



THE BEHAVIOR COVENANT IN REGARD TO SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Approved 7/25/23

This covenant applies to all of those engaged in ministry and/or pastoral care for the Presbytery of Genesee Valley, indicating a common understanding of the nature and language of sexual misconduct in all its forms. It creates a covenant between the signer, the Presbytery, and God to actively recognize, prevent, and avoid engaging in Sexual Misconduct as part of their calling to be ambassadors, showing the love and justice of Jesus Christ.

To this end:

As it is written in Holy Scripture,

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?” 1 Cor 6:19

So I covenant:

- to recognize that people’s bodies are the sacred dwelling places of God and therefore deserve such reverence.
- to avoid all forms of unwanted physical touch, sexualized language or images, sexualized behavior, and/or sexualized attention given to another.
- to honor the boundaries of my ministerial role, and to honor boundaries set by others, both physical and relational, about their body, gender, and identity.
- to adopt the responsibility to proactively inquire about these boundaries when they are unclear.

As it is written in Holy Scripture,

“Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit ... is guilty of an eternal sin.” Mark 3:28

So I covenant:

- to honor that sexual misconduct is more than a break in trust to be mediated between people; it is an abuse against the spirit of the person and Spirit of God.
- to recognize that, in answering my call to care for the spirit of others in my work for the Presbytery, I am in a position of real and/or perceived power.
- to actively maintain an awareness of that power dynamic when it comes to my interactions with others in our physical and relational interactions.

As it is written in Holy Scripture,

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him ... And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”

Matt 25:31-32a, 40

So I covenant:

- to recognize that sexual misconduct is not just the sin of an individual, but is a sin born out of a context, culture, and system that makes the abuses of sexual misconduct possible, and that this sin is compounded when we fail to address such abuses in light of this awareness.
- to intentionally work in my ministry context toward creating a culture that actively rejects and dismantles such systems that allow sexual misconduct to occur and seeks to reverse the Church's historical patterns of sweeping abuse under the rug.
- to actively raise the question of whether something I have done is being perceived as sexual misconduct, when I observe such a possibility.
- to speak out if I witness an action that may be considered sexual misconduct.
- to create a safe space in my ministry context and within myself, for others to bring an experience of sexual misconduct, whether as identified victim/survivor, identified perpetrator, or observer.
- to learn how to respond to accusations of sexual misconduct in our Presbytery, through participating in required and recommended boundaries training opportunities, and through continued listening and conversation, so I am prepared to address them in healthy ways and guide those in my ministry context to do the same.

All of these, I covenant with the Presbytery of Genesee Valley, before God, as I seek to be a friend among my colleagues in ministry, to further the peace, unity, and purity of the Church, and to love others as Christ has loved me by caring for their bodies, boundaries, spirits, and sacred worth, as I do my own.

Name

Date