The Presbytery of DONEGAL

Anti-Harassment Policy

I. Introduction

The Presbytery of Donegal is committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all members, visitors, staff, and volunteers. We believe that all people are created in the image of God and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. This policy reflects our commitment to fostering a community of love, forgiveness, and reconciliation in the name of Jesus Christ.

II. Definition of Harassment

Harassment is defined as unwanted behavior that demeans, threatens, or humiliates another person. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, words and actions based upon an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, as well as any other legally protected characteristic. Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Verbal harassment: Comments that are offensive or unwelcome such as cursing, innuendoes, insults, jokes, mocking, name-calling, slurs, threats, epithets, negative stereotyping and or yelling, including comments with regards to a person's nationality, origin, race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, body, medical conditions, disability, appearance.
2. Nonverbal harassment: Displaying or distributing written or graphic material, making gestures, or engaging in behavior that ridicules, denigrates, insults, belittles, or shows hostility, aversion, or disrespect towards another, including when the above is done for reasons of nationality, origin, race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, body, medical conditions, disability, or appearance.
3. Physical harassment: Unwanted touching, physical assaults, or interference with movement.
4. Sexual harassment: Behavior characterized by the making of unwelcome and inappropriate sexual remarks, physical advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment may take many different forms, including but not limited to Verbal, nonverbal, and physical sexual harassment.
5. Electronic harassment: Using email, social media, text messages, blogs, online games, forums, instant messaging, mobile phone pictures, or other electronic means to harass, intimidate, or bully.
6. Retaliation: Any hardship, loss, benefit, or penalty imposed on any person in response to filing or responding to a bona fide complaint or discrimination or harassment.

III. Prohibited Behaviors

1. The following behaviors are expressly prohibited within our Presbytery:
   - Any form of harassment as defined above
   - Retaliation against individuals who report harassment or participate in investigations
   - Knowingly making false accusations of harassment

IV. Reporting Procedures

1. Any person who experiences or witnesses harassment within the Presbytery should report it promptly to one of the following:
   - Executive Presbyter of Donegal Presbytery
   - Stated Clerk of Donegal Presbytery
   - Connecting Our Ministry Commission Chair (COM)
2. Reports should be made in writing when possible, but may be made in writing or verbally. While anonymous reports will be accepted, they may be more difficult to investigate fully.
3. When a report is received, the person receiving the report should share it with the Executive Presbyter of Donegal Presbytery, and/or the Stated Clerk of Donegal Presbytery, as appropriate.
4. All reports will be taken seriously, and further information will be investigated by a Harassment Response Team, to be appointed by **Executive Presbyter /Stated Clerk and/or the Chair of COM.**
5. The Harassment Response Team will gather all available information, including interviews and reports as appropriate.
6. In cases where both sexual harassment and harassing behaviors that are not sexual harassment have been reported as part of the same situation, those responsible for appointing a response team will take both situations into account in determining the best response in accordance with both the Harassment Policy and the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy.
7. The Harassment Response Team will refer their report and recommendations to the appropriate group, usually **Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk, and COM** Outcomes might include:
   - Dismissal of the complaint
   - Counseling or mediation
   - For employees: Initiation of disciplinary processes defined in the Presbytery of Donegal Employee Handbook. For presbytery leaders: Requests for resignation from positions of leadership.
   - Referral to the COM for further action as indicated
   - Referral to the COM for cases involving Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Commissioned Ruling Elders, and Certified Church Educators
   - Filing of an allegation of offense with the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery for those under the jurisdiction of the presbytery.
8. If an allegation is filed in accordance with the Church Discipline procedures defined in the PC(USA) Book of Order, all further action will be governed by the Church Discipline Process.

V. Confidentiality

1. All reports and investigations will be handled with confidentiality, while still ensuring a thorough investigation and appropriate action.
2. The Presbytery is committed to providing a safe space for those who have been subjected to harassment. Confidentiality and safeguards against retaliation will be implemented in all circumstances, including the right of victims to refuse the invitation to explain the circumstances, to decline to file a written statement of the alleged offense, or to decline to be interviewed or otherwise participate.
3. Written statements of alleged offense involving rape or sexual assault, or sexual abuse of children under the age of eighteen, or one who allegedly lacks the mental capacity to consent, shall be additionally reported to civil authorities, as governed by the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy.

VI. Education and Prevention

The Presbytery commits to:

1. Providing regular training on this policy and harassment prevention for all staff, volunteers, and Presbytery leaders
2. Educating the Presbytery about this policy and our commitment to a harassment-free environment

VII. Pastoral Care

We recognize that instances of harassment can be traumatic for all involved. Pastoral care and support will be made available to those affected by harassment, including the complainant, alleged victims, the accused, and the broader congregation, as needed.

VIII. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Presbytery and updated as necessary to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with current laws and the policies of the Presbyterian Church (USA).