

RESOLUTION: TRAINING FOR THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IN CHURCHES

WHEREAS, ministry comprises a sacred trust between clergy and parishioners, which is grounded in scripture, Paul stated that those who serve in pastoral leadership, “Must be hospitable, a lover of goodness, prudent, upright, devout and self controlled,” (Titus 1:8) and also stated, “You are witnesses, and God also, how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was toward you believers . . .” (Thessalonians 2:10); and

WHEREAS, ministerial sexual misconduct can be defined as any “sexualized behavior” within a “ministerial relationship” and violation of said trust; and

WHEREAS, the leadership and care of a congregation is inconsistent with the abuse of pastoral power in sexual misconduct with parishioners, as is clearly stated by the Ordained Minister’s Code: “I will not use my position, power, or authority to exploit any person”; and

WHEREAS, many of the churches of the Connecticut Conference have endured the consequences and experienced suffering and confusion caused by sexual misconduct by a clergy person; and

WHEREAS, the 127th Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ passed a resolution entitled and calling for “Training Those in Authorized Ministries in the Nature and Consequences of Clergy Sexual Misconduct” and yet only about 100 of our 683 ordained ministers have participated in such training during the past five years.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the delegates to the 133rd Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ urge the Associations of the Conference and their Committees on Ministry to adopt a policy requiring all Authorized Ministers (Ordained, Licensed and Commissioned) to participate in, at minimum, a one-day workshop on sexual misconduct prevention within three years of adoption of the policy or within three years of being granted standing by the Association, and repeat training within each subsequent seven year period; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge the Associations of the Conference and their Committees on Ministry to adopt a policy within two years of the adoption of this resolution requiring all persons in-care of Associations to participate in, at a minimum, a one-day workshop on sexual misconduct prevention prior to being recommended to an Ecclesiastical Council for Ordination; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the Connecticut Conference Office for Program and Resources to offer one-day workshops on sexual misconduct prevention for persons in-care and Authorized Ministers at least twice during each calendar year; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon the Connecticut Conference Office for Program and Resources, working with Regional Ministers, Regional Ministry Teams and local churches to further develop and make more available comprehensive and appropriate educational opportunities for Christian Educators, Youth Leaders, Sunday School Teachers, Music Directors, Organists, and Choir Directors and other Lay Leaders to learn about the nature and consequences of Sexual Misconduct; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Connecticut Conference Committee on Ministry present and interpret this resolution to all fifteen Associations of the Connecticut Conference and all Executive Committees of the Associations of the Connecticut Conference within one year of the adoption of this resolution.

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