

St. Peter's By-the-Sea Presbyterian Church



ST. PETER'S BY-THE-SEA
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

St. Peter's By-the-Sea Presbyterian Church Candidate Profile

Returning your profile:

Please answer the questions set forth below and give the completed questionnaire to Zach Smith, email to zsmithhb@verizon.net or leave it at the church office.

You may also submit your response to the church office fax at 714 846-5901.

Your interview format, time and location

A Nominating Committee member will call you concerning the day, time and place for an Interview. The interview, which will be conducted by two representatives from the Nominating Committee, will take approximately 30-40 minutes and will consist of the following:

- Review of the candidate's profile
- Questions for the candidate
- Questions by the candidate
- Prayer for the candidate and the church body

Your Name: _____

Email: _____

Home Phone #: _____ Cell #: _____

Candidate for (specify elder or deacon): _____

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Please respond to the following questions in the space provided, or on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Describe your personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Please discuss your belief and trust in Him. Describe how you came to faith in Christ, your education as a Christian, Bible study and daily devotional habits, prayer life, small group participation, and other aspects of your relationship with Him.

2. Please describe your spiritual gifts and abilities that relate to ministry. What leads you to feel you have a calling to serve St. Peter's and in what capacity?

3. Please describe your hopes and desires for St. Peter's. Were you to serve in the position of Elder or Deacon, what would you personally hope to accomplish during this time?

4. Describe your past service in any church.

5. What are your views on stewardship and tithing? How do you apply these views in managing your time, talents and financial resources?

6. Will you commit to the St Peter's By-the-Sea Vision and Mission Statements and Resolutions (attached)?

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7. A candidate's occupation and outside activities give the church insights concerning the candidate's talents and time constraints. To the extent that you are comfortable please briefly describe your occupation and outside activities.

8. As you prayerfully consider serving, please review the Constitutional questions to elders and deacons:

- a. *Do you trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior, acknowledge him Lord of all and Head of the Church, and through him believe in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?*
- b. *Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you?*
- c. *Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God? (A copy can be provided upon request. See attached outline.)*
- d. *Will you fulfill your office in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions?*
- e. *Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?*
- f. *Will you in your own life seek to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, love your neighbors, and work for the reconciliation of the world?*
- g. *Do you promise to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church?*
- h. *Will you seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?*
- i. (For elder): *Will you be a faithful elder, watching over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service? Will you share in government and discipline, serving in governing bodies of the church and in your ministry; will you try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ?*

j. Do you agree with and will you faithfully abide by these Constitutional Questions to elders and deacons? Describe any concerns or questions you may have with these questions:

It is the policy of St. Peter's that each Elder and Deacon shall adhere to biblical standards of personal sexual behavior, including sexual fidelity within the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman, and chastity in singleness.

Thank you for your prayerful responses.

SPBTS Mission/Vision Statement:

“St. Peter’s is a family of faith that intentionally reaches out to our community with the love of Jesus Christ. Through God’s grace, we actively seek to lead our family and others into a personal relationship with Christ and to nurture that relationship through Spirit-led worship, biblically based teaching, purposeful discipleship and prayer.”

Essential Tenets and Reformed Distinctives Doctrine

The following question is one our ordination views:

“Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as Expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as lead the people of God? (Book of Order, G-14.0405b(3))

Every ordained Presbyterian – deacon, elder and minister – must respond “yes”, which means that they choose to respect, know, “sincerely receive and adopt” certain truths or doctrines that our Constitution calls “tenets”.

What are the essential tenets? The essential tenets are our foundation convictions, contained in our creeds and confessions that bear witness to God’s grace in Jesus Christ. “They guide the church in its study and interpretation of the Scriptures; they summarize the essence of Christian tradition; they direct the church in maintaining sound doctrines; they equip the church for its work of proclamation.” (G-2.01000(b))

Reformed Christians have never been at a loss to explain what they believe. It is a distinguishing mark of our heritage. Do Presbyterians really know what they believe? Yes. Is our theology so infinitely inclusive that any theological expression is permissible? No.

The following summary distills some 300 pages from the Book of Confessions to a helpful six essentials and seven distinctives. The summary is necessary for two reasons: 1) theology matters and 2) there is considerable confusion within many churches today, including our own Presbyterian Church (USA).

Essential Tenets

Authority of Scripture – The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are God’s uniquely revealed and written Word, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and are the church’s first and final authority in all areas of faith and life including, but not limited to, theological doctrine, mission, church order, character, and ethical behavior.

The Bible speaks to us with the authority of God himself. We seek to understand, love, follow, obey, surrender and submit to God’s Word – Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, and the Scripture, the written Word of God, which bear true and faithful witness to Jesus Christ.

Reference: Matthew 4:4; 1st Thessalonians 2:13; 11 Timothy 3:16-17

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What is NOT affirmed is any doctrine:

- That seeks to invalidate or subvert scriptural teaching concerning what is to be believed or how we are to live;
- That attempts to subordinate biblical authority to any human authority, cultural norm, or ideology as though the church should listen primarily to another voice than the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ as expressed in Scripture;
- That rejects as historical fact the witness of Scripture to the incarnation, birth, ministry, miracles, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ;
- That regards Scripture as subjectively, but not objectively, God's written Word, or that maintains the Scripture contain the Word of God, but are not in themselves the Word of God.

Jesus Christ is Lord of the church, and he rules the church through the written Word of Scripture, which is illuminated to humankind by the Holy Spirit.

God – We worship the one only living and true God who is revealed in the Bible and who is the source of all life, glory, goodness and blessedness.

With the holy catholic church in all ages, we confess the mystery of the holy Trinity – that there is one God alone, infinite and eternal, Creator of all things, who is one in essence or nature, yet who exist in a plurality of distinct persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

God in the beginning created the universe and everything in it for the manifestation of God's glory, eternal power, wisdom, and goodness. He is the sovereign ruler of creation, working all things according to the counsel of his omnipotent and righteous will. In gracious providence God continually upholds, directs, oversees, and governs creation – all creatures, actions, and things.

In sovereignty God has seen fit to accommodate free will among moral creatures, resulting in great cultural and cosmic good and terrible evil, disorder, and disobedience. Nevertheless, God is in no way the author of evil or sin, but continues to govern creation in such a way as to cause all things to work together.

God is a God of love. In grace, God chooses to show love and mercy. When we were dead in sin, God made us alive with Christ, saving us by grace through faith, as a sheer gift of sovereign love.

God and God alone is worthy of worship. We respond to God by consciously and intentionally seeking to declare, explore, celebrate, and submit to God's righteous and gracious kingship over all creation and over every aspect of our individual and corporate life.

Reference: Genesis 1; Exodus 20:4-5; John 14:26; Romans 1:23; Ephesians 1:7-11

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What is NOT affirmed is any doctrine:

- That denies this doctrine of God's triune nature, or refuses to confess the Trinity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
- That asserts that all religions are essentially true, that all religious beliefs are essentially in accord; or that the views of God held by the world's major religions are equally valid;
- That confesses or celebrates belief in multiple gods or goddesses, or that identifies God as a goddess, or that worships God's uncreated glory through idols images representing creatures or creation.

Sin – Human beings were created by God in God's own image – in true righteousness and holiness – to know, love, and obey God and be righteous stewards of the creation. Our earliest forebears, instead of acknowledging, worshiping, and obeying God, became disobedient sinners and brought sin and death upon themselves and all creation.

There is now a radical brokenness and corruption in human nature that is the result of and results in sin. Sin is rebellion against God. No human effort can fully resolve or redeem this defect. Sin is destructive, contagious, parasitical, polluting and disabling. Human beings are sinners by nature, by influence, by choice and by action.

Human beings are in bondage to sin and subject to God's holy judgment. Without God's intervening grace and salvation, they are lost and condemned.

Reference: Genesis 1:26-27; Matthew 15:19-20; Romans 3:10-23; 5:18-19; 7-18-23

What is NOT affirmed is:

- The notion that human nature is basically good and self-redeemable through good effort, discipline, improved environment, etc.;
- The notion that man's defective nature is the result of heredity or environment to such a degree that human beings are not morally responsible for their nature or behavior;
- The notion that God is the author of sin or that sin is part of his original plan to educate and improve humankind.

Jesus Christ - Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human. In the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the eternal Son of God uniquely entered human history and became a real human being. He is truly the perfect and culminating expression of God's mind and heart and of God's will and character. His divine-human identity is corroborated by the true witness of Scripture – in his divine conception and virgin birth, in God's own testimony concerning Jesus, in Jesus' supernatural works of healing and deliverance, in his obedience to the point of sacrificial death, in his bodily resurrection from the dead, ascension and exaltation. He is now Lord over everything in creation.

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Jesus Christ is God's only Mediator between God and humankind and God's unique agent for the salvation of the world. He is also the perfect expression of what humanity was designed to be. In his complete obedience, he became the representative Human Being, a second Adam, modeling for us human life and offering to God in our behalf human life that is rightly in God's

This same Lord Jesus Christ is to be the center of the Christian Church's proclamation, worship, discipleship and mission. We eagerly and prayerfully anticipate that he will come to judge the living and the dead and to establish God's righteous kingdom in fullness and perfection.

Reference: John 1:1-3; 14-18; Romans 5:18-19; Colossians 1:15-20; 1 John 4:2-4

What is NOT affirmed is any doctrine:

- That affirms the deity but not the full humanity of Christ or the humanity but not Christ's full deity;
- That asserts that Jesus was an inspired or extraordinary or holy man, but was merely human in nature and not the incarnation in history of the eternal Son of God;
- That asserts that Jesus is one Mediator between God and humankind among other religious options.

Atonement – Jesus' death on the cross was the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. In this act of obedience to God's will and love for humankind, Jesus acted as the divine agent for the salvation of the world. The Cross became an altar on which his life was sacrificed as a substitute for ours and satisfaction and expiation (atonement) for sins were completely accomplished. On the sole basis of Christ on the Cross, sinners may now be reconciled to a holy God and set free from their bondage to sin and death to live for God in holiness and joy.

Exalted to the place of honor beside God the Father, Jesus Christ the eternal Son continues his saving work advocating and interceding on behalf of the church.

Reference: Romans 3:25; Galatians 3:13; 6:14; Ephesians 1:19-23; 1 John 2:2

What is NOT affirmed is any theology:

- That does not affirm as biblical and true the death of Christ as the central saving act of our Christian faith;
- That seeks to substitute some other basis or to promote some more culturally relevant paradigm for our salvation, justification and reconciliation with God than Christ's death on the Cross for us.
- That suggests that Christ's atoning work is universally applied to all or most of the human race, so that all or most are saved regardless of their religion or non religion and apart from hearing the gospel and believing in Christ.

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Salvation by Grace through Faith – Salvation is God's gracious work through Jesus Christ to reclaim humankind and all creation from sin and its consequences. Salvation is a gift of God's grace received by faith. Christ's righteousness and atonement are the sole basis for human salvation. Faith in Christ is the only instrument by which this righteousness is received by individual believers, resulting in their justification.

Justification is the righteousness of Christ attributed to a sinful person through faith alone in Christ. The person's faith appropriates Christ's atonement, resulting in their sins atoned for and forgiven and God declaring them to be righteous.

Faith is: 1) accepting the message of salvation as true and 2) trusting God to apply this salvation to us. Faith is "certain knowledge" and "wholehearted trust" that is created in us by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

Reference: Mark 10:45; John 3:16; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:22-26; Ephesians 2:8-9

What is NOT affirmed is any doctrine that:

- Asserts that salvation can be obtained through other religions or that other religions have equally valid solutions to the human problem, or that there is salvation in some other name besides Jesus Christ
- Denies the radical sinfulness of human beings, denies their condemnation before a holy God, denies that human beings are lost apart from Christ or denies their need for a Savior.
- Teaches that God saves or will save everybody regardless of their faith in Jesus Christ or whether they hear the gospel or not or whether they put their faith explicitly in Jesus Christ or not.

Reformed Distinctive

Election for salvation and service – Our salvation and sanctification are based entirely on God's initiative and God's grace. It is not primarily about our choice but God's choice. Our salvation is not an accident we stumble into or a destiny we create. It is God's gracious purpose for our life and it is for God's glory.

Election is a doctrine intended to reassure Christians of the security of their salvation and of the steadfast love of God for them and to instill in them a sense of divine purpose and zeal for good works.

Covenant and covenant life – Covenant, in the cultural context of the Bible, described the strongest relationship of love and loyalty between persons. A covenant was entered into by faith as a relationship of trust and solemn promises; it was held together by faithfulness. God adapted this covenant model to describe his special relationship and bond with the people he redeemed.

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God's covenants had different forms and details at different times in salvation history, but they reflected a single sovereign and gracious purpose to redeem, sanctify and preserve a people who belonged to God. The divine covenant was always initiated by God and was sustained by God's faithfulness in spite of humankind's history of unfaithfulness. It reached a culmination and fullness in the "new covenant" established and perfected by Jesus Christ.

Every believer is called to be a faithful and participating member of a local church, where "the community of the new covenant" has local expression and where they can be disciple into holiness and maturity. The community of the new covenant is to be a demonstration of the supernatural reality and power of the kingdom of God: a community of love and wholeness, ministry extending the healing, deliverance and grace that marked the life of Jesus and his disciples.

Sacraments – The church receives from the Lord Jesus Christ two sacred and symbolic actions, called sacraments, which enact and perform the promises of the gospel. These sacraments are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism is the sign and seal of incorporation into Christ and of the washing away of sin through his sacrifice. Baptism publicly acknowledges that one baptized is part of the covenant community of faith.

The Lord's Supper is the sign and seal of our ongoing communion with the living Christ and of his life continuing to nourish us. Celebrating the Lord's Supper, we give thanks as we remember that Christ lived for us, died for us and will come again.

The Holy Spirit uses these sacraments to convey grace, salvation and the real presence of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sanctification – The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the individual and collective life of believers brings about real transformation – a life of increasing holiness, righteousness, power, and love, as we are changed more and more into the image of Christ. Though Christians are marred by sin and imperfect until Christ returns, there is a substantial manifestation of the righteousness and power of the kingdom of God in the Believer, the church, and the world through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit connects us to the life of Christ and releases in us the supernatural and saving power of Christ's life, death, resurrection and glory.

Priesthood of all believers – Every believer, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, is called to participate in his priestly ministry. A priest functions to reconcile people to God. Jesus Christ is the eternal high priest of God's new covenant. All believers are called as disciples to participate in his priestly work of reconciling the world to God by proclaiming the gospel, doing the work of Jesus and manifesting the reality and power of the kingdom of God in the world. This is the vocational privilege and responsibility of every Christian.

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Mission of the church – The great ends of the church are the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter nurture; and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of the truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven in the world.

Jesus Christ calls the church into being, declares its mission and equips it for its work. Its mission is:

- To be the provisional demonstration of the new reality God intends for humankind;
- To proclaim the good news of salvation by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ, leading persons to repentance, acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord, and new life as his disciples;
- To make disciples of all nations;
- To tangibly demonstrate new life in Christ through its love for one another and the quality of its common life together, sharing in worship, fellowship and nurture, practicing a deepened life of prayer and service under the guidance of the Holy Spirit;
- To participate in God's activity in the world through its life for others.

Stewardship – God has given us all that we have and all that we are. He charges us with the responsibility of using all our abilities and gifts in his faithful service and to his glory. In particular God has ordered us to manage and care for creation as grateful stewards and obedient servants.

Jesus Christ is Lord of every area of our life:

- Our spiritual life and our physical life;
- Our social life, including marriage, politics, justice and culture;
- Our intellectual life;
- Our work life and our recreational life;
- The use of our bodies, possessions, resources and finances

We are to be stewards of all these things to manifest and extend the kingdom of God in the world.

GOVERNMENT AND DISCIPLINE

You should peruse the following sections of the Book of Order:

- G-1 - Preliminary Principles
- G-2 - The Church and its Confessions
- G-3 - The Church and its Mission
- G-4 - The Church and its Unity
- G-6.0100 - Offices of Ministry
- G-6.0300 - Elders
- G-60.400 - Deacons
- G-10 - The Session
- D-1 - Principles of Church Discipline

Responsibilities of an Elder

"An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless – not overbearing, not quick tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." Titus 1:6-9

The office of Elder is one of doctrinal soundness, wisdom, witness and compassionate service after the example of Jesus Christ. The Elders of the church will have the responsibility to exercise leadership, government and discipline in the church as guided by The Book of Confessions and The Book of Order. Elders will govern together with the pastors as members of the Session and will assume such duties as may be delegated to them by the Session. There are fifteen elders serving three-year terms.

Elder activities include:

- Leading the church through prayer, consultation, collaboration and the faithful use of individual talents, gifts, relationships and financial resources.
- Attending Officer Training classes, when scheduled
- Attending monthly session meetings (third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm)
- Serving on one or more ministry committees of session, as assigned: Property and Finance, Children's, Church Life, Membership, Mission and Outreach, Personnel, Adult, Education, Worship, Communications and Student. Guiding the committee in the planning and execution of its ministry and/or administering the duties assigned
- Performing other tasks as requested by Session including serving as a delegate to Presbytery and Session: approved task forces, commissions, search committees
- Serving Communion at least 4 times each year while on Session
- Being available to members of the congregation to discuss the decisions of leadership and the vision, direction and priorities of the church
- Helping to equip the people of St. Peter's for the fullest expression of our mission and vision (attached)
- Praying for the Pastor and greeting at Sunday services, as needed
- An Elder should plan on approximately 15-30 hours a month allocated to their services to effectively accomplish their Elder ministry.
- An Elder attends worship services, congregational meetings, Thursday Night Alive and pursues continued growth in faith through participation in such activities as adult classes, small groups, retreats, individual prayer, bible study and devotions.

Responsibilities of a Deacon

"Deacons, likewise, "are to be men and women worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as Deacons." 1 Timothy 3:8

The office of Deacon as set forth in scripture is one of sympathy, witness and service after the example of Jesus Christ. It is the duty of deacons, first of all, to minister to those who are in need, to the sick, to the friendless and to any who may be in distress both within and beyond the community of faith. They shall assume such other duties as may be delegated to them from time to time by the Session. (Book of Order G-6.0400 excerpts). There are nineteen deacons serving three-year terms.

Deacon responsibilities include, but re not limited to:

- Attending monthly Board of Deacons' meetings (second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm)
- Attend Officer Training classes, when scheduled

Taking part in some of the Deacons' Ministries as noted below:

- Visitation/Contact Ministry – Each Deacon is assigned to a 'parish' (of Church members for whom he/she provides oversight) to help meet special needs, including food, transportation and visitation or those with in their parish
- Financial Assistance Ministry – Responding to temporary emergency financial needs of individuals in our church family and other, as reviewed by the Deacon Moderator and Friendship Fund Team
- Communion Ministry – Assist with serving Communion at least 4 times each year while serving as a Deacon
- Prayer Ministry – Volunteer to assist in prayer during Sunday services, when requested
- Memorial Reception Ministry – Assist with Memorial Receptions, as requested by the Deacon Moderator
- Each Deacon will attend a Session meeting on a rotational basis
- A Deacon should plan on approximately 10-15 hours a month allocated to their service to effectively accomplish their Deacon ministry
- A Deacon attends worship services, congregational meetings and pursues continued growth in faith through participation in such activities as adult classes, small groups, retreats, individual prayer, bible study and devotion.