

Constitution and By-Laws
Of
ST. PETERS EVANGELICAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Billings, Missouri

Revised & Adopted
January 29, 2023

**The CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS of
ST. PETER'S EVANGELICAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Adopted—October 12, 2008

C O N S T I T U T I O N

ARTICLE I -- NAME

The name of this Congregation shall be St. Peter's Evangelical United Church of Christ in Billings, Missouri. [*This is a continuation of the original St. Peter's Evangelical Church, which later became St. Peter's Evangelical & Reformed Church, and more recently known as St. Peter's Evangelical Church of the United Church of Christ*]

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

It shall be the purpose of this Congregation to establish in its community, a Christian Congregation for worship, for proclaiming the Word of God and the administration of the sacraments; to provide spiritual renewal and nurture; to advance the Kingdom of God inwardly and outwardly both at home and abroad.

ARTICLE III – AFFILIATION

1. This Congregation shall be an active and supportive Congregation of that larger fellowship of Christians known as the United Church of Christ, or its successor. As was understood when the union of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches merged to form the United Church of Christ, this local Congregation is free to continue its historic continuities and traditions.
2. As the Constitution and By-laws of the United Church of Christ state, the autonomy of this Congregation is inherent and modifiable only by its own action.

ARTICLE IV – CONFESSION

1. This Congregation accepts the Holy Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, as God's inspired Word, a book of hope to be used as a guide and a help in our daily lives. In the Bible, we profess to find the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. We look to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to prosper God's creative and redemptive work in the world.
2. In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, this Congregation recognizes two sacraments; Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. The Evangelical Catechism shall continue to be acknowledged and used by this Congregation as a valuable teaching medium.

ARTICLE V -- MEETINGS

The Congregation shall have an Annual Meeting and such other meetings as are

provided for in the By-Laws.

ARTICLE VI – QUORUM

Twenty five percent (25%) of the active members shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE VII – MEMBERSHIP

All baptized persons who have been duly received into our fellowship by confirmation, by profession of faith, by letter of transfer, or by reaffirmation of faith, shall be communicant members of this Congregation and shall be entitled to all its rights and privileges.

ARTICLE VIII – CHURCH BOARD

The Church Board shall be composed of the Pastor, Secretary, Treasurer, and three members chosen by the Congregation. In addition to these, each Organization of the Congregation shall be entitled to a Church Board member elected by its own method. After serving a three year term, no layperson of the Church Board shall be eligible for re-election until a year has passed.

ARTICLE IX – ADMINISTRATION

1. Congregation Meetings. The supreme legislative and administrative power of the Congregation is vested in the Congregation itself, assembled in meeting, duly and legally called as provided in the By-Laws.
2. It is the right of the congregational meetings to decide such questions as the buying and selling of property, building projects, extensive repairs of church property, the Call and/or rejection of a Pastor, and questions of the policy of the Congregation, as well as changes in the Constitution and By-Laws. For the transaction of all other business, the administration of the Church is entrusted to the Church Board, chosen and composed as provided for in the Constitution and By-Laws.

ARTICLE X – THE PASTOR

1. The Congregation shall elect as its pastor, a minister who has the approval of the Committee on Church and Ministry of the Western Association of the Missouri Conference of the United Church of Christ, or its successor.
2. The Church Board shall nominate one candidate to be voted upon by the Congregation.. The Congregation shall consider only one candidate at a time, and shall vote by ballot for or against his/her election immediately following the guest sermon. A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the members present constitutes election. If the minister is elected, the Church Board shall issue him/her a Call. The Call is to be presented to the Committee on Church and Ministry of the Western Association.

ARTICLE XI – PROPERTY

1. The Congregation may, in its corporate name, sue and be sued, hold, purchase, and receive title by gift, grant or other conveyance of and to any property, real or personal, with power of mortgage, sell, or convey the same, providing the State Laws permit.
2. In case of a division of the membership of the Congregation, both parties shall submit the question to the right of the property and records to the Missouri Conference of the United Church of Christ. The decision of that judiciary shall be binding on all members of the Congregation.
3. In case of dissolution of the Congregation, its assets and all property and interests of which it shall then be possessed, including any devise, bequest, gift or grant contained in any Will or other instrument, in trust or otherwise, made before or after such dissolution, shall be transferred to the Missouri Conference of the United Church of Christ, or its successor.

ARTICLE XII – CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS

The Organizations of the Congregation are recognized as being instruments of service of this Congregation, and are not to act independently of the Congregation or of the Church Board. The Organization shall make annual reports to the Congregation.

ARTICLE XIII – DISCIPLINE

Should the Congregation call for the discipline of a member, this would lie in the realm of the Church Board to investigate the charges. In the case of the Pastor, he/she would be accountable to the Committee on Church and Ministry of the Western Association of the Missouri Conference.

ARTICLE XIV – AMENDMENTS

1. Additions and alterations to this Constitution and the By-Laws may be made at any regular meeting of the Congregation or duly called special meeting, provided the text of the proposed change(s) has been publicized to the Congregation at least two (2) weeks prior to the meeting.
2. A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote, of the voting members present, is necessary for adoption of additions and alterations of the Constitution.
3. A majority vote, of the voting members present, is necessary for adoption of additions and alterations to the By-Laws.

B Y ---L A W S

ARTICLE I – OBLIGATION TO THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. This Congregation shall comply with the provisions of the Missouri Conference in sending delegates to the Annual Meeting.
2. This Congregation shall contribute regularly to O.C.W.M. (Our Church's Wider Mission) of the United Church of Christ, and voluntarily to any other programs and institutions of the Missouri Conference and the United Church of Christ.
3. The official year of the Congregation shall be from January 1 to December 31.

ARTICLE II – PRIVILEGES AND DUTIES OF MEMBERS

1. All members are entitled to a full share in the fellowship and the spiritual blessings of the Congregation, and to the service of its Pastor and officials.
2. All communicant members of this Congregation are entitled to a voice, vote and office unless otherwise stated in the Constitution and By-Laws.
3. An active member is one who communes and attends the services of the Congregation as often as possible, and who contributes to the financial support of the Congregation unless he/she has no means to contribute.

ARTICLE III – INACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

When a member is continuously absent from the worship services of the Congregation, and does not contribute to its financial support, and has not partaken of the Lord's Supper for one year without reason, the Church Board shall make contact to encourage their renewed relationship with St. Peter's Congregation. If the member wishes to remain a part of St. Peter's fellowship, but continues their inactive status for another year, their name may be placed on the list of inactive members until they choose to become active again.

ARTICLE IV – ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS

1. Applicants for membership may apply to the Pastor, and with the consent of the Church Board, may become members of the Congregation if they comply with all other regulations. New members shall be presented to the Congregation at some regular Sunday morning service to be publicly pledged to this Constitution & By-Laws. As has already been stated in the Constitution, member shall be received by confirmation, profession of faith, letter of transfer, or by reaffirmation of faith.
2. Children/young people shall continue to be received as members by the Rite of Confirmation, following the completion of a class of instructions in the fundamentals of Christian Faith. Those to be confirmed shall have reached the minimum age of 13 or be in the eighth grade. This is not to imply that younger children cannot and do not believe personally in Christ as the Savior, but this item of the By-Laws continues the tradition of the Congregation that Confirmation equips the child for responsible

church membership and discipleship. At the discretion of the Pastor and with Church Board approval, an exception may be made to this requirement.

ARTICLE V – CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

1. The Annual Meeting shall be held in the month of January of each year.
2. Special Meetings may be called by the Church Board or upon the written request of five percent of the communicant members. The Church Board shall issue a call for such a meeting.
3. ALL meetings shall be announced the preceding two Sundays unless special notice has been mailed to all families of the Congregation.

ARTICLE VI -- THE CHURCH BOARD

1. The administration of the Congregation is vested in the Church Board as long as it abides by Article IX (Administration) in the Constitution. The three members chosen by the Congregation shall have attained the age of at least 21 years. The members chosen by the various Organizations shall be individuals who will assume the responsibility.
2. The three members chosen by the Congregation shall be elected by a majority vote at the annual meeting. They shall be elected for a term of three years, but it shall be so arranged that one of their numbers is elected each year. If necessary to assure this kind of member rotation, the Congregation may, from time to time, elect a member to serve for less than three years.
3. The Secretary and the Treasurer shall be elected by the Congregation at the annual meeting each year.
4. The members of the various Organizations shall be elected for a term of one year, according to the method of election by the Organization.
5. Vacancies on the Church Board are to be filled by action of the Congregation for the remainder of the vacated term.
6. A person elected by the Congregation to serve an unexpired term of not more than one year shall be eligible for election to a full three year term under Article IV paragraph 2 above.
7. The Church Board shall transact the business of the Congregation, make provision for the preparation and raising of the budget for the Congregation, as well as the recommendation of benevolent money to be sent to Conference or U.C.C. agencies or for other purposes. Provision shall be made to audit all financial accounts. It shall keep accurate record of proceedings and be custodian of all congregational records.
8. The Church Board may authorize any extraordinary expense, but if such expense exceeds \$5,000, it must receive the approval of the Congregation.
9. The Church Board shall, through its President, appoint such committees as it may find necessary to accomplish its work.
10. The Church Board shall meet within a week after the Annual Meeting for the purpose

of organization and thereafter at least once a month at a place and time convenient to the members for the transaction of such business as may properly come before it. Special meetings are subject to the call of the President or Pastor.

ARTICLE VII -- DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. The **President** presides at all meetings of the Church Board and the Congregation. He/she has the authority to call any special session of the Church Board, and it becomes his/her duty to call a special session when requested by at least three (3) of the other members of the Church Board. In the event of a tie vote, he/she shall cast the deciding vote. He/she is also empowered, along with the Secretary, to sign all contracts, loans and deeds in the name of the Congregation. He/she shall be ex-officio on all Committees, with voice but no vote.
He/she shall remind the Pastor to announce all regular and special meetings of the Congregation on two (2) successive Sundays, or in case it is decided so by the Church Board, to instruct the Secretary to send a call for such meetings to every member of the Congregation by mail.
2. The **Vice-President** shall perform the duties of the President in the absence or inability of the President to serve. He/she shall preside at all meetings where the President is not present and also when business pertaining to the President and his administration is before the Congregation. The Vice-President should do all in his/her power to help the President and his/her administration easier.
3. The **Secretary** must keep correct minutes of the meetings of the Church Board and Congregation, keep a correct roster of all members, and keep a record of their admission and withdrawal. He/she is also corresponding secretary of the Congregation, unless it would seem more appropriate for the Pastor to answer the correspondence in question. He/she shall, with the President, sign all contracts, loans and deeds in the name of the Congregation.
4. The **Treasurer** shall have charge of all monies of the Congregation. He/she shall submit a statement to the Church Board each month and to the Congregation at its meetings. He/she must pay all bills authorized by the Church Board.

ARTICLE VIII -- COMMITTEES

1. The St. Peter's Evangelical Church Cemetery is now a separate corporation and acts under its own constitution and by-laws. The Cemetery Committee makes annual reports to the St. Peter's Congregation. The financial records of the Cemetery are audited by the Auditing Committee of St. Peter's Evangelical Congregation.
2. The Auditing Committee shall consist of three members to serve terms of three years each, one member to vacate office each year. The Church Board shall appoint all members to the Auditing Committee. It shall be their duty to audit all financial records of the Congregation and its affiliated Organizations.

ARTICLE IX – PASTORAL VACANCY

1. As soon as a pastoral vacancy occurs, the President of the Church Board shall inform the proper Conference/Association staff person.
2. The Church Board shall, with the help of the Conference staff if necessary, make arrangements for supply ministry for the period of vacancy.
3. The Church Board may appoint a Pulpit Search Committee, whose duties shall be to meet with Conference staff for proper procedure in seeking a candidate; to interview candidates for the pastoral position; to select one candidate as it's recommendation; to report its recommendation to the Church Board; and with the approval of the Church Board, to make arrangements for the candidate to appear for a guest sermon.
4. The Church Board shall call a special meeting of the Congregation to follow the guest sermon to vote by ballot for or against his/her election. A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the members present constitutes election and authorizes the extending of a Call to the pastorate of this Congregation.
5. When a minister accepts the Call to become pastor of this Congregation, the Church Board and he/she shall join in requesting the Association to arrange for a Service of Installation or Recognition.

ARTICLE X -- THE PASTOR

1. **Term of Office.** The Pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period. In order to terminate this relationship, three months notice shall be given by either Pastor or Congregation, unless by mutual consent, they agree to do otherwise.
2. **Duties of the Pastor.** It shall be the duty of the Pastor to set a good example for the Congregation; to conduct all services on Sundays, holidays and such other days as the Congregation may desire; to direct the work of religious education; to administer the Holy Sacraments; to visit the sick; to comfort the distressed; and to perform all such duties as belong to the Pastor's office in The United Church of Christ. He/she shall keep a record of all service performed and make an annual report of his/her work to the Congregation.
3. **Rights of the Pastor.** The Pastor is an ex-officio member of the Church Board and all Organizations within the Congregation, with voice but no vote. As long as he/she is Pastor, no other minister shall perform any religious ceremony in the church without his/her consent. To invite a speaker either during a temporary absence of the Pastor or for special occasions, the consent of both Pastor and Church Board is necessary. The Pastor's salary shall be paid promptly in semi-monthly installments and shall be sufficient to relieve him/her of temporal cares as far as is possible so to preserve the dignity of his/her calling, subject however, to the provisions of the contract between the Pastor and Congregation. His/her moving expenses, when he/she assumes charge, shall be borne in full by the Congregation.