

Mission Hills Church

Constitution and Bylaws

Mission Hills Church

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Introduction

This document, including this Introduction, constitutes the Constitution, Bylaws and the religious Statements of Faith of Mission Hills Church ("church"). All reference to "Constitution" is solely to this document in its entirety.

Through this Constitution we are setting forth our religious calling, commitments, core practices, and the essential doctrines of our church so as to clearly summarize the core of our religious beliefs, of what we hold to be true. In addition, through this Constitution we are communicating the required and expected behavior, religious beliefs and doctrines which our church pastors, clergy, employees, members, and volunteers all have a special duty and requirement to adhere to and comply with.

This Constitution enables our prospective pastors, clergy, employees, volunteers, and members to be informed of our religious beliefs, doctrines, and requirements, so that they will then be able to make an informed decision and give their full consent to our religious beliefs, doctrines, and requirements prior to becoming a part of our church and thereafter in whatever role they fill.

We believe that all of these individuals are part of our church ministry and as such are ministers of our church. We believe these individuals reflect our church and are all called by God to go "... and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that (Jesus has) commanded." (Matthew 28:19-20) We believe that our pastors, clergy, employees, members, and volunteers serve as role models for our church and for society. Therefore, we require that all such persons adhere to, comply with, and accurately teach and communicate our religious beliefs and doctrines consistent with this Constitution.

We believe our church facilities, assets, and resources were provided through God's benevolence and by the sacrificial generosity of people sharing our religious beliefs. We believe that God desires that our church facilities, assets, resources, and all that our church may in the future receive in any manner, or in any other manner may control, are to be used consistent with our religious beliefs for the fellowship of the Body of Christ and to bring God glory. Therefore, all such items shall only be used for purposes consistent with, and to promote our religious beliefs and doctrines.

Churches are typically driven by many forces - traditions, personalities, finances, buildings, programs, events and seekers. Our desire is to appropriately recognize these forces and strategically plan for them, but what compels us as God's people is our understanding of the biblical purposes for the Church, the specific calling He has given our church, and the doctrines that bind us together as a voluntary community of religious believers who have assembled to exercise our religious beliefs and rights as individuals and corporately through this church. Our intent and our goal is to communicate that which we believe, that which unites us and draws us together in this assembly of religious believers.

We recognize that the doctrines and principles set out in this Constitution do not exhaust the extent of our religious beliefs and doctrines. We believe that the Bible itself is the only inspired and infallible Word of God and as such it speaks with the final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, and it serves as the sole and final source of all, including everything we believe. (Matthew 28:18; Matthew 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25) Our Board of Elders is our church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application for purposes of our church's religious beliefs, doctrine, practice, policy, operations, and discipline.

Believing that the Bible itself is the only inspired and infallible Word of God and as such it speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind, serving as the sole and final source of all, if there is any conflict between secular teaching, laws, regulations, or principles, and our religious beliefs and doctrine, our church shall follow and comply with our religious beliefs as set forth in the Bible and determined by our Board of Elders.

We believe that to carry on the religious mission of the church, to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons who associate with the church as members should abide by and agree to the following statements and conduct themselves in accordance with them.

Our Calling:

We are a church family called in love to share in and be shaped by Christ our hope

As Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God lives in an eternal fellowship of love. In short, God is love. In overflowing love God the Father *calls us* in the Son and by his Spirit to be adopted children in his *family*. Together, as adopted brothers and sisters, we are called to *share in* Jesus' loving relationship with the Father and to *share in* all of the benefits of this eternal relationship. As we abide in this loving relationship we are *shaped* in the image of Jesus Christ to be faithful and obedient children, bearing witness to God's love in the world.

Romans 1:1-7, Ephesians 1:3-5, Romans 8:28-29, Galatians 4:4-7, Ephesians 2:17-22, John 14:20-21

Article I: Biblical Foundation and Commitments

Section 1: Biblical Foundation

Mission Hills Church ("church") is comprised of individuals ("family") who voluntarily assemble to live life in pursuit of Christ and his kingdom, based on and as taught in the Bible. Toward this goal, Bible references are provided in our Constitution to help the reader understand the Bible-based ("Biblical") foundation supporting the truths we embrace and follow at Mission Hills Church. These Biblical truths are central to the understanding of our nature and calling. They are the foundation and the building blocks of all of our church ministries and the guiding principles for all of our church policies and decisions. If any teaching conflicts with Biblical truth and principle, this church shall follow the Biblical truth, as determined by its Board of Elders.

We believe that Mission Hills Church exists to bring honor to God by fulfilling God's calling for us as His church. (1 Peter 2:9-10; Ephesians 3:20-21). We seek to fulfill God's desire for the church by living our lives and participating in church according to the four key commitments for God's people:

Section 2: Our Commitments

These commitments are relational intentions which distinguish the family of God as we enter in and respond to our calling.

Prayerfulness

Because God in Christ shares his life of love with us, we are committed to continuously remain in his love. Prayer is the primary means by which we abide in God's love. Prayer is being with God who is always with us. This means that prayer is not merely an occasional act, but rather a way of life. As a church family we are committed to embracing this prayerful way of life together. Prayer is our first commitment as a church family, because it is the primary means by which we embrace our calling and it is the posture in which we seek to move forward in all of our commitments.

Matthew 6:5-13, John 15:5, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Ephesians 6:18

Wisdom

Because God in Christ shares his life of love with us, we are committed to cherish and discern the truth in love. To know and embrace truth we must seek the wisdom of God. True wisdom is found in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the truth. To share in Christ is to share in his wisdom. As we abide in loving relationship with him we are shaped into the kind of family that cherishes and discerns the truth in love. As such we are committed to live life well, relating to God, our neighbor and all of creation in truth and love. Our authoritative Word of Jesus for living well in the world is Holy Scripture.

Proverbs 2, Proverbs 8, John 16:13-14, Colossians 2:1-3, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, James 3:13-18

Reconciliation

Because God in Christ shares his life of love with us, we are committed to pursue relationships defined by repentance and forgiveness for the sake of love. God has reconciled us to right relationship with himself in and through Jesus. We are no longer strangers and aliens, but adopted children in the household of God. As adopted children we are joined to a family of brothers and sisters in Christ. It is not our gender, our age, our class or our ethnicity that most fundamentally defines who we are, but rather our identity in Christ, which is shared together. As a result, we are committed to unity in Christ. This unity is none the less marked by genuine diversity. Thus, a

pursuit of unity demands a commitment to reconciliation. As a church family we are committed to move toward one another in love by embracing the relational virtues of forgiveness and repentance.

Matthew 6:12, Romans 5:10-11, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, Ephesians 2:11-22, Galatians 3:26-29

Compassion

Because God in Christ shares his life of love with us, we are committed to move toward the poor, the marginalized, and the broken in love. As a church family we are committed to love because God first loved us. Compassion is love in action. It is the concrete expression of children who are abiding in God's love prayerfully and seeking to walk in his way of wisdom. God has called us to move towards others in love, and in particular to move towards the poor, marginalized and broken. This move toward the poor, marginalized and broken entails sacrificial solidarity as it is a call to suffer with them. As a church family we are committed to compassion both locally and globally.

Matthew 25:35, Luke 4:18, Luke 14:12-24, Philippians 2:5-8, James 1:27, James 2:1-7, 1 John 4:7-21

Article II: Additional Statements of Religious Beliefs and Doctrine

Section 1: Doctrinal Commitments and Introduction to Our Statement of Faith

We at Mission Hills Church are committed to the "faith that was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3)." This faith has been historically expressed by Christian churches throughout the centuries in concise documents called "creeds." These creeds are summaries of the faith that have been delivered to us through the church's reflection and deliberation on the Holy Scriptures which occurred during what are called the "Seven Ecumenical Councils" and express what is essential for us to believe as Christians. The foremost of these creeds are the Apostle's Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and the Chalcedonian Creed; each of which expressed the foundational beliefs of the Christian church and without which one could not reasonably consider themselves a Christian. In addition to this Mission Hills Church participates in the Protestant, Reformed, and Evangelical tradition of the Christian church which is most helpfully summarized through five commitments historically expressed in what are called the "Five Solas." These five commitments are as follows; Sola Fide (By Faith Alone), Sola Gratia (Through Grace Alone), Solus Christus (In Christ Alone), Sola Scriptura (According to Scripture Alone), Sola Dei Gloria (To the Glory of God Alone).

Section 2: Statement of Faith

In addition to these doctrinal commitments this expanded statement of faith gives further expression to our biblical beliefs at Mission Hills Church.

A. The Bible

We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God. God so superintended the human authors that while retaining their own individual personalities and writing styles they chose the very words that God intended. Their original writings were free from error. The Bible is the believer's only infallible rule for faith and practice (Psalms 19:7-9; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

B. The Godhead

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These three are identical in essence and equal in power and glory; they possess the same nature, attributes, and perfections, and are worthy of the same worship, confidence, and obedience (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

C. The Person and Work of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man without ceasing to be God, being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He came to reveal God to mankind and to redeem our sinful race by giving Himself as a sinless substitutionary sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, satisfying God's righteous judgments against sin. He then arose bodily from the dead and ascended to the Father's right hand where He intercedes on the believer's behalf. He will personally and bodily return in glory to judge the living and the dead and to consummate his everlasting kingdom. All the Scriptures, from first to last, testify of Him (Luke 1:34-35; 24:27; John

1:1-2, 14, 18; Romans 3:24-26; 8:34; Matthew 25:31-45, Acts 1:11, Titus 2:13, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, 2 Thessalonians 1:5-8).

D. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Divine Person who convicts the world of sin, gives eternal life to those who place their trust in Christ, unites all believers to Christ in one body by His baptizing ministry, indwells them permanently, seals them unto the day of redemption, fills (controls) those who are yielding to Him, and empowers them for service. He seeks to direct their attention not to themselves nor to their experience, but to Christ (John 3:5-8; 14:16-17; 16:7-11; 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:30; 5:18).

E. The Condition of Humanity

We believe that Adam was originally created in the image and after the likeness of God, free from sin. He subsequently fell into sin by a voluntary act of personal disobedience to the revealed will of God, lost his spiritual life, and became dead in sins and corrupt in nature. These effects of sin have been transmitted to the entire human race, Jesus Christ excepted, and thus every person born into the world is alienated from the life of God and incapable of remedying his lost and depraved condition apart from divine grace (Genesis 1:26; 3:1-24; 6:5; Psalms 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-18; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3).

F. The Means of Salvation

We believe that salvation from the guilt and condemnation of sin is possible only as the gift of God's grace. It cannot be gained by good resolutions, sincere efforts, nor submission to the rules, regulations, or ordinances of any church, but is freely bestowed on all who put their faith in Christ and trust in the work which Christ accomplished on the cross of Calvary. All who so trust the Savior pass from death unto life, are forgiven of their sins, accepted by the Father, and born into His family by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God (John 5:24; Ephesians 1:6-7; 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23).

G. The Believer's Assurance and Responsibility

We believe that all who have been born again by God's transforming grace are secure in Christ forever. It is their privilege to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation, not on the basis of their own worthiness, but on the basis of God's faithfulness and the testimony of His Word. However, this assurance must not become an occasion for sin. The reality of their faith in Christ is demonstrated by subjecting their fleshly natures to the power of the Holy Spirit and by doing the good works for which He saved them, especially by demonstrating a Christ-like love for one another (Matthew 7:20; John 10:27-29; 13:34-35; Romans 6:13; 8:28-39; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 2:10; 1 John 3:14,23; 5:13).

H. The Church

We believe that all who have placed their faith in Christ are united by the Holy Spirit into one spiritual body, the Church, of which Christ is the Head. This body was formed on the day of Pentecost and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own. The members of this one spiritual body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies for instruction, worship, prayer, fellowship, service, and the administration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are likewise to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:42-47; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:3).

I. The Gifts of the Spirit

We believe that enabling gifts for service are bestowed according to God's own will upon all believers by the Spirit of God to be exercised for the edification of the Church and for the glory of the Lord. These gifts are sovereignly bestowed by God in order to fulfill specific purposes in His program. We believe that, as a sign to unbelievers, the Biblical gift of speaking in tongues was speaking in existing languages which the speaker had never learned and that it was never the common nor necessary sign of the baptism or filling of the Spirit. We further believe that while God may choose to heal supernaturally, the healing of the temporal body is not assured by Christ's atoning work on the cross; the complete deliverance of the body from sickness awaits the consummation of our salvation in the

resurrection (Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 27-31; 13:8-10; 14:21-22; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Ephesians 4:7-13; Hebrews 2:3-4; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 2 Timothy 4:20).

J. The Resurrection of the Body and the Eternal State

We believe that at death the souls of believers pass immediately into the presence of Jesus Christ. At death the souls of unbelievers pass immediately into torment. When Christ returns the souls of believers and unbelievers will be reunited with their bodies in resurrection. Believers in Christ will be resurrected unto eternal conscious joy and life with God. Unbelievers will be resurrected unto eternal conscious torment under the judgment of God (2 Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 1:23, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 2 Thessalonians 1:5-12, John 5:28-29, Revelation 21:1-3).

K. Sanctity of Life / Education and Training

We believe that life begins at conception. (Psalm 139:13-16) We believe that all human life is sacred and is created by God in His image (Genesis 1:27), and is therefore of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other state or condition from conception through natural death.

We believe that every person is created by God for a purpose (Jeremiah 1:4-5; Galatians 1:15), and is a gift from God (Psalm 127:3).

We believe that God gives the primary responsibility of training children to the child's parent(s). We believe the parent(s) is charged with giving discipline and instruction of God according to biblical principles (Ephesians 6:4). We believe that as a Church we are to be deeply committed to providing biblical resources, teaching, training, and encouragement to assist the parent, and every person, to grow to be like Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

L. Gender / Gender Identification

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. (Genesis 1:27; Deuteronomy 22:5) We believe these two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Genesis 1:26-27) We believe that being man or being woman is a reality which is good and is willed by God, and comes to each from God, reflecting God's wisdom and design. (Psalm 139:13-16; Genesis 1:27) We believe that an individual's gender as a man or a woman, with some extremely rare exceptions, is based solely on that person's biological sex as determined at conception and as revealed at birth by that person's anatomy. (Psalm 139:13-16; Genesis 1:27) We believe that the rejection of, or any conduct with the intent to adopt a different gender or change one's gender or biological/anatomical sex, is a rejection of the image of God and His design within that person and is sinful and offensive to God (Genesis 1:27; Deuteronomy 22:5).

All gender related references in this Constitution, including but not limited to male, man, female, or woman, is specifically limited to Gender as defined in this Section.

M. Marriage

We believe that God designed and limited the expression of sexual intimacy to be the exclusive boundaries of a one man and one woman marriage covenant (Genesis 2:24-25; 1 Corinthians 7:3-5). We believe that God designed marriage to reflect the beauty and permanence of Christ's loving relationship with his bride, the Church (Ephesians 5:22-23; Revelation 19:7). We believe God established marriage to be a sacred, lifelong, exclusive relationship between one man and one woman (Matthew 19:4-6). We believe the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in the Bible (Genesis 2:18-25). Because God has defined and ordained marriage as the covenant relationship between one man and one woman, we only recognize, honor, permit, or conduct marriages between one man and one woman.

N. Sexual Purity

We believe that God commands that each individual abstain from any form of sexual impurity (Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 7:2; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9-10; 7:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4). We believe that any form of sexual immorality including but not limited to: adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and the use of pornography is sinful and offensive to God. (Genesis 2:24; 19:5, 13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 7:2; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9-10; 7:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).

O. Counseling

We believe and understand that every person, including Christians, struggle living biblically pure lives. We also believe and understand that every person also struggles with the negative effect his or her failure to live a biblically pure life has on his or her life and relationships. We believe that God understands this struggle and calls believers to seek assistance from other believers and especially from church leaders. We believe that our pastoral and lay church leaders have the responsibility of providing Bible-based counseling and oversight (Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:10; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Hebrews 13:17; James 5:16). We believe that the Bible is God's manual providing wisdom, guidance, and instruction for faith and for life for every person (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Therefore, we are deeply committed to encouraging and enabling individuals to live life according to God's will as revealed in the Bible. Our counseling and spiritual guidance shall be based on our religious beliefs and doctrines. We recognize that in some instances our religious beliefs and doctrines may differ from secular principles, in which instances our counseling and spiritual guidance shall follow and comply with our religious beliefs and doctrines.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness solely through Jesus Christ (John 3: 16-18; Acts 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). We believe that every person should be treated with compassion, love, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.)

Article III: Core Practices

These practices are the primary activities in the family of God by which we share in and are shaped by Christ our hope; through them the commitments to prayerfulness, compassion, wisdom, and reconciliation take root in our hearts and lives.

Worship

Worship is the means by which the family of God gathers in the presence of the Father, where he speaks to us in his Word and by his Spirit, and we glorify him through songs and prayers.

(Exodus 20:1-11; Psalm 29:2; 66:4; 86:9; Matthew 28:17; John 4:20-24; Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 4 & 5)

Baptism

Baptism is the means by which the members of God's family are identified with God's family; the water is a symbol of our being bathed by the Spirit, washed of all our sins, and given new identities in Christ.

(Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:26-29; Colossians 2:11-15; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 3:21)

Communion

Communion is the means by which the members of God's family are fed; the elements of bread and wine are symbols of being nourished with the life of Christ himself.

(Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; John 6:53-58; 1 Corinthians 10:16-22; 11:17-34)

Fellowship

Fellowship is the means by which we share in the life of God's family; in it we learn to love one another through humble service and habitual sacrifice.

(John 13:34-35; Romans 12:10; 13:8; Galatians 5:13; Hebrews 10:24; 1 Peter 4:8; 1 John 1:1-10; 3:11, 27; 4:7-12)

Witness

Witness is the means by which the family of God relates to the world outside us; through verbal proclamation and visible demonstration we invite others to share in our hope.

(Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 5:11-21; Acts 1:8; Galatians 6:10)

Article IV: Accountability and Dispute Resolution Within Our Church

Section 1: Scriptural Foundation / Authority / Purpose

We believe the holiness of God demands accountability, also called discipline, within the church. We further believe that accountability within the church is commanded by God in Scripture and is one of the most important responsibilities of the church. (Matthew 18:12-20; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Galatians 2:11-14; 6:1; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:20; 5:19-20; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; Titus 3:10; Hebrews 10:24-30; 12:5-17; 2 John 7-11; Revelation 3:19).

We believe that accountability within the church brings honor to God by:

- a) Leading to the repentance, spiritual growth and restoration of the offender to usefulness to God and fellowship with the church;
- b) Guarding and preserving the welfare, purity, and edification of the church; and,
- c) Guarding other believers from being tempted, misled, divided, or otherwise harmed.

(Romans 2:24; 1 Corinthians 5:6-7; 1 Corinthians 10:21; Ephesians 4:13; 1 Timothy 5:20; Hebrews 12:11; 1 Peter 1:15-16; 2:12).

Section 2: Oversight and Implementation

The accountability and restoration principles that this church follows are outlined in various parts of the Bible, see Matthew 5:23,24;18:15-18. The procedures for restoration and discipline are also to be based on biblical principles including those outlined in this Constitution. The Board of Elders is responsible for the oversight and implementation of all church discipline. By becoming a member of the church, the member agrees to submit and be subject to church accountability as established and implemented by the Board of Elders.

Section 3: Continuation of Discipline

We believe that the Elders of this church have the biblical authority and responsibility to restore to the Lord a member who is living in disobedience to Christ. Accountability procedures may be instituted at any time and may continue after a member seeks to withdraw from membership if the Board of Elders determines that such discipline may serve to guard and preserve the honor of God, protect the purity of the church, or restore the disobedient member to the Lord. While the church cannot force a withdrawing person to remain in this congregation, the church has the biblical right and the responsibility to encourage restoration, to bring the disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion, to make determinations as to the person's membership status, and to follow accountability principles and processes the Board deems biblically appropriate. (Matthew 18:12-14; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-14; 2 Timothy 1:15; 2:16-18; 4:9, 14-15; 3 John 9-10).

Section 4: Dispute Resolution Between Members

We believe that the Bible commands us to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes between those that hold our religious beliefs, in private or within the Christian church and to do so without litigation (see Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8).

Section 5: Expectations of Church Employees and Volunteers

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Mission Hills Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to our church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Mission Hills Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to abide by our Statements of Faith (in the Introduction and Articles I and II of this Constitution). (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22)

Article V: Joining Us (Membership)

Section 1: Classes and Requirements for Membership

Our two categories or classes of membership are “Active Membership” and “Associate Membership”. To qualify for either class of membership an individual must:

- A. Be at least sixteen years old;
- B. Attend our services regularly for a period of at least six consecutive months prior to being granted membership;
- C. Attend our new member’s class;
- D. Make a credible profession of faith in Christ with a member of or a duly appointed representative of our Board of Elders;
- E. Read and agree to abide by the Mission Hills Church Constitution and Bylaws; and,
- F. Sign the Mission Hills Church Covenant of Membership.

The Board of Elders may recommend individual exceptions to items B and C of these requirements, but in these exceptional cases will clearly explain the reason(s) for any such exception when it submits the recommendation of that individual to the church at the regular business meeting.

The individual becomes a member only after he or she:

1. Has fulfilled all of the Membership requirements outlined above; and,
2. Has been approved by the Membership at a regular business meeting, after having been recommended for membership by the Board of Elders.

Section 2: Membership Roll and Category Changes

Members of this church are enrolled in one of the following two categories:

- A. **Active Member Roll:** This roll consists of all Members who show consistent commitment to the Covenant of Membership and attend church on a regular basis; or,
- B. **Associate Member Roll:** This roll consists of those who take up temporary residence in another locality and enter into membership in another church as part of their training or in order to serve.

Changes between Active and Associate categories of Membership and reinstatement to one of these categories are actions that must be approved by the a two-thirds vote of the Elders, but do not require approval of the church Membership. Recommendations to receive new applicants and to terminate Active or Associate Members are to be made by the Board of Elders to the church Membership at a regular or special business meeting. The recommendation is not effective until it is confirmed by a two-thirds majority of Active Members voting at that meeting.

Section 3: Voting

- A. Eligibility: Only persons in ‘good standing’ (i.e. not under church discipline) on the Active Member Roll have the right to vote. Associate Members do not have the right to vote.
- B. Issues requiring vote of Active Members:
 1. Except as provided for in Section 4 below, approval of new Members and Member terminations requires a two-thirds majority vote of Active Members’ ballots cast at a regular or special meeting of the Membership for business. (Vote may be by voice or show of hands rather than secret ballot.)

2. This Constitution and Bylaws may only be amended, modified, or rescinded by a two-thirds majority vote of Active Members' ballots cast at a regular or special meeting of the Membership for business.
 3. Affirmations of all Elders require approval by a two-thirds majority vote of Active Members' ballots cast at a regular or special meeting of the Membership for business.
 4. Election of elected members of the Nominating Committee.
- C. Absentee Ballots: Absentee ballots are furnished to eligible voters upon written request to the church Secretary, provided that such request allows sufficient time for the ballot to be returned to church Secretary prior to counting the votes.

Section 4: Termination

An individual's membership in this church may be terminated:

- A. By request: A letter of termination upon request of a Member in good standing, i.e. not under our church discipline.
- B. By removal: Any Member out of harmony with the doctrine and practices of this church as set forth in this Constitution, or whose conduct has been determined by the Board of Elders to be harmful to the health and unity of our church family, may be recommended for removal from church membership by the Board. In this event, pending the vote by church Membership on the Board's recommendation for a Member's removal, the privileges and rights of an individual's membership may be temporarily suspended by the Board.
- C. For inactivity: Any Member who has been inactive for a period of twelve months and has been non-responsive to contact efforts, may be recommended by the Board to the Active Members to be dropped from the rolls.
- D. By death: The names of deceased Members are removed from our Membership rolls.

Section 5: Covenant of Membership

The principles in the Covenant of Membership are fundamental principles of the church. The Covenant of Membership is:

"My purpose in applying for Membership in Mission Hills Church ("church") is to respond to the call of God by participating in a local church and to exercise my religious rights by consenting and agreeing to comply with, and to fully cooperate and participate with the church in promoting its religious beliefs and doctrines including but not limited to its Mission, Vision and Purpose.

I have read and I consent and agree to comply and abide with the Mission Hills religious beliefs and doctrines as set forth in its Constitution and Bylaws and as may be determined in the future by its Board of Elders.

In joining with fellow Mission Hills Church Members in this commitment and in entering into this Covenant of Membership. I affirm that I am trusting solely in the merits of Jesus Christ for my salvation from sin.

In addition, I gladly and freely covenant with God and the church that by God's enabling grace, as a Member I will endeavor to conduct my life in accordance with the Scripture including but not limited to the biblical principles noted in the Constitution and in the following principles:

1. I will sincerely pray that Jesus Christ be exalted and that lives be blessed through the ministries of this church (2 Thessalonians 3:1).
2. I will endeavor to live in a way that consistently honors Jesus Christ, whom I acknowledge as the Lord of my whole life (Ephesians 4:1).
3. I will participate as regularly as possible in worship services, small groups and events of this congregation (Hebrews 10:25).

4. I will seek to discover my spiritual gifts, heart for ministry, abilities, and uniqueness of my personality and life experiences to be a blessing to God and other people (Genesis 12:1-3; Ephesians 4:11-13).
5. I will endeavor to participate faithfully in the financial support of this church and her ministries (2 Corinthians 9:6-11).
6. I will refrain from promoting any Scriptural interpretation that is out of harmony with those set forth by this church (1 Corinthians 1:10).
7. I will seek diligently to refrain from sexual impurity and all other forms of sin (Genesis 2:24; 19:5,13; 26:8-9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26 -29; 7:2; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9-10; 7:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).

If my adherence to the foundational biblical principles of this church is called into question, I agree to submit to the authority and judgment of the Board of Elders (1 Corinthians 6:1-4; Hebrews 13:17) including their accountability and restoration principles such as those found in Matthew 18:15-18. If I remain unwilling to settle any differences under the authority of the Board of Elders, then I agree that in addition to other accountability steps the Board of Elders may administer, the church should drop my name from its membership roll.

I enter into this Covenant joyfully, knowingly, freely, and not subject to any duress.”

Article VI: Church Organization and Administration

Section 1: Church Organization

- A. The church organization is outlined in Attachment No. 1. Changes in elements of this organization are considered amendments to this Constitution and are made only with the approval of the church Membership.
- B. Current organization charts showing sub-elements of the church organization are maintained by the church staff.
- C. Only such men and women are recommended for elective or appointed office as can and will conscientiously affirm the Constitution including the Statement of Faith without reservation.

Section 2: Elders

- A. In accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and the Articles of Incorporation, and subject to the provisions and limitations of the California Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law and any other applicable laws, the temporal activities, business, and affairs of the church are governed, and all corporate powers are exercised by or under the direction of the Board of Elders. For the purpose of this Constitution, the directors of this church are referred to as “Elders” and the Board of Directors is referred to as the “Board of Elders” or the “Board.”
- B. Lay Elders
 1. Lay Elders are volunteer church Members, i.e. not paid by the church.
 2. Lay Elders are men recommended by the sitting Board of Elders and affirmed for three-year terms by a two-thirds majority vote of Active Members’ ballots cast at a regular or special meeting of the Membership for business -- normally at the annual congregational business meeting. The terms of office expire so that approximately one third of the offices become vacant each year.
 3. A Lay Elder who has completed two consecutive full terms is not eligible to serve in office for at least one year.
 4. The number of Lay Elders must always be at least one more than the total number of Pastoral and Staff

Elders. If an additional appointment is required to maintain this balance, the sitting Board of Elders will make that appointment, to take effect as soon as affirmed by the church Membership at a special or regular meeting for business.

C. Pastoral and Staff Elders

1. Pastoral Elders are those elders who, in addition to their role as elders also hold a teaching office in the life of Mission Hills Church which entails primary pulpit responsibility, development of doctrinal and theological positions for the church, and general oversight of staff and the ministries of the church.
3. The Board of Elders selects one of the Pastoral Elders to serve as the President of the church for a term of three years, during which time the President is assigned and held primarily accountable for the implementation of the policies as established by the Board of Elders.
5. The Elder Board may recommend to the membership of Mission Hills Church other staff or paid members of the church (such as other pastors, directors, etc.) to hold the office of elder. These staff or paid members of the board of elders would be considered "Staff Elders" and would be subject to two consecutive three year terms with a seventh year of ineligibility for office.

D. Qualifications: All Elders are men who are members of Mission Hills Church and who meet the biblical qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-3.

E. Purposes and duties: The purposes and duties of the Board of Elders include the following Scriptural responsibilities:

1. To guard the truth of the Scriptures and apply them to life situations (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9).
2. To care for the spiritual welfare of the Members of the church (Hebrews 13:17).
3. To provide leadership and exercise authority over the church. (1 Timothy 3:4-5; 5:17).
4. To shepherd the Members of the church. To pray for the sick and to minister the Word of God (Acts 20:28; James 5:14-15).
5. To serve willingly (1 Peter 5:2).
6. To oversee discipline and restoration of church Members and those who voluntarily agree to submit to the authority and judgment of the Board of Elders and to the discipline, restoration, and conflict resolution policies of this church (Titus 1:13).

F. Termination of Office

1. All Elders are subject to a vote of confidence by the church Membership at any time by written request to the Board of Elders of ten percent of the total active church Membership or by recommendation of two-thirds of the Lay Elders. Involuntary termination requires a two-thirds majority vote of Active Members' ballots cast at a meeting called for that purpose. Prior to such a vote, the Elder must be advised of the nature and substance of any relevant charges and afforded opportunity to defend against such charges before the church Membership.

G. Board of Elders Organization and Meetings

1. At the first Board meeting after the annual congregational business meeting, the Elders elect from among the Lay Elders a chairman, a vice-chairman, a secretary, and an alternate secretary.
2. In the absence of the chairman and vice-chairman, the President moderates meetings of the Board of Elders.

3. Regular meetings of the Board of Elders are held at least monthly. Special meetings may be called at the request of a Pastoral Elder, the Chairman of the Board, or a majority of the Lay Elders.
4. A quorum for the conduct of normal business consists of at least a majority of the Lay Elders, together with at least one Pastoral Elders.
5. Where a personal conflict of interest is identified by the Board of Elders on behalf of a particular elder, the board may vote to exclude said elder from discussion and voting on such matters.
6. The Secretary of the Board of Elders maintains Board policies and procedures that describe Board operating processes, procedures, and organization as needed within the bounds of this Constitution.

Section 3: Officers

- A. The Officers of the church include a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, all of whom must be church Members. The church may also have, at the Board of Elders' discretion, one or more additional Vice Presidents and one or more Assistant Secretaries. Except for the President, any other Officer may or may not be employed by the church.
- B. The President of the church is a Pastoral Elder appointed by the Board of Elders for a three-year term. The other Officers of the church are appointed by the Board of Elders and each serves at the pleasure of the Board, subject to the rights, if any, of the Officer under any agreement of employment.
- C. The Pastoral Elders may only be terminated as provided in Section 2 of this Article. Any other Officer's term may only be terminated by the Board.
- D. Resignation of Officers: Any Officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the church. The resignation takes effect as of the date the notice is received or at any later time specified in the notice and, unless otherwise specified in the notice, the resignation need not be accepted to be effective. Any resignation is without prejudice to the rights, if any, of the church under any agreement to which the Officer is a party.
- E. Vacancies in Offices: A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or any other cause is filled by appointment by the Board of Elders. Such appointment continues in force for the balance of the vacated term or until the next election as determined by the Board.
- F. President: The President is, subject to the control of the Board, the general manager of the church and he supervises, directs, and controls the business and the Officers of the church. The President has such other powers and duties as are prescribed by this Constitution or by the Board of Elders.
- G. Vice President: The Vice President is appointed by the Board of Elders. In the absence or disability of the President, the Vice President performs all duties of the President. When so acting, the Vice President has all powers of and is subject to all restrictions on the President.
- H. Secretary: The Secretary is appointed by the Board of Elders at least thirty days prior to the annual meeting of the church Membership. The term of office is for a period of one year beginning the first day of the month following the meeting. The Secretary keeps a record of all business transacted at meetings of the church Membership and also secures, after each annual meeting, the signature of each church Elder and Officer on a document reaffirming their affirmation of the Constitution of the church. The Secretary ensures that an accurate record of the church Membership rolls is maintained, showing all Members' names, addresses, and categories of Membership, and also performs any other duties normally required of such an Officer.
- I. Treasurer: The Treasurer is appointed by the Board of Elders at least thirty days prior to the annual meeting of the church Membership. The term of office is for a period of one year beginning the first day of the month following the meeting. The duties of the Treasurer are:
 1. To oversee the collection, safeguarding, and disbursement of the funds of the church under the direction of the Board of Elders.

2. To ensure the maintenance of adequate financial records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, make quarterly and annual reports to the church, and provide such other reports as prescribed by the Board of Elders.
3. To submit the church's financial records for independent review in such manner and at such times as prescribed by the Board of Elders.
4. To perform such other duties as prescribed by the Board of Elders.

Section 4: Nominating Committee

- A. Purpose: The Nominating Committee receives and considers all suggestions for Lay Elders and Nominating Committee received from church Members in good standing. The Committee examines the qualifications and willingness of each suggested person and submits its recommendations to the Board of Elders which generates the final list of nominees for vote of affirmation by the church Membership.
- B. Membership: The Nominating Committee consists of five Members of the church who are in good standing. The Board of Elders appoints two members to this Committee from its own Lay members. At the annual church business meeting the church Membership elects the remaining three, none of whom are Elders or other church Officers.
- C. Meetings: The Committee elects a chairman at its first meeting, and meets thereafter at the call of the Chairman as often as required to fulfill its duties. A quorum consists of a minimum of four members.

Article VII: Church Records

Section 1: Maintenance of Records

- A. General Records: An accurate, complete, and permanent record is kept of the decisions of all regular and special business meetings of the church Membership, the Board of Elders, the Nominating Committee, and all the other councils, committees, and subcommittees reporting to the Board of Elders. The church Secretary is responsible for the official church records, and the respective secretaries are responsible for the records of other church activities.
- B. Confidential Records: Discussions by the Board of Elders of items of a personal nature which do not result in a recommendation to the church Membership are not entered in the minutes of the Board of Elders' meetings. Such matters may be included as attachments to the minutes and may include but not be limited to:
 1. Pastoral and staff counseling of individuals.
 2. Discussion of proposed disciplinary actions that do not result in recommendation to the Membership.
 3. Other items of a personal nature, revelation of which would result in unnecessary embarrassment to the parties involved.

Section 2: Documentation of Policies and Procedures

Documentation of church policies, positions, organization, and practices is maintained current by the church staff. Revisions to church oversight policies and positions must be approved by the Board of Elders. The purposes of these documents are:

- A. To define church policies and positions not included in this Constitution.
- B. To define church organization, lines of authority, and responsibility.

- C. To outline the purposes, composition, responsibilities, and duties of appointed committees and Officers.
- D. To detail the purposes and functions of the various ministries.
- E. To outline the duties of the paid staff of the church.
- F. To establish specific procedures for the conduct of church ministries and business.
- G. To regulate other matters, as necessary, to insure effectiveness of ministries and efficiency of operations.

Section 3: Inspection of Records

- A. The following records are open to inspection by the Members at all reasonable times during office hours:
 - 1. A current copy of this Constitution.
 - 2. Minutes of regular and special meetings of the church Membership maintained by the church Secretary.
 - 3. Minutes of the regular and special meetings of the Board of Elders.
 - 5. Documentation of the church's policies, positions, operations and practices.
- B. Confidential records as described in Section 1.B of this Article are not open to inspection by the church Members other than the members of the Board of Elders.
- C. Individual giving records are only available to the Treasurer and accounting staff specifically authorized by the Treasurer. All other financial records are made available to all Elders and Officers.
- D. Audited/reviewed annual financial statements are made available to Members upon request.

Article VIII: Meetings of the Membership for Business

Section 1: Regular

The annual meeting of the church Membership to hear reports, affirm Elders and elect Nominating Committee members, and conduct such other business as would naturally come before it is held in June of each year. Quarterly business meetings are held in September, December, and March. The date of a business meeting is announced from the pulpit and a copy of the agenda prepared by the Board of Elders is posted in a prominent location, for two consecutive weekends immediately preceding the day of the meeting. Business to be conducted is confined to matters contained in the agenda.

Section 2: Special

The church Membership may be called together for the transaction of any legitimate business (excepting amendments to this Constitution) by a majority of the Lay Elders. Notice of such meeting is given on the two consecutive weekends immediately preceding the day appointed, and the nature of the business to be conducted is stated.

Section 3: Procedures

The President or another Pastoral Elder moderates all meetings of the church Membership for business. In their absence, or in matters of conflict of interest, the Chairman of the Board of Elders moderates. The Members present at any annual, quarterly, or special business meeting constitute a quorum for the conduct of business. Except as otherwise stipulated herein, a two-thirds majority vote of Active Members' ballots cast at any regular or special meeting is required to approve action on matters of business.

Article IX: Affirmation of Lay and Staff Elders and Election of Nominating Committee

Section 1: Procedures

The church Members affirm all Lay and Staff Elders and elective members of the Nominating Committee by secret ballot. Those elder nominees recommended to the membership for affirmation must receive the required two-thirds affirmative vote to be considered affirmed in their office. Amongst the recommendations for the Nominating Committee Those receiving the highest number of votes are elected. In the event that there is only one nominee for a vacancy, a two-thirds affirmative vote of Active Members' ballots cast is required to elect. All Elders and members of the Nominating Committee must be on the Active Member Roll of the church.

Section 2: Starting Date of Newly Elected Persons

The terms of newly affirmed Elders and elected members of the Nominating Committee begin immediately upon affirmation/election.

Article X: Dissolution

Section 1: Qualifications

No part of the net earnings of the church shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, Member, director, Officer of the church, or any private individual; and no donor, director, Member, Officer of the church, or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the church assets.

Section 2: Distribution of Assets

Upon dissolution, any assets of Mission Hills church will be transferred to Emmanuel Faith Community church (EFCC). If the EFCC Board of Elders determines that EFCC is unwilling or unable to accept this responsibility, then these assets must be distributed to one or more organizations to be named by the Mission Hills church Board of Elders. These organizations must be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as being organized exclusively for religious purposes and must have doctrinal beliefs and purposes similar to those of this church.

Article XI: License for Ministerial Duties and Ordination to The Gospel Ministry

Section 1: License for Ministerial Duties

The Board of Elders may license individuals to perform ministerial duties for specified periods of time. Applicants for such licensing must meet requirements as specified in the church's policies and procedures.

Section 2: Ordination to the Gospel Ministry

The Board of Elders seeks out and encourages individuals who have given evidence of God's call to be ordained to the Gospel ministry. The church may publicly ordain such candidates and may present them with an ordination certificate after they have met requirements specified in the church's policies and procedures.

Article XII: Amendments

Section 1: Procedures

This Constitution and Bylaws may only be amended, modified, or rescinded by a two-thirds majority vote of Active Members' ballots cast at any regular or special meeting of the Membership for business. Such amendments must be submitted to the church Membership by the Board of Elders by posting three weeks prior to the meeting, and public and written announcements must be made for each of at least three weekends preceding the day of the meeting.

Section 2: Proposed Amendments

A Constitution Committee appointed by the Board of Elders prepares proposed amendments to the Constitution. The Board considers the proposed amendments, and, if approved, recommends them to the church Membership.

Article XIII: Miscellaneous

Section 1: Execution of Documents

The Board of Elders, serving as Trustees, may authorize any Officer or Officers, agent or agents to enter into any contract or execute any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the church, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances; and, unless so authorized by a two-thirds majority of the Elders, no Officer, agent, or other person has any power or authority to bind the church by any contract or engagement or to pledge its credit or to render it liable for any purpose or to any amount.

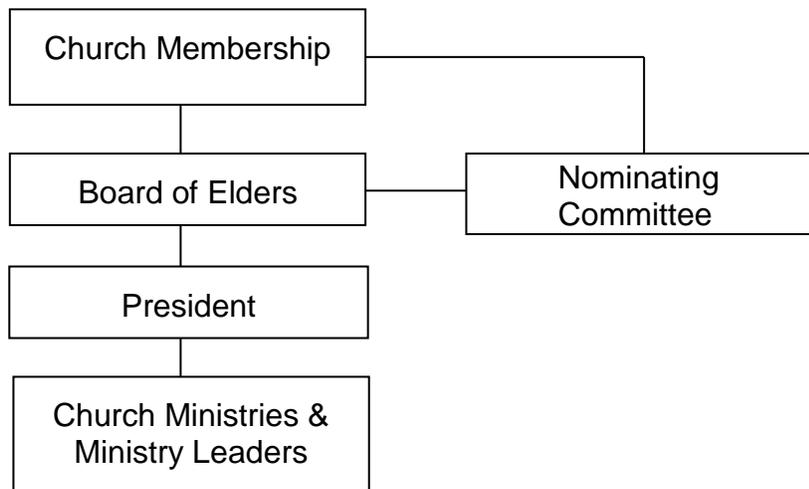
Section 2: Construction and Definitions

Unless the context otherwise requires, the general provisions, rules of construction, and definitions contained in the California General Nonprofit Corporation Law govern the construction of this Constitution.

Section 3: Rules of Order

The rules contained in the current version of Robert's Rules of Order govern all business meetings of the church Membership and the Board of Elders, except in instances of conflict between these Rules of Order and the church Constitution or provisions of law.

Attachment I: Organizational Chart for Mission Hills Church



Changes in elements of this organization constitute amendments to the Constitution and are made only with the approval of the church Membership.