**CHURCH OF THE APOSTLES, UCC**

**BY-LAWS**

This Church acknowledges Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Savior, as its sole head. The Church of the Apostles United Church of Christ believes in its mission to welcome and include people as they are, serve compassionately, and champion social and environmental justice.

1. Membership

Church of the Apostles seeks persons who have been baptized or desire to be baptized members of the Church.

1. Members
2. Members are individuals who have been baptized and have made a public profession of faith to this congregation.
3. They may serve in leadership roles in the church.
4. They have voice and vote in congregational meetings.
5. They may represent the congregation on the Church Board and denominational bodies of the wider church.
6. Responsibilities and Limitations
7. Regularly participate in worship, Holy Communion, and prayer.
8. Generously contribute time, talent, and treasure toward the congregation ministry and mission.
9. Proclaim the Gospel in word and deed.
10. Strive to live by the Covenant for Christian Living included in the Policy Manual.
11. Members of the Church shall not be permitted to serve as paid office administration staff.
12. Membership Transfers
13. Any member may request and be granted a letter of transfer drafted by the Pastor.
14. Friends of Church of the Apostles
15. Friends are non-members who have special status within the Church and have limited rights. They are not counted for official statistics of membership.
16. Rights include voice without vote at congregational meetings, serving on ministry teams, inclusion in a Church Directory.
17. Friends’ Limits preclude serving as paid administrative staff, serving on the Church Board, and representing Church of the Apostles to the wider Church.
18. Governing Body

Full members assembled in meeting shall be the governing body of the Church. Friends of the Church are welcome at the meetings but shall not have a vote.

1. Meeting Conduct
2. In all Congregational, Board and other Church meetings Robert’s Rules of Order shall be followed.
3. Any matter brought before the members assembled in a meeting shall be acted upon by the full members present and voting unless the subject is proposed amendments to the By-Laws or the call or release of a Pastor.
4. A quorum, defined as 15% of the full members of the Church, shall be required to conduct business unless an exception is mentioned in this document.

4.The presiding officer shall determine a quorum of eligible voters.

1. Congregational Meetings
2. The congregation shall meet at least annually, no later than the 4th Sunday in November and on a date set by the Board to:
3. Act on the annual budget.
4. Elect new Board members.
5. Conduct any business that may be brought before the congregation.
6. The Board may call special meetings of the congregation but the only items of business may be that which was specifically mentioned in the meeting notice.
7. Ten (10) days written notice shall be given of all meetings of the congregation unless otherwise specified in these By-Laws.
8. Board

The administrative and planning body of the Church shall be the Board.

1. Membership
2. The Board shall consist of seven (7) full members who shall be elected by the congregation at the annual meeting.
3. For 2025 there will be nine (9) members as we need a year to arrive at the lesser number though natural attrition. In 2026 we will have attained seven (7) members.
4. Members of the Board shall serve a term of three (3) years and shall be eligible for re-election. After two (2) consecutive terms, a period of one (1) year should elapse before re-election to the Board.
5. The Pastor(s) and the Church Administrator shall participate ex-officio in the business of the Board unless otherwise stated in these by-laws.
6. The Nomination Process
7. Before the end of June, the President of the Board shall appoint a Nominating Committee which includes the Vice-President who shall chair the committee. The committee needs approval by the majority of the Board and the Pastor(s) shall represent the staff at the Nominating Committee meetings. One (1) year or more of Church membership is necessary for election to the Board.
8. The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of nominees equal to the number of vacancies on the Board. The slate must be submitted to the congregation at least two (2) weeks prior to the Annual Meeting in preparation for an election.
9. Election
10. Election to the Board shall occur at the Annual Meeting with the slate of nominees being presented to the congregation for a vote of approval.
11. Additional nominations may be received from the floor at the Annual Meeting if the person being nominated has agreed to serve. These names may then be added to the ballot to be included in the vote.
12. If a vacancy of the Board occurs during the year, the President shall appoint a full member to fill that seat. These appointments need to have a two-third approval from the Board to accept the appointment.
13. Those appointed by the President to fill unexpired terms may be elected to two (2) consecutive terms provided the unexpired term was one (1) year or less.
14. Board Meeting Conduct
15. The Board shall meet at least six (6) times a year and shall be subject to the call of the President. Notice of a Board meeting shall be made at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance. Board meetings are open to the congregation.
16. A quorum of the Board shall be considered as two-thirds of its members.
17. Any motion brought before the Board shall require for approval a majority vote from those members present unless otherwise stated herein.
18. Responsibilities and Limitations

1.The Board is responsible for setting Church policies. Proposals for policies may be initiated by a Board member, a member of the congregation, or by a Staff member or the Pastor(s).

2.The Board is also responsible for the planning process and a portion of every meeting will be dedicated to long range plans and discussions of the future.

3.The Board, in conjunction with the Pastor(s) input, shall evaluate the staffing needs of the congregation and propose a model for the Administration of the Church, including Pastoral Staff, to be approved by the congregation. The Staff shall have the authority and responsibilities delegated by these by-laws and by their job descriptions.

1. A vote of ninety (90) percent approval of the total Board shall be required in order to forward to the congregation a candidate recommendation in the calling or hiring of a Pastor.
2. A recommendation to the congregation of dismissal of a Pastor shall require a two-thirds vote of the total Board.
3. The Board shall submit an annual budget to the congregation for approval at the Annual Meeting.
4. The Board may authorize up to $50,000 in unbudgeted expense or debt. Any amount exceeding this will need approval from the congregation.
5. The President of the Board may, with the approval of the majority of the Board, appoint other ad hoc or standing committees deemed necessary for the Board to function.
6. The President of the Board shall appoint two (2) members as delegates to both the Conference and Association meetings.
7. Officers of the Board
8. Members of the Board shall elect a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer at its December meeting for the following year. The incoming members of the Board shall participate in the vote but the outgoing members will not. The term for an officer shall be one (1) year, with the eligibility of re-election for one more year. The Treasurer ‘s term shall coincide with their entire term on the Board. The four officers shall also act as officers of the congregation.

 a. The Board president shall preside over the December meeting unless he/she is being considered for a second term. In that case he/she shall relinquish the floor to another Board officer who shall conduct the meeting.

1. Committee and Ministry Teams

A vital part of any Church is the membership who performs the ministries consistent with any Church’s mission. We refer to them as Ministry Teams.

A. Creation of a Ministry Team

1.Our definition of a Ministry Team is “…wherever two or more are gathered…..” Matthew 18:20. When a member chooses a ministry that he/she would like to perform, they should ask another person to also participate with them. The Pastor shall determine whether their vision is consistent with our ministry and mission. If a second person cannot be found to be part of a Team, it will cease to exist.

2.The Ministry Teams will be supported by the Church with its time, talent, and treasure.

 B. Responsibilities

1. Ministry Teams will report the results of their ministry work directly to the Pastor(s) or the Church Administrator assigned to them.

2. A request for any funds needed will be submitted to the Pastor(s) or Church Administrator.

3. Information regarding the results of a MinistryTeam will be communicated to the Board on a monthly basis and to the congregation at least annually by the Pastor(s) and/or the Church Administrator.

C. Ministry Team membership shall be open to full members and to Friends of the Church.

D. Standing Committees

 1. Finance and Property committees will be retained as standing administrative committees reporting directly to the Board. They will be chaired by Staff members.

1. Pastors
2. Call of a Pastor
3. The congregation shall call a Pastor by an affirmative vote of ninety (90) percent of the votes cast.
4. Release of a Pastor
	1. In the event that a Pastoral relationship is ending, a written statement of two (2) months’ notice shall be given to all parties affected, subject to the terms of the call contract.
5. Vacancy of Pastoral Position
6. In the event of a vacancy, the Board shall appoint a Pastoral Search Committee of at least six (6) full members of the Church. The Search Committee shall be charged with nominating a candidate to fill the vacancy.
7. The Board may also recommend to the congregation for approval, that a period of interim ministry occur.
8. Pastoral Responsibilities
9. The Pastor shall provide services in accordance with the staffing model and applicable job descriptions and be accountable to the Board.
10. No one shall perform any religious ceremonies in the Church without the consent of the Pastor (s).
11. In addition to their job descriptions, the pastor (s) are the bridge between the ministry teams and the Board by communicating the ministries accomplished by the teams at the Board meetings, whether by written report or by voice.
12. The Pastor (s) will appoint, with input from the President, a committee to handle relationships between members, members and staff, members and Pastor (s) and any other relationship in the Church that could benefit from additional care.
13. The Pastor (s) may appoint ad hoc committees to assist them at their discretion.
14. The Pastor (s) and the Church Administrator will assess the performance of the other staff members annually. The Pastor (s) will be assessed on their performance by the Board annually in addition to a mutual assessment of the Board and the Church Administrator and Pastor (s).
15. Church Year

The Church fiscal and governance year shall be from January 1st to December 31st.

1. Amendments

Amendments to these By-laws shall be presented in writing at any meeting of the Board. Upon an affirmative vote from a majority of the total Board, a special meeting of the congregation shall be called, giving thirty (30) days written notice to allow consideration of the proposed amendment. By a two-thirds vote of the full members present at any subsequently called meeting of the congregation, the proposed amendment may be changed, adopted or rejected.

 Council approved amendments to the By-laws on September 16, 2024 and the congregation approved amendments on …..

Council approved amendments referring them to the congregation. The congregation approved amendments on September 20, 2020. .

 Council approved amendments October 21, 2013, and the congregation approved all amendments on December 8, 2013.

 Council approved revisions and the congregation approved all revisions September 19, 2010.

 Council approved September 24, 2007, and congregation approved on November 18, 2007.

 Council approved June 19, 2006, and congregation approved August 13, 2006.

 2004 Council approved and the Congregation approved amendments.