



CHURCH PROFILE
January 2026



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I. Introduction

Monte Sano Mountain located in Huntsville, Alabama has an elevation of about 1,600 ft. It is home to the Monte Sano Baptist Church. Monte Sano means "Mountain of Health" in Spanish, reflecting its historical use in the 19th century as a health retreat due to its fresh air and springs.

Monte Sano Baptist Church (referred to as MSBC thereafter) has a very rich beginning and history. The church began as a mission by the First Baptist Church in downtown Huntsville. It started as a home church in 1960. The congregation officially became Monte Sano Baptist Church in 1964 and dedicated its own new sanctuary at its current location in February 1966.

Statement of Faith

The church subscribes to the doctrinal statement of "The Baptist Faith and Message" as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000. But, the Bible itself, as the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality and the proper conduct of mankind, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For the purposes of MSBC's faith, doctrine, practice, policy and discipline, our pastors/elders are MSBC's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

Mission

Our mission is to be a church where the Bible is taught faithfully and accurately, disciples are made locally and globally, and our community is impacted physically and spiritually.

The purpose of the Church Profile is to provide a comprehensive yet concise overview of the congregation's identity, history, demographics, leadership structure, worship style, ministries, mission and outreach efforts and financials. The primary utility of the document is for the recruitment and hiring of a Senior Pastor to lead the congregation.

In addition, the Church Profile can potentially serve in the broader aspect of "strategic planning and growth" by identifying trends, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities that will provide directions for the Pastor and church leadership for visioning and decision-making. It can also serve as a tool for "self-reflection and accountability" as it encourages honest reflection on the past year's effectiveness as "kingdom builders."

The Church Profile was created by the seven-member Pastoral Search Committee in January 2026. Please address all inquiries to:

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II. Beginnings to Present – A Brief Account

[Note: Referenced from (1) "Harper, Maxwell Velorese A. (1981) "Histories of Three Churches in Madison County," *Huntsville Historical Review*: Vol. 11: No. 3, Article 5. Available at: <https://louis.uah.edu/huntsville-historical-review/vol11/iss3/5>; and (2) "An Account of the Beginning and First Fifty Years." Prepared by the Fiftieth Anniversary Committee of Monte Sano Baptist Church. 2014 (a pdf document is available upon request)].

Huntsville was on the threshold of the space age with the transfer of Werner von Braun rocket program team to the city in 1950. As Huntsville population grew exponentially, so did that of Monte Sano. The community was annexed into the city in 1955. Before the end of the decade, the community saw brisk development of both public and private infrastructure, including residential home building on the available 600 lots on Monte Sano at that time. The potential for a full-time Baptist ministry was apparent.

In February 1958, the First Baptist Church (located in downtown Huntsville) purchased three acres of property at 604 Monte Sano Blvd SE at a cost of \$9,000, with \$1,750 assistance from the Alabama Baptist State Board. This property was used in the summers of 1958 and 1959 for Vacation Bible Schools. In August 1959, Rev. E. Maxwell Harper was the speaker during the tent revival. With the help of the First Baptist W.M.U., the first Baptist members living on the mountain had previously organized a W.M.S. Circle. An interesting historical footnote concerning the property is that, in the late 1800's, the easternmost two-thirds was a part of the home-site property of William P. Newman, an officer of the company that built the original Hotel Monte Sano. Old deeds describe the property as "Newman's Orchard." It seems fitting that what was once Mr. Newman's orchard would be set aside as an orchard to bear fruit for the Master.

On October 27, 1960, Mr. Glenn Halcomb, chairman of the First Baptist Missions Committee; Rev. Maxwell Harper and interested families residing in the mountain met in the home of Mr. M. L. Smith. Several families had previous meetings with the pastor of First Baptist Church.

The first services of Monte Sano Baptist Chapel were held on December 4, 1960 in the adjoining homes of Mr. M. C. Cherry (3513 Wildwood Drive) and Mr. W. R. Allen, Jr. (3511 Wildwood Drive). Rev. Maxwell led the first worship service of the newly born home-based church. He was pastor from January 1, 1961 to January 1, 1964.

On March 12, 1961, the Chapel moved to rented houses at 307 Monte Sano Blvd and at Fearn Street. The congregation left the Fearn Street house and rented the old Methodist Church (on the southwest corner of Monte Sano Blvd and Nolen Avenue) after the Methodist congregation moved into their new facility in May 1962. The new Methodist Church is adjacent to the lot the First Baptist Church acquired in February 1958, the future site of the Chapel.

Throughout its life, the Chapel was financially self-supporting. In 1963, Architect Mr. Paul Tuggle was employed to plan a permanent building. By November 1963, the building fund was \$8,100. Rev. Keith Weekly became the pastor on January 19, 1964.

On May 31, 1964, the Chapel membership approved a resolution recommended by the constitution planning committee that requested First Baptist Church to consider calling for a church council and under their direction constitute Monte Sano Baptist Church. On June 10, 1964, First Baptist approved the request and, at the same time, voted to convey the title to the building site property to the newly constituted church. The conversion of the Chapel into a Church took place on June 28, 1964. The church entered its new sanctuary at 604 Monte Sano Blvd on the first Sunday of January 1966. It was dedicated on February 20, 1966.

Growth in attendance and ministry associated with new undertakings peaked at its highest within three years of the constitution of MSBC. But this would not continue for long. A leveling off started at the start of 1967 and progressing to a pronounced decline by 1968. Some causes for the decline are readily identifiable; others are less certain. Major drivers of decline include: (1) move of active church families due to job changes or reassignments; (2) death; (3) move of members to churches of different denominations; (4) move of college age children of several families and (5) members leaving due to dissatisfaction.

With the area's population growth slowing as the space program stabilized, there were fewer potential prospects to replace the many members lost. In the closing years of the sixties, active church membership had declined by a third, as had contributions. Stewardship faithfulness of the relatively static membership, coupled with sacrificial service on the part of the pastor and other paid and volunteer workers, enabled the church to meet its financial obligations while continuing basic ministries and starting some significant new ones.

With a track record of consistent contributions by a stable membership, the church devoted greater financial resources to ministry and much-needed church property upgrades and improvements in the

1980s to early 1990s. A renewed spirit and motivation for outreach engendered by having resident pastors and improved facilities brought meaningful, if modest, growth in all areas of church ministry in the 1990s.

The decade of the nineties did not end as well as it began in the areas of programs and numbers. Nevertheless, through the nurturing of a continuing basic program of Bible study, an active prayer ministry, and a Bible-centered pulpit ministry, the congregation persevered through some lean years and into the new millennium. The church saw modest growth in a span of three years in the mid-1990s.

As with any organization, good times do not always prevail, and disagreements sometimes arise. During the church year 1997, Monte Sano Baptist experienced such a conflict. A serious difference of opinion occurred regarding adherence to church bylaws. As a result, feelings were injured, certain members changed church membership, and others just stopped attending Monte Sano Baptist Church. As a result, the turn of the century found a decline of nearly one-half of the number of members actively involved in the work of the church. Nevertheless, through the faithful attendance and stewardship of those remaining, and the willingness of workers to do double duty, essential programs of worship, Bible study, and prayer were maintained, and several meaningful new ministries were initiated.

As the church entered in the 21st century, several major renovations, utilities upgrades and another building expansion were realized. A new Activity Building was dedicated on July 4, 2010. The new Activity Building serves the need for more ministry activities in addition to the many community outreaches. The Activity Building also serves as venues to various community organization meetings.

As in the case of many churches, MSBC saw a marked decrease in attendance during the covid pandemic years 2020-2023. However, attendance rebounded post-covid and there was an increase in both attendance and membership of young families that contributed to an increase in number of toddlers and young children in the congregation.

Figure 1 shows a photo collage of MSBC church building as it evolved through the decades.

Figure 2 shows the Activity Building dedicated in July 2010.

Figure 3 shows the remodeled sanctuary.

Fig 1. Church Building Profile from circa early 60s to 2014.



Fig. 2. Activity Building dedicated in July 2010



Fig. 3. Sanctuary 2025



III. Demographics

A. Community Demographics

Monte Sano Mountain in Huntsville, Alabama has an elevation of approximately 1,600 feet. It is home to a community of approximately 650 homes. According to 2020 census, there are approximately 3,800 residents (predominantly Caucasians) living in the mountain. As a popular recreation destination that offers a lot of outdoor activities, the mountain is home to Monte Sano State Park and Nature Preserve, Burritt on the Mountain, Monte Sano Event Lodge, among others. Huntsville's bustling downtown and medical district are only 10 minutes away. The tranquility and beauty of the mountaintop offers plenty to do without leaving home. A map of Monte Sano is shown in Fig. 4.

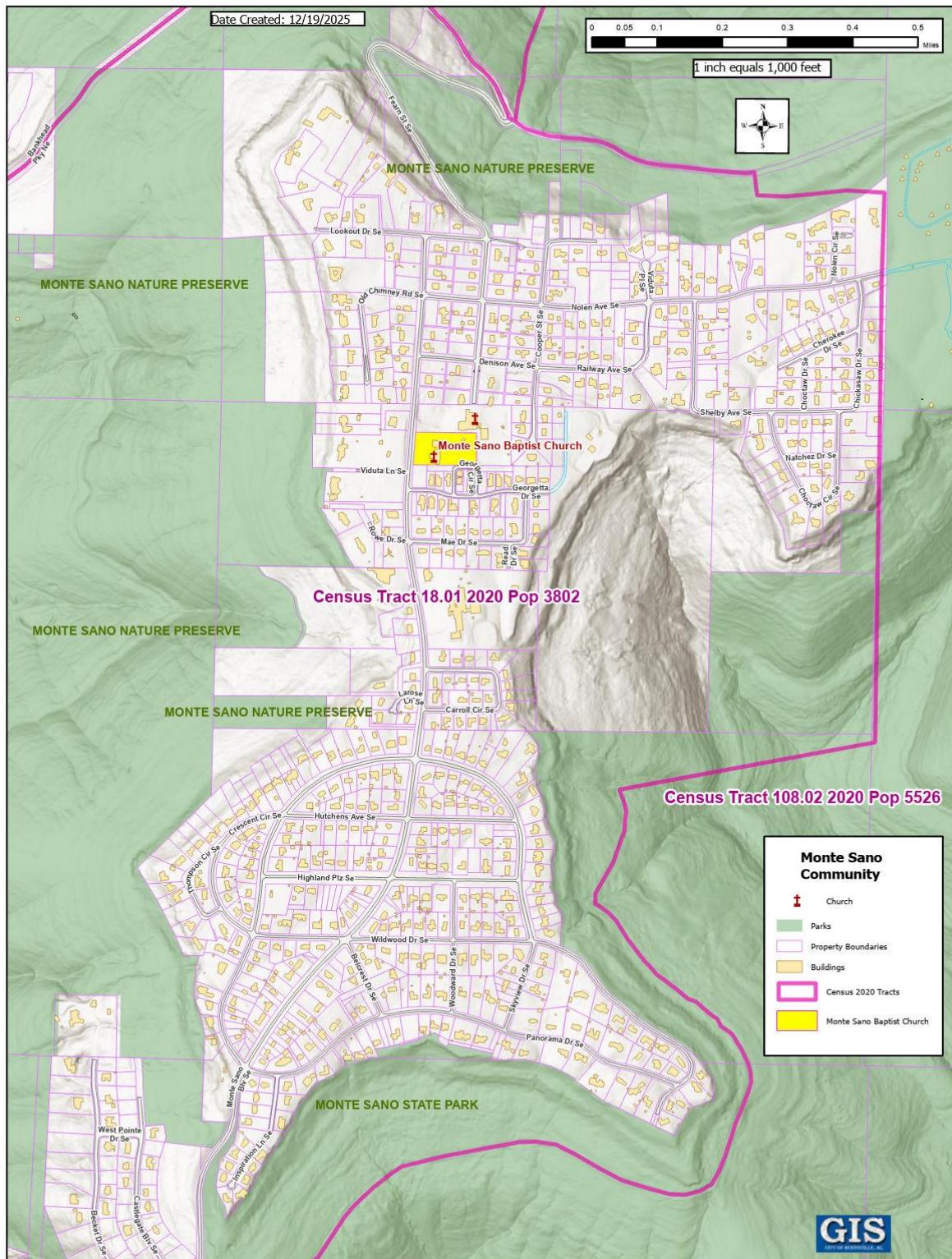
The Monte Sano community is served by the public schools of Monte Sano Elementary, Huntsville Junior High, and Huntsville High School. While the community is comprised of retirees, middle-aged adults, and young families, most residents work in Huntsville for the many government agencies and supporting contractors.

The Monte Sano Community also boasts of the presence of various civic and non-profit organizations that serve the community. The more prominent ones include Monte Sano Village, Monte Sano Club, Monte Sano State Park Association, Land Trust of North Alabama, Valley Leadership Academy, Von Braun Astronomical Society and Monte Sano Women's Club.

The City of Huntsville has been experiencing tremendous growth in the past decade. Huntsville is now the biggest city in the state, in terms of population and land area. The robust economic growth is driven by the strong technology sector (aerospace, defense, information technology) and recent major investments from the federal government, publicly traded corporations and private sector. The continued growth is leading high job creation, low unemployment and significant population influx. The metro area sees significant population growth (26% since 2010) with a highly educated workforce, fueling demand and expansion.

Figure 4 shows the Monte Sano Community Map and 2020 Census Tract.

Fig 4. Monte Sano Community Map



B. Church Demographics

While many of those attending MSBC are residents in the mountain, several are from nearby communities such as Big Cove, Owens Cross Roads, Gurley, Ryland, and Brownsboro, within a fifteen minute drive to the church campus. Currently, there is an approximate 50/50 split of congregants living in the mountain and in the nearby communities.

The number of adult including teens and children attending regularly at the end of 2025 was approximately 84.

Our congregation is multi-generational, with 34% of the congregants are children and youth (17 or younger); 24% are young adults (18-40) and 42% adults and senior (40 and older). We have about 13 families with children of varying age groups.

Church members come from a plethora of backgrounds, married, single, empty nesters, retired, widowed, divorced and with varying educational, employment and career histories..

The average number of worship service attendees for 2025 was 54; Sunday School (adult, youth and children) 32; Wednesday evening youth 8 and children (5th grade and under) 15; Wednesday evening adult Bible study 5.

Number of baptism for 2025 is 3.

The husband and wife of a family that has been attending church regularly formally joined the church in 2025.

IV. The Church

The members of Monte Sano Baptist Church (MSBC), desiring to honor the Lord Jesus Christ, established Biblical principles of government and adopted its Constitution and By-Laws as a declaration of their commitment to carry out the work of the Lord in a proper and orderly fashion and in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation signed and dated August 18, 1994 under the Alabama Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Article 2 (Affiliation), Article 3 (Government), Article 4 (Statement of Faith), Article 7 (Church Offices) and Article 8 (Church Staff) are included in this Church Profile. The rest of the Articles and details can be found in the “Constitution and By-Laws of Monte Sano Baptist Church Effective January 2019.” A copy is available upon request from the Pastoral Search Committee.

A. Affiliation

MSBC shall be a cooperating member of the Madison Baptist Association, the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions and the Southern Baptist Convention.

B. Government

The government of MSBC consists of both the pastors/elders who lead her and in the body of believers (members) who compose here. This is an autonomous Southern Baptist church operating under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and led by her pastors/elders. It is subject to the control of no ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the importance of mutual counsel and cooperation, which are common among evangelical churches. The governing documents of the church are her Constitution and By-Laws, which include her Statement of Faith and Church Membership Covenant.

C. Church Officers and Church Staff

The Biblical offices in the church are pastors/elders and deacons. In addition, our church recognizes the administrative positions, under this constitution, of clerk, treasurer and trustee. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

Currently, we have two elders, four deacons, three trustees and an administrative aid/clerk. Our support staff includes Director of Music Ministries, Director of Student Ministries, Director of Children's Ministries, Bookkeeper (outsourced), Building Custodian (outsourced), Safety Personnel (outsourced) and a Nursery Worker.

D. Church Meetings

1. Worship Gathering

Worship services are held on each Lord's Day and throughout the week as the pastor/elders determine. MSBC routinely observes the ordinances of the Lord's Supper and Baptism as part of its regular service.

Currently, there is one worship service held at 10:30 am in the Sanctuary. Families worship together on Family Sundays (once a quarter, on a Lord's Supper). On regular Sundays, children are dismissed from the sanctuary before the Pastor delivers the sermon to attend the Children's Church held in the Activity Building. There are two Children's Church groups – one for older kids (1st to 5th graders) and another for younger ones (2-year old to kindergarten). We also have a Toddlers' Room and a Nursery where babies and toddlers stay during worship service. A nursery worker and dedicated church volunteers attend to the needs of the babies and toddlers while the parents are in the sanctuary.

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A typical Order of Service at MSBC is shown below:

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude

Call to Worship

Songs of Praise

Scripture Reading

Pastoral Prayer

Silent Confession

The Lord's Prayer

Song of Assurance

Song of Foundation*

Sermon

Song of Response

Benediction

*Children dismissed to Children's Church following Song of Foundation

Our music is a blend of hymns and choruses. Music accompaniments are keyboard and/or guitar.

2. Members' Meetings

Business meetings for members only are held every quarter. The purpose of the fourth quarterly meeting is to adopt the new year's budget, compare periodic spending (quarterly and annual) against budget, review progress of planned projects and review the Lord's work in the year gone by.

3. Special Gathering

The church holds two Easter Services. The first one is a Sunrise Service held at Burritt on the Mountain at 6 am. The event, well attended by the Monte Sano Community, is followed by breakfast at the Activity Building. A second service is held at 10:30 am (normal schedule).

The church holds regularly Christmas Eve services and special Christmas musical presentation performed by the children and youth.

The congregation gathers for a pot luck meal at the Activity Center every first Sunday of the month for fellowship and observance of special occasions like Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Special events are also celebrated like Graduation Sunday, Anniversary celebrations and Celebration of Life and others.

E. Ministries

Sunday School Classes for all age groups

Worship and Music Ministries

Aside from the Director, there are vocalists, organists and alternate worship leaders. Sound and audio-visual technician and volunteers are also part of this important ministry.

Student Ministries

The Director conducts Bible study and discipleship programs for teens/youth.

Children's Ministries

The Director, Children's Sunday School Teacher and volunteers conduct Sunday School classes and other activities for the children. The director also spearhead VBS planning and implementation.

Missions

MSBC sent a young family to the mission field in South Asia in 2024.

Vacation Bible School

VBS is one of the ministries that is anticipated and well attended by church families and the Monte Sano Community families with young children. VBS runs for three consecutive nights in the month of June. There are different activities for each night for different age groups. In 2025, an average of 15 kids and 7 teens attended each night. Light meals are served each night. An average of 10 adults and church staff participate in VBS.

Prayer Ministry

An informal group of women in church pray for the petitions and prayer request of the congregation.

Men's Ministry

The group studies the Bible and fellowship once a month.

Hospitality Ministry

This women-led group takes the initiatives in providing meals to those who need them. The ministry also is a reliable help in planning and implementation of special gatherings and events.

The church participates faithfully in Annie Armstrong and Lottie Moon programs.

F. Community Involvement

The church hosts the Community Garden Club of Monte Sano. A good portion at the empty lot at the back of the church was converted to a fenced garden area.

Several civic clubs and community organizations are welcome to use the Activity Building for their regular member meetings and other activities.

V. Financials

The church finances are on a sound footing. The church has no debt. The church has never failed to pay its financial obligations to cooperative programs and missions. The generosity and stewardship of the congregation enables a debt-free operation for the upkeep of church building and property, future improvement, upgrades and expansion. The church maintains a reasonable “rainy day fund.” The annual budget grows at an average rate of 3% to 7%. Quarterly reviews of actual spending against budget are tightly monitored to avoid any deficit spending. The church maintains transparency of financial records.