

**The Bylaws of
St. Peter United Church of Christ
approved August 22, 2021**

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 – Membership

Once someone has decided St. Peter is their spiritual home, they are encouraged to become an official member of the church. To do so, they must participate in a new members' class, relinquish membership in any other church, and be officially welcomed by the congregation during a worship service (those who worship with us via livestream can be accommodated digitally).

Section 2 - Membership Responsibilities

With membership comes the expectation to participate fully within the covenant community as able and gifted by God, through sacraments, fiscal responsibility, and fellowship. Members are expected to attend worship (via livestream or in the building), unless sick, on vacation, at work, or other extenuating circumstances. There is also a responsibility to attend congregational meetings and exercise the right, privilege and duty to vote.

Section 3 - Withdrawal of Membership

A member may voluntarily withdraw from membership by written request.

Membership rolls will be reviewed annually by the Church Shepherds. Any member who has failed for two years to abide by the responsibilities of membership as listed in Article I, Section 2 of the Church's Bylaws, will be sent a letter encouraging them to renew their commitment to the church. If, after ample time has elapsed, the member who has failed to abide by the responsibilities of membership for two years does not renew their participation in the life of the church, their membership will be withdrawn.

Any member whose membership has been withdrawn may again become a member as stated in the Constitution of St. Peter United Church of Christ.

ARTICLE II – OFFICERS

Section 1 – Officers

The officers of this Church are the lay Church Shepherds. All lay Church Shepherds shall be members of this congregation. Three lay Church Shepherds shall be elected to a two-year term which may be renewed once. Once a lay Church Shepherd has served two, two-year terms, they may not be elected to any position for one year.

Section 2 – Church Shepherds

The Church Shepherds are the administrative heads of the congregation. They will conduct all meetings of the Assembly and the congregation. They are associate members of all Vision Teams engaged in the governance of the Church.

The Church Shepherds may establish Ad Hoc teams required for the governance of this Church. They shall assign additional functions and responsibilities to the members of the congregation for the governance of this Church.

The lay Church Shepherds shall sign and affix the seal in the name of and on behalf of this Church on all contracts, deeds, and other instruments including short or long term debts authorized by the Assembly or as directed by the members of the congregation.

The lay Church Shepherds are the custodians of all the funds of this Church. They shall present a financial report at each regularly scheduled meeting of the Assembly. They shall oversee the publication of an

annual written report which details receipts and expenditures of this Church in accordance with usual and customary accounting principles. They shall ensure an annual stewardship program is conducted to provide the funds needed to carry out the work of the Church. They shall oversee the budget preparation process. The lay Church Shepherds shall approve compensation and benefit plans for the Church staff.

The lay Church Shepherds shall maintain a record of the proceedings at the annual meeting and special meetings of the congregation and at all meetings of the Assembly. They shall assure that the congregation is informed on a timely basis of their activities and the activities of other Church bodies.

Section 3 – Quorum

A quorum shall be 66% of the lay Church Shepherds at any regular or special meeting of the Church Shepherds.

ARTICLE III – ASSEMBLY

Section 1 – Assembly Membership

Along with the Church Shepherds, the Assembly shall ensure the work of this Church is being completed and the Vision is being lived out.

The Assembly shall be composed of the Church Shepherds and the Vision Teams.

Section 2 – Assembly Responsibilities

The Assembly will meet no fewer than six times per year to:

- a) Review financial reports submitted by the Church Shepherds;
- b) Receive suggestions from church members and attendees, assign to appropriate Vision Team for research, and follow-up with those who made the suggestion once a decision has been made about the suggestion;
- c) Receive reports from Church Shepherds and Vision Teams;
- d) Schedule the annual meeting;
- e) Approve all contracts and bids as described in Article X, Sections 2 and 4 of the Church Bylaws;
- f) Ensure the Church's Constitution and Bylaws are being followed.

Section 3 – Assembly Nominations and Vacancies

Prior to the annual meeting, the Assembly shall create an Ad Hoc team (which may include Church Shepherds and Vision Team members) to find qualified individuals to fill Church Shepherd and Vision Team vacancies.

In the event of a resignation or death of a Church Shepherd or Vision Team member during the fiscal year, the remaining members of the Assembly may elect a replacement until the next annual meeting of the congregation. In the event more than one vacancy occurs simultaneously, a special meeting of the congregation will be called to elect replacements.

Section 4 – Open/Closed Meetings & Minutes

All meetings of the Assembly and the Vision Teams shall be open to all members of the congregation except discussions concerning personnel; lease, purchase or sale of real property; litigation; or other matters of a sensitive nature. Such discussions may be closed at the discretion of the Church Shepherds with the advice and consent of the meeting attendees.

The Church Shepherds shall report to the Assembly the date, location, time of opening, time of closing, and the names of those in attendance at said meeting.

Decisions and acts of the Assembly shall be made in open meetings and noted in the minutes of that meeting. Minutes of Assembly meetings shall be kept on file and posted publicly once they have been approved.

ARTICLE IV – VISION TEAMS

Section 1 – Established Vision Teams

The following standing teams are established with the approval of these Bylaws:

- a) Belong Vision Team
- b) Engage Vision Team
- c) Act Vision Team

Each Vision Team will have one elected members who serves a two-year term which can be renewed once. Once someone has served two, two-year terms on a Vision Team, they may not be elected to any Vision Team position for one year. All Vision Team members shall be members of this congregation.

Vision Teams shall organize Ad Hoc teams. An Ad Hoc team shall have responsibility for an assigned portion of the Vision Team's goals and objectives, a short-term project, problem resolution, or special event. Ad Hoc teams must report their work to their Vision Team on a bimonthly basis until their work is completed for the fiscal year. The Vision Team will share the progress of the Ad Hoc team with the Assembly.

Section 2 – Common Vision Team Duties

Common duties of each Vision Team are to:

- a) Ensure their area of the Vision is being lived out and report how this is being done at each Assembly meeting.
- b) Recommend to the Assembly an annotated line-item budget of the proposed expenditures for the Vision Team and Ad Hoc teams for consideration in preparing the annual budget of this Church;
- c) Provide, as needed, information for the annual meeting;
- d) Oversee the work of any Ad Hoc teams they create;
- e) Oversee the work of any Ministry Groups who report to them;
- f) Support and communicate with other Vision Teams;
- g) Develop programs and lead members of the congregation, individually and collectively, to a sharing of their spiritual gifts, time, and treasure in the performance of Christian service wherever needed;
- h) Research any suggestions or proposals given them by the Assembly and report findings back to the Assembly.

Section 3 – Belong Team

The Belong Team will foster and oversee ministries that enable everyone in our Church to work together to create a culture of oneness, unity, togetherness. They will ensure:

- We each seek to make our church community a safe and inclusive place for all.
- We respect, learn from, support, and love each other unconditionally.
- We continually nurture deeper relationships with each other.
- We celebrate each other's gifts.
- We offer an inclusive welcome to all (ages, orientations, genders, political/theological perspectives, etc).
- We embrace those who are new to our community including those who worship with us via livestream.
- We have fun together.

Section 4 – Engage Team

The Engage Team will foster and oversee ministries where everyone in our Church's gifts are utilized to make our church thrive. They will ensure:

- We rely on each other and, therefore, that each one is needed to consistently contribute to the life of our church.
- We strive to offer well-defined avenues for all (ages, orientations, genders, political/ theological perspectives, in the building and via livestream, etc) to be connected and involved.
- We offer a range of times and ways in which people can participate in our life together.
- We intentionally ensure every generation is represented in our whole church decision-making.
- We support the next generation of leaders as they grow into their roles and encourage new ideas and creativity through the regular rotation of our leaders.

Section 5 – Act Team

The Act Team will foster and oversee ministries where everyone gives of themselves in service to our neighborhood and beyond, inspired and energized to act by the love of God. They will ensure:

- We walk the talk of our faith not just at church events, but in everything we do.
- We live the Gospel, encouraging all to love as Jesus loved.
- We create a world of justice and hope for all.
- We graciously offer help to those in need.
- We hold our world in prayer.

Section 6 – Church Shepherds/Pastor Attendance at Vision Team Meetings

Generally speaking, the work of the Vision Teams shall be completed during Assembly meetings. Occasionally, Vision Teams may need additional meeting time. The Church Shepherds (including the Senior Pastor, or their delegate as described in Article VII, Section 3 of the Church Bylaws) shall be invited to attend any meetings of Vision Teams and/or Ad Hoc teams.

Section 7 – Meeting Minutes

Each Vision Team shall file the minutes of any meeting occurring outside an Assembly meeting with the Church Shepherds within one week of the meeting so the Church leadership can be kept abreast of all Church activities.

Section 8 – Quorum

A quorum shall be 100% of the members of a Vision Team at any regular or special meeting of that Vision Team.

ARTICLE V – FOUNDATIONS TEAMS

Section 1 – Established Foundations Teams

The following Foundations Teams are established with the approval of these Bylaws:

- a) Christian Education
- b) Worship

Each Foundations Team will have three members minimum who serve for a season of the church year. The Pastor(s) lead the Foundations Teams. Foundations Teams are encouraged to be intergenerational. Foundations Teams members can also serve in elected capacities.

Sign-ups for Foundations Teams will happen around the time of the annual meeting. People will be asked to indicate what seasons of the church year interest them and their seasonal availability. The Church Shepherds will then assemble Foundations Teams based on people's preferences. A person can only serve on a Foundations Team for which they signed-up if they attend the planning meeting of that season.

Foundations Teams report to the Church Shepherds.

Section 2 – Worship Foundations Team Seasons & Duties

Members of the Worship Foundations Team can serve two seasons of a year as long as they are at least two seasons apart. Individuals may not serve the same season(s) two years in a row.

The Worship Foundations Team meets together to study Scripture, discern what the Spirit is saying to the church in this time, and plan the season's worship activities around a theme. Members of the Worship Foundations Team then execute the plan including finding any additional help needed to implement the Team's plans.

The seasons of the Worship Foundations Team are:

- Harvest (Fall Kick-Off – Christ the King Sunday)
- Advent/Christmas (Advent 1 – the first Sunday of Christmas)
- Epiphany (Epiphany – Transfiguration Sunday)
- Lent (Lent)
- Easter (Easter – May)
- Pentecost (June up to Fall Kick-Off)

Section 3 – Christian Education Foundations Teams Seasons & Duties

Members of the Christian Education Foundations Team can serve one season of a year. Individuals may not serve the same season(s) two years in a row.

The Christian Education Foundations Team meets together to prayerfully discern how the Spirit is calling our church to grow in our faith and knowledge of God and plan the season's activities around a theme. They also ensure and support quality Christian Education programming for all ages during each season of the church year.

The seasons of the Christian Education Foundations Team are:

- Fall (Fall Kick-Off – Epiphany)
- Winter (Baptism of Christ – Lent)
- Spring (Easter – Memorial Day)
- Summer (Memorial Day – Fall Kick-Off)

ARTICLE VI – MINISTRIES

To be an authorized Ministry, a purpose statement must be submitted to the Assembly. The purpose statement shall define a Ministry's vision, goals, and how the Ministry's work supports the Church's Vision. If the Assembly decides to grant Ministry status, the Assembly will then assign the Ministry to a Vision Team who shall oversee the work of that Ministry. At a minimum, a Ministry must annually submit a written report to their Vision Team specifically detailing how their work supports the Church's Vision, what goals they accomplished in the past year, and what goals they have for the following year. If a Ministry has its own finances, they are to submit a written report of their expenditures to their Vision Team quarterly. Whenever a Ministry has a change in officers or leadership, they are to notify their Vision Team in writing. All requests for fundraisers by a Ministry must first be submitted to their Vision Team who, if they approve the request, shall then submit the request to the Assembly for approval.

If a Ministry has funds, they must be on deposit with the Church. The treasurer of a Ministry can ask for disbursements of their Ministry funds.

ARTICLE VII – CLERGY AND STAFF

Section 1 – Senior Pastor Call

The call for any Senior Pastor will be determined and conducted in consultation with the appropriate bodies of the United Church of Christ.

Whenever a vacancy occurs in the Senior Pastor position, the Assembly will appoint a search committee of not more than six members who will be as representative as possible of the demographics and needs of the congregation. The position description for any Senior or Associate Pastor will be approved by the Assembly.

When the Search Committee has found an appropriate candidate, they shall inform the Assembly and work together to schedule a trial sermon followed by a congregational meeting to vote to call the proposed candidate.

The Search Committee which calls a pastor will become the initial Pastor-Parish Connection¹ Team for that pastor when a new pastor is called.

Section 2 – Clergy Responsibilities

The Pastor(s) will preach the Word, care for the established services of worship, administer the sacraments (if ordained), promote the spiritual well-being of the Church and of those whom it serves, and exercise the privilege of religious teacher and counselor in public and private.

Section 3 – Senior Pastor

The Senior Pastor shall be ordained. They shall be the head of staff and supervise both clergy and lay staff members.

The Senior Pastor shall be a Church Shepherd^s and, therefore, a member of the Assembly. Along with the lay Church Shepherds, the Senior Pastor is an associate member of the Vision Teams. The Senior Pastor may delegate their role as an associate member of a Vision Team to any Associate or Assistant Pastor.

Section 4 – Associate Pastor

One or more Associate Pastor(s) may be called in the same manner as the Senior Pastor. An Associate Pastor shall be ordained.

When necessary, the Associate Pastor(s) may be delegated to serve in the Senior Pastor's role as an associate member of a Vision Team, as described in Article VII, Section 3 of the Church Bylaws.

Section 5 – Assistant Pastor

One or more Assistant Pastor(s) may be hired. An Assistant Pastor may be ordained, licensed or commissioned.

When the Assembly decides to hire an Assistant Pastor, the Church Shepherds shall solicit and receive applications. When the Church Shepherds have found an appropriate candidate, they shall make their recommendation to the Assembly who shall decide if an offer of employment should be extended.

The duties of an Assistant Pastor shall be defined by the specific nature of the responsibilities established by the terms of the contract of employment.

When necessary, the Assistant Pastor(s) may be delegated to serve in the Senior Pastor's role as an associate member of a Vision Team, as described in Article VII, Section 3 of the Church Bylaws.

¹ For more information on the work of the Pastor-Parish Connection team, see their guidelines.

An Assistant Pastor may terminate their employment with the Church with written notice as detailed in the Assistant Pastor's covenant. The Church Shepherds may recommend the Assembly terminate an Assistant Pastor's employment with notice as detailed in the Assistant Pastor's covenant.

Section 6 – Interim Pastor

When the need for an Interim Pastor arises, the Church Shepherds shall solicit and receive applications in consultation with the appropriate bodies of the United Church of Christ. When the Church Shepherds have found an appropriate candidate, they shall make their recommendation to the Assembly who shall decide if an offer of employment should be extended.

An Interim Senior or Associate Pastor must be ordained.

An Interim Pastor cannot be called as a settled pastor of the Church.

Section 7 – Termination of Senior or Associate Pastor Call Agreement

Under normal circumstances, a Senior or Associate Pastor may terminate their call agreement with 90 days written notice and the Church may terminate a call agreement by vote of the congregation. If the Church terminates a call agreement, the Pastor's employment ends immediately with 90 days continued salary and benefits constituting severance pay, dating from the congregational vote.

The termination of a Senior or Associate Pastor's call agreement must follow the details outlined in the Pastor's call agreement with the Church and those details supersede the details listed above.

Section 8 – Support Staff

Proposals for support staff requirements may come from the Vision Teams. Proposals will be reviewed and approved by the Church Shepherds who will then pass on their recommendation about the proposed changes to the Assembly. The Church Shepherds shall be responsible for hiring and discharging support staff and determining salaries and other terms of employment for all support staff. Support staff cannot be members of the Church.

ARTICLE VIII – ENDOWMENT FUND & BOARD

Section 1 – Endowment Fund

The Endowment Fund will help the Church provide a sound foundation for spiritual and moral growth through worship, education, caring support, community service, and the pursuit of justice and Christian fellowship.

The Fund will be held as a separate fund from all other Church funds and be operated through the Church's 501 C status.

Annually, the income from the Endowment Fund will be distributed to the Church.

Section 2 – Endowment Board

The Endowment Fund Board will consist of four Church members elected by the congregation, each serving a two-year term, which can be renewed once. One Church Shepherd shall sit on the Endowment Board and the Senior Pastor shall be an ex officio member of the Endowment Board. In the event of a resignation or death of an Endowment Fund Board member during the fiscal year, the Assembly may elect a replacement until the next annual meeting of the congregation. Prior to the annual meeting, the Assembly will find qualified individuals to fill Endowment Board vacancies.

The Fund's board members will have fiduciary responsibility to the Fund and oversight of the management of the Fund. The Endowment Board will administer and invest a separate fund known as the Endowment Fund. The board will be accountable to the Assembly with ultimate authority resting with the congregation.

Section 3 – Board Duties

The Endowment Fund Board shall:

- a) Publicize the purposes of the Endowment Fund and offer gift-planning assistance to potential donors;
- b) Facilitate the receipt of gifts to the Endowment Fund;
- c) Meet with and evaluate the performance of the professional fund manager who is hired to manage and invest the funds;
- d) Coordinate the independent audit of the Fund every two years;
- e) Inform the Assembly of any annual income and support the distribution of these funds.

Section 4 – Board Liability

Members of the Endowment Fund Board will not be liable for the performance of Endowment Fund investments unless losses were the result of fraud or gross negligence. No Board member will receive any financial benefit or serve personal interests from operation of the Endowment Fund.

Other guidelines for this Fund and Board are detailed in the Church's Endowment Fund Policy.

ARTICLE IX – CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Section 1 – Annual Meeting

An annual meeting of the congregation shall be held on Church premises no later than the last day of the month preceding the beginning of the Church fiscal year. The Church Shepherds will provide written notice of the annual meeting to all members (as defined in Article 1, Section 2) at least two weeks prior to the meeting. The notice will include items that will be voted on at the meeting. The agenda for the annual meeting will include the following:

- a) Reviewing and approving church objectives for the coming year;
- b) Reviewing and adopting a budget;
- c) Receiving all annual reports;
- d) Electing official positions;
- e) Other business as specified in the annual meeting notice provided to members (as defined in Article 1, Section 2).

Section 2 – Special Congregational Meetings

A special meeting of the congregation may be called by the Assembly or by the signatures of fifty members (as defined in Article 1, Section 2) of the congregation.

Section 3 – Quorum for Congregational Meetings

A quorum shall be fifty members at any annual or special meeting of the congregation. Members may be present in the building or via livestream.

Section 4 – Open/Closed Meetings & Minutes

Meetings shall be open to all members of the congregation except discussions concerning personnel; lease, purchase or sale of real property; litigation; or other matters of a sensitive nature. Such discussions may be closed at the discretion of the Church Shepherds with the advice and consent of the meeting attendees.

The Church Shepherds shall report to the Assembly the date, location, time of opening, time of closing and the names of those in attendance at said meeting.

Decisions and acts of the congregation shall be made in open meeting and noted in the minutes of that meeting. Minutes of congregational meetings shall be kept on file and posted publicly once approved.

Section 5 - Rules

The latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the conduct of Congregational Meetings.

ARTICLE X - FINANCES

Section 1 - Balanced Budget

The Church Shepherds are obligated to present a balanced budget to the Congregation for their approval. They are also responsible for monitoring expenses during the fiscal year to ensure that funds are spent in a manner consistent with the approved budget. If the Church Shepherds believe a balanced budget is not possible, an alternate plan may be presented to the congregation for approval. This plan shall provide full disclosure of the reasons for exceeding planned revenue and how the deficit is to be funded. The church shall honor current financial obligations, including repayment of monies borrowed from church assets.

Section 2 - Vision Team Approval Limits and Contracts

Prior to budgeted funds being spent, the Church Shepherds or appropriate Vision Team shall confirm the validity of all invoices and requests for payment. Non-budgeted items greater than \$3,000 and up to \$5,000 shall be approved by Assembly prior to funds being spent.

Contracts for \$3,000 or less of budgeted funds shall be approved by the Church Shepherds or appropriate Vision Team and must be signed by one lay Church Shepherd. Contracts for more than \$3,000 of budgeted funds must be approved by the Assembly and signed by two lay Church Shepherds.

Section 3 - Assembly Approval Limits

If the Assembly determines it is necessary to exceed the approved budget during the fiscal year, it is authorized to do so in an amount not to exceed \$5,000. Congregational approval should be received for unbudgeted expenditures over \$5,000 via congregational meeting.

Section 4 - Bid Process

Whenever possible, three separate bids shall be obtained prior to purchasing goods or services over \$5,000. The Assembly will make the decision of which bid to accept.

When circumstances make it impossible to secure three separate bids for a purchase that exceeds \$5,000, approval to purchase goods or services based on less than three bids may be granted by the Church Shepherds.

Section 5 - Check Signing Authority

Check signing authority is given to the lay Church Shepherds.

ARTICLE XI - GRIEVANCES

In the spirit of Christ and the purpose of our Church, members and clergy who have grievances with other members or clergy are encouraged to resolve those grievances among themselves in a prayerful, caring, and responsible manner.

Any member or clergy unable to resolve a grievance with another member or clergy may bring that grievance to the Pastor-Parish Connections Team. The Pastor-Parish Connections Team may hear the grievance in open or closed session and may address the grievance within the bounds of its authority, may refer it to the Church Shepherds, the Assembly, or a Vision Team.

The Church Shepherds, upon receiving the grievance, may address the grievance within the bounds of its authority, may refer it to another Vision Team or put the grievance to a special meeting of the congregation.

ARTICLE XII – EMERGENCIES

During times of official local, state, or national emergency, the Church shall do its best to abide by these Bylaws. However, in unprecedented circumstances this may not be possible and the Church Shepherds shall be given the grace to prayerfully lead the church during these times.

ARTICLE XIII – FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year will begin on October 1 and end on September 30.

ARTICLE XIV – REGULAR REVIEWS & AMENDMENTS

The Church Shepherds are responsible for ensuring the Bylaws are reviewed in accordance with Article XI of the Church Constitution and, at a minimum, every four years. The Bylaws may be amended in any duly called meeting of the congregation by a 75% affirmative vote of those members present.