

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Policy for Lay Personnel on Sexual and Other
Forms of Harassment

The First United Methodist Church affirms *The 2000 Book of Resolutions, Sexual Abuse Within the Ministerial Relationship and Sexual Harassment Within the Church*, which states that sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship and sexual harassment within the church are incompatible with biblical teachings of hospitality, justice and healing. In accordance with *The 2000 Book of Discipline*, ¶161F, all human beings, both male and female, are created in the image of God, and thus have been made equal in Christ. As the promise of Galatians 3:26-29 states, all are one in Christ, we support equity among all persons without regard to ethnicity, situation or gender.

The church recognizes that a staff member has the right to work in an environment untainted by sexual or other forms of harassment or discrimination. Offensive conduct which has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, discriminatory or offensive environment will not be tolerated.

Sexual harassment includes all unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors and verbal or physical contacts of a sexual nature whenever submission to such conduct is made a condition of employment or a basis for an employment decision. Other prohibited conduct includes that which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, discriminatory or offensive environment on the basis of gender, religion, race, color, national origin or ancestry, age, disability, height, weight, marital status, sexual orientation and/or any other legally protected characteristic.

Sexual harassment or other forms of harassment within the life of the church interfere with its moral mission. First United Methodist Church prohibits and will not tolerate these behaviors, which are sinful, demeaning, abusive and wrong. The church commits itself to fair and expedient investigation of any complaint of sexual or other forms of harassment, sexual abuse or misconduct of a sexual nature within the church and to take action deemed appropriate and in compliance with the *Book of Discipline*.

Complaint Procedures:

1. Some instances of harassment can be resolved informally by conversation between the parties or facilitated mediation. However, in all instances, the conduct should be reported immediately to the chairperson of the Lay Personnel Committee and/or a pastor.
2. Any lay employee who feels he/she or someone else in the church has been harassed by a lay employee shall resolve the matter through the Lay Personnel Committee's internal review process. The employee has a responsibility to report or complain as soon as possible to his/her supervisor and to the chairperson of the Lay Personnel Committee in writing.

3. All complaints of harassment will be investigated promptly and in an impartial and confidential manner by the chairperson of the Lay Personnel Committee. If an employee is not satisfied with the handling of a complaint or the action taken by the chairperson, or if the chairperson is the subject of the complaint, then the employee should bring the complaint to one of the pastors.
4. To the extent possible (within the limitations of the law), the investigation will be conducted in a manner calculated to protect the privacy of all individuals involved in the investigation. The church will make every reasonable effort to maintain confidentiality by disclosing information about the complaint on a "need to know" basis only and as necessary to promote God's call for justice, reconciliation and healing.
5. In all cases, the employee is to be advised of the status of the investigation, findings and conclusions.
6. Any supervisor who has knowledge that sexual harassment or other forms of harassment have occurred or has received a complaint and takes no action is also subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
7. No person shall be retaliated against or suffer a detrimental impact on his or her employment as a result of making a complaint or participating in an investigation of a complaint. However, the church also recognizes that false allegations of harassment can seriously affect people. Making an intentionally or recklessly false allegation is also a violation of this policy.
8. Any lay employee who is found, after appropriate investigation, to have engaged in prohibited harassment of another employee or someone else in the church will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, depending on the circumstances, up to and including termination. First United Methodist Church reserves the right to take any additional action necessary to appropriately correct a situation.
9. All lay employees are expected to make every effort to comply with the spirit of this policy and to do their part to maintain a work environment which is professional and respectful to everyone.

ADOPTED BY THE FUMC LAY PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

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