

Constitution and Bylaws  
of the  
Pleasant Hill Community  
United Church of Christ

Adopted December 17, 2017



**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF PLEASANT HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH,  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
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**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF PLEASANT HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH,  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**-----CONSTITUTION -----**

**ARTICLE I            NAME**

The name of this church shall be the Pleasant Hill Community Church, United Church of Christ. It is located in Pleasant Hill, Cumberland County, Tennessee.

**ARTICLE II            PURPOSE, FAITH, AFFILIATION, MISSION STATEMENT**

**Section A.    Purpose**

This Congregation provides members, friends, and neighbors opportunity to: worship God; understand and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ; participate in the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion; extend Christian fellowship and unity within this Congregation and the Church Universal; and live in a Christ-centered community as people of God: rendering loving service, working for universal justice, peace, and the integrity of creation, studying and interpreting the Bible, aware that God is still speaking.

**Section B.    Faith**

This Congregation acknowledges as its sole Head, Jesus the Christ. It acknowledges as kindred in Christ all who share faith in God. It looks to the Word of God in the Scriptures and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to prosper its creative and redemptive work in the world. It claims as its own the faith of the historic Church expressed in the ancient creeds and reclaimed in the basic insights of the Protestant Reformers. It affirms the responsibility of the Church in each generation to make this faith its own. It recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion.

**Section C.    Affiliation**

This Congregation shall be a part of the United Church of Christ as described in portions of the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ adopted July 4, 1961 and subsequently amended. To sustain that relationship, it shall subscribe to those portions of the Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ relating to all local churches. Further, as a Congregation of the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ, this Congregation shall also subscribe to the Bylaws of that Conference.

The governance of this Congregation is vested in its members, who exercise the right of control in all of its affairs; subject, however, to the Laws governing not-for-profit corporations.

**Section D. Mission Statement**

The Pleasant Hill Community Church is a congregation of the United Church of Christ witnessing to the teachings and ministry of Jesus the Christ.

This local Congregation is committed to being a Just Peace, Open and Affirming, Whole Earth, Global Mission congregation inviting all God's children into its ministry of peacemaking, healing, compassionate outreach, environmental consciousness, and extravagant welcome.

**ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP**

Membership shall be open to any baptized person who acknowledges faith in Jesus the Christ, upon recommendation by the pastor, and affirmation of the Council. Membership may be accomplished by one of the following ways: Confirmation, Profession of Faith, Reaffirmation of Faith; or Letter of Transfer from another church. New members are received in a regular worship service, unless waived by the Council.

**ARTICLE IV GOVERNANCE**

The absolute legislative and administrative power of the Congregation is vested in the Congregation itself, assembled in meeting duly and legally called as stated in the Bylaws.

It is the prerogative of the Congregation to decide such questions as the buying, selling, and receiving of real property; building projects; the call and dismissal of a Pastor; Congregation policies; and changes in the Constitution and Bylaws. For the transaction of all other business, the responsibility of the Congregation is entrusted to the Church Council chosen and composed as provided for in the Bylaws.

The Church Council (henceforth called the Council) shall consist of members of the Congregation. This body shall have such authority as is designated to it by the Constitution and Bylaws, and the Congregation. The Council is composed of the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, and the Minister for each of the Core Ministries as described in the Bylaws. The Pastor serves as ex officio with voice and no vote.

**ARTICLE V OFFICIAL GATHERINGS FOR CONGREGATION BUSINESS**

Gatherings for Congregation Business shall be called by the Council, following the procedures addressed in the Bylaws. A quorum for a Gathering for Congregation Business shall be one-third of the membership known by the Clerk to live within a fifty mile radius of the church. A Gathering for Congregation Business shall conduct appropriate business using *Roberts Rules of Order (most recent edition)*, unless otherwise determined.

A two-thirds vote of membership present and voting is required to: Amend the Constitution; Call a pastor; Dismiss a pastor; Enter into a major capital campaign;

Buy or sell church real estate; or Dissolve the Congregation. Unless otherwise specified in this document or voted by the Congregation, all other shall be by majority vote of the membership present and voting.

**ARTICLE VI            OFFICERS**

The Officers of the Congregation shall be: Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, and Treasurer. The Officers shall be elected by the Congregation as provided for in the Bylaws.

**ARTICLE VII         THE PASTOR**

The Congregation shall call only a minister who has ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ or approved by the Southeast Conference.

The Pastor shall be called by the Congregation upon recommendation of a Pastoral Search Team, as described in the Bylaws. A two-thirds majority of the members present and voting at a Congregational Special Gathering is required for extending a Call. Acceptance of the Call by the minister constitutes a pastor-congregation covenant.

The Pastor is called for an indefinite period. Termination of this relationship is by pastoral resignation or by congregational dismissal. A two-thirds majority of members present and voting at a Congregational Special Gathering is necessary for dismissal. A sixty-day notice shall be given by either party unless otherwise agreed to by both parties.

**Article VIII            PROPERTY AND DISSOLUTION OF THE CONGREGATION**

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 property, real or personal, with power to mortgage, sell, or convey the same.

Should a division occur within the membership of the Congregation, all money, property, and other assets shall remain with that part of the Congregation which continues its affiliation with the United Church of Christ.

In the event that the members of this Congregation vote for dissolution of the Congregation, all real estate, properties, goods, monies, and funds belonging to this Congregation shall, after payment of any indebtedness, bills, and claims, become the property of the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ, subject only to such limitation as may be provided in any bequests or other gifts making up the invested reserves of the Congregation. The associate members will be denied a vote for dissolution.

**ARTICLE IX            AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

Amendments to the Constitution shall be referred to the congregation by the Council or by ten members. Amendments shall be submitted to the Clerk in writing at least two months in advance of the Annual Gathering or a Special

Gathering called for this purpose. A Gathering for Covenant may be helpful preceding the gathering at which the decision(s) will be made. Copies of the proposed amendments shall be made available to the membership at least two Sundays prior to the Annual or Special Gathering at which they are to be considered.

The quorum for a Special Gathering called for the purpose of amending the Constitution or Bylaws shall be one-third of the membership of the Congregation known by the Clerk to live within a fifty mile radius of the church. The decision to amend the Constitution shall be made by at least a two-thirds vote of the membership present and voting. Changes to the Bylaws require a majority vote of the membership present and voting.

\*\*\*\*\*BY-LAWS\*\*\*\*\*

**ARTICLE I MEMBERSHIP**

**Section A. Categories of Membership**

There are three categories of membership

1. A member is a person under Article III in the Constitution whose primary church relationship is in this Congregation.
2. An associate member is a person under Article III who maintains a primary relationship in another church, but who wishes to participate in the ministries and activities of this Congregation. Associate members have all the duties and rights of members, except they shall not be: Reported to the Conference for inclusion in the *United Church of Christ* Yearbook; Granted a letter of transfer to another church; Granted a vote on dissolution of the Congregation.
3. Inactive members are members or associate members who have a long-unknown address or not participated in the life of the Congregation as determined by the Council (see Article 1 Section D for more details).

**Section B. Expectations**

All members under Article III of the Constitution are encouraged within their abilities to be faithful in their response as followers of Jesus the Christ including:

1. Participate in worship services.
2. Support the Congregation and its mission financially.
3. Participate in Congregation business gatherings.
4. Encourage the spiritual well-being of other Congregation members and of the larger human family.
5. Share in the common work and mission of the Congregation in both its local and global expression.

**Section C. Termination of Membership**

Membership is terminated on recommendation by the Pastor and action of the Council:

1. When a member requests a letter of transfer to another church, indicating whether or not the member wishes to maintain an associate membership in this Congregation. A letter of transfer will not be provided for an associate member.
2. When a member unites with another church without requesting a letter of transfer.
3. When a member or associate member submits a written request.

**Section D. Inactive Membership Status**

1. Upon recommendation of the Pastor and action of the Council, the clerk shall put on an inactive members list any member that fits the description in Article I A.3. of the Bylaws.
2. Inactive members shall forfeit all the rights and privileges of



- membership, and shall not be included as part of a quorum.
3. Inactive members shall not be reported to the Conference for inclusion in the United Church of Christ Yearbook.
  4. The clerk shall restore inactive members to their previous membership upon recommendation of the Pastor and action of the Council.

## **ARTICLE II            GATHERINGS OF THE CONGREGATION**

### **Section A.    Gatherings for Worship**

Worship service on Sundays and at other times, scheduling for Holy Communion and Baptisms shall be determined by the Pastor in conjunction with the Council. The Pastor and the Council may cancel gatherings for worship because of inclement weather or other sufficient reasons, notifying members.

### **Section B.    Gatherings for Covenant**

Gatherings for Covenant may be called by the Council. No formal business or decision-making procedures shall be part of such gatherings. Gatherings for Covenant may include, but are not limited to gatherings called for growing together through fellowship, music, service, or celebration; for communicating information, airing of views, and generating new ideas; to prepare for special business gatherings, projects, or planning.

### **Section C.    Gatherings for Business**

1. General Procedure
  - a. Gatherings for Business shall be called by the Council.
  - b. The Clerk shall publish notices of the date and time of a Gathering for Congregation Business on at least two Sundays in advance of the gathering.
  - c. The Pastor and Moderator shall determine postponement of a Gathering for Congregation business due to inclement weather or other sufficient cause, notify members, and announce the alternate date.
2. The Administration and Finance Gathering: Additional procedures
  - a. The Administration and Finance Gathering shall be held annually no later than a date in early December decided by the Council no later than its regular October meeting.
  - b. This gathering for business shall adopt an annual Mission Spending Plan (budget) that shall take effect the following January 1.
  - c. This Gathering for Business shall elect officers and Ministers for the Core Ministries to assume office on the first day following the next Annual Gathering.
  - d. Other items of business may be part of the agenda.
3. Annual Gathering: additional procedures
  - a. The date of the Annual Gathering shall normally be in late January, to be decided by the Council no later than at its regular November meeting.

- b. The Annual Gathering shall receive written reports of Officers, Core Ministries, and Action Teams. These shall be available to be distributed by the clerk at least seven days before the Annual Gathering.
4. Special Gatherings: additional procedures
- a. A Special Gathering for Business shall be called by the clerk upon the written request by the Pastor, the Moderator, or by ten members. The request shall include the purpose and a proposed date.
  - b. The call for the gathering must be issued at least two Sundays before the proposed date of the gathering.
  - c. The call for the gathering shall specify the motion(s) to be acted upon. Only matters directly related to the motion(s) shall be considered at that time. As general policy, one or more Gatherings for Covenant (Article II. B.) for open discussion may be held before a Special Gathering is held.

### **Article III            Officers**

#### **Section A.    The Moderator**

The Moderator is elected by the Congregation for a two-year term and can be re-elected for successive 1-year terms.

Responsibilities:

1. Be a member of the Council.
2. Prepare an agenda and preside at all Gatherings for Business and Special Gatherings.
3. Prepare an agenda and preside at meetings of the Council.
4. Receive any resignation of a Council member in writing.
5. Assist the Pastor to guide the Congregation in making long-range plans as well as coordinating current emphases and schedules.
6. Serve as a delegate, if possible, to Annual Meetings of the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ.
7. Perform other duties assigned by the Council or the Congregation.

#### **Section B.    The Vice-Moderator**

The Vice-Moderator shall be elected by the congregation for a two-year term and can be re-elected for successive 1-year terms.

Responsibilities:

1. Be a member of the Council.
2. Serve as Minister for Leadership Development, leading the Leadership Development Recruitment Team and the Human Resources Team.
3. Perform the duties of the Moderator in that officer's absence and any other duties assigned by the Council or the congregation.

#### **Section C.    The Clerk**

The Clerk is elected by the congregation for a two-year term and can be re-elected for successive 1-year terms.

Responsibilities:

1. Be a member of the Council.

2. Acts as secretary of the Congregation, determining quorum, taking minutes of the Gatherings for Covenant, Gatherings for Business, the Annual Gathering, and Special Gatherings.
3. Acts as secretary of the Council, determining quorum, taking minutes and following up with correspondence as requested by the Council.
4. Oversees the register of members with the following information: Addresses; Dates and modes of reception; Dates and modes of dismissal; Baptisms; Marriages; Deaths; Status: active, associate, inactive.
5. Oversees requests for letters of transfer for new members and letters of transfer to other churches.
6. Oversees the sharing of church statistics and information requested by the Southeast Conference and National Office of the United Church of Christ.
7. Performs such other duties as are prescribed by law or which usually pertain to the office of a clerk of an assembly.

**Section D. The Treasurer**

The Treasurer shall be elected by the congregation for a term of 2-year term and can be re-elected for successive 1-year terms.

Responsibilities:

1. Be a member of the Council.
2. Oversee the secure receipt of all funds; and establish procedures of financial record-keeping, the payment of personnel, and the regular payment of all expenses of the church.
3. Oversee the distribution of dedicated funds and invested funds as directed by the Council, honoring the intentions/directions of donors.
4. Oversee the establishment and fulfillment of financial policies and procedures as described in the Operating Guidelines.
5. Share in the preparation of the annual Mission Spending Plan (budget) as a member of the Financial Stewardship's Budget Development Team.

**Article IV The Pastor**

**Section A. Procedures for Calling a Pastor**

1. The Council shall be responsible to provide interim pastoral services when necessary.
2. The Clerk shall report a vacancy in the pastorate without delay to the Conference Minister of the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ.
3. The Council shall then propose to the Congregation, for election at a Special Gathering, the names of seven members of the Congregation who are representative of the life of the Congregation for a Pastoral Search Team. The Council shall designate the chair from among the seven elected.

4. The Pastoral Search Team will follow the process as developed and recommended by the Southeast Conference and the United Church of Christ.
5. When preparing a profile describing the Pleasant Hill Community Church, the Pastoral Search Team shall consult broadly across the congregation.
6. In preparing the terms of the Call to a pastor, the Pastoral Search Team shall consult the Council.
7. At a Special Gathering called for that purpose the terms of the Call as proposed by the Pastoral Search Team and the election of the candidate for Pastor proposed by that Team, shall be considered for action. Voting to elect a Pastor shall be by written ballot. A two-thirds affirmative vote of members present and voting is required.
8. A copy of the Letter of Call as adopted shall be furnished to the Clerk, the Conference Minister, and the newly-elected Pastor.

**Section B. Responsibilities**

1. The Pastor is the spiritual leader and teacher of the congregation: developing and leading worship; working with the Worship and Spiritual Development Core Ministry; working with the music leadership, administering the sacraments, providing pastoral care and visitation.
2. The Pastor serves as the principal administrative officer, supervising staff according to the personnel policies as well as overseeing the overall operations of the church office.
3. The Pastor serves as ex officio member with voice and no vote of the Council, preparing monthly reports for the Council and an Annual Pastoral report.
4. The Pastor will participate on the Pastoral Relations Team and be a member of the Leadership Development Recruitment Team.
5. The Pastor is also expected to participate in the wider church, through the Southeast Conference and ecumenical agencies as time and interest permits.

**Section C. Procedures for Terminating a Pastorate**

1. The Pastor, desiring to terminate the relationship, shall present the resignation in writing to the Council, giving at least sixty days' notice.
2. If the congregation or Council desires to terminate the relationship with the Pastor, the Moderator shall seek the assistance of the Southeast Conference Minister to determine what action should be taken.
3. The loss of ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ by the Pastor terminates the pastoral relationship.
4. The Congregation, by a two-thirds vote at a Special Gathering called for that purpose, may terminate the relationship with the Pastor to take effect in not more than sixty days.

## **Article V CHURCH COUNCIL**

### **Section A. Composition and Quorum**

1. The Council is composed of the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, the Minister for each of the Five Core Ministries (Minister for Worship and Spiritual Development, Minister for Justice and Mission, Minister for Congregational Life and Care, Minister for Financial Stewardship, Minister for Stewardship of Our Physical Resources), and Pastor, ex officio with voice and no vote.
2. The Council is installed by the Congregation.
3. A simple majority of serving Council members eligible to vote constitutes a quorum.

### **Section B. Responsibilities**

1. It shall be the responsibility and purpose of the Council to act for the Congregation between gatherings of the congregation, according to the Constitution and Bylaws.
2. The Council shall promote efficiency and effectiveness in the life and work of the Congregation through regular and specially called meetings of the Council.
3. The Council may make recommendations to the various Core Ministries and Program Areas and to the congregation.
4. The Council shall receive from the Clerk, within thirty days, the minutes of any Annual or Special Gathering of the Congregation for review and adoption.
5. The Council shall have general oversight of the mission and ministry of the Congregation.
6. The Council shall fulfill other responsibilities as described in other parts of the Constitution/Bylaws.
7. If a vacancy occurs on the Council, the Council shall seek the advice of the Leadership Development Recruitment Team and appoint a person to complete the unexpired term.

## **ARTICLE VI WIDER CHURCH CONNECTIONS**

The Congregation will support the ministry and mission of the United Church of Christ and the Southeast Conference through financial support and participation.

The Council, upon the recommendation of the Pastor and the Moderator, shall appoint the required number of official delegates and alternates to the meetings of the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ. Whenever possible, the Moderator of the Congregation shall serve as a delegate. Names of appointed delegates shall be reported to the congregation prior to any meeting of the Conference.

Members will be encouraged to participate in other Conference programs, including the Alabama/Tennessee Association.

The Council is responsible for sending church members to any agencies, organizations, or outreach programs that it deems important for Congregation participation. It shall be the responsibility of these members to report to the Council.

## **ARTICLE VII ORGANIZATION**

### **Section A. Definitions**

#### 1. Core Ministries

There are five Core Ministries: Worship and Spiritual Development, Justice and Mission, Congregational Life and Care, Financial Stewardship, Stewardship of Our Physical Resources (each described below). The first three Core Ministries include Program Areas and Action Teams. The latter two Core Ministries include Action Teams. Each Ministry is overseen by a Minister of that Core Ministry who is elected by the Congregation for a two-year term and can be re-elected for successive 1-year terms. Each Minister is a member of the Council.

#### 2. Program Areas

The Core Ministries of Worship and Spiritual Development, Congregational Life and Care, and Justice and Mission include various Program Areas, led by Program Area Coordinators. Program Area Coordinators are nominated by the Minister of the Core Ministry in consultation with the Leadership Development Recruitment Team and appointed by the Council for two-year terms and can be re-appointed for successive 1-year terms. The Coordinators are affirmed and installed by the Congregation. Program Areas may change as the Mission and Ministry of the Congregation changes.

#### 3. Action Teams

The work of the Program Areas is primarily done through Action Teams, some of which are ongoing and some are short-term or project-oriented. Action Team Leaders are recruited by the Program Area Coordinators and serve as long as they feel called and able to do the work of the Action Team.

### **Section B. Core Ministry Descriptions**

#### 1. Worship and Spiritual Development Ministry

This Ministry is responsible for working with the pastor to create and implement worship experiences, classes, retreats, and workshops for adults and children. It includes such Program Areas as Worship Logistics, Worship Planning, and Spiritual Development.

#### 2. Justice and Mission Ministry

This Ministry is responsible to assist the Congregation in responding to the needs in our local area and to the needs of the world. It includes

such Program Areas as Global Justice and Mission, Local Justice and Mission, and Radical Welcome.

3. **Congregational Life and Care Ministry**  
This Ministry is responsible for promoting care for each other, through providing one-on-one care; hospitality; and organizing a rich community life through activities. It includes such Program Areas as Congregational Care, Pastor-on-Call, Congregational Life, Communication, and Hospitality.
4. **Financial Stewardship Ministry**  
This Ministry is responsible for overseeing the management of the financial assets, including an annual Stewardship focus to support each year's budget. The Minister for Financial Stewardship will oversee the Action Teams addressing such areas as Investments, Endowments, and Planned Giving; Debt Management and Capital Planning; Stewardship; Insurance; Audit; and Budget Development.
5. **Stewardship of Our Physical Resources Ministry**  
This Ministry is responsible for the physical plant including the church building, the Community House and grounds, and Memorial Garden. The Minister for Stewardship of Our Physical Resources will oversee the Action Teams addressing this Core Ministry.

### **Section C. Essential Ongoing Teams**

1. **Leadership Development Recruitment Team:**  
The Team is led by the Vice-Moderator who serves as the Minister for Leadership Development, the Pastor, and three members who are elected by the congregation for two-year terms and can be re-elected for successive 1-year terms.  
Responsibilities:
  - a. Recruit members of the Council (Officers and Ministers of the Core Ministries), seeking to stagger terms so that there is some continuity on the Council.
  - b. Present the names to the Council who nominates them to the congregation for election and installation, providing opportunity to nominate from the floor.
  - c. Develop on-going leadership in the congregation through such things as job descriptions, guidelines, mentoring for positions, etc.
2. **Human Relations Team:**  
The Team is led by the Vice-Moderator who serves as the Minister of Leadership Development and appoints members of the Team.  
Responsibilities:
  - a. Develop and review annually a personnel policy document approved by the Council and containing the following:
    1. Employee job descriptions, hours and benefits.

2. Procedures for recruiting and hiring candidates.
  3. Procedures for review of employee performance.
  4. Procedures for terminating employee service.
- b. Implement the Personnel Policy
  - c. Oversee annual performance reviews of staff
  - d. Work with the pastor to make recommendations to the Council regarding salaries.
3. Pastoral Relations Team:  
The Team consists of the Pastor, 3 members chosen by the Pastor, and 2 members appointed by the Council. The work of the Team is confidential and does not involve program development or action.  
Responsibilities:
    - a. Provide support to the Pastor
    - b. Assist in resolving issues that arise between members of the congregation and the Pastor
    - c. Meets no less than quarterly
  4. The Grab Thrift Shop Team  
Having originated with the Pleasant Hill Academy in the late 1800's, the Grab Thrift Shop is an outreach mission of the congregation and a shared project with the community. Its main purpose is to provide useable clothing at reasonable prices. The Team consists of members of the congregation appointed by the Justice and Mission Core Ministry and at least two members of the wider Pleasant Hill community. The Team is accountable to the Council through the Justice and Mission Core Ministry.  
Responsibilities:
    - a. Follow the policies and procedures for the Grab Thrift Shop as established in the Operating Guidelines for Pleasant Hill Community Church.
    - b. Ensure that the Grab Thrift Shop facility is maintained.
    - c. Oversee the financial aspect of the mission, following the fiscal policies and procedures of Pleasant Hill Community Church.

**Section D. Essential Ongoing Positions**

1. Assistant Treasurer  
The Assistant Treasurer shall be elected by the Congregation for a 2-year term and can be re-elected for successive 1-year terms. The Assistant Treasurer is not considered an Officer of the Congregation and does not serve on the Council, unless serving and acting as Church Treasurer as described in Section b. below.  
Responsibilities:
  - a. Is accountable to and assists the Treasurer.
  - b. Serve as Treasurer if the Treasurer is not able to fulfill his/her responsibilities.



- c. Create and Oversee the Financial Action Team that counts receipts and prepares the paperwork for deposits and entry into the accounting system.
- d. Serve as a member of the Budget Development Team

## **ARTICLE VIII            AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS**

Amendments to the Bylaws shall be referred to the Congregation by the Council or by ten members. Amendments shall be submitted to the Clerk in writing at least two months in advance of the Annual Gathering or a Special Gathering called for this purpose. A Gathering for Covenant may be helpful preceding the gathering at which decisions will be made. Copies of the proposed amendments shall be made available to the membership at least two Sundays prior to the Annual or Special Gathering at which they are to be considered.

The quorum for a Special Gathering called for the purpose of amending the Constitution shall be one-third of the membership of the Congregation known by the Clerk to live within a fifty mile radius of the church. Decisions to amend the Bylaws require a majority vote of the membership present and voting.