

A Pastoral Letter on Sexual Misconduct

*"Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan,
and the Lord will hear my voice." Psalm 55*

In recent months, there have been numerous stories of sexual misconduct by men of power in various settings of business, media, entertainment, and politics. In each case, it took the courage of one to name their experience of being sexually harassed or abused by someone more powerful than themselves in order for the sin of sexual abuse to finally be recognized.

We confess that the United Church of Christ (UCC) is not immune to these sins of sexual harassment, abuse, and misconduct. We repent when those in power at any setting of the UCC has acted inappropriately and violated others with their words, actions, or power. We, the Church, have sinned, and we ask for forgiveness from those, who have been violated.

We recognize the stories of courageous women and men in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures who, when they were sexually assaulted by men of power, God provided them strength, courage, and love already within them because they were created in God's image. So, too, we honor that all are created in God's image and have the capacity for wholeness in the midst of sexual abuse and misconduct.

We, the leaders of the United Church of Christ, are committed to providing safe space for all, where sexual harassment, abuse, or misconduct is not tolerated. Our Committees on Ministry along with MESA (Ministerial Excellence, Support, and Authorization) seek to ensure our churches, authorized ministers, and volunteers safe space from sexual misconduct of power.

May God's Peace be with us as we seek to create a Just World for All, which starts with safe space for all.

Faithfully yours,

The National Officers of the United Church of Christ

The Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer, General Minister and President

The Rev. Traci Blackmon, Executive Minister, Justice and Witness Ministries

The Rev. James Moos, Executive Minister, Wider Church Ministries

The Council of Conference Ministers of the United Church of Christ

