

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

Finance Committee Charter

Version: 07-17-2025

Approved by Finance Committee on 07-17-25

Approved by Vestry on July 24, 2025

Section 14.A. of Article IV of the By-Laws of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Skidaway Island Georgia (the "By-Laws" and the "Church", respectively) provides for the appointment by the Vestry of a Finance Committee (capitalized terms used herein and not otherwise defined have the respective meanings assigned thereto in the By-Laws). The purpose of this Charter is to set forth certain organizational matters relating to the Finance Committee; in the event of any conflict between the provisions of the By-Laws and this Charter, the provision of the By-Laws shall prevail. This Charter as stated in Section 10 affirms that the Finance Committee operates under the authority and oversight of the Vestry. All actions, recommendations, and responsibilities of the Committee are ultimately subject to Vestry review and approval. This principle is stated here at the outset to clearly establish the overarching governance structure within which the Committee functions.

Section 1. Purpose

The Finance Committee (the "Committee") shall be responsible for preparing budgets and reviewing and making recommendations on the financial practices and policies of the Church.

Section 2. Membership

The Committee shall consist of a Chairperson, Senior Warden, the Treasurer, the Chairperson of the Stewardship Committee and such additional members as may be recommended by the Chairperson to properly fulfill the responsibilities of the Committee. The Chairperson and the Treasurer shall be elected by the Vestry at its first meeting following the annual meeting of members of the Church. Such additional members (who may, but need not, be members of the Vestry) shall be appointed by the Vestry, shall serve two-year terms and may be reappointed for not more than three consecutive terms. If the Chairperson of the Finance Committee is not otherwise a member of the Vestry, he or she shall be an ex officio, non-voting member of the Vestry. The Rector shall be an ex officio member of the Committee.

Section 3. Chairperson

The Chairperson of the Finance Committee shall serve as the parish's chief financial officer and shall ensure the completion of canonical responsibilities set forth in Section 1 of Article VI of the By-Laws as follows:

- To receive and disburse all monies collected.
- To keep a true record of the receipts and disbursements of the Church and to present a full statement of such receipts and disbursements and of the financial condition of the Church at annual meetings of the Church, to the Diocese and National Church, and at other times requested by the Vestry.

- To maintain the records of all trusts and permanent funds belonging to the Church, listing the source and date of such trusts and funds, the terms governing the use of the principal and income thereof, to whom and how often accounts are to be made and how the trusts and funds are invested.
- Except as the Vestry may otherwise designate, to act or appoint any members of the Vestry (with or without power of substitution to act, as proxy or attorney in fact for the Church at any meeting of stockholders of any corporation), the securities of which are held by the Church.

Section 4. Responsibilities of the Committee

The Committee shall advise and make recommendations to the Vestry concerning:

A. Financial Oversight

- Review and monitor the church's financial position, including cash, income, expenses, assets, and liabilities.
- Ensure that financial reports are prepared accurately and presented to the Vestry and Parish.
- Oversee the implementation of financial policies and internal controls.
- Ensure that all financial records are maintained securely in accordance with best practices and the canons of the Episcopal Church.
- Ensure the maintenance of records of all trust and permanent funds showing: (1) source and date; (2) terms governing the use of principal and income; (3) to whom and how often reports are to be made; and (4) how the funds are invested, as required by Title I, Canon 7, Section 1(c).
- Ensure that treasurers and custodians, other than banking institutions, are adequately bonded as required by Title I, Canon 7, Section 1(d), except for treasurers of funds that do not exceed \$500 at any time during the fiscal year.

B. Budgeting

- Prepare and review the Church's annual budget, which shall be adopted and controlled by the Vestry.
- Recommend budgetary adjustments at least semi-annually to ensure fiscal responsibility.
- Ensure the budget aligns with the Church's mission, goals, and strategic plan.

C. Audit and Internal Controls

- Ensure compliance with Title I, Canon 7, Section 1(f) of the Episcopal Church Constitution and Canons, which requires all parish accounts to be audited or reviewed annually by an independent Certified Public Accountant, independent Licensed Public Accountant, or authorized audit committee.
- Ensure audit reports are filed with the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority not later than 30 days following the date of such report, and in no event later than September 1 of each year, as required by Title I, Canon 7, Section 1(g).
- Review audit/review reports and oversee the implementation of corrective actions.

- Develop and maintain policies for financial accountability, including fraud prevention measures.
- Ensure audit findings are submitted to the Rector, the Vestry, and the Parish prior to the Diocese's deadline, as required by the Diocesan Canons.

D. Fundraising and Stewardship

- Provide oversight on fundraising efforts and ensure financial integrity in all Church giving.
- Encourage best practices for financial stewardship.
- Review and monitor restricted funds, endowments, and special financial campaign.

E. Cash Management and Investments

- Recommend cash management policies to ensure sufficient liquidity while optimizing returns.
- Develop investment strategies consistent with the Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs and consider socially responsible investing options in alignment with Episcopal Church values.
- Monitor investment performance and compliance with established policies, reporting regularly to the Vestry.
- Ensure that all investment accounts are opened and maintained by the Church Bookkeeper upon the recommendation of the Committee.

F. Bank Accounts and Financial Records

- Ensure that all transactional and investment accounts are opened and maintained by the Church Bookkeeper upon the recommendation of the Committee.
- Maintain proper books of account for satisfactory financial accounting, reporting, and auditing. Maintain financial accounting software with good storage practices.

G. Real Property

- Recommends insurance coverage to Vestry and determine that all church buildings and contents are adequately insured.
- Recognize that any encumbrance or alienation of real property requires written consent of the Bishop and Standing Committee of the Diocese, as mandated by Title I, Canon 7, Section 3.

H. Reporting Responsibilities

- The Treasurer shall provide detailed monthly statements for the accounts the Treasurer oversees. The Finance Chair will provide financial reports, including income, expenses, restricted account balances, balance sheet, to the Vestry and make such reports accessible to the Parish.
- The Bookkeeper shall issue an annual written contribution statement to each contributor no later than January 31 of the following year.

- The Finance Committee may issue additional contribution statements at the discretion of the Vestry or Rector.

I. Gifts and Memorials

- No object intended as a permanent addition to the physical campus of the church shall be accepted without the approval of the Rector and the Vestry, subject to any prescribed conditions.
- No object intended for worship shall be accepted without the Rector's approval.
- Records of donor names, persons memorialized, terms, conditions, and dates of acceptance shall be preserved in the permanent Parish records.
- Gifts are subject to the Vestry-approved policy. Under this policy, unrestricted gifts of cash and marketable securities are allocated by the Vestry. For non-cash or non-marketable securities gifts, an ad hoc committee shall be formed to review and recommend appropriate action. This committee will include a representative from the Vestry, the Endowment Board, the Finance Committee, and a parishioner with relevant expertise.

J. Proposal Review

- Any proposal for review should be presented in writing to the Finance Committee Chairperson not less than six days before the meeting at which action is proposed to be taken.

Section 5. Meetings

- The Committee shall meet at least monthly. Special meetings may be called more frequently.
- Minutes of meetings shall be recorded and shared with the Vestry.
- Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson as necessary.
- Where practical, an electronic meeting option shall be made available.
- Meetings shall be open to all Parish members to observe the functioning of the committee.
- The Charter affirms that past Senior Wardens may attend Finance Committee meetings. Their experience and institutional knowledge are valued assets. The Committee supports their participation, recognizing the importance of inclusivity and informed dialogue in financial oversight, however, they do not vote.
- Any new business or report for review should be presented in writing to the Chairperson not less than six days before the meeting at which action is proposed to be taken.
- Review materials should be normally available 48 hours before regularly scheduled meetings.
- Meetings are run by the chair, or the chair's appointee, subject to Robert's Rules.

Section 6. Reporting

The Committee shall:

- Report to the Vestry at least monthly
- Present an annual financial report to the Congregation and

- Assist in preparation of the annual Parochial Report in accordance with Title I, Canon 7, Section 1(j), which establishes the fiscal year as January 1 through December 31.
- Recommendations regarding financial policies, budgets, audits/reviews, cash management, investment strategies shall be submitted for approval by the Vestry.

Section 7. Professional Confidentiality and Ethical Standards

Committee members shall:

- Maintain appropriate confidentiality regarding financial matters of the Church.
- Disclose and avoid conflicts of interest
- Disclose any potential financial interests related to the Church's operations.
- Be subject to Diocesan financial appropriateness applications.
- Comply with all applicable diocesan policies regarding financial ethics and conflicts of interest.
- Be under the umbrella of the Church's liability insurance coverage.

Section 8. Amendments

This Charter may be reviewed and amended by the Vestry.

Section 9. Training and Development

- Committee members are encouraged to participate in training on Episcopal Church financial practices and stewardship principles.
- An annual review process for this charter shall be established to ensure continued compliance with Episcopal Church canons and best practices.

Section 10. Vestry Authority

The Vestry shall serve as agents and legal representatives of the Parish in all matters concerning its corporate property and the relations of the Parish to its clergy, in accordance with Title I, Canon 14, Section 2 of the Episcopal Church Constitution and Canons. All final decisions regarding financial policies, audits, budgets, fundraising, property matters, cash management, and investment strategies rest with the Vestry, in accordance with the Canons of the Episcopal Church, the Diocese of Georgia, and the Parish Bylaws.

Section 11. Alignment with By-laws

A. Rector's Authority over Staff (Article II of By-laws):

This Charter acknowledges the Rector's role in hiring and terminating staff, as stated in the By-laws, while the Vestry, in consultation with the Finance and Human Resource Committees, shall in all cases determine the salary and benefits, if any, to be paid. The Committee shall avoid language that could be interpreted as infringing upon this authority.

B. Indemnification (Article XV of Bylaws):

Nothing in this Charter shall be deemed to contradict or limit the indemnification rights of Parish officers and members of the Vestry as established in Article XV of the By-laws.

C. Restrictions on Alienation or Encumbrance of Real Estate (Article VIII of Bylaws):

Nothing in this Charter shall conflict with the restrictions on alienation or encumbrance of real estate in Article VIII of the By-laws. The Committee's role in real property matters shall be limited to making recommendations to the Vestry.

D. Special Offerings (Article IX):

Any policies or procedures related to special offerings shall align with Article IX of the By-laws. The Committee shall not establish practices that contradict or circumvent the requirements relating to special offering set forth in the By-laws.