

## SEXUAL MISCONDUCT/HARASSMENT POLICY

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church condemns sexual misconduct/harassment.

Sexual misconduct/harassment includes but is not limited to all crimes involving sexual conduct under state penal codes such as indecent exposure, indecency with a child, sexual assault (including rape) and also other inappropriate sexual conduct which may not violate a penal statute. Again these actions include but are not limited to the coercion of another person into a sexual relationship, or an attempt to coerce another person into a sexual relationship, or to subject a person to unwanted sexual attention, or to create a sexually suggestive, intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or worship or educational environment. Sexual misconduct/harassment includes a wide range of behaviors, from actual sexual coercion to the unwelcome emphasizing of sexual identity. This policy is based upon an understanding of accepted standards of mature behavior, Christian tradition, and freedom of expression.

Sexual misconduct/harassment in any situation is absolutely unacceptable. Sexual misconduct/harassment is particularly reprehensible when it exploits the religious, spiritual or psychological dependence and trust between persons. Sexual misconduct/harassment in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church is always totally unacceptable. All people in positions of authority should be sensitive to the possible misunderstanding that could result from personal relationships that also involve professional and religious relationships.

Individuals who believe that they have been sexually harassed or are victims of other misconduct should report the misconduct through the established informal and formal procedures of the church. Only a written, signed complaint to the session clerk/stated clerk can initiate formal procedures against alleged sexual misconduct/harassment. People in authority who receive reports of sexual misconduct or harassment must respond promptly and fairly, and comply with the law of both church and state. The church will respect the right to confidentiality of all members of the community in both informal and formal procedures, insofar as possible. This policy condemns retaliations against persons bringing complaints of sexual misconduct/harassment. An individual found to be guilty of sexual misconduct/harassment is subject to disciplinary action consistent with the *Confession of Faith of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church*.

Any person who feels a sexual misconduct/harassment complaint did not receive prompt and fair response should appeal to the next highest judicatory of the church. (1996 Minutes, pages 148 - 149)