



**South-Central Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**
God's work. Our hands.

Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Policy of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin ELCA

Statement of Policy

It is the policy of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin (SCSW) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that sexual harassment and misconduct will not be tolerated. Any complaint of sexual harassment or misconduct will be dealt with promptly and as confidentially as the law allows. Our Policy applies to clergy, deacons, ecumenical partners, lay employees, committee members, and volunteers.

SCSW further holds that sexual abuse, sexual harassment and sexual misconduct within the church are incompatible with biblical teachings of hospitality, justice and healing. The intent of this Policy statement is to make certain that responses to any allegation of sexual harassment or misconduct be just and compassionate for all involved, and that all parties be heard.

Definition of Sexual Harassment and Misconduct

Sexual harassment and misconduct refer to sexualized behavior which 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
- Sexual assaults or molestation
- Intimate 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 another person
- Contact of a sexual or inappropriate nature via Internet, electronic, or social media
- Any attempt to engage in or perform any of the above
- Any additional sexual activity that is covered either by Federal or State laws.

Reporting

Any person who believes that he or she has experienced or witnessed sexual harassment or misconduct, or have had a sexual harassment or misconduct issue reported to them should report it immediately to:

- Reports involving clergy, deacons, ecumenical partners, lay employees, committee members, and volunteers shall be promptly reported to the Bishop of South-Central Synod of Wisconsin.
- Reports involving the Bishop of the Synod shall be promptly reported to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will notify the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA.
- Sexual misconduct or sexual harassment allegations by an intern, allegations involving an intern, or allegations involving an intern's supervising pastor, shall be reported to the Director of Internship at the seminary in which the intern is enrolled. Allegations involving an intern's supervising pastor shall also be reported to the Bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin.
- If required by law, ordinance or similar regulations, the Bishop or a designated member of the Executive Committee shall immediately report this incident to the proper governmental authorities.

Investigation

- Each incident that is reported will be investigated by the Bishop and/or the Executive Committee, with care and concern for all involved.
- Incidents involving the Bishop will be investigated by the Executive Committee.
- Investigations will include interviews with all concerned, if possible.
- Investigations 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.
- The Bishop and 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 Bishop and/or 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 Bishop and/or 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 Bishop and/or 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.
- The South-Central Synod of Wisconsin will not engage in or tolerate retaliation against any clergy, deacon, ecumenical partner, lay employee, committee member, 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

The month after the Synod Assembly the secretary, or other person designated by the Synod Council, shall send an electronic copy of this policy to Synod officers, Synod Council members, Synod committee members, and Synod employees. This policy will also be posted on the Synod website.

Adopted by the Synod Council the 25th day of April 2018.

Acknowledgement

Signature

Name

Date

Synod Position/Committee