

CONSTITUTION

MONTGOMERY HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH
9727 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland

ARTICLE I -- NAME

The corporate name of this church, located in Montgomery County of the State of Maryland, USA, shall be the Montgomery Hills Baptist Church.

ARTICLE II -- COVENANT

We, the members of the Montgomery Hills Baptist Church, having accepted Christ as our personal Savior and followed Him in baptism, do now joyfully and solemnly enter into this covenant one with another.

We devote ourselves to the love, obedience, and service of Jesus Christ; we take His Word as the law of our lives; we promise to follow Him in all things, and to walk with His disciples in love.

We promise to pray and labor for the spirituality and prosperity of our church; to help in sustaining its worship and ordinances; and to devote ourselves gladly to the carrying of the Gospel throughout the world.

ARTICLE III -- CHARACTER

1. In religious matters, this church is a free, autonomous, independent body, congregational in nature, with authority to determine for itself, in the manner set forth in this Constitution, the use of its property and all church policies, free from outside control, authority or power.
2. This church accepts the Scriptures as its authority in matters of faith and practice. Its understanding of Christian truth, as contained therein, is in essential accord with the belief historically and generally held by Baptist congregations.
3. This church is affiliated with the District of Columbia Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A.

ARTICLE IV -- MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership. The membership of this church shall consist of persons who have made a profession of their faith in Christ as Savior and Lord; who desire to be numbered among His disciples; who are in agreement with the faith and practices of this church, including believer's baptism; and who have given evidence of their sincerity and faith to the satisfaction of the Pastor, the Board of Deacons, and the church membership. In addition to full membership in the church, two special categories of membership are available:

- (a) Associate Membership. Persons wishing to unite with this church who are members of a Christian church that does not practice Believer's Baptism may be received as associate members. Such associate members shall share all of the responsibilities and privileges of membership of this church but are not eligible to be a deacon, trustee or church officer.
 - (b) Watchcare Membership. Those persons wishing to come under the watchcare of the church on a temporary basis, without moving their membership from their present Christian church, may be granted the status of watchcare membership. Such watchcare members will not be numbered on the church membership roll, but shall share all of the responsibilities and privileges of membership of this church except voting on proposed amendments to this Constitution and its by-laws, and being eligible for any elective church office.
2. All members and associate members shall be eligible to vote in matters presented to the membership for a vote. Watchcare members shall also be eligible to vote in matters presented to the church membership, except regarding proposed amendments to this Constitution and its by-laws.
 3. Persons are to be added to or removed from the status of membership in accord with the procedures specified in the by-laws.

ARTICLE V -- ELECTIVE OFFICERS

1. Officers. The officers of this church shall be the Pastor, Church Treasurer, Assistant Church Treasurer, Church Clerk, and other officers as deemed by the collective membership to be necessary to administer the church program.
2. Terms and Duties of Officers. The terms of office and duties of the officers shall be prescribed in the by-laws.
3. Elections of Officers shall be held as prescribed by the by-laws.

ARTICLE VI -- MEETINGS

Meetings of the church members shall include:

1. Worship. Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day and on special occasions such as Lent, Easter, Christmas Eve, etc., as determined by the Pastor and the Board of Deacons.

Cancellation of Services. Any of the stated services may be called off by:

 - (a) Vote of the church members, or
 - (b) By the Pastor with the concurrence of the Chairperson of the Board of Deacons when hazardous weather conditions or other circumstances warrant it.
2. Business Meetings. The Chairperson of the Board of Deacons shall serve as Moderator of business meetings. Regular business meetings of the church shall be held quarterly on dates to be selected by the Moderator and Pastor. Officers, boards, mission teams, and

other church-related organizations are encouraged to make quarterly reports to the church membership. Special business meetings may be called by the Pastor or the Moderator, or by the Church Clerk upon written application of any ten members specifying the purpose, provided that notice of the meeting and its purpose shall be given at a Sunday service at least three days preceding the date of the proposed meeting.

Quorum. The presence of at least twenty-five members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, unless the number of church members is fewer than twenty-five. In such a case, the presence of at least 60% of members shall constitute a quorum.

Unless otherwise provided in a specific provision of this Constitution or the by-laws, the membership shall be considered to have approved a matter if a quorum is present for a vote on the matter and a majority of the members present vote in favor of the matter.

ARTICLE VII -- ORDINANCES

The ordinances shall be Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

1. Baptism. Baptism of believers shall be by immersion.
2. The Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper shall be observed not less than once a month as prescribed by the Pastor and the Board of Deacons.

ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present at a church business meeting, provided that notice is given and the proposed amendment is made available to the membership at least thirty days in advance of the meeting. The vote shall be by written ballot.

The by-laws may be amended by the membership at a church business meeting, provided that notice is given and the proposed amendment is made available to the membership at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. Further amendment may be offered and adopted at the meeting, provided that such further amendment is presented in writing at the meeting and relates to the matters affected by the proposed amendment.

BY-LAWS

MONTGOMERY HILLS BAPTIST CHURCH
9727 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland

Section 1. MEMBERSHIP

- A. Admission to Membership. The Pastor or the Board of Deacons may nominate a candidate for admission to membership. Such candidates may be elected to membership at a business meeting of the church. Membership in this church may be attained as follows:
- (a) By the ordinance of Believer's Baptism after profession of faith.
 - (b) By letter from any church of like faith and order.
 - (c) By certificate or statement of baptism in another church which holds to the Baptist interpretation of the ordinances.
 - (d) By restoration to the rolls after having been dropped or after exclusion.
 - (e) By statement of Christian experience indicating previous compliance with either (a), (b), or (c).
 - (f) Where health, infirmities of age, or other warranted circumstances prevent compliance with any of the foregoing conditions, such conditions may be waived and membership granted by the church membership upon recommendation of the Pastor and the Board of Deacons.
- B. Transfer of Membership. A member may be granted a letter of recommendation to another church upon request. Such a letter of recommendation shall be sent directly to the church to which it is addressed and membership in Montgomery Hills Baptist Church shall cease at the time at which the letter is sent.
- C. Cessation of Membership. A member for whom the church has no current address, or who has given indication to the Pastor or the Deacons that they have no further interest in the church, may be removed from membership by placing their name on an inactive list, upon majority vote of the Board of Deacons in consultation with the Pastor. Said former member may be restored to membership by the Church Clerk upon notice from the Pastor and the Board of Deacons that they are satisfied as to the renewed interest and devotion of this former member.
- D. Expulsion of a Member. A member may be expelled by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Deacons in consultation with the Pastor. The member may appeal this action to the church membership at a church business meeting, at which time a majority vote of members present and voting at the meeting is necessary to uphold the expulsion action.

Section 2. CHURCH OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

- A. The Pastor. The Pastor shall seek to perform the duties of that office with all fidelity; to preach on the Lord's Day; to administer the ordinances as commanded by the New Testament; to visit the members of the church and to perform other duties as pertaining to

that office. The Pastor shall be the administrator of the church, serving as an ex-officio member of all boards, and organizations, and the Pastor's leadership shall be recognized in all of them.

The Pastor shall be called for an indefinite term at a church business meeting. The proposal to call a Pastor shall be provided to the church membership with at least one week's notice. The vote on calling a Pastor shall be by written ballot. An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present shall be necessary.

When in the judgment of either the Pastor or the church membership that the spiritual needs of the church would be best served by terminating the Pastor's spiritual leadership of the church, the Pastor's call will be terminated. If the Pastor initiates this action, the effective date of the termination will be as the Pastor specifies unless the church membership specifies an earlier date. The membership may initiate the action at a business meeting called for such purpose, for which notice of the proposed action shall have been provided to the membership at least two weeks before such meeting. Termination of salary paid by the church shall not be earlier than thirty days after the date of this meeting.

The Pastor will be entitled to one week of study leave for each year of service. This may be cumulative up to six years, and may be taken at one time, upon approval of the Board of Deacons, to allow for an extended sabbatical leave.

- B. Associate Pastor. The church membership may authorize the position of Associate Pastor. The Associate Pastor shall assist the Pastor, assisting in public worship and in the conduct of the ordinances, sharing in the pastoral and administrative duties, as directed by the Pastor. In the temporary absence or incapacity of the Pastor, or if the position is vacant, the Associate Pastor shall assume selected pastoral responsibilities as directed by the Board of Deacons. Provisions pertaining to the terms of call, termination, and vacation of the Pastor shall apply equally to the Associate Pastor.
- C. Moderator and Associate Moderator. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Board of Deacons shall serve as the Moderator and Associate Moderator, respectively. The Moderator shall preside at all business meetings of the church membership and shall see that the meetings of the church are held as prescribed, and that required reports are submitted by the various officers and boards to the membership at business meetings. The Moderator shall appoint ad hoc committees as instructed by the Board of Deacons or the membership at a business meeting. The Moderator shall be an ex-officio member of all boards. In the absence or incapacity of the Moderator, the Associate Moderator shall perform the duties of the Moderator. In the absence or incapacity of both the Moderator and the Associate Moderator, the Pastor shall designate a current member of the Board of Deacons or a former moderator to perform the duties of Moderator.
- D. Church Clerk. It shall be the duty of the Church Clerk to record the minutes of all business meetings of the church; to preserve an accurate roll of the resident and non-resident membership; to prepare jointly with the Pastor and church secretary the annual report to the District of Columbia Baptist Convention concerning the work of the church; to perform such other duties as usually are associated with this office, and to render reports to the church membership at quarterly business meetings.

- E. Church Treasurer and Assistant Church Treasurer. The Church Treasurer shall receive, hold, and disburse all checks, monies, bonds, collateral, or funds for the church. The Church Treasurer shall keep all funds received in banks approved by the Board of Trustees in consideration of recommendations of the Finance team, and shall pay by check or electronic transfer all accounts supported by vouchers authorized by the proper officer. The Church Treasurer, assisted by designees of the Finance team, shall be responsible for counting and recording all offerings. The Church Treasurer will be an ex-officio member of the Finance team. All checks must be countersigned by a designee of the Finance team. Original copies of all financial records of the church shall be kept at the church under the custody of the Church Treasurer. Under conditions approved by the Finance team, a backup copy may be placed elsewhere to assure record availability should the originals not be available. The Assistant Church Treasurer will assist the Church Treasurer and will act for the Church Treasurer in the case of absence or incapacity of the Church Treasurer.
- F. Financial Secretary. The Financial Secretary, assisted by designees of the Finance team, shall be responsible for recording all offerings and posting of all expenses. All funds shall be turned over to the Church Treasurer who will furnish the Financial Secretary a receipt for these funds. The Financial Secretary shall assist the Finance team by furnishing reports and information that the team may need in its work.
- G. Other Church Employees. The church membership may authorize the employment of additional church staff as deemed necessary to carry out the church programs and activities.
- H. Conditions of Church Employment. Compensation of employees and conditions of employment shall be established by designees of the Board of Trustees. Full-time employees shall be eligible for retirement and hospitalization insurance benefits.
- (a) Supervision All employees shall be under the supervision of the Pastor who, with the concurrence of the Board of Deacons, shall be authorized to arrange for an individual's employment or termination of service, which must be concurred at a church business meeting. The general duties of employees shall be prescribed by the Personnel Relations Committee and recorded in the minutes of the Church Clerk.
- (b) Vacations. Employees having at least ten years of service shall be entitled to four weeks of paid vacation. Employees with less than ten continuous years but more than one year of service shall be entitled to three weeks of paid vacation. Vacation schedules shall be submitted to the Pastor for approval. Paid Holidays will be observed on the same basis as for Federal employees in the metropolitan area. Time off for illness without loss of pay maybe granted when the Pastor determines the circumstances warrant it.

Section 3. BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND MINISTRY TEAMS

Members of the church participate in activities that advance the mission of the church individually and within groups. The following describes the organizational structure of the major groupings.

A. **Deacons**. The Board of Deacons shall consist of no fewer than ten members of the church. Deacons must have proved themselves in the matter of church membership and should meet the qualifications for such a position as set forth in the New Testament. The Deacons shall be chosen so that the two-year terms of one-half of the Board will terminate each year. One year must intervene before a former Deacon may be eligible for re-election after the expiration of a full two-year term.

Deacons shall at all times consider themselves church servants. The Board of Deacons shall be charged with the initiation, promotion, and execution of plans, programs, and efforts of the church as a whole. It shall provide for and assist the Pastor in pastoral care of the members of the church, in the proper observance of church ordinances, and shall be in charge of the devotional services of the church in the absence of the Pastor. The Board shall keep itself informed as to the regularity of the members in attending services and participating in the life of the church. It shall conduct all disciplinary reviews.

(a) **Personnel Relations Committee**. This committee shall consist of three Deacons and one Trustee, nominated by their respective Chairpersons and approved by a vote of their respective Boards. These members will serve one year and the committee will meet at least twice a year. The Personnel Relations Committee shall foster constructive communication between the church membership and its pastoral leadership and staff, and to implement the congregation's responsibility for the personal and professional well being of the Pastor and staff. Members shall be persons who are sensitive to the needs of the church, Pastor and staff.

The committee shall make recommendations to the Finance team regarding budgeting of pastoral and staff compensation.

(b) **Fellowship Fund**. This offering shall be collected each Communion Sunday for the purpose of providing financial aid to needy persons. Such aid shall be given as prescribed by the Pastor or the Board of Deacons.

B. **Trustees**. The Board of Trustees shall consist of no fewer than five members of the church who shall be elected for terms of three years. These terms are to be set on a rotating basis, so that no more than one-third of the trustee terms will expire in the same year. One year must intervene before a former Trustee may be eligible for re-election after the expiration of a full three-year term. The Board of Trustees is responsible for all processes and controls that assure that, in consultation with the Finance team, finances are utilized efficiently and effectively for the mission of the church. The Board of Trustees shall hold in trust the property of this church but shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer, any property without approval of the church membership. The Board of Trustees shall secure necessary insurance on church property and personal liability insurance.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for an audit of the church's financial records at least once in every calendar year. The Board of Trustees may conduct such an audit or designate a committee to perform this function. The audit shall be an internal audit unless the membership at a business meeting votes that an outside auditing firm be employed.

The Board of Trustees, in concert with the Building and Grounds team, shall inspect all church buildings and equipment for proper maintenance and repair once a year. The Board of Trustees shall maintain a complete list of all furnishings and office equipment, including audio-visual equipment and other valuable property.

C. **Ministry Teams**. The ongoing ministry of this church is directed through Leadership Ministry Teams and Ministry Action Teams.

The **Leadership Ministry Teams** are basic teams essential for the effective operation and ministry of the church. These teams include: Lay Mobilization, Finance, Spiritual Life and Growth, Mission and Service, and Building and Grounds.

(a) **Lay Mobilization**. This team is responsible for recruitment, training, support, and resourcing of all of the Leadership Ministry Teams. The Lay Mobilization team is responsible for preparing a list of nominations for church positions, vacant or soon to become vacant, and submit this list to the Board of Deacons. The team is responsible for helping members discover their gifts and callings for their own spiritual growth and for the upbuilding of the church. The team is also responsible for creating and administering a Spiritual Gifts Inventory that each individual will be asked to complete upon becoming a church member. Members of the Lay Mobilization team will be nominated by the Moderator in consultation with the Board of Deacons and the Pastor.

(b) **Finance**. This team is responsible for administering the financial processes of this church and for devising ways and means of securing adequate income to meet the financial requirements of the church. This team shall include a member of the Board of Trustees and shall inform the Board of Trustees of all considerations and outcomes of their activities. The team shall give oversight to the financial condition of the church and bring any critical situations to the attention of the church members. The team shall have the Financial Secretary prepare a monthly financial statement and such other reports as are deemed necessary to keep the church membership fully informed of the financial condition of the church.

The Finance team, in consultation with leaders of the teams and groups of the church, shall prepare a unified budget of the estimated expenses of the church for all needs for the ensuing year. The proposed budget must be submitted to the Board of Trustees at least one month prior to the annual business meeting at which the church membership will act on it. Copies of the proposed budget must be made available to the church membership at least one week before it is presented to the church annual meeting for action. The membership may approve or amend the proposed budget at a regular meeting or at a special meeting prior to January 1 of the ensuing year. If, after submission of the proposed budget or after its adoption, changes in the budget seem warranted, the Finance team may review the budget and recommend through the Board of Trustees to the church membership such changes as it deems advisable. The Budget may be amended or revised by the church membership, at any business meeting, provided due notice of the meeting and the proposed action have been given to the membership.

Any contemplated expenditures for which budget authority does not exist, or no longer exists, if not more than 0.5% of the total budget, may be authorized by the Church Treasurer, with the approval of the Pastor and the Finance team Chairperson, or by the church membership at a business meeting. In such cases the Finance team shall determine whether items for which budget authority does exist, should be changed to cover the authorized expenditures. Any such contemplated expenditure in excess of 0.5% of the total budget must be approved by the church membership, provided the members have been duly notified one week prior to the meeting at which approval of the

expenditure will be requested.

(c) Spiritual Life And Growth. This team facilitates and oversees all aspects of the education ministry of the church. The team establishes the overall vision and mission for the church's educational ministry. This team provides age-level appropriate spiritual growth and resources for children, youth, and adults. The team focuses on strengthening, supporting, and enhancing the spiritual growth of the Montgomery Hills Baptist Church congregation. The spiritual growth process focuses on Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and various Bible Study and Topical Studies that meet congregational needs.

(d) Mission and Service. This team shall coordinate the missions and ministries of the church. They are responsible for helping the church to become a missional church by engaging in ministry and mission locally and around the world. The team is responsible for mission education and outreach projects including mission trips.

(e) Building and Grounds. This team is responsible for overseeing policies concerning the use of the building and grounds of the church. The team is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and improvement of the building and grounds including, but not limited to, plumbing, electrical, painting, heating/AC, landscaping, and lawn care. Projects contemplated by individuals or groups shall be submitted to this team for consideration and approval when the alteration of the building, equipment, furnishings, or property lot is involved.

Ministry Action Teams carry out various specific ministries and missions and, where appropriate, will report to the most relevant Leadership Ministry Team. These MATs will have the responsibility for their specific mission and will recruit their own team members. Each MAT will have a facilitator appointed by the team itself. MAT teams are self-starting and self-dissolving when the need for a particular ministry no longer exists. Anyone possessing a new idea for ministry or mission is encouraged to begin a MAT after coordinating with the appropriate Leadership Ministry Team.

D. Endowment Committee. This Committee will take appropriate measures to ensure that the Heritage and Hope Endowment Fund is managed properly. It is the responsibility of the Committee to ensure that distributions from gifts are made in accordance with gift guidelines and reflect the donors' desires. Terms of service and composition of the Committee are to be in accordance with the description passed at the time of initiating the Fund.

E. Pulpit Committee. In the event of a vacancy or impending vacancy in the office of Pastor, the Moderator, with the concurrence of the Board of Deacons, shall present to the church membership, for approval, a Pulpit Committee comprised of no fewer than nine church members. The Committee shall seek out a Baptist Minister to recommend to the church membership to be called as Pastor of the church. In consultation with the Board of Deacons, this Committee shall also recommend to the church membership for approval, a person as interim-pastor to lead worship services and perform other pastoral duties as the church membership may deem necessary, or shall otherwise arrange for supplying Ministers or other qualified persons to perform these pastoral functions.

F. Church Committees. Other Church Committees may be formed as deemed necessary by the church membership. All Church Committees shall, when feasible, confer with the Pastor before making recommendations to the Boards or the church membership.

Section 4. ORDER OF BUSINESS

All business meetings shall be conducted in conformity with Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 5. ELECTIONS

A. Slate of Nominees. The Lay Mobilization team shall present to the church membership a slate of nominees to fill the necessary positions of elected church officers and organizations at a business meeting timed to permit an election before the established date for the commencement of the term of office for which candidates are nominated. Nominations may also be made from the floor to fill any such position. The Lay Mobilization team shall also make nominations at other times to fill vacancies as needed. The positions requiring election are: the church officers, members of all Boards and Committees, and the members of the Finance team. Some committees are formed from Boards after the start of the year or are formed on an "as needed" basis. These will be elected by the church membership at the earliest possible church business meeting.

B. Eligibility for Office. Only full-members may serve as an elected Church Officer or Board member. Associate members and watchcare members are encouraged to participate in all other team and ministry opportunities.

C. Duties Assumed and Terms of Office. The persons elected to any office, board, team, or committee shall assume their respective offices on January 1. For special circumstances the person shall assume their duties on a date as determined by the church membership. Unless otherwise specified herein, all terms of office shall be for a one-year period.

D. Vacancies. Elections to fill any vacancies that may occur should be held as soon as practical.

E. Organization of Boards, Teams and Committees. All Boards, Teams and Committees shall be called together as soon as practical following their election to organize and select a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and recording secretary.

Section 6. GIFTS AND BEQUESTS

A. General Provisions The Board of Trustees is authorized to accept and receive, for the church, title to any gift or bequest, which they feel is in the best interest of the church. Title to any gift or bequest that has not been designated for any specific purpose by the donor shall be held in trust by the Board of Trustees until dispersed and/or dispensed by recommendation of the Finance team and approved by the church membership, having been duly notified prior to the meeting at which approval will be requested. Upon receipt of tangible property, such as furnishings, equipment, supplies, etc., the Board of Trustees is to furnish the donor a written estimate of its value for tax purposes.

Gifts, bequests, and devises may be received by the Church either as a "designated gift," or an "undesignated gift." The church shall seek to carry out the intent of any designated gift, bequest, or devise. Use of the funds may differ from the original designation under the following conditions:

- (a) written consent of the donor, or
- (b) recommendation of the Board of Trustees and/or Finance team and approval of the church membership.

All cash gifts, bequests, and proceeds derived from disposing of a gift or bequest, whether designated or not, shall be invested in such savings account, savings certificate, or securities, as determined by the Finance team, until such time as those funds shall be disbursed by either of the following means:

(c) if designated, for the purpose designated by the donor, or

(d) if not designated, for a purpose or purposes as recommended by the Finance team and approved by the Board of Trustees and the church membership.

It is understood that any individual or group of members may submit suggestions for the use of funds to the Finance team or to the Board of Trustees or at a church business meeting.

B. Memorial Funds Gifts of memorial funds in memory of deceased loved ones and friends are encouraged. These funds may be designated by the family or heirs of the deceased, in consultation with the Pastor, for specific purposes. If, after one year from the date of death, the family has not made or declared their intention to make a specific designation, the funds will be transferred to a general church memorial fund account. Such funds shall be used for specific purposes as recommended by the Finance team and approved by the Board of Trustees and the church membership.

C. Church Endowment An additional option of designation by donors is for either current use or for addition to the Heritage and Hope Endowment Fund of Montgomery Hills Baptist Church. The management of Heritage and Hope funds will be in accord with the formation stipulation of the fund.

Section 7. LOANS

A decision to take a loan shall be informed by a market survey of several lenders in order to obtain a favorable interest rate and terms.

A loan having duration of more than one year or exceeding 5% of the annual budget will be initiated by the Finance Team and approved by the Board of Trustees and the church membership. The Board of Trustees will make arrangements for the financing and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees will execute all necessary documents.

A loan of one year or less and not to exceed 5% of the annual budget will be obtained by the Finance Team with the approval of the Board of Trustees. The Church Treasurer or Chairperson of the Finance Team will sign the necessary loan documents.

Credit cards may be obtained in the name of the Church. Unless borrowing is approved pursuant to the foregoing provisions of this Section, cash advances are prohibited and credit card bills shall be paid in such amount and timeliness to avoid finance charges and fees. The Finance Team shall establish written policy consistent with these by-laws for the use of credit cards.