# Senior Pastor, Full-Time OPPORTUNITY PROFILE

Wildwood Baptist Church Bethesda, MD, U.S.A. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Overview**

Wildwood Baptist Church (Wildwood), formerly known as Mount Zion Baptist Church, has been a cornerstone of the Bethesda, MD community since its founding in 1862. Its rich history is matched by its vibrant present being a close-knit, international, and multi-generational congregation passionate about God's word. The church is a friendly and caring community that recognizes the importance of expository teaching and sharing of fellowship. It is rooted in a solid foundation of biblical-truth and love for one another. For many, Wildwood feels like a family and their home away from home. In recent years, Wildwood underwent leadership transitions with the retirement of their long-tenured pastor and the subsequent departure of his successor. Though these transitions are marked with sadness and challenges, the church proves to be resilient through its people's strength and steadfast faith. As Wildwood looks to the future, it is filled with hope and anticipation in welcoming a new pastor who will shepherd and grow its people and equip the church in its mission to glorify God.

### The Church

- Worship: A Sunday service is held at 11 AM ET, offering expository preaching with a blend of hymns and praise songs all chosen for their focus on biblical truth. The Word of God is central and is therefore the focus of what is preached, sung, and prayed. The church also hosts Sunday School classes and meets on Wednesday nights for prayer and Bible study.
- **Beliefs:** Throughout its ministries, Wildwood emphasizes the 'five solas' of the Reformation and continues in the footsteps of its Baptist forebears by building its statement of beliefs around the 1689 London Baptist Confession.
- Governance: Wildwood has a congregational form of governance whereby leadership
  appointments, church business, and key decisions are voted upon by church members. The
  church is led by an Elder board that would include the Senior Pastor and supported by
  Deacons/Deaconesses.
- Population: Average weekly attendance is 30-50 attendees.
- **Affiliations:** As a Southern Baptist Church, Wildwood is part of the national convention, Maryland and Delaware convention, and Montgomery County Baptist Association.

### The Location

Wildwood is located at 10200 Old Georgetown Road in Bethesda, MD. It is well-situated in the Washington metropolitan area, where all corners of the country and countries worldwide are well represented. Less than four miles from Wildwood, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, and Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS) medical school bring many people from around the world, offering an international mission field right in one's backyard. The church is nestled in a safe and family-friendly suburb surrounded by excellent schools, shops, restaurants, parks, and trails. The neighborhood offers convenient access to urban areas and amenities, while just within a few hours of quiet getaways to mountains and beaches. With its unbeatable location, thriving community, and endless opportunities to connect, Wildwood is poised to grow and share the Gospel in a place where everything you need is close at hand.

# The Opportunity

The Senior Pastor will minister to and shepherd the spiritual well-being and growth of a diverse congregation, while working alongside lay members to manage the day-to-day business and administration of the church. He will play a vital role in building a healthy, kingdom-minded Biblical vision for Wildwood, prioritizing the study of God's Word and fellowship around it, fostering a servant mindset throughout the fellowship, and equipping the congregation to answer the call of the Great Commission. This role, in collaboration with other church leaders, has the responsibility to teach and equip church members to support the gospel work of the church.

Leadership development and discipleship are additional opportunities at Wildwood. After the retirement of its long-time pastor in October 2022, having faithfully served the church for 25 years, it was followed by the departure of the Associate Pastor in January 2024 who succeeded him. This left Wildwood devoid of leadership. Though these events were met with adversity and sorrow, the congregation's commitment to and love for Christ propelled the church to regroup to ensure the continuity of the church and its mission. At present, Wildwood has an interim pastor and three young, lay elders who focus on ministering God's Word to the congregation, two deacons who serve various physical needs of the church body, a church treasurer, and several committees to coordinate and support aspects of church business and ministry. This provides the incoming pastor an infrastructure in which to operate while giving him the flexibility to rethink and reshape its leadership and structure for the betterment of the church.

Wildwood has never been a large church, generally ranging between 50-150 attendees in its recent history. The church values and measures success based on spiritual growth over numeric growth. But the church equally recognizes its need to increase its impact in the community and its mission to reach people who do not yet know Jesus. The new pastor will have the opportunity to help Wildwood strategically approach this mission field and guide the church towards relevant growth.

The incoming pastor will inherit a congregation who is devoted to the Lord and eager to love and serve their pastor. It is a small, but steadfast church that has withstood the test of time as witnessed from its long history. The church is ripe for leadership who can forge the next chapter and continue the church's legacy atop the hill on which it stands.

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## The Candidate

Wildwood is looking for a faithful, mature, and experienced pastor who will humbly embrace his role as the spiritual leader of the congregation, uphold the Bible as the literal Word of God, and have a passion for and participate in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20. As a shepherd leads his flock, the pastor will guide the church in godly living and protect her from false teachings. The pastor should teach and instruct with the authority of Scripture, as a messenger of God's Word. Wildwood expects the pastor to be bold in upholding and defending the truths of Scripture in obedience to God and service to the church. The pastor is first and foremost accountable to God, to the plurality of elders, and finally, as the representative governing body, to the congregation.

Wildwood members will connect well with a relational and approachable pastor who builds personal relationships with the congregants. Deep relationships are key to developing spiritual maturity together and supporting one another as the body of Christ. Building and strengthening discipleship relationships is something the congregation strives to attain. The next pastor will encourage these strong personal connections, while fostering them with the congregation himself. As Jesus prayed in His High Priestly prayer, the church believes that its unity as Christians is of the utmost importance since it is a witness of God's love to His people and the world.

Since Wildwood's lay elders are new to church leadership, it will be important for the Senior Pastor to be willing to expend effort developing leaders and mentoring young and old Christians throughout the congregation. The right pastor for Wildwood will be one who will listen to its people, but has the wisdom to discern the words and opinions of people who come from different walks of life, culture, and spiritual maturity. Being able to wear multiple hats, recognize and leverage the talents of its congregation, and effectively work with others will serve a Senior Pastor well at Wildwood due to the church's size and since many lay members serve in multiple capacities.

As the new Senior Pastor engages in God's work at Wildwood, he may encounter some of the residuals from the events of the past couple of years. Patience, understanding, and discernment will be needed to ensure continued healing and growth while momentum is built. But as the Senior Pastor boldly teaches God's Word, builds relationships, and effectively implements a vision, he will experience the joy that comes from working with a devoted and loving congregation to move the church to a spiritually sound and promising future.

# Qualifications

- Elder qualified as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4.
- Aligns with and affirms Wildwood's <u>Statement of Faith</u>.
- Minimum of five to ten years of demonstrated pastoral leadership with direct oversight of paid staff and unpaid volunteers, regular experience in the pulpit, and administration of church business.
- A theological master's degree preferred.
- Proven experience in expository preaching and teaching with strong ability to explain biblical truth that is accessible, authentic, and relatable to people of all ages and stages of spiritual development.
- Effective in casting vision, developing reproducing disciples, and building a healthy church.
- Exhibits spiritual maturity and high emotional and organizational intelligence.
- Collaborative, proactive, and sympathetic leader who inspires people and elevates those around him.
- Decisive and discerning with exceptional communication skills.
- Ability to make difficult decisions with firmness and grace.
- Strong work ethic that exemplifies integrity, character, and accountability.
- Proficient in serving with a plurality of Elders within a congregational form of church government.

# **Next Steps**

Interested and qualified candidates should submit the following:

- 1. A resume or CV.
- 2. A cover letter (maximum of two pages) with responses to the following:
  - a. Describe your faith in Jesus Christ. Tell us how you came to personal faith as well as your journey into full time ministry.
  - b. Reason(s) for applying to Wildwood.
  - c. Notable giftedness and abilities for the role, and how have you used those strengths to positively shape or advance the church or organization you served.
  - d. Why you are a "fit" for Wildwood's particular context.
- 3. Three web links to videos of you preaching/teaching.

Please submit the above to the Pastoral Search Committee at WildwoodPastor@gmail.com.

Requisition compensation range and benefits:

\$50,000 to \$72,000 a year

Retirement and healthcare contributions, paid time off, and use of the church-owned parsonage

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