

## **Presbytery of Lake Erie Harassment Policy**

Adopted by COM October 4, 2023

It is the policy of the Presbytery of Lake Erie that all employees, members of the Presbytery, and all events and programs of the Presbytery should enjoy a faith filled environment free from all forms of harassment and discrimination.

### **A. General Harassment**

The Presbytery does not condone and will not permit discriminatory harassment of anyone based on race, sex, sexual orientation, gender, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, citizenship or disability. Harassment is defined further as occurring when unwelcome conduct based on these categories (a) makes enduring offensive conduct a condition of continued employment (including volunteer work) or (b) severe or pervasive enough to cause a reasonable person to consider the environment an intimidating, hostile or abusive one. Any Employee or volunteer who violates this harassment policy will be subject to corrective action up to and including termination of employment. Any member Minister of Word and Sacrament or Commissioned Pastor who violates this harassment policy will be subject to corrective action which might include church disciplinary action or termination of employment.

### **B. Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment refers to behavior of a sexual nature, which is unwelcome and personally offensive to its recipients. Sexual harassment is a form of misconduct that is demeaning to another person and undermines the integrity of the employment or church relationship. Unwelcome sexual advance, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes “sexual harassment” when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a condition of an individual’s employment (including volunteer work);
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for an employment decision or position on a committee or with a program; or
3. The harassment has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an Employee/Volunteer’s work performance or creating an environment, which is intimidating, hostile, or offensive to the Employee/Volunteer.

The Presbytery’s Sexual Misconduct policy shall be followed.

### **C. Harassment Complaint Procedure**

An Employee who feels that he or she has been harassed or subject to discriminatory employment practices should immediately report the matter to the General Presbyter. Reports may be verbal or written. Any supervisor or manager who becomes aware of any possible harassment or discriminatory employment practices must immediately advise the General Presbyter or Personnel Committee moderator. If the complaint of harassment to the General

Presbyter is not appropriate, the complaint must be lodged with the moderator of the Personnel Committee.

Reports of Sexual Abuse, which is defined by D-7.09 of the Church Discipline section of the Book of Order as sexual conduct in relation to any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone without the capacity to consent, or any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position, should follow the procedure outlined in the Church Discipline Section of the Book of Order and any Sexual Misconduct Policies of the Presbytery. Reports of this nature shall be reported to the Stated Clerk and any other authorities required by mandatory reporting laws.

Upon receipt of a report of harassment or discrimination, an investigation will be initiated by the Stated Clerk. This investigation will be handled discreetly and confidentially. The purpose of the investigation is to verify that such conduct is occurring or has occurred and to take steps to ensure that such conduct does not continue. After investigation, any Employee/Volunteer that has been found to have engaged in unlawful or prohibited harassment or conduct will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Neither the Church nor the Presbytery will retaliate against anyone for making a harassment or discrimination complaint, even if no determination is made that harassment and/or discrimination has occurred. However, anyone who knowingly makes a false claim or knowingly provides false information in the course of an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

**Note:** This policy should be reviewed and updated anytime the Policy Regarding Sexual Misconduct is revised to ensure that the language and requirements of both policies are consistent.