

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
LYNN HAVEN, FLORIDA
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY / PROCEDURES

“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6: 8)

A. Prohibition of Sexual Misconduct

First Presbyterian Church is committed to creating a worship and work community in which members, friends, staff, and volunteers can worship and work together in an atmosphere free of all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Specifically, all persons associated with First Presbyterian Church should be aware that the church has zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and harassment and that such behavior is prohibited by church policy. It is the intention and responsibility of the church to take whatever action may be needed to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and, if necessary, to discipline those persons who violate this policy.

B. Conduct of Church Leaders and Staff

Sexual harassment or sexual exploitation of parishioners or other individuals by anyone engaged in the ministry of First Presbyterian Church (including elders, employees, volunteers, and Ministers of the Word and Sacrament) is unethical and unprofessional behavior and shall not be tolerated within this congregation.

The church encourages those engaged in the church’s ministry to maintain their own psychological, emotional, and spiritual health, have adequate preparation and education for helping others, and understand the importance of referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources.

The church is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God’s love. In order to ensure this, we expect that all people applying to be volunteers who work with minors shall have been members or friends of the church for at least six months. It is the policy of the church to

provide adequate supervision for all youth activities with an emphasis in maintaining at least two adults in the presence of minors. While this may not always be possible, the church members expect that all church leaders, employees and those volunteers who work with minors shall endeavor to provide safe places for the children and youth including striving to avoid instances where an individual minor is alone with an individual adult or older youth.

All church leaders, employees, and those volunteers who work with minors are expected to complete and submit a copy of the self-certification statement attached to this policy.

The session of First Presbyterian Church shall endeavor to keep current with the risk management policies of its insurance company, including conducting at the time of hiring such background check on an employee as the insurance company may strongly recommend or require. In such case the applicant for employment shall be asked to sign a release form as recommended by the insurance company.

All church leaders and employees shall receive a copy of this policy.

C. Reporting Allegations

The Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA), at G-6-0204b, requires the following of ministers of the Word and Sacrament:

A Minister of the Word and Sacrament shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to 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-6.0204a; or (2) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.

Similarly, at G-6.0304 b, it requires the following of elders:

An elder shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge, gained in the course of service to the church, of harm, or the 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 privileged communication; or (2) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.

The Rules of Discipline of the Book of Order provide detailed procedures to be followed in the case of allegations of sexual misconduct. In the case of a Minister of the Word and Sacrament such allegations shall be reported to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery through the Clerk of Session. In all other cases involving elders, members, or employees, the Moderator and the Clerk of Session should contact the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery for advice and guidance.

All church members who have knowledge or suspicion of child abuse should be aware that state law requires the immediate reporting of such abuse to the civil authorities.

SELF-CERTIFICATION
FOR
OFFICERS / STAFF / EMPLOYEES / VOLUNTEERS

*(This includes Pastor, Active Ruling Elders, Clerk of Session,
Treasurer, Trustees, and Staff)*

Please complete the following certification:

I certify that (a) no civil, criminal, ecclesiastical complaint has ever been sustained or is pending* against me for sexual misconduct; (b) I have never resigned or been terminated from a position for reasons related to sexual misconduct. I have been given a copy each of First Presbyterian Church's Sexual Misconduct Policy / Procedures. If at any time my status changes in regards to the above self-certification, I shall notify the Clerk of Session.*

Signature

Date

*NOTE: If you are unable to make the above certification, you may instead give in the space provided a description of the complaint, termination or the outcome of the situation and any explanatory comments you care to add.