

Policy Against Workplace Harassment of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee

Statement on the Policy Against Workplace Harassment

The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee (“PMT”) is committed to the principles of fair and equal employment opportunity and strives to protect all people who seek and hold employment from being subjected to harassment in the workplace. Every church should provide an enjoyable work environment to the extent reasonably possible, free of harassment, including harassment based on a person’s race, color, national origin, age (over 40), sex, pregnancy, religion, creed, disability, veteran’s status, or any other category protected by state and/or federal civil rights laws.

Workplace harassment, including, but not limited to, sexual harassment, that is severe and pervasive can be illegal. Other behavior, such as bullying, can be inappropriate in the workplace and violate this policy even if it does not rise to the level of illegal harassment.

Workplace harassment is defined as any unwelcomed verbal, written or physical conduct that either degrades or shows hostility or aversion towards a person that (1) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; (2) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee’s work performance; or (3) affects an employee’s employment opportunities or compensation. Such conduct may be illegal if it is based on a person’s race, color, national origin, age (over 40), sex, pregnancy, religion, creed, disability, veteran’s status, or any other category protected by state and/or federal civil rights laws.

Petty slights, annoyances, and isolated incidents (unless extremely serious) will not rise to the level of illegality. To be unlawful, the conduct must create a work environment that would be intimidating, hostile, or offensive to reasonable people.

Offensive conduct may include, but is not limited to, offensive jokes, slurs, epithets or name calling, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures, and interference with work performance. Harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, an agent of the employer, a co-worker, or a non-employee.
- The victim does not have to be the person harassed but can be anyone affected by the offensive conduct.
- Unlawful harassment may occur without economic injury to, or discharge of, the victim.

Application and Administration of Policy

This policy applies to all church members, church officers, employees, non-member employees, and volunteers in service to and within the PMT.

Prevention is the best tool to eliminate harassment in the workplace. Churches adopting this policy are encouraged to take appropriate steps to prevent and correct unlawful harassment. They should clearly communicate to employees that unwelcome harassing conduct will not be tolerated. They can do this by establishing an effective complaint or grievance process, providing anti-harassment training to their managers and employees, and taking immediate and appropriate action when an employee complains. Churches should

strive to create an environment in which employees feel free to raise concerns and are confident that those concerns will be addressed.

Interpretation of Policy

The PMT has adopted and may in the future adopt additional policies concerning Sexual Misconduct, Child and Youth Protection, and Antiracism, which may overlap to some extent with the policies set out here. These policies shall be interpreted consistently with one another, but, if there are conflicts or inconsistencies, the stricter policy shall apply.

Orientation and Training

Each congregation and organization in PMT is responsible for developing a policy for its officers, members, non-member employees, and volunteers which is consistent with this document. It is incumbent on each PMT entity to ensure compliance with its policy.