

Union Evangelical Lutheran Church

Sexual Exploitation, Ministerial Conduct, and Youth Protection Policy

Definitions

Minister: all persons engaged by the church to carry out its ministry. This includes elected or appointed leaders of the church, employees, and volunteers, as well as ordained ministers and other rostered leaders.

Ordained Minister: a person who holds ordained ministerial standing in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or another judicatory with which the ELCA has full communion.

Rostered leader: a person who holds official standing in the ELCA.

Ministerial relationship: the relationship between one who carries out the ministry of the church and the one being served by that ministry.

Sexual abuse or exploitation: the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement or coercion of any child to engage in or assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of any sexually conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting or filming, of any sexually explicit conduct or the rape, sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, aggravated indecent assault, molestation, incest, indecent exposure, prostitution, statutory sexual assault or other form of sexual exploitation of children.

Sexual harassment: repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to his or her wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person's sexuality or sexual orientation with the intent of intimidating, humiliating or embarrassing the other person, or subjecting the person to public discrimination. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly a term or condition or circumstance of instruction, employment, or participation in any church activity;
- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel or church-related decisions affecting an individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or participation in church activities or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or church environment.

Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones, particularly:

- Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes or invitations;
- Verbal contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits or sexual orientation and sexual propositions;
- Physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual intercourse; and
- Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, poster, or magazines.

Sexual harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome – and using sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, salary, work, learning, or worship environment of another. It is impermissible to suggest, threaten, or imply that failure to accept a request for a date or sexual intimacy will affect a person's job prospects, church leadership, or participation in the life of the church. For example, it is forbidden either to imply or actually withhold support for an appointment, promotion, or change of assignment, to suggest that a poor performance report will be given because a person has declined a personal proposition; or to hint that benefits, such as promotions, favorable performance evaluations, favorable assigned duties or shifts, recommendations or reclassifications, will be forthcoming in exchange for sexual favors.

Friend of the congregation: any person who is a non-member, either a minor or an adult individual, involved in the ministry of Union Evangelical Lutheran Church

A. Prohibition of Sexual Exploitation and Harassment

Union Evangelical Lutheran Church is committed to creating and maintaining a community for worship and service in which members, friends, staff and volunteers can worship and work together in an atmosphere free of all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Specifically, all persons associated with Union Evangelical Lutheran Church should be aware that the church is strongly opposed to sexual exploitation and sexual harassment and that such behavior is prohibited by church policy. It is the intention and desire of the church to take whatever action necessary to prevent and correct behavior which is contrary to this policy and, if necessary, to discipline or report to the appropriate authorities those persons who violate this policy.

B. Ministerial Conduct

All persons engaged in the ministry of Union Evangelical Lutheran Church (including but not limited to elected or appointed leaders, employees, volunteers, and ordained ministers or other rostered leaders) are responsible for being informed through this policy of the possible impact of their words and actions. Sexual harassment or sexual

exploitation of parishioners or other individuals by persons engaged in the ministry of Union Evangelical Lutheran Church is unethical and unprofessional behavior and will not be tolerated within this congregation.

All persons engaged in the ministry of Union Evangelical Lutheran Church (including but not limited to elected or appointed leaders, employees, volunteers, and ordained ministers or other rostered leaders) often deal with individuals who are emotionally and psychologically fragile or vulnerable. It is imperative that those persons engaged in the ministry of Union Evangelical Lutheran Church maintain their own psychological, emotional and spiritual health and are required to have adequate preparation and education. It is the policy of Union Evangelical Lutheran Church to encourage all persons defined herein to nurture safety within ministerial relationships by being attentive to self-care, education, and by referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources. It is also required that those persons engaged in providing ministry will complete and submit a screening authorization form for criminal background check.

C. Youth Protection Policy

Union Evangelical Lutheran Church is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment for young people to learn about and experience God's love. In order to ensure this, we require all people applying or requesting to work with minors are members for at least six months, *or friends (non-members) of Union Evangelical Lutheran Church* for one year. It is the policy of the church to provide adequate supervision for all youth activities. We also expect all persons (including but not limited to elected or appointed leaders, employees, volunteers, and ordained ministers or other rostered leaders) who work with minors to complete and submit a screening authorization form for criminal background check.