

Boone Memorial Presbyterian Church

Sexual Misconduct Policy

Purpose

The intention of this policy is to protect the members, volunteers, and paid staff of Boone Memorial Presbyterian Church from sexual abuse, misconduct or harassment.

Boone Memorial Presbyterian Church, prohibits any kind of discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment, against any individual based on race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, sex, age, marital status, or any status protected by state or federal law. Discrimination is interpreted to include harassment, coercion, and intimidation.

Definition

Sexual misconduct is the comprehensive term used to in this policy to include sexual abuse of children or adults, rape, or sexual assault, and sexual harassment. Sexual misconduct is the abuse of authority and power, breaching Christian ethical principles by misusing a relationship of trust to gain advantage over another for personal gratification in an abusive, exploitative and unjust manner.

Sexual abuse includes but is not limited to:

- Sexual acts or sexual contact with a minor
- Non-consensual sexual acts or sexual contact, involving inducement, threat, coercion, force, violence, or intimidation of another person
- Sexual acts, or contact between ministers and laity, with whom they have a professional relationship, including consensual relationships
- Sexual acts or contact with another person who is incapable of appraising the nature of the contact, or incapable of declining participation in that contact

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Unwanted sexual advances, invitations, or comments
- Physical conduct such as derogatory and or sexually oriented, posters, photography, cartoon drawings, screensavers, or gestures
- Physical conduct, such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movement or interfering with work
- Threats and/or demands to submit to a sexual request as a condition of continued employment or to avoid some other loss
- Offers of employment benefits in return for sexual favors
- Retaliation for having reported or threatened to report harassment.

Policy

Zero Tolerance - sexual misconduct is never permissible or acceptable. Reports of an individual engaging in sexual misconduct will result in informing the appropriate secular and religious authorities of the unacceptable behavior (see below). Church leadership will prioritize the victim's comfort and safety in their decisions.

Reporting

Upon learning about an incident of sexual misconduct, a person (whether witness, confidant, or the victim themselves) shall report it to the Senior Pastor (or, if uncomfortable reporting to the Senior Pastor, to a member of the current Session) as soon as possible. The church representative shall subsequently contact the General Presbyter and the Presbytery's stated clerk, and together they shall advise session and take such other actions as are necessary to investigate and resolve the matter, up to and including referral to the Permanent Judicial Committee (PJC) and secular authorities. THIS MUST OCCUR EVEN IF THE VICTIM DOES NOT WISH TO PURSUE CHARGES - Presbytery and church leadership will take this into account in their determinations.

Those persons involved in the report or investigation should hold information received in strict confidence, subject to such disclosures as required under church polity, or required by law, as advised by the general presbyter, stated clerk, and the PJC. Further action will be taken in accordance with the legal requirements of the state of Idaho. (See attachment)

Employment screening

All applicants for employment on the church staff will complete and sign an employment application, which authorizes the church to conduct prior employment, reference, and background checks.

Applicants shall be given an opportunity to correct or respond to information regarding sexual misconduct obtained from a reference check or background check.

Standards of Conduct

Employees, volunteer adults, and youth helpers shall not touch or interact with children or youth in any way that is intended to be sexually stimulating. Care must also be taken that consenting adults do not act in a sexually stimulating way during any church activity. Consensual expressions of affection (hugs), affirmations (pat on the back) support (prayer), or physical caretaking, (diapers, etc.) are appropriate in this community of caring Christians. Care must be taken that the physical expressions of affection are not excessive or imposed upon others.

Supervisors of programs involving children should work in pairs whenever possible. Best practice is two adults present with children at all times. When that is not possible, Sunday school teachers and other volunteers may work alone when there is visual access to the classroom through an open door or a window and parents/guardians have been adequately apprised of the situation.

Acknowledgment

Volunteers and staff will indicate their acceptance of this policy by reading this document, and signing the statement below:

I, _____ (print name) have read the Boone Memorial Presbyterian Church sexual misconduct policy and agree to abide by it. I further affirm that I have not resigned from or been terminated from a position (voluntary or paid) for reasons relating to sexual misconduct as defined in this policy statement.

Signature

Date