

GOOD SHEPHERD BY LAWS

Article I. Membership

A. Baptized Membership

1. The sacrament of Holy Baptism shall be available to any person upon request.
2. A Baptismal sponsor must be a baptized Christian.
3. A Baptism shall be celebrated in the context of a worship service except for emergencies or special circumstances.
4. Any person who has received Christian Baptism and has not been excluded by disciplinary process is a member of the Church.
5. Baptized persons who are not yet communicant members shall be enrolled as unconfirmed members. Unconfirmed members shall be instructed in the Christian way and standards of faith and doctrine of Good Shepherd United Church of Christ.
6. The church will provide and dedicate a rose bud to commemorate a Baptism.

B. Communicant Membership

1. A Communicant Member is one who has been received into full communion by public profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior through one of the following means, and has not been excluded by disciplinary action.
 - a. Confession of Faith, signified by Baptism
 - b. The Rite of Confirmation
 - c. Letter of Transfer or certification from another Christian congregation
 - d. Reaffirmation of Faith
2. It is understood that all who apply for membership as Communicant Members shall have received the sacrament of Holy Baptism.
3. All members of the congregation shall have received adequate instruction and training in the doctrines, beliefs, and practices of the Church.

C. Duties of Communicant Members

1. Recognizing the nature of the Church as the people of God on a mission of which the local congregation is a part, members of the Church shall live sober, righteous and godly lives; and labor faithfully to bring others to Christ. They shall take an active part in the life and work of the Church.
2. To be in an active relationship with the Church the following will be encouraged but not limited to:
 - a. Regular attendance at Divine Worship
 - b. Devout use of the Holy Sacraments
 - c. Diligent observance of private devotions
 - d. Liberal financial and moral support
 - e. Obedience to her established law and authorities
 - f. Invite others into the life and worship of the Church
 - g. Sincere endeavor to apply the teachings of Jesus to all human relationships
 - h. Regular exercise of the right and duty to voice and vote in congregational meetings
 - i. Assuming such offices as the congregation may confer upon them with the help of God
3. Parents shall provide (in-cooperation with the local church) adequate Christian training for their entire household, and shall give due heed to the fulfillment of the Baptismal vows.

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D. Termination of Communicant Membership

1. The names of deceased members shall be removed from the roll, and date of death noted on the roll.
2. A member shall be entitled to obtain a Letter of Transfer to another Christian congregation.
3. If a member united with another congregation without receiving a Letter of Transfer, upon receiving adequate notice there of, the Spiritual Council (Elders) shall remove such name from the church roll.
4. A Letter of Dismissal will be granted upon request to any member.

E. The Process of Discipline

1. Matters of discipline, except for the discipline of a pastor, shall reside with the Spiritual Council, in the exercise of the authority for admission to or erasure from the church's roll.
2. All disciplinary measures shall have as its aim reconciliation between the members and the church.
3. When a member moves from the area of the church, the Spiritual Council shall encourage him/her to join a Christian congregation in the new community.
4. Should a member become an offense to the church and to its name by reason of unchristian conduct, or by persistent breach of his/her covenant vows, the Spiritual Council may censure him/her, suspend him/her, or terminate his/her membership by two-thirds vote at a duly called meeting of the Spiritual Council, but only after due notice and after faithful efforts have been made to bring him/her to amendment in accordance with the law of Christ. (Matthew 18:15-17)
5. The Spiritual Council shall review the membership roll annually in order to visit or contact members who neglect to partake of Holy Communion or who refuse to contribute to the support of the church.
6. Special concern shall be exercised on behalf of members under disciplinary procedure. Efforts shall be made to re-win them for Christ and His Church. After one (1) year of contact, if the member has not responded, a Letter of Erasure will be sent notifying the person of the action of the Spiritual Council.

Article II. Church Government And Polity

A. The congregation and the congregational meetings

1. The governing body (voting members) of this congregation shall consist of all communicant
2. All responsibility for the life, work, and mission of the church shall ultimately rest in the hands of the congregation.
3. There shall be an annual congregational meeting held in November. A Quorum shall consist of 10% of the members. All members will be required to sign a register as a member prior and in order to
4. Special congregational meetings may be called by the Consistory or by a petition of 10% of the communicant members. The Consistory shall call such meetings within three (3) weeks from receipt of the petition, and adequate notice of such meeting shall be sent to the membership by the secretary.

B. Elders, Deacons and Youth Deacon

1. To effectively carry out and administrate the work of the church in an orderly fashion, the congregation shall at the congregational meeting elect Elders, Deacons and a Youth Deacon.

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2. An Elder is a member of the church who is chosen by the congregation and ordained to the position. Elders shall assist and support the Pastor in the spiritual affairs of the church and shall be an example unto others. Elders shall watch faithfully over the spiritual interest of the congregation, maintain order in the House of God, aid in visiting the sick, and minister to the members. An Elder shall have served a minimum of one (1) four (4) year term as a Deacon in this congregation.
3. A Deacon is a member of the church at least 18 years of age who is elected by the congregation, and installed to the position. Deacons shall oversee the collection of contributions at services of worship, count the collection and see that the treasurer receives the monies and report. Deacons will verify the content of each envelope and see that the financial secretary receives the envelopes and report. Deacons will keep an accurate attendance at each service and note it on the attendance chart. Deacons will change the hymn board for all services. Deacons will keep pew racks in an orderly fashion and should remain at doors when worship begins to greet late-comers with bulletins and make sure they are seated.
4. Elders and Deacons shall be elected for a four (4) year term by a majority vote cast at the November congregational meeting.
5. When elected for the first term, Elders shall be publicly ordained and Deacons shall be installed to their positions.
6. A Youth Deacon shall be elected for a one (1) year term, and shall serve one term, and will be eligible for a second one (1) year term if the nominating committee has no other candidate. To be eligible for the office of Youth Deacon, the candidate shall be a confirmed member under the age of 21. The duties of a Youth Deacon coincide with those of a Deacon.
7. In the event the position of Elder, Deacon, or Youth Deacon is vacated, it shall be filled for the unexpired term by appointment by the Consistory. Notice of the vacancy shall be announced from the pulpit at least two (2) weeks prior to the filling of the unexpired term.

C. The Consistory

1. The Consistory shall consist of the Pastor or Pastors, 4 Elders, 8 Deacons, and 2 Youth Deacons.
2. The Consistory shall organize itself on an annual basis. The president shall be the Pastor or duly elected Elder or Deacon. A vice-president, recording secretary, financial secretary, and treasurer shall be elected for a term of one (1) year.
3. The Consistory shall meet at least once every month for the transaction of such business as may properly come before it. Special meetings may be called by the secretary when requested to do so by one-third of the Consistory. Proper notice of all meetings shall be given to all Consistory members including the Pastor or Pastors.
4. In managing the general affairs of the congregation, the Consistory shall transact the business of the church, make provision for the determining and raising of the current and benevolent budgets of the congregation, shall make provision for liberal financial and moral support for the ministry of the church, auditing of financial accounts, and the maintenance of complete and accurate records of its proceedings and of all monies received and all expenditures of monies for congregational and benevolent purposes. For all unbudgeted expenditures, the Consistory shall approve all bills before payment, and shall instruct the proper officers to make said payment. The Consistory may authorize any extraordinary expense, but if that expense exceeds 5% of the annual budget, it must receive the approval of the congregation. The Consistory members shall be required to attend a minimum of 75% of the scheduled meetings unless work scheduled or illness prohibit attendance.

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5. An individual is limited to serving no more than two (2) consecutive full four (4) year terms. After one (1) full year of not serving on Consistory, a person shall become eligible for another term of service.
6. The Consistory shall appoint such committees as it may deem necessary for the accomplishment of its work. Among the standing committees responsible to the congregation through the Consistory are the following:
 - a. Altar Guild
 - b. Christian Education
 - c. Communications & Marketing
 - d. Evangelism
 - e. Finance
 - f. Fund Raising
 - g. Health & Wellness
 - h. Memorial
 - i. Nominating
 - j. Personnel
 - k. Property
 - l. Social Ministry
 - m. Spiritual Council
 - n. Stewardship
 - o. Worship & Music

Among the special committees responsible to the congregation through the Consistory are the following:

- a. Auditing
 - b. Pastoral Search
 - c. Constitution and
7. The Consistory shall have jurisdiction and oversight for the congregation and all its organizations. It shall be constituted as the trustees of the congregation.
 8. The Consistory shall appoint an individual to keep a complete record of baptisms, confirmations, receptions of new members, transfers, erasures, marriages, deaths, and any other changes in the roll.

D. Duties of Officers

1. President: shall see that all meetings of the Consistory are regularly called by the recording secretary, shall open and conduct such meetings, as well as all special and congregational meetings, and shall see to the execution of all resolutions, and shall co-sign all checks.
2. Vice-President: shall preside at all meetings in the president's absence, and also when business pertaining to the president and his/her administration is before the congregation.
3. Recording Secretary: shall keep a record of all transactions at the meetings of the congregation and of the Consistory, and attend to all correspondence, shall sign the minutes of all meetings of the Consistory and congregation, as well as all official legal documents.
4. Treasurer: shall have charge of all monies for congregational support received from the Consistory, give him/her receipt for the same, and make payments by check on order of Consistory. All checks will be co-signed by the current Consistory president.
5. Financial Secretary: shall receive all envelopes, issue receipts for all monies received from the congregation and maintain a record of each individual's contributions. All records shall be kept current at all times.
6. All elected officers shall be bonded. The fee shall be paid out of the current fund.
7. If at any time the Consistory considers that the best interest of the congregation will be served by appointing an assistant to any office it is authorized to do so.
8. The President and Pastor are ex-officio (by virtue of the office) members with voice and vote of all committees of the congregation and of the Consistory, as well as all organizations.

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E. Organization of Committees

1. Each standing committee shall be made up of a minimum of three (3) persons and a maximum to be determined by the chairperson.
2. The President of Consistory will appoint at least one (1) Consistory person to be an active participant on each standing committee and/or special committee.
3. The Consistory person will be the link between the Consistory, the Pastor, and the Committee. It is the duty of each committee representative to attend meetings of those organizations which the committee represents so that the Consistory as a group will be constantly aware of the progress and problems of all organizations. When the first visit is made to the assigned organization or committee, the organization or committee shall be advised of the identity of the committee representative and the reason for such representation. The Committee Representative is expected to offer ideas, suggestions, and recommendations which will benefit the church, but has no vote.
4. The terms of office shall be organized to allow for a staggering of replacements. Example - three (3) member committees shall be structured to replace only one (1) person each year to allow for consistency in the understanding of that committee's functions and responsibilities. If committees consist of 4 or 5 persons, the structure needs to allow for no more than two (2) persons to be replaced in any one (1) year for consistency as well. An individual will be limited to serving no more than two (2) consecutive full three (3) year terms on any standing committee. After one (1) full year of not serving on a particular committee, a person shall become eligible for another term of
5. Committee Members shall be nominated to their positions by the nominating committee and duly installed on Installation Sunday.
6. Each Standing Committee will be responsible to submit a proposed budget for that committee. This proposed budget will be presented to the finance committee to be included in the annual proposed budget.
7. Committee meetings shall be called quarterly to transact the business of the committee and to formulate a written report to the Consistory. Other meetings shall be called as needed to effect the work of the committee.

F. Purpose of Committees

1. Altar Guild

- a. To be responsible for the weekly Altar flower and bulletin charts.
 - i. Place orders for flowers or other chancel decorations for special occasions such as Christmas, Easter, Harvest Home, Palm Sunday, Advent, Memorial Day, Pentecost, Ascension Day, Reformation Day, and Baptisms.
 - ii. Choice of Florist shall be determined by the Altar Guild.
 - iii. Care for Altar vase and liners and distribution of Sunday Altar flowers.
 - iv. Payment for flowers and bulletins shall be placed in specified envelopes and placed in the offering plates.
- b. The changing and purchasing of Altar candles. The changing as appropriate of paraments.
- c. Weekly organization of an acolyte schedule, out-fitting the acolyte, and give acolyte proper instructions.
- d. The regular care and maintenance of the chancel furniture and appointments.

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2. Christian Education

- a. To examine the broadest aspects of Christian Education with the goal of developing knowledge of Christianity among present and prospective members.
- b. The Christian Education staff shall consist of a superintendent, recording secretary, teachers, and two (2) representatives from the congregation who are nominated by the nominating committee.
- c. To administer all educational programs of the church which shall reflect the current needs of the congregation including Vacation Bible School.
- d. Shall be guided by norms and standards established by a consensus of the Christian Education committee; organize and carry out special Sunday school programs for Christmas, Easter, Promotion Sunday and at other times when it is appropriate.
- e. Shall prepare and submit all budgetary expenses for inclusion in the annual proposed budget.

3. Communications and Marketing

- a. To increase community awareness and encourage members and non-member participation in church events and programs.
- b. To oversee the church calendar to avoid scheduling conflicts.
- c. To maintain information tower and event sign with current/relevant information
- d. To utilize various media outlets such as print, radio, television, signs, flyers, internet and other means deemed appropriate and cost effective.

4. Evangelism

- a. To deepen the faith and quicken the spiritual life of every member.
- b. To make the local community aware of the church and its programs, attend to greeting cards, a working prayer chain, and advertising.
- c. To seek out the unchurched in the community.

5. Finance

- a. To promote the support of local and world mission.
- b. To promote the support of the budget.
- c. To develop an annual budget to be presented first for Consistorial acceptance or revision, then to be presented for approval at the annual congregational meeting.

6. Fund Raising

- a. It shall be the policy of this church to allow groups, committees and organizations to raise funds through the sales of products and/or services subject to the approval of the Consistory.
- b. Shall be responsible for all activities and programs for raising funds for the church with all monies to be deposited in the general fund of the church treasury.
- c. Money raised by fund raising will be considered income and will be used to defray the church expenses as the Consistory deems appropriate.
- d. Activities can include but not limited to sandwich/soup/pizza/candy/bake sales; bar b-ques; dinners, bus trips, and special events (i.e. toy run)
- e. All other committees and organizations raising money for the church will inform and seek permission of the Consistory.

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7. Health and Wellness

- a. To motivate people in combating various health concerns.
- b. Sponsor blood drives, awareness walks/runs, health moments and encourage participation throughout the church and community.

8. Memorial

- a. The Memorial Committee shall be responsible for educating the congregation regarding planned giving, or authorizing disposition of gifts received according to church policies, and for overseeing the prudent management of the Memorial Fund of Good Shepherd.
- b. The committee may request other members of the congregation to serve as advisory members.
- c. Recommendations to hold, sell, exchange, rent, lease, transfer, convert, invest, reinvest, and in all other respects to manage and control the assets of the Memorial Fund, including stocks, bonds, mortgages, notes, or other securities, as in their judgement and discretion they deem wise and prudent, are to be made by the committee for approval by the Consistory, with subsequent execution by the delegated member of the committee.
- d. Receipts of gifts, bequests, and memorials shall be used upon the initiative of the family or the church to provide appointments, equipment, etc. as needed or desired.
- e. All gifts received in forms of property other than cash will be converted to cash at its fair market value as soon as practical.
- f. The church reserves the right to refuse any gift.

9. Nominating

- a. To secure nominees for Elder, Deacon, Youth Deacon, Standing and Special Committee Members.
- b. Nominations will be accepted from the committees, from church members, and from the Consistory to create a pool of potential nominees and/or officers upon which the nominating committee can draw to fill vacancies.
- c. First considerations for replacement shall be given to nominations from the committee having a vacancy.
- d. The nominating committee will post yearly a current listing of all committees and/or officers on the church bulletin board in the Narthex.

10. Personnel

- a. Shall devise and keep current a job description for employees of the church including but not limited to pastor, organist, choir director, secretary, and sexton.
- b. Shall recommend qualified individuals for these positions with the exception of pastor for the Consistory and/or congregation's approval.
- c. Shall act as a liaison between employee and members of the congregation including other employees, the pastor, or the Consistory handling appropriately criticisms and concerns.
- d. Shall annually evaluate job performance and make recommendations to the budget committee regarding increase in financial compensation.

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11. Property

- a. To schedule grounds and building improvements, repairs and maintenance as required or suggested, cost subject to the approval of the Consistory.
- b. To arrange for taking of annual inventory of church property including furnishings.
- c. To become familiar with the mechanical and electrical systems involved with the church building and/or buildings.

12. Social Ministry

- a. The Social Ministry Committee shall be responsible for the organization of social and fellowship functions, funeral luncheons, and receptions.
- b. The Social Ministry Committee shall be responsible for the outreach ministry of the church to those church members and others in the community in time of crisis and need.

13. Spiritual Council

- a. The Spiritual Council shall consist of the Pastor(s) and the Elders currently in office.
- b. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum.
- c. The Pastor of the congregation shall be the chairperson. If there is no pastor, one of the Elders may be chosen as temporary chairperson. A head Elder shall be selected to keep records of all proceeding, and dispatch all communications in the affairs of the Spiritual Council.
- d. The Spiritual Council shall exercise the spiritual oversight of the entire congregation. Particular concern shall be exercised in the admission and exclusion of members for the congregation. It shall meet with all applicants for membership in the congregation and admit into membership those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and seek Christian living.
- e. The Spiritual Council shall administer the discipline of the church. Elders shall admonish the impenitent and those who neglect their duties as members.
- f. In exercise of its responsibility, the Spiritual Council shall name such committees as necessary to fulfill its task.
- g. Together with the Pastor, and in relation to the Christian Education Committee, the Spiritual Council shall give special concern to overseeing of the Confirmation program for youth and adults.

14. Stewardship

- a. Shall annually review the contributions through church envelopes.
- b. Shall educate the congregation regarding stewardship in all its forms (i.e. financial, ecological, time management, etc.).
- c. Shall solicit faith promises from the congregation in regard to yearly contributions.

15. Worship and Music

- a. To assist the Pastor in determining the forms of worship to be used.
- b. To assist in initiation of musical programs.

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G. Special Committees

1. Constitution and By-laws

- a. A Constitution and By-laws Committee shall be appointed by the Consistory when it is deemed appropriate to review the Constitution and/or the By-laws of the church, or when it becomes incumbent upon the congregation to consider amendments to the Constitution or By-laws.

2. Auditing

- a. An Auditing Committee shall be appointed yearly by the Consistory to audit the church and church organizations' financial records.
- b. Audits should be conducted biannually.

3. Pastoral Search

- a. It shall be the responsibility of the committee appointed by the Consistory to seek a candidate for a vacancy in the office of Pastor.
- b. As soon as a pastoral vacancy occurs it shall be reported to the conference executive.
- c. In filling a vacancy or in securing supply or interim pastors for the period of vacancy, the committee shall seek the counsel of the conference placement committee. The committee shall seek approval and recommendation of the Church and Ministry Committee of Penn Northeast Conference of the United Church of Christ for any pastor with good standing in the United Church of Christ.
- d. The committee shall present to the church the name of the candidate it recommends to fill the vacancy. A favorable vote of the church, as defined in the By-laws, constitutes a call.

Article III. Pastor(s)

- A. In the call, the terms of the relationship shall be stated including the agreement of the church to participate in the pension fund of the United Church of Christ, the ministers' health insurance programs, and other terms agreed between the candidate and the committee. The minister, the church, and the conference executive shall each receive a copy of the call.
- B. When a minister accepts a call to this church, the church and newly called minister shall join in requesting the conference to arrange for a service of installation. A report of this service shall be signed by the conference executive, and copies shall be sent to the secretary of the United Church of Christ and to the Office for Church Life and Leadership.
- C. The minister shall be elected for an indefinite period. In order to terminate this relationship, three (3) months notice shall be given by either party, unless by mutual agreement the period is shortened. The procedure shall be in accordance with the Constitution and By-laws of the United Church of Christ.
- D. When either party decides to terminate the relationship the termination shall be by action of the Consistory, and notice of such termination shall be sent by the President of the Consistory to the conference executive for appropriate action.
- E. Discipline of the Pastor shall be in conformity with the Constitution any By-laws of the United Church of Christ. If the Pastor loses his/her standing in the United Church of Christ, he/she can no longer serve as the Pastor of Good Shepherd Church.
- F. The Church may at its discretion choose an associate or assistant pastor(s).
- G. No other pastor can perform any sacrament, rite, or ministerial act in Good Shepherd without the consent of the Pastor and/or Consistory.

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Article IV. Property

- A.** The church may in its corporate name sue and be sued and acquire by purchase, gift, devise, bequest, or otherwise and own, hold, invest, re-invest, or dispose of property both real and personal for such work as the Church may undertake, and may purchase, own, receive, hold, manage, care for, and transfer, rent, lease, mortgage or otherwise encumber, sell, assign, transfer and convey such property for the general purpose of the Church; it may receive and hold in trust both real and personal property, and invest and re-invest the same, and make any contracts for promoting the objects and purposes of the Church.
- B.** Upon dissolution of the church, its assets and all property and interests of which it owns 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 Penn Northeast Conference of the United Church. (This is not required by the General Synod, and we want to make it plain that the United Church stands firmly on Article 21 of the Constitution, but under the internal revenue service regulations, if there is not a specific disavowal that the assets on dissolution will be distributed to the membership, the church will not qualify as an exempt organization. See internal revenue Code Sec. 501 (C) (3) and the regulations there under.)

Article V. Revised Rules Of Order

- A.** Robert's Rules of Order, revised, shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by this Constitution and/or By-laws.

Article VI. Amendments

- A.** Amendments to this Constitution and By-laws may be made at any duly called church meeting by a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present, public announcement of the text of the proposed amendment(s) having been made two (2) weeks prior to the meeting.

Good Shepherd United Church of Christ Congregation
Revised January 2009