

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
PATASKALA, OHIO**

Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures
(Approved by the Session – 1-12-2023)

*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.
(1Corinthians 12:27, 26)*

INTRODUCTION

*As God who called you is holy,
be holy yourselves in all your conduct.*

* * * * *

*Tend the flock of God that is your charge,
not under compulsion but willingly,
not for sordid gain but eagerly.
Do not lord it over those in your charge,
but be examples to the flock.*

* * * * *

*You know that we who teach
shall be judged with greater strictness.
(I Peter 1:15; 5:2; James 3:1, NRSV)*

The First Presbyterian Church of Pataskala (FPCP) states its position that when sexual harassment occurs, it is:

- an offense against the law of God.
- a dishonoring of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- a serious breach of the fellowship which the Holy Spirit builds in the church.
- a violation of professional ethics.
- a misuse of the power of position or person.
- in many applicable circumstances, a violation of secular law.
- a violation of the trust of a person seeking the ministry of the church.

POLICY

First Presbyterian Church of Pataskala (FPCP) is committed to the maintenance of a religious environment of trust, and one that is consequently free of all forms of sexual harassment for all members, non-members, volunteers and officers of the church. Sexual harassment violates FPCP's moral code, the Scriptures, and Presbyterian Belief and Practice and thus is an offense as defined in the Book of Order (D-2.0203.b). We affirm that God is the source of human dignity; that God calls us to promote the dignity of all persons. The person and/or anyone knowing of sexual behavior that violates the policy herein should seek resolution in accordance with the procedures that follow. All inquiries shall be strictly confidential to protect the privacy of, and minimize suspicion toward, all parties concerned. In the situation of a pastor the inquiry shall involve the Presbytery of Scioto Valley. In the case of an elder or member, the

inquiry may involve Scioto Valley Presbytery. The session will handle each case as prescribed by the current Book of Order's "Rules of Discipline." Any individual found to have violated First Presbyterian Church's policy against sexual harassment will be subject to appropriate church disciplinary action.

All accusers have the following rights:

1. To have all allegations of sexual harassment treated seriously.
2. To be assured of any other rights under this policy, whether an offense is reported.
3. To be free from suggestion that accusers are responsible for the commission of offenses against them.
4. To be free from pressure by church personnel to:
 - a. refrain from reporting offenses for any reason.
 - b. report offenses if the accuser does not want to.
 - c. report offenses as lesser offenses than the accuser perceives them to be.

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct or display of an overtly or explicitly sexual nature when:

1. submission to such conduct is an explicit or implicit condition or basis for employment, membership, or participation in church activities.
2. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work, membership, or participation in church activities; or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or religious environment.
3. persons in the church setting claim to find the material offensive or to affect morale or performance of an individual.

Most sexual harassment falls into two categories, verbal and physical.

Verbal harassment may include, but is not limited to:

1. sexual innuendos and comments about clothing, body, or sexual activities.
2. suggestive or insulting sounds
3. whistling in a suggestive manner
4. humor and jokes about sex
5. sexual propositions, invitations, or other pressure for sexual favors.
6. implied or overt threats.

Physical harassment may include, but is not limited to:

1. intentional brushing against the body.
2. patting, pinching, and any other inappropriate touching or feeling.
3. attempted or actual kissing or fondling.
4. coerced sexual intercourse.
5. sexual assault.

Other forms of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to:

1. leering or ogling.
2. making obscene gestures.
3. using written or visual form via social media or other print media

Sexual harassment most often takes place where there is a power differential between the persons involved (such as in counseling situations, youth leaders and youth, employer and employee). It also may occur between persons of the same status. In any case, First

Presbyterian Church of Pataskala holds that sexual harassment is intolerable and threatening to the vitality and growth of the accuser and our religious community.

First Presbyterian Church of Pataskala prohibits retaliation for reporting concerns in good faith of possible violations of this policy or for participating in any investigation of reported concerns. Initiation of a good faith complaint of possible harassment or retaliation will never be grounds for further action, even if the allegations cannot be substantiated.

The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Pataskala, through its Personnel Committee, shall communicate this policy and procedures to its membership and staff.

It is the responsibility of any member of, employee of, or participant in church activities at FPCP who believes that he/she has been sexually harassed to report and seek a resolution of this problem.

Resolution includes:

1. speaking directly and assertively to the person who is harassing to let that person know that you will not tolerate that behavior; and/or
2. speaking to the pastor and having him/her have a talk with the harasser and tell the harasser to stop the behavior; and/or
3. speaking with the Personnel Committee Chairperson for his/her advice; and/or
4. proceeding with the method of resolution in accordance with the Book of Order's "Rules of Discipline" Chapter X (Disciplinary Cases). This should be discussed with the Clerk of Session, Personnel Committee representative, or pastor. A written statement using the form in the Book of Order's "Rules of Discipline" (Form Number 26 reproduced on p. 4 of this Enclosure) should be submitted to the Clerk of Session, and the judicial procedure specified in the Book of Order's "Rules of Discipline" shall be followed. A formal complaint against a harasser usually involves an inquiry regarding not only First Presbyterian Church of Pataskala, but, in the case of a pastor, shall also involve Scioto Valley Presbytery. The inquiry may involve the Presbytery in the case of a non-pastor. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality to avoid the destruction of the reputation of the accused and the accuser.

Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Pataskala shall check annually to see that this policy and procedure statement is in compliance with all constitutional requirements of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), and all the requirements of the laws of the State of Ohio.

Additionally, under certain circumstances, sexual harassment and sexual abuse may involve civil and criminal liability. In the case of a child, reporting is mandatory according to state law.

FORMS IN DISCIPLINARY CASES

FORM NO. 26

ACCUSATION BY INDIVIDUAL AS STATEMENT OF OFFENSE, D-10.0102a

To: _____ (clerk of session or stated clerk of presbytery)

From: _____ (name of person or persons making accusation)

I, _____, under the jurisdiction of the _____ (name of session of congregation or presbytery), accuse _____ (name of person accused) of committing the offense of _____ contrary to Holy Scripture and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and I submit the following information in support of said accusation:

The said _____ (name of accused) did, on or about _____ (date), _____ (insert a narrative and alleged facts believed to support the accusation).

Date

Signature of Accuser