

# **POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND MISCONDUCT**

## **GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH 466 ELM STREET MONROE, CT 06468**

### **Statement of Policy**

It is the policy of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church (“GSLC”) that sexual harassment and misconduct will not be tolerated. Any complaint of sexual harassment and misconduct will be dealt with quickly and confidentially. **Our policy applies to clergy, lay employees and volunteers.** The intent of this policy statement is to make certain that responses to any allegation of sexual harassment and misconduct be just and compassionate for all involved and that all parties be heard.

### **Definition of Sexual Harassment and Misconduct**

Sexual harassment and misconduct refers to behavior that is not welcome to the recipient and that is personally offensive. There are many forms of offensive behavior including, but not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances, leering, whistling, or sexual gestures
- Deliberate assaults or molestation
- Questions or comments about sexual behavior
- Gender based harassment
- Undesired physical contact
- Inappropriate comments about clothing or physical appearance
- Persistent sexually-oriented humor or language
- Continued or repeated jokes, language, epithets or remarks of a sexual nature
- Causing another person to engage in a sexual act by threatening that other person, placing that other person in fear or asserting undue influence over that other person
- Providing or displaying pornographic media to a person below the age permitted by law
- Any attempt to engage in or perform any of the above
- Any additional activity that is covered either by Federal or State laws

### **Reporting**

Any person who believes that they have experienced or witnesses sexual harassment or misconduct, or have had a sexual harassment or misconduct issue reported to them should report it immediately to:

- Any member of the Church Council Executive Committee (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Finance Committee Secretary; or
- The pastor of GSLC; or
- Reports involving a rostered member of the ordained clergy or rostered lay person at GSLC shall also be promptly reported to the Bishop of the New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

If required by law, ordinance or similar regulations, a designated member of the Congregation shall immediately report this incident to the proper civil authorities.

### **Investigation**

- Each incident that is reported will be promptly investigated with the confidentiality, care and concern for all involved by the Executive Committee of the Church Council
- Investigations will include interviews with all concerned
- Investigation will include review of all relevant documentation
- The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances. Should an individual’s words or conduct be determined to

constitute misconduct or harassment, recommendations for action will be developed and appropriate action will be taken. The action taken will depend on the severity of the situation and shall be governed by this policy and by the constitution and by-laws of GSLC.

- Incorporated into this policy by reference is the New England Synod's "Statement of Policy: Response to Sexual Misconduct", including the New England Synod's program entitled "First Contact."
- The Executive Committee will be sensitive to the needs of all involved and shall provide any support necessary including counseling during the investigation and response.

### **Response**

- The Executive Committee will review all information obtained during the investigation, and when deemed necessary, will seek legal counsel to assist in the investigation and resolution.
- The Executive Committee, upon reaching a course of action, will meet separately with the person filing the complaint and then with the accused to communicate the results and resolution.
- The Executive Committee may recommend a course of action that may include counseling, education, or disciplinary action.
- If a complaint is not substantiated, all parties will be informed.
- GSLC will not engage in or tolerate retaliation against any clergy person, lay employee, or volunteer for making a good faith claim of misconduct or harassment or providing information relating to such complaints during an investigation.

### **Communication of Policy**

This Policy shall be given to and reviewed with the Congregation's clergy, employees and volunteers to ensure their understanding and support of this Policy. This review shall take place on a regular basis. Their signature below indicates that the individual has reviewed, understands and supports this policy statement. In addition, GSLC shall periodically publicize this Policy to all its members and volunteers through appropriate forms of communication.

### **Approval**

The Congregational Council of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church has approved this policy as of November 10, 2004.

Please return this signature page to the church secretary for filing and retention.

**Acknowledgement of receipt, understanding and support of this Sexual Harassment Policy**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Reviewed