ANTI-HARASSMENT AND ANTI RACISM POLICY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW HOPE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

The Presbytery of New Hope of the Presbyterian Church (USA) seeks to form disciples whose lives and behaviors conform to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus sets a standard for personal conduct and may be summarized in Jesus’ command “to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself.”

The Presbytery of New Hope is committed to maintaining workplaces free of harassment and discrimination. Employees, ministers of Word and Sacrament, certified Christian Educators, Commissioned Ruling Elders and inquirers and candidates under care of the presbytery are required by the *Book of Order* (G-2) to receive Healthy Boundary training authorized by the presbytery once every 36 months. The boundary training shall include the topics of sexual misconduct, child sexual abuse prevention training, anti-harassment and anti-discrimination training.

Below is the Presbytery’s Anti-Harassment and Anti-Racism policy. The Presbytery of New Hope expects its staff, minsters of Word and Sacrament members, church professionals and other church leaders under its direction to conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner that supports and maintains workplaces free of harassment and discrimination for our employees, members, and those with whom we minister. We ask employees, ministers of Word and Sacrament members, church professionals and other church leaders under its direction to review and sign this Policy and Acknowledgment Form, indicating they understand and agree to abide by the Presbytery of New Hope’s policy and expectations regarding harassment and discrimination in the workplace.

The Presbytery of New Hope is committed to maintaining an environment free from harassment or discrimination against any individual regardless of race, sex, age, disability, national origin or ancestry, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or genetic information. This policy applies to all personnel actions, including but not limited to: recruiting, hiring, classification and compensation, benefits, promotions, transfers, layoffs, reinstatement, and educational programs.

**Prohibited Activities:** derogatory comments, jokes, slurs based on one or more of the protected classes; unwanted physical conduct of any kind, impeding or blocking movement, or physical interference with normal work movement, when directed at an individual based on membership in a protected class; the display, mailing or e-mailing of derogatory posters, cartoons, or drawings based on one’s membership in a protected class.

**Sexual harassment** refers to unwelcome sexual behavior, either verbal or physical, that interferes with work effectiveness and integrity. An employee may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Similarly, any member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) including, but not limited to, minister members, inquirers, candidates, certified Christian Educators, Commissioned Ruling Elders or Ruling Elders who engage in this type of behavior may be subject to disciplinary action as detailed in the Rules of Discipline section of the Book of Order. The Presbytery of New Hope also reserves the right to other disciplinary or remedial actions as imposed by the Personnel Committee, Commission on Ministry, the Commission on Preparation for Ministry, or the Presbytery itself. The harassment of members or staff based on race, color or national origin or other protected class as named above is also prohibited. In addition, any person authorized by the Commission on Ministry to serve in the pastoral role of a particular congregation is prohibited from having a romantic or sexual relationship with a member of the particular congregation unless they are lawfully married to the one authorized by the COM to serve in the pastoral role.

**Complaint Procedure:** If an employee or other person present in the presbytery believes they have been subjected to sexual or other forms of harassment, or discriminatory behavior, that individual has the responsibility to file a complaint about the harassment or discriminatory behavior as soon as possible. The complaint shall be made in writing with the employee’s immediate supervisor, and/or general presbyter and/or stated clerk of the presbytery and/or chair of the presbytery’s personnel committee.

The complainant may also contact persons inside or outside of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to assist with filing a written complaint. The complainant may also pursue redress through the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Once a supervisor and/or the general presbyter and or the stated clerk of the presbytery and/or the chair of the presbyter’s personnel committee become(s) aware of a complaint, whether in writing or not, the supervisor and/or stated clerk, and/or chair of the presbytery’s personnel committee together with the general presbyter, **MUST** issue a Cease-and-Desist Memorandum to the alleged offender and contact the presbytery’s personnel committee, Commission on Ministry, or Commission on Preparation for Ministry to report the complaint as soon as possible to determine if an investigation is warranted. All information gathered during the investigation shall be held confidential to the maximum extent possible.

AND/OR

The complainant my initiate a disciplinary action using the “Rules of Discipline” in the *Book of Order* (D-1 through D- 14), if the accused is a member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

AND/OR

The complainant should call the police and report a crime if the nature of the complaint rises to that level.

Additionally, the person(s) receiving the complaint should be reminded of their responsibilities as “mandatory reporters” according to the provisions of the *Book of Order* (G-4.0302) quoted here:

*Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian Educator employed by this church or its congregations, shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0301, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.*

**Support for Complainants and Accused Parties**

The Presbytery of New Hope reaffirms its commitment to creating an environment where both the complainant and the accused are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness during any disciplinary process. This addendum explicitly outlines protections, separation measures, and pastoral care to support all parties involved.

1. Separation Between Complainant and Accused

To ensure safety, emotional well-being, and fairness during the disciplinary process, the following measures shall be taken:

      •     Immediate Separation: Upon receiving a formal complaint, the Presbytery or session shall implement separation between the complainant and the accused. This may involve temporary reassignment of roles, alternative meeting arrangements, or temporary leave for one or both parties, as circumstances require. (Book of Order D-10.0106 on “Temporary Suspension”).

      •     Safe Worship and Workplace Spaces: If the complainant and accused are part of the same congregation or workplace, the session shall take steps to ensure they do not have direct interactions during the investigation and hearing process. This includes adjusting schedules, restricting access to certain spaces, or other necessary actions to protect the complainant and avoid conflicts of interest.

      •     Supervision of Pastoral Relationships: Any pastoral care or counseling offered during the process must come from a neutral party approved by the Presbytery in consultation with the session to avoid real or perceived bias.

2. Access to Pastoral Care and Support

Both the complainant and the accused have the right to ongoing spiritual and emotional care throughout the disciplinary process and are encouraged to engage in such. This is grounded in the church’s commitment to reconciliation and justice (W-4.0404).

      •     **For the Complainant:**

      •     Pastoral Support: The session or presbytery shall designate a pastor, ruling elder, or counselor ( Pastoral Care Team) unaffiliated with the accused or the immediate process to serve as a support person(s) for the complainant.

      •     Confidential Spaces: The complainant shall be provided with access to confidential spaces for processing and emotional care as needed.

      •     Trauma-Informed Care: When necessary, the complainant shall be directed to trauma-informed counseling services to help navigate the harm they have experienced.

      •     **For the Accused:**

      •     Pastoral Care: The accused is entitled to access pastoral support to address their spiritual and emotional needs during the process, while remaining separate from the complainant’s care.

      •     Guidance on the Process: The accused shall be informed of the complaint, their rights under the Rules of Discipline, and any required steps in the investigation and hearing process (D-10.0202 on “Rights of the Accused”).

3. Transparency and Fairness in the Process

To ensure procedural fairness, both the complainant and the accused will receive clear, written explanations of the disciplinary process, including their respective rights and responsibilities. The session or presbytery must:

      •     Appoint neutral investigators or committees. (D-10.0201 on “Judicial Process”).

      •     Regularly update both parties on the progress of the investigation.

      •     Reiterate protections against retaliation for both the complainant and accused (D-1.0102).

4. Commitment to Reconciliation and Healing

Once a complaint has reached a resolution, the Presbytery will provide opportunities for conciliation and healing for all affected parties and the broader congregation. This may include:

      •     Facilitated discussions or mediation (with consent).

      •     Spiritual renewal opportunities for individuals or congregations.

      •     Continued monitoring and pastoral care to ensure long-term healing.

**Retaliation:** Retaliation against anyone who files a harassment charge or who participates in the investigation of these charges is strictly prohibited. Anyone filing a harassment or discrimination complaint or assisting in the investigation of a complaint shall not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment nor discriminated against in any manner because of the complaint.

**Disciplinary Action:** When the activities or conduct of any member, staff, or other church leader is considered to be contrary to the standards or aims of the Presbytery of New Hope or is considered to be disruptive to the operations of the Presbytery of New Hope, its programs, or ministries, the procedure for potential corrective action outlined above and/or in the Rules of Discipline shall be followed.

The PC(USA) affirms that "God’s reconciling act in Jesus Christ is the foundation of the church’s mission" (F-1.01). Our mission, therefore, includes the pursuit of justice and reconciliation among all people. The Book of Order states that the church is called to "minister to and with the poor, the sick, the lonely, and the powerless" (F-1.0301), recognizing that harassment and racism is a sin that violates the dignity and worth of those marginalized by its effects.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to "strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being" (W-4.0404). The Presbytery of New Hope reaffirms its commitment to this sacred calling and invites all its members to join in this transformative work.

The Presbytery of New Hope, in accordance with our Reformed heritage and the teachings of Jesus Christ, commits to the work of addressing harassment in all its forms, dismantling systemic racism and promoting equity and justice within our community and the world. This policy is grounded in the theological and ethical imperatives of our faith as articulated in the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

**Conclusion**

This policy reflects the Presbytery of New Hope’s commitment to a just, compassionate, and safe disciplinary process for all parties. It is grounded in our theological calling to seek conciliation and justice while upholding the dignity of every individual (F-1.0301). These explicit measures ensure that both the complainant and the accused are supported as they navigate a challenging but vital process in the life of the church.

I acknowledge that I have read the above Anti-Harassment and Anti-Racism Policy and will present any questions I have to the general presbyter of the Presbytery of New Hope. I understand that I am responsible for adhering to the Anti-Harassment and Anti-Racism policy.

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