

1 **CONSTITUTION**

2 *of the*

3 **CAPITOL HILL BAPTIST CHURCH**

4 WASHINGTON, D.C.

5 *Adopted by the membership on May 17, 1998.*

6 *Revised by the membership on May 18, 2003, September 17, 2006,*
7 *November 16, 2008, March 15, 2009, September 21, 2014, and September 16, 2018.*

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9
10 **Preamble**

11
12 Since it pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call certain of His servants
13 to unite here in 1878 under the name Metropolitan Baptist Church of Washington, D.C.,
14 for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and He has sustained
15 and prospered this work to the present day; and

16 Whereas we, the members of Capitol Hill Baptist Church, having searched the
17 Scriptures under the guidance of His Spirit, have recognized the need to reconstitute
18 ourselves to more closely conform to His will for the Church in this age and prepare
19 ourselves for greater efforts in His name;

20 Now therefore we, the members of Capitol Hill Baptist Church, do hereby
21 organize ourselves in accord with the D.C. Nonprofit Corporation Act and adopt this
22 Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the
23 character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated
24 in the standards set forth in the Statement of Faith (1878) and Covenant (1996) of this
25 church.

26
27 **Article 1 – Name**

28
29 The name of this church is: Capitol Hill Baptist Church.

30
31 **Article 2 – Purpose**

32
33 This church exists by the grace of God, for the glory of God, which shall be the
34 ultimate purpose in all its activities.

35 This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through:
36 Worshipping Him;

37 Equipping the saints through Bible instruction and study;

38 Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and personal

39 evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of Holy

40 Scripture;

41 Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work, local, domestic, and
42 international;

43 Administering the ordinances of baptism and communion;

44 Encouraging Biblical fellowship among believers;

1 Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical,
2 emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ; and
3 Calling fellow churches to biblical faithfulness and purity through instruction and
4 encouragement about the nature of the local church.
5

6 **Article 3 – Membership**

7

8 Section 1 – Qualifications

9 To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus
10 Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized, in obedience to
11 Christ, following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the
12 Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the
13 teaching of scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the
14 commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The elders shall be responsible for
15 determining each person’s qualification for membership. In making this determination,
16 they may rely on a person’s profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders
17 deem appropriate.
18

19 Section 2 – Admission of Members

20 To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be ordinarily, but not
21 necessarily, recommended by the elders for admission and must be accepted by vote of
22 the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and shall at that point
23 relinquish their membership in other churches.
24

25 Section 3 – Duties and Privileges of Membership

26 In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall
27 be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the
28 church, consistent with God’s leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources
29 each has received from God. Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the
30 church who are members of this congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc
31 basis with the approval of the elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the
32 church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

33 Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the
34 privilege and responsibility of members to attend members’ meetings and vote on the
35 election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters
36 as may be submitted to a vote.
37

38 Section 4 – On Church Discipline

39 Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by
40 which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare
41 of the church and/or rendering doubtful a profession of faith, shall be subject to the
42 admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of
43 our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and the example of scripture. Church discipline, then,
44 should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

1 Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation,
2 deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18: 15–17; 1 Timothy 5: 19–
3 20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4–5).

4 The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and
5 spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15: 5; 29: 15; I
6 Corinthians 4: 14; Ephesians 6: 4; I Timothy 3: 4–5; Hebrews 12: 1–11;
7 Psalm 119: 115; 141: 5; Proverbs 17: 10; 25: 12; 27: 5; Ecclesiastes 7: 5;
8 Matthew 7: 26–27; 18: 15–17; Luke 17: 3; Acts 2: 40; I Corinthians 5: 5;
9 Galatians 6: 1–5; II Thessalonians 3: 6, 14–15; I Timothy 1: 20; Titus 1:
10 13–14; James 1: 22);

11 For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to
12 them (see Proverbs 13: 20; Romans 15: 14; I Corinthians 5: 11; 15: 33;
13 Colossians 3: 16; I Thessalonians 5: 14 [note this is written to the whole
14 church, not just to leaders]; I Timothy 5: 20; Titus 1: 11; Hebrews 10: 24–
15 25);

16 For the purity of the church as a whole (see I Corinthians 5: 6–7; II Corinthians
17 13: 10; Ephesians 5: 27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21: 2);

18 For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see Proverbs 28: 7;
19 Matthew 5: 13–16; John 13: 35; Acts 5: 1–14; Ephesians 5: 11; I Timothy
20 3: 7; II Peter 2: 2; I John 3: 10); and

21 Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see
22 Deuteronomy 5: 11; I Kings 11: 2; II Chronicles 19: 2; Ezra 6: 21;
23 Nehemiah 9: 2; Isaiah 52: 11; Ezekiel 36: 20; Matthew 5: 16; John 15: 8;
24 18: 17, 25; Romans 2: 24; 15: 5–6; II Corinthians 6: 14–7: 1; Ephesians 1:
25 4; 5: 27; I Peter 2: 12).

27 Section 5 – Termination of Membership

28 The church shall recognize the termination of a person’s membership following
29 his or her death, and it shall also recognize the termination of a person’s membership
30 following his or her self-professed apostasy as confirmed by congregational vote.

31 Additionally, the church may recognize the termination of a person’s membership after
32 he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Membership may also
33 be terminated as an act of church discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the
34 recommendation of the elders) upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members
35 present at any regular or special meeting of the members.

36 The church shall have authority to refuse a member’s voluntary resignation or
37 transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a
38 process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.

40 **Article 4 - Meetings**

42 Section 1 – Worship Meetings

43 Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the
44 week as the church determines.

1 reaffirmed by the church triennially. After an elder, other than the senior or associate
2 pastor(s), has served two consecutive three-year terms, he may only be elected to the
3 office of elder after at least one year.

4 An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any
5 two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express
6 such concern to the elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be
7 done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and I
8 Timothy 5: 17–21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the
9 members at any members' meeting of the church.

10 The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective
11 members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions,
12 oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct
13 worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the
14 membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice,
15 admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and
16 promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions.
17 Further, the elders should seek to ensure that all who minister the Word to the
18 congregation, including outside speakers, affirm our fundamental gospel convictions and
19 do not teach our church anything contrary to the Statement of Faith.

20 The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in
21 fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid staff
22 positions. The membership shall approve all candidates to fill the positions of senior and
23 associate pastor. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall
24 reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position.

25 Each year the elders, after consultation with the deacons, the deaconesses, and the
26 membership, shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be
27 presented for discussion at a regular or specially-called budget meeting and called up for
28 a vote at the following members' meeting. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf
29 of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders.

30 The elders shall elect a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also elect one of
31 their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings. For purposes of compliance
32 with the nonprofit corporation laws of the District of Columbia, the elders shall elect one
33 of their number to serve as the president of the corporation.

34 35 Section 3 – The Senior Pastor

36 The senior pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder
37 described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted
38 and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.

39 His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation
40 set out in Article 5, Section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 6,
41 Section 3.

42 He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and
43 communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth
44 in the constitution.

1 The senior pastor shall have primary responsibility for the supervision and
2 evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be
3 delegated to another staff member.

4 In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor the elders shall assume
5 responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

6 7 Section 4 – Associate Pastors

8 The church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the senior pastor is
9 that of associate.

10 An associate pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder
11 described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted
12 and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.

13 His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation
14 set out in Article 5, Section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 6,
15 Section 4.

16 He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall
17 perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the
18 constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation.

19 In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for defined periods of time (such
20 as sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his
21 duties under the oversight of the elders.

22 23 Section 5 – Assistant Pastors

24 The church may call additional pastors, from within the congregation only, whose
25 relationship to the senior pastor is that of assistant.

26 An assistant pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder
27 described in Section 2, above, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted
28 and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.

29 His call shall be subject to the triennial reaffirmation and term limitation set out in
30 Article 5, section 2, for elders. His call shall be defined as per Article 6, Section 5

31 He shall assist the senior pastor and associate pastor(s) in the performance of their
32 regular duties, and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of
33 pastor. The elders shall define the responsibilities of the assistant pastor(s).

34 35 Section 6 – Senior Pastoral Assistants

36 With the approval of the elders, the senior pastor may hire additional staff to
37 assist with pastoral ministry, designated as senior pastoral assistants. These shall not be
38 pastors, though they may be recognized as elders should they be nominated by the elders
39 and elected by the congregation, in accordance with Article 5, Section 2. Should the
40 congregation recognize a senior pastoral assistant as an elder, he will assume the title and
41 responsibilities of assistant pastor as described in Article 5, Section 5.

42 The elders shall define the responsibilities of the senior pastoral assistant(s).
43 They shall serve at the will of the elders for an initial term up to four years, though that
44 term may be extended with the approval of the elders.

45 46 Section 7 – Pastoral Assistants

1 The senior pastor may hire additional staff to assist with pastoral ministry,
2 designated as pastoral assistants. These shall not be pastors, though they may be
3 recognized as elders should they be nominated by the elders and elected by the
4 congregation, in accordance with Article 5, Section 2.

5 The senior pastor shall assign the responsibilities of the pastoral assistant(s).
6 They shall serve at the will of the senior pastor for a term of one year, though that term
7 may be extended with the approval of the elders.

8 9 Section 8 – Deacons & Deaconesses

10 The office of deacon is described in I Timothy 3: 8–13. The church shall
11 recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men and women
12 who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of
13 service. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6, these members shall be
14 received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons and deaconesses. They
15 shall be elected to one term lasting for a maximum of three years and may only be elected
16 to another term after one year.

17 Deacons and deaconesses shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to
18 the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help
19 others and those with gifts of administration.

20 The elders, with assistance from the deacons and deaconesses shall receive, hold,
21 and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders at their request, and
22 reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only.

23 The deacons and deaconesses, with the agreement of the elders, may establish
24 unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling
25 their responsibilities in the church.

26 27 Section 9 – Clerk

28 It shall be the duty of the clerk to record the minutes of all regular and special
29 members' meetings of the church, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to
30 render reports as requested by the elders or the church.

31 The clerk, who shall be a member in good standing, shall be nominated by the
32 elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of three years.

33 In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the elders shall appoint a member to
34 perform the duties of the church clerk.

35 For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the District of
36 Columbia, the clerk shall serve as the secretary of the corporation.

37 The church clerk shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this
38 constitution shall be available for all church members.

39 40 Section 10 – Treasurer

41 The treasurer, who shall not be an active elder, deacon, or paid church staff
42 member, shall be a member in good standing. The treasurer shall support the elders in
43 providing oversight of the financial and accounting activities of the church, shall not have
44 custody of church funds, and shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are
45 properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The
46 treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances,

1 revenues and expenses of the church at each members' meeting. This responsibility may
2 be delegated with the approval of the elders. The treasurer shall also see that full and
3 accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the
4 church, and that adequate controls are implemented to ensure that all funds belonging to
5 the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church.
6 The treasurer shall render to the elders, whenever they may require it, an account of all
7 activities as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church.

8 The treasurer shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to
9 serve a term of three years.

10 **Article 6 – Elections**

11 Section 1 – Principles

12 The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the
13 following principles:

14 Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of
15 the election process;

16 Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders;

17 All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and
18 honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members;

19 The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving
20 consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

21 Section 2 – Selection of Officers

22 The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church.

23 Names of nominees to serve as elders, deacons, deaconesses, clerk, or treasurer shall be
24 presented by the elders at the previous members' meeting (providing that previous
25 meeting occurred at least eight weeks prior), and the election shall proceed as directed by
26 the moderator.

27 The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general
28 membership in the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a
29 nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the
30 elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their
31 objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members'
32 meeting.

33 The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a two-thirds majority of all
34 votes cast for the office of elder at a regularly-scheduled members meeting. For all other
35 offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority of all
36 votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast.

37 The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless
38 another date has been specifically designated.

39 Section 3 – Calling of the Senior Pastor

40 In the calling of any man to this position, the same basic process of calling an
41 elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate
42 opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential senior pastor and, before being
43

1 asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having
2 interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the
3 Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be
4 elected to membership and called as senior pastor (which shall include, if necessary,
5 election to membership of his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday
6 morning services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

7
8 Section 4 – Calling of Associate Pastor

9 In the calling of any man to the position of associate pastor, the same basic
10 process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be
11 given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential associate pastor
12 and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders
13 that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted
14 assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a
15 man to be called as associate pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to
16 membership of him and his wife if he is married) must be given at two Sunday morning
17 services following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

18
19 Section 5 – Calling of Assistant Pastor

20 The calling of any man to the position of assistant pastor requires that that man
21 have been recognized and called by the congregation to the office of elder, according to
22 the process described in Article 6, Section 2. Such a man may then be called by the
23 elders to serve as assistant pastor with defined duties for a fixed period of time specified
24 by the elders in the terms of his call.

25
26 **Article 7 – Indemnification**

27
28 Section 1 – Mandatory Indemnification

29 If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she
30 is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide
31 indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the
32 elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily
33 prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c)
34 in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and
35 the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

36
37 Section 2 – Permissive Indemnification

38 At the discretion of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who
39 acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's
40 best interest and not unlawful.

41
42 Section 3 – Procedure

43 If a quorum of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination
44 because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may
45 be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

1 **Article 8 – Dispute Resolution**

2
3 Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at
4 peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church
5 (see, e.g., Matthew 18: 15–20, I Corinthians 6: 1–8), the church shall require its members
6 to resolve ordinary civil disputes among themselves according to biblically based
7 principles, without reliance on the secular courts. In the case of criminal activity within
8 the congregation, the State has a God-given responsibility to protect the peace and
9 security of its citizens that should be supported and encouraged. Consistent with its call
10 to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles to
11 resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan
12 and whether individuals or corporate entities.

13
14 **Article 9 – Deviations of Practice**

15
16 If a church member believes the church to be out of accord with this constitution,
17 he or she should inform an elder. When the elders determine that the church is out of
18 accord with this constitution, they must provide an update at each members’ meeting
19 until the situation is remedied.

20
21 **Article 10 – Amendments**

22
23 The Statement of Faith and Church Covenant may be amended by a two-thirds
24 vote of the members present and voting at a members’ meeting, provided the amendment
25 shall have been offered in writing at the previous members’ meeting, and shall have been
26 announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

27 This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present
28 and voting at a members’ meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in
29 writing at the previous members’ meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit
30 at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote.

31 The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church
32 members by the church clerk.

33
34 **Article 11 – Dissolution**

35
36 In the event that the elders of the church determine that there is reasonable cause to
37 dissolve the Capitol Hill Baptist Church as a corporate entity, the elders shall recommend
38 dissolution to the membership. The elders shall call a special members’ meeting as set
39 out in Article 4, Section 2. Notice of the meeting shall be sent in writing to the
40 membership and posted at all entrances to the church building no less than sixty days
41 prior to the meeting. The notice shall state that the purpose of the meeting is to consider
42 dissolution of the corporation and how the assets of the corporation will be distributed
43 after all creditors have been paid. At least two-thirds of the members present at the
44 meeting must vote in the affirmative to approve the proposal of dissolution.

1 After approval of dissolution by the members, all of the corporation's debts shall be fully
2 satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or other
3 individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated, as approved by a simple majority of the
4 members present at a members' meeting, to one or more religious organizations which
5 meet the qualifications described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and
6 which are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the Statement of Faith. Any such
7 assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of exclusively for such exempt purposes by a
8 court of competent jurisdiction where the principal office of the corporation is then
9 located.