

Minutes of the 908th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Baltimore September 13, 2025, at 10:00 am Catonsville Presbyterian Church

Outgoing Moderator, Soung Baranowski, called the meeting of the Presbytery of Baltimore to order at 10:00 AM. She opened the meeting with prayer. A quorum was present.

She called on Stated Clerk Mary Gaut who presented the docket, explaining that the slate of nominees would be acted on before worship so that the installations can happen during worship. She then moved approval of the docket. The motion was seconded and **APPROVED** by common consent.

The Moderator recognized Rev Ken Kovacs, who welcomed the Presbytery to Catonsville Presbyterian

General Presbyter, Jackie Taylor, welcomed first time ruling elders and guests. She gave a special recognition to RE Susan Taylor King, member of Trinity Presbyterian, who was the recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor in March 2025. (see Appendix B). She also recognized RE Debbie Reese who was elected Vice-Moderator of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic at its assembly this past week.

STATED CLERK'S REPORT AND CONSENT MOTION

Following devotions, the Moderator recognized the Stated Clerk who moved the approval of the minutes of the 907th Stated Meeting as posted with the meeting papers. The motion was seconded and the minutes were **APPROVED** by common consent.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION AND NOMINATIONS:

Rev. McKenna Wallen, chair of the committee, was recognized. She moved, on behalf of the committee, the election of the committee, commission and chairperson nominees as presented in their written report (Appendix C) No second was required and there were no nominations from the floor. The motion was **APPROVED**.

Land Recognition

The presbytery was called to remember the Native American Tribes on whose land we reside.

WORSHIP

The Presbytery then moved into Morning Worship coordinated by Lea Gilmore, member of the Gathering Team. Worship leadership included the Catonsville Presbyterian Choir, led by music director Greg Knauf and organist and assistant director Wendy Johnson. Outgoing Moderator, RE Soung Baranowski, preach a sermon titled "God's Incomparable Great Power for Us," based on Ephesians 1:17-19. The Sacrament of Holy Communion was celebrated with Rev. Ken Kovacs and out-going vice-moderator, Rev. Barbara Renton. The list of ruling elders and ministers who died in the past year (Appendix D) was printed in the worship bulletin.

REPORT OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Newly installed moderator, Rev. Sue Lowcock Harris, recognized the chairperson of the Personnel Committee, Rev. Keith Paige. He summarized the results of the staff reviews and then moved, on behalf of the committee, that Dr. Jackie Taylor's Contract as General Presbyter be extended for an additional five years. The motion did not require a second. He said:

"In leading the staff, she has balanced the requirements of each staff position with the flexibility that allows her staff members to explore new aspects of their jobs. Dr. Taylor is truly knowledgeable about the job and responsibilities". She is also mainly responsible for an office atmosphere that is both collegial and productive. Based on interviews with the staff, she is incredibly supportive of them and ensures they have the necessary tools to perform their duties. Staffers cite her leadership as the central reason for the offices' supportive, working environment."

Rev. Taylor left the room for discussion and vote. The motion **PASSED** unanimously, and she returned to the room to warm applause.

COMMISSION ON RECONCILIATION

The Moderator then turned the meeting over to the Dismantling Racism Team which summarized the ***Proposal to Create a Reparative Justice Fund*** which was introduced at the 907th stated meeting in May. A video which the team prepared was shown, highlighting the historical wrongs which the Reparative Justice Fund will address and the historical and faith significance of the proposed action.

The proposal was presented for approval through a series of five separate but related motions, none of which required a second as they came from the Dismantling Racism Team. Prior to each motion the team co-chair, Rev. Catherine Goodrich, gave explanatory remarks that put each of the motions into the context of the proposal as a whole.

MOTIONS TO CREATE THE REPARATIVE JUSTICE FUND

1. THAT the Presbytery of Baltimore create a Reparative Justice Fund (The Fund) for the purpose of repairing historic harms through financial support for the self-development of Black congregations and communities. The fund will prioritize the six historically and majority Black churches of the Presbytery of Baltimore, while also extending to Black neighborhoods and communities within the geographic boundaries of the Presbytery of Baltimore. At least 25% and up to one third of the Fund will be designated in support of the six PCUSA congregations.

and

That the Reparative Justice Fund be separately incorporated and directed by an independent Board of Directors composed of leaders from among the Presbytery of Baltimore churches and within the impacted communities. The articles of incorporation and founding board members to be approved by the presbytery. The Board will have sole authority for directing the distribution of funds within the stated purposes of the initiative.

During a time of discussion former Presbytery Moderator, RE James Parks, reminded the presbytery of its prophetic stance during the racial unrest of 2015-16 and its witness for justice within the denomination. The answer to another question affirmed that Baltimore is the first presbytery to consider creating a reparative justice fund. The motion was enthusiastically **APPROVED** with one “no” vote.

2. THAT the Presbytery of Baltimore commit and release 15% of the net assets without donor restrictions or designations held by the Trustees of the Presbytery of Baltimore, Inc. to establish the Reparative Justice Fund. In addition, 15% of the Mission/Abbott and Urban/Arlington designated funds will be released, in keeping with their initial stated purpose. The actual amount to be determined based on the reconciled balances of these net assets as of December 31, 2025 as stated on the Trustee Fund Reconciliation report.

and

That these funds shall be distributed in two equal installments: the first on June 1, 2026, and the second on June 1, 2027. These funds will continue to be invested and managed by the Trustees of the Presbytery of Baltimore, Inc. until such time as the newly established corporation is able to lawfully receive them.

RE John Dittman moved to amend the motion to change the amount released to 24% of non-restricted or designated assets. The motion was seconded. Following brief discussion, the motion to amend was **DISAPPROVED**.

The original motion was restated and was **APPROVED** unanimously.

3. THAT the Presbytery of Baltimore commit and release the Reparative Actions Fund Reserve, created by the legacy of The Center, along with any subsequent contributions, to the Reparative Justice Fund.

The motion was APPROVED unanimously.

4. That the Manual of the Presbytery of Baltimore section 9.6.5, be amended effective December 31, 2025, to read: (Manual change requires a 2/3 vote)

After the obligations as required by each particular sale have been met, the Trustees are to place 45% of the net proceeds into the Enduring Witness Fund, 15% into The Emergency Assistance Grant Fund, **and transfer 10% to the Reparative Justice Fund**. The Trustees shall invest and manage the remaining monies in accordance with their duties. Any expenditure of these remaining funds requires approval of the Presbytery, upon receipt of the advice of the Trustees and the Steering Cabinet.

The motion was **APPROVED** unanimously.

5. THAT the Dismantling Racism Team, working with the Commission on Reconciliation, be directed to organize working groups to draft Articles of Incorporation and relevant guidelines, the incorporating board composition, and nominees to the incorporating Board for approval by the Presbytery at the 911th Meeting of the Presbytery of Baltimore in May 2026.

and

THAT the Dismantling Racism Team, working with others as appropriate, provide educational materials and outreach to churches and individuals, encouraging them to contribute to the Reparative Justice Fund and supporting their own efforts toward racial justice.

The motion was **APPROVED** unanimously.

Following the vote, RE Lea Gilmore led the Presbytery in singing “Glory to God” (the new version of the Doxology included in the Glory to God Hymnbook. The mood was jubilant as the Presbytery celebrated the historical and social justice significance of its action in creating the Reparative Justice Fund.

Vice-Moderator Rob Smith then took the gavel.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

Rev. Mark Phillips, chair of the Commission on Preparation, was recognized and moved, on behalf of the commission that Presbytery examine Inquirer RE Josh Gilhart on his sense of call and approve his advancement to the status of candidate. The motion did not require a second. A statement on his sense of call was included with the meeting papers (Appendix E).

Rev. Phillips gave a synopsis of the requirements necessary for advancement to candidacy and attested that Elder Gilhart has done well in fulfilling them all. Following the examination, Elder Gilhart was escorted from the room for discussion and vote. The motion was **APPROVED** and he was brought back into the room. Rev. Alison Peters, pastor of Cumberland Presbyterian Church offered a prayer of blessing.

Rev Phillips then moved that Presbytery examine RE Jennifer Pearson on her statement of faith (Appendix F) and approve commissioning her as Commissioned Lay Pastor at Babcock Presbyterian Church for 3 years beginning October 1, 2025. He gave an overview of her training for this position including academic studies, internship and clinical pastoral education. Following the examination Elder Pearson left the room for discussion and vote. The motion to commission her was **APPROVED** and she returned to the room for a prayer of blessing offered by Rev. Jack Hodges.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

Vice-Moderator Rob Smith introduced Rev. Mary Speers, chair of the Commission on Ministry. She moved the following motions on behalf of the Commission (which did not require a second):

That Presbytery approve amending the Manual section 7.9.5.2.1 (the commission’s authority to appoint session moderators) to add “The commission may delegate this authority to the commission chair, the General Presbytery and/or the Stated Clerk, who must report appointments of moderators to the next meeting of the commission.” There was no discussion and the motion **PASSED**..

That Presbytery approve a 2.5% COLA increase in effective salary for installed and temporary pastoral positions. (Mandatory for those at the minimum for their factor and strongly recommended for all others). The motion was **APPROVED**.

That Presbytery commission RE Troy Bailey to officiate the Sacrament of Communion at any church in the presbytery when invited by the session. (His sense of call is Appendix G). Having previously been examined on his statement of faith, an examination was not required. Following brief discussion the motion was **APPROVED**.

That Presbytery approve the revised Policy on Pastoral Compensation (Appendix H). There was no discussion and the motion **PASSED**.

Rev. Speers then turned the next item to Rev. Laura Hollister, chairperson of the Sexual Misconduct Response Team (SMRT) who moved that Presbytery approve the revised Sexual Misconduct Policy as presented (Appendix I). She gave a brief synopsis of the changes. The motion was **APPROVED**.

REPORT OF THE STEERING CABINET

Stated Clerk Mary Gaut presented the following motions on behalf of the Cabinet. None of them required a second:

That Presbytery approve the proposed Anti-Harassment Policy (Appendix J). **APPROVED**.

That Presbytery approve the revised Child Protection Policy (Appendix K). **APPROVED**.

That Presbytery amend the Manual section 6.2.1 to add a member of the Nominating Committee and a member of the Dismantling Racism Team to the membership of the Steering Cabinet. (Approval requires 2/3 majority.) The motion was **APPROVED** unanimously.

No business was removed from the consent motion and there was no new business. The motion to adjourn was seconded and approved by common consent. Vice-moderator RE Rob Smith closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Gaut, Stated Clerk

APPENDIX A

Attendance Detail

Category	Present	Excused	Absent
Teaching Elders Serving Churches	32	2	14
Specialized Teaching Elders. (non-resident TEs are permanently excused)	4	2	5
New Worshiping Community Leaders	{2}	0	0
Honorably Retired Teaching Elders	12	-	-
CREs & Commissioned Pastors	3	0	3
Ruling Elder Commissioners (Including officers and Commission members)	41	-	35
Former Ruling Elder Moderators	6	-	-
Former Ruling Elder Stated Clerks	1	-	-
Certified Educators	0	-	-
Subtotal voting members	99	4	52
Corresponding Members	0		
Youth Advisory Delegates (Non-voting)	0		
Guests and Presbytery Staff (Non-voting)	52		
Candidates and Inquirers (Non-voting)	4		
Subtotal non-voting attendees	56		
TOTAL PRESENT	155		

TEACHING ELDERS SERVING CHURCHES:

PRESENT: Tim Stern (Ark & Dove), Michele Wallen (Ashland), Steve Nofel (Bethel), Andrew Connors (Brown), Ken Kovacs, Dorothy Boulton (Catonsville); Jeremy Sanderson (Central); Keith Paige (Cherry Hill); Jeff Young (Christ Our King); Catherine Goodrich (Faith); Jose Lopez-Chapa (Fallston & Kenwood), Melissa Lopez (First Bel Air); Alison Peters (First Cumberland), Mark Phillips (First and Franklin), Mihee Kim-Kort (First of Annapolis); Ken Page (First of Howard Co.), Kim Nofel (Granite & Churchville), Ron Hankins (Govans), Tanya Wade (Grace), Harold Bennett (Grove), Teresa Martin-Minnich (Hancock), Susan Bouche (Harundale), Jennifer DiFrancesco (Havenwood and *Slate*); Ray Meute (Highland), Karen Brown (Hope), Carlos Wilton (Light Street); Phyllis Felton (Madison Ave.), McKenna Wallen (Maryland), Amy Carlson (Mt Hebron), Mark Hannah (Roland Park); Dan Melton (St. Andrew's), Hiywot Teshome (St John United), Joel Strom (Towson),

ABSENT AND EXCUSED: Jessie Lowry (Christ Our Anchor); Rebecca Crate (Springfield)

ABSENT: Jennifer McCullough (Ark & Dove); Sungjin Kim (Bridge), Andy Gathman (Chestnut Grove), Janna VanderWoude (Christ Memorial), Andrew Kort, (First of Annapolis), Matthew Glasgow (First Westminister); Eric Myers (Frederick), Jeong Hoon Han (Korean United);, Elizabeth McLean (Prince of Peace); Mark Sandell (St. Andrew), Andy Nagel (Second); Rob Carter (Towson), JC Austin & Nancy Lincoln (Woods),

NEW WORSHIPING COMMUNITY LEADERS:

PRESENT: *Jennifer DiFrancesco (Slate. Listed under Havenwood),*

ABSENT:

RESIDENT SPECIALIZED CLERGY

PRESENT: Brandon Brewer, Laurie Hogge, Edwin Lacy, Jackie Taylor, *Michele Wallen (also Ashland),*

EXCUSED: Kate Foster, Shannon Weston

ABSENT: Sarah Diehl; Richard Jones, Stephen Mann; Michael Moore, Jenine Zabriskie

NONRESIDENT SPECIALIZED CLERGY:

PRESENT: Tanya Denley

ABSENT AND EXCUSED: John Boulware, Rob Hoch, Stacy Martin, Todd Smith

HONORABLY RETIRED

PRESENT: John Carlson, Mary Gaut, Gene Gordon, David Harris, Morton Harris, Laura Hollister, Jack Hodges, Sue Lowcock Harris, Dottie LaPenta, Claire Pula, Barbara Renton, Mary Speers,

CORRESPONDING MEMBERS:

RULING ELDER OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF PRESBYTERY'S STEERING CABINET AND COMMISSIONS

PRESENT: Rob Smith (Vice Moderator – Central), Bobby Hall, Neil Nemser (Faith) Tina Coleman (Harundale), Charese Jordan Moore (Knox), Karen Garrett (Knox), Betsy Stewart (Woods Memorial)

RULING ELDER COMMISSIONERS FROM CONGREGATIONS:

CATONSVILLE, John Dittman; CHESTNUT GROVE, Debbie Schmidt; CHRIST OUR ANCHOR, Debbie Barbour; CHRIST OUR KING, Marlene Butler; CHURCHVILLE, Stacy Hunter, DICKEY MEMORIAL, Lynn Bernhardt; FAITH Robin Nemser; FIRST AND FRANKLIN, Malinda Wu; FIRST OF ANNAPOLIS, Rae Jean Goodman; FIRST OF CUMBERLAND, Josh Gilhart; FIRST OF HOWARD CO., Kathy Robie-Suh, Laura Burris; FRANKLINVILLE, Ed Stuebing; GOOD SHEPHERD, Cindy Prevatt; GOVANS, Tiffany James; GRANITE, Cheryl Spezzano; HAMILTON, Janice Howard; HANCOCK, Nancy Younker HARUNDALE, Lee Wexel; HAVENWOOD, Stephen Plano; HAVRE DE GRACE, Patricia Allingham; HIGHLAND, Craig DeRan; HOPE, Susan Fetcho;, HUNTING RIDGE, Annette Snyder; KNOX, Steven Parish; LIGHT STREET, Julie Helms; MARYLAND, Carol Mason; PRINCE OF PEACE, Cory Gimperling; ROLAND PARK,

Laura Hirschfeld; SECOND, Scott Silverwood; SPRINGFIELD, Sharon Pappas; St. JOHN UNITED, Susan Moody; WOODS MEMORIAL, Linwood Hayman; Steve Tidwell

CONGREGATIONS WITHOUT ELDER REPRESENTATION Churches listed in ORANGE had elders present but listed in a different voting category

ARK & DOVE, ASHLAND, BABCOCK, BARRELVILLE, BETHEL, BRIDGE, BROWN, CENTRAL CHERRY HILL, CHRIST MEMORIAL, EMMITSBURG, FALLSTON, FIRST OF BEL AIR, FREDERICK, FROSTBURG, , GRACE, GROVE, HAGERSTOWN, HUGHES MEMORIAL, KENWOOD, KOREAN UNITED, LOCHEARN, MADISON AVE, MT. HEBRON, MT. PARAN, PERRY HALL, ST. ANDREW, ST ANDREWS, TOWSON, TRINITY, WESTMINSTER

COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS

PRESENT: Ed Terry (Hamilton); Anita Bishop-Johnson (Mt Paran), Troy Baily (Fallston)

EXCUSED: Stanley Howes (First Frostburg-Huntingdon Presbytery)

ABSENT: John Brewington (Lochearn), Donna Lea (Mt Paran), Paul Martin (Havre de Grace), Cleoda Walker (Knox)

CANDIDATES AND INQUIRERS: Josh Gilhart (listed with Cumberland), Jennifer Pearson (Babcock) Kathy Welsh Smith (Central), Heather Russell von Marko (First Westminster)

FORMER RULING ELDER MODERATORS (with vote): Jim Schroll (First and Franklin) Audrey Trapp (Faith), Cecil Phillips (Granite), James Parks (Hunting Ridge), Guy Moody (St. John United), Adrienne Knight (Knox)

FORMER RULING ELDER STATED CLERKS (with vote): Catherine Blacka

OTHER PRESBYTERY STAFF (without vote): Chuck Brawner, Susan Krehbiel, Frank Perrelli, Felicia Scott,

GUESTS: John Pearson (Babcock), Charlie Burch, Nancy Burke, Ted Churn, Debbie Davis, Mark Davis, Marcellous Dixon-Grant, Keith Glennan, Judy Halsey, Susan Hutton, Jenny Hutton, David Hutton, Dakota Jani, Bernard Lawson, Norman Lazarus, Vickie Lord, Greg Mayes, Linda Meyer, Laurie White, Aisha White (Catonsville), Sarah Doerrer (Christ Our Anchor), Andrew Fuller (Faith), Lea Gilmore, Kit Clark, Kaye Gooch, David Hornbeck, Becky Horbeck, Tanya Morrel, (Govans), Carroll Baranowski (Havre de Grace), Debbie Reese, Matt Fenton (First Howard), Brenda Alston, Carrie Hubbard, Yvette McEachern, Volanda Peace, Sarah Walker, Kenneth Walker, (Knox), Kramer Hardman (Light Street), Laura Hirschfeld Mary Carey, Phoebe Evans Letocha (Roland Park), Greg Barrett (Trinity Pastor), Susan King, Sheila Drummond Camm, Sharon Carwell, Teri Henson, Camille King Hinmon, (Trinity), Rev. Daniel Wachira (Presbyterian Church of East Africa – Baltimore)

Note on Attendance Detail: The number of TEs with votes include all active pastors and resident specialized ministers plus retired ministers who attended a presbytery meeting at least once in the past year. The number of REs with vote includes elder commissioners from churches, former and current RE moderators and clerks, and RE members of COM, CPM, Thriving, SLD, Reconciliation, Steering Cabinet, Administration & Personnel. (See Manual section 2). Each year a calculation is run to be sure there is a balance of ruling and teaching elders on the roll. The number of absent RE commissioners is calculated by subtracting ALL eligible voting elder commissions from the number present

APPENDIX B

Susan Taylor King: 101 Years of Faith and Service



Susan Emmaline Taylor King has lived a remarkable life of service, perseverance, and faith. Born in 1924 in Kilmarnock, Virginia, she moved with her family to Baltimore during the Great Depression. A graduate of Frederick Douglass High School, she trained as a riveter and joined the workforce at Eastern Aircraft Company during World War II, becoming one of Baltimore's few African American "Rosie the Riveters." In that historic moment, she not only contributed to the nation's defense but also witnessed the breaking down of racial barriers in the workplace, experiences she would later

share in documentaries, books, and public tributes. In March 2025, Mrs. King was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, one of the highest civilian honors, recognizing her vital contributions to the war effort.

After the war, Mrs. King pursued higher education, earning both her bachelor's and master's degrees from Morgan State University. She went on to serve as a science teacher and guidance counselor in Baltimore City Public Schools for over two decades.

Through all these seasons, Susan King has remained grounded in her faith as a charter member of Trinity Presbyterian Church. For more than seven decades, her presence has been a blessing to the congregation – her witness shaped as much by her commitment to peace and justice as by her generosity of spirit. Now at 101 years old, she continues to inspire those around her with her story, her wisdom, and her steadfast devotion to God's

call. We give thanks for her life, her service, and the example of faith she embodies for the Presbytery of Baltimore.

APPENDIX C

Report of Nominations Committee

Moderator	Sue Lowcock Harris	Retired Clergy (FPCHC)	TE	2026
Vice-Moderator	Rob Smith	Central	RE	2026
CPM	Claire Pula	Retired Clergy (Light Street)	RE	2028
CPM	Bill Minor	Kenwood	TE	2028
COM	Mary Speers	Retired Clergy (FPCHC)	RE	2026
COM	Guy Moody	St John United	TE	2028
COM	JC Austin	Woods Memorial	TE	2028
COM	LouAnn Rau	Fallston	RE	2028
COR	Jessie Lowry	Christ Our Anchor	TE	2026
COR	Jenn McCullough	Ark and Dove	TE	2026
COR	Stephan Price-Gibson	Retired Clergy (Ark & Dove)	TE	2027
Trustees	Morton Harris	Retired Clergy (FPCHC)	TE	2028
P&L	Jeremy Sanderson	Central	TE	2028
CTLIC	Tina Coleman	Harundale	RE	2026
CTLIC	Karen Garrett	Knox	RE	2026
CTLIC	Morton Harris	Retired Clergy (FPCHC)	TE	2026
CTLIC	Heather Russell	Westminster	RE	2026
CTLIC	Betsy Stewart	FPC Annapolis	RE	2027
CTLIC	Eva Hendrix	Hunting Ridge	RE	2027
CTLIC	Pete McCallum	Highland	RE	2027
CTLIC	Shannon Weston	Validated Call	TE	2027
CTLIC	Janna VanderWoude	Christ Memorial	TE	2028
CTLIC	Jeff Young	Christ Our King	TE	2028
NOM	Susan Boucher	Harundale	TE	2028
Admin	John Schmidt	Ret. Clergy (Chestnut Grove)	TE	2028
Personnel	Matthew Glasgow	FPC Westminster	TE	2027
Personnel	Barb Crump	FPC Bel Air	RE	2028

APPENDIX D

NECROLOGY 2024-25

Name	Church
Lew Shell	Harundale
Stan Mohr	Harundale
Ken Catlin	Harundale
Bob Williams	Ashland
Betty Meekins (2/19/2025)	Granite
William (Bill) Hyde	Faith
Kay Ballard	Faith
Maimah Stewart	Faith
Eleda (Liz) Jackson	Maryland
Thomas H Horn Sr. (Dec)	Cumberland
John Peter Sietsema (Sep)	Catonsville
Betty Duff	Grove
Jon Livezey	Grove
Leslie E. (Rocky) Gaut	Towson
Rev. Thomas Blair	PRESBYTERY OF BALTIMORE
Rev. Thomas Bashore	PRESBYTERY OF BALTIMORE
Edwin (Ed) Herbert Blacka	Howard
Donald A. Kyle	Christ Memorial
Nancy M. Walworth	Christ Memorial
Katie Kinzie	Christ Memorial
Mary Mayo	Dickey Memorial
Sandra Cannon	Frederick
Ada Woods	Westminster
Rae Murray	Westminster
Dottie Gaudioso	Westminster
Blanche Bakke	Woods
Carolyn Decker	Woods
Earl Dewees	Woods
Judy Dimartini	Woods
Bill Eaton	Woods
Vivian Harquail	Woods
John Hollis	Woods
Paul Jones	Woods
Bruce Karner	Woods
Carolyn Kinnamon	Woods
Elaine Soderlund	Woods

APPENDIX E

JOSH GILHART – SENSE OF CALL

I have often spoken of life, particularly my faith and discernment, as a river. For the early half of my life I would say I generally walked alongside it, occasionally dipped a toe or even waded in a bit. I grew up in a religious family though not one which valued church attendance. Religion was viewed as a very personal matter, rather than communal. This time of life created in me much challenge as I felt my life, my being, at odds with the God who I was taught about. This was a God who kept score, who sought our mistakes, who hated me because of my sexuality. I never gave up faith in God, but I fell away from any regular Christian practice throughout my high school years and through college. In 2016, I was forced into the river. Faced with the news of the murder of my father, the life I had built around me crumbled and, in that weakness, and suffering, more than ever, I felt God's presence, holding and comforting me when the world felt so dark. My goals were selfish at first. I waded into the river, determined that I would see my father again in the next life. We began searching for churches and we found our local PC(USA) church. We began with the belief that we would be relegated to the back pews but soon found the river sweeping us away. The pastor at the time, Caroline Kelly, welcomed us in fully and encouraged our involvement. As I worked through letting God lead my life, I learned to give in to the flow of the river rather than fight the current. As I did this, I found myself being led deeper and deeper into ministry. Committees, Session, Pastor Nominating Committee, Christian Education Association courses, and now, discerning a call into ministry.

I have considered many careers in my life, as I look back, I see bits and pieces of them coming together in my call to ministry. Each time I sought a career path, something seemed out of place. I chased these other career paths like streams branching off the river, each drying out in their time. What I found during those excursions from the river was that no matter what else I had going on, what brought me joy was my work in the church, whether on Session, or just serving as a volunteer. The work of the church was not draining, rather it was life-giving, and I yearned to go deeper, to grow in my involvement and in my faith. I learned of the Christian Educator Associate program and decided to enroll in it to get an idea of whether I would want to pursue seminary. Around the same time, we were welcoming in a new pastor at our church and over time and discussions she helped me discern a calling into ministry as a pastor. This is an applied sense of call, in that I feel called to serve God and neighbor. I feel called to help people grown in their faith and grow in connection to the living and loving God of creation. I believe I am being called into pastoral ministry, though should the CPM not certify me, my calling would not change. I would continue pursuing theological education and consider other ways I can serve God, perhaps in Christian Education or in academia.

As I continue along this journey, I am ever looking to deepen my faith. Through class discussions and conversations with my colleagues and professors, I have developed an appreciation for the difficult work of slowing down. It is easy to get caught up in the whirlwind of life and try to carry everything on our shoulders but when we do that, we often fall into the idolatry of thinking we have the ability to do everything and that everything relies on us. By slowing down I am reminded that it is God who is at work in and through the church, the community, and the world. I believe pastors are called to the spiritual task of slowing down, to listen for God and to seek what God is doing and calling us to join in that work. Currently, I find myself doing my best to allow the river's current to guide me wherever God wants to use me and to do the work that is before me to achieve that end.

APPENDIX F

Statement of Faith

Jennifer Pearson

1. The Bible

I believe the Bible is the inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God. It is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. It must never be used as a weapon to condemn people but as a vehicle to inform about a God that loves them more than they can comprehend.

2. God

I believe in one God that takes three different forms: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This of course is a hard idea to understand or explain in words. I think the source of the difficulty exists because of the difficulty in defining an omnipotent God using the tool of limited human language. God is the Alpha and the Omega. I believe God knew me before I was born. I believe that he gave me the gift of free will. I believe that God is present everywhere throughout time and space.

3. Jesus Christ

I believe that Jesus is the incarnation of God. I believe that he walked this Earth in human form as the ultimate act of love to demonstrate how we are to live and act and worship. I believe in his death on the cross paid the price for our sin (once and for always). I believed in the bodily resurrection demonstrating that he has power even over death. I believe that he ascended into heaven and that he will return. I believe that this Jesus has the ability to change lives and bring people into the person they were created to be.

4. The Holy Spirit

I believe the Holy Spirit acts in our world today. This spirit of God convicts the world of sin and reminds us about the fact of God's love. The spirit surrounds us and helps believers to walk through times of temptation and darkness.

5. Salvation

I believe salvation is a gift from God by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. While it cannot be earned through our actions or our hard work, it must be accepted with open hands.

6. The Church

I believe the Church is the body of Christ on earth although it sometimes does not act that way. The mission of the church is to glorify God, proclaim the gospel to our neighbors wherever we find them, and serve others in love.

APPENDIX G

Troy Bailey Sense of Call to Commissioning for Celebrating Sacraments in Baltimore Presbytery Churches

I am called to ministry within the Presbyterian Church (USA), which has been my lifelong spiritual home. This call is rooted in my identity as a layperson and ordained ruling elder, and not a Minister of Word and Sacrament. I live out a dual vocation: I work full-time in financial services while also serving as a church musician and worship leader. My time as bridge pastor at Dickey Memorial Presbyterian Church in Baltimore offered valuable insight into the full range of pastoral responsibilities. While personally enriching, the demands of solo pastoral leadership occasionally conflicted with my professional obligations.

I feel called to serve where my gifts meet the Church's greatest needs. At this moment, I believe a commission to officiate sacraments throughout the Presbytery is the most faithful expression of that call. My deepest spiritual joy is found in the celebrations of congregational life—especially presiding at the Lord's Supper, as well as welcoming new members, and recognizing years of service. I am well-prepared for this ministry, both in terms of my formal theological education at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities and through preaching opportunities across the Presbytery, including repeated engagements at Ashland, Havenwood, and Perry Hall.

Prayerfully submitted,

Troy Bailey

APPENDIX H



Presbytery of Baltimore Policy on Pastoral Compensation

TERMS OF CALL

All pastoral calls approved by the Presbytery must **be consistent with the values and requirements of the Pension Plan of the PCUSA and conform** to the [*Presbytery's Factoring Guide for Professional Positions*](#) for determining minimum compensation. Each of these separately and together insure adequate and just compensation and the benefits necessary for the well-being of the pastor and pastor's family.

The Policy on Pastoral Compensation and the Factoring Guide apply to all installed and temporary ministers of Word and Sacrament and to Certified and Associate Certified Educators serving in the Presbytery of Baltimore except as noted.

For purposes of calculating salary ranges the Presbytery will use a minimum salary [BO G-2.1103b, G-2.0804] for a fully qualified professional (factor of 520) representing an effective salary that is at least 80% of the moderate standard of living for a family of four in our area. Salary adjustments will be based on the average of the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers and all wage earners for the region defined by the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics to include Baltimore and surrounding areas for the latest of the months of May, June, or July of the prior year.

For tax purposes, ministers are considered self-employed. The Self-Employed Contributions Act (SECA) requires self-employed workers to contribute tax equivalent to both the employee and employer portions of the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) tax, which funds Social Security and Medicare. Because ministers must pay the full amount of these taxes, a church shall provide a reimbursement for a portion of it. Such an amount would equal the amount that would have been paid if the church were required to pay the employer's share. The amount will be separately itemized and be included in the Terms of Call. However, it will neither be included in effective salary as defined by the Board of Pensions nor be used to meet the minimum salary requirements of the Presbytery of Baltimore. *The SECA reimbursement is taxable income for the minister and included as salary on the W-2 tax form each year.*

If a pastor has opted not to be covered by Social Security, the church may provide for an amount that would be equal to the amount of FICA taxes that would have been paid if the church were required to pay the employer's share. Such pay will be deposited in a retirement account by the church. The amount will be separately itemized and be included in the Terms of Call. However, it will neither be included in effective salary as defined by the Board of Pensions nor be used to meet the minimum salary requirements of the Presbytery of Baltimore. Neither the Church nor the Presbytery will be

held liable should the minister later seek redress because he or she feels that his or her retirement or disability benefits are inadequate due to his or her non-participation in Social Security.

Clergy Couples. A clergy couple sharing the equivalent of one full-time pastoral position may be called as co-pastors and compensated at the sole pastor minimum. The couple will be splitting both the compensation and benefits package based on one position.

Part-time and Tentmaking Pastorates. The position of pastor is to be considered full-time unless otherwise approved by the session and the Presbytery. The Presbytery will determine if the compensation package offered by the church meets the minimum requirements according to the percentage of time worked. Pastors wishing to supplement their income by working outside the church must have approval of the session

Exceptional Cases. If a church is unable to compensate its pastor at the required levels, or if the required level is greater than 50% of the income of the church, the church should consult with the COM, which may recommend an exception to the compensation requirements, which must be approved by the Presbytery.

BENEFITS

BENEFITS

PCUSA Benefits Plan. All pastoral calls and contract positions approved by the Presbytery must provide for participation in the Benefits Plan of the PCUSA, unless granted an exception by the COM. The Benefits Plan provides income protection through the Pension Plan and death and disability benefits. The Congregational Pastors Package also provides Medical Insurance benefits for the pastor. This benefits package is required for all installed pastors and is normative for all temporary pastors working a minimum of 20 hours a week with a contract term of six months or longer. Any exceptions must be approved by the Commission on Ministry.

Spousal and Dependent Medical Benefits. The Benefits Plan of the PCUSA provides for optional medical benefits for family members. For pastors needing spousal and dependent medical benefits the Transitional Pastors Package shall be the normative/default method of providing family medical benefits in 2025, (spouse only or children only benefits may be purchased separately through the Plan if appropriate.) If a pastor and congregation mutually agree that comparable dependent benefits can be provided through alternative sources such as a spouse's workplace benefits, or the open market through the Affordable Care Act Exchanges, proof of such coverage must be provided before the COM will approve the 2025 compensation package.

In no case will the COM approve a compensation package that does not guarantee family medical benefits at a level comparable to what is offered by the Benefits Plan of the PCUSA.

In cases where benefits are purchased through alternative means the pastor's effective salary should be increased to accommodate the additional cost. (This is a taxable event, and it is highly

recommended that the advice of an accountant or tax attorney be sought). Pastors concerned about an adverse impact on effective salary should contact the COM

Congregations are urged to provide Vision and Dental Benefits for pastors and families as well as medical benefits.

Supplementary Benefits. All installed and temporary (a minimum of 20 hours/week) pastoral terms of compensation approved by the Presbytery, including all changes in call, must additionally provide:

Automobile mileage vouchered and at the current IRS rate.

At least four full weeks, including four Sundays, **vacation** per year.

Reasonable **moving expenses** to the field. *This amount is taxable for the pastor.*

Continuing Education. All pastoral calls approved by the Presbytery, including all changes in call, must provide for at least two weeks study leave. The COM will provide and publish *Guidelines for Continuing Education* as part of its manual.

Sabbatical Leaves. Sessions are encouraged to grant sabbatical leaves when appropriate. *The COM maintains a policy on sabbatical guidelines.*

Sick Leave. Leave for reasons of the pastor's own health should be negotiated with the Session on an as needed basis, guided by the General Assembly personnel policy of 10 days per year. It is suggested that unused sick leave can be accumulated up to 90 days. Extended medical leave should be negotiated in conversation with the Board of Pensions and its temporary disability benefits. The COM may be consulted for advice.

Paid Family Medical Leave. Terms of call for all installed pastoral positions must provide up to 12 weeks of Paid Family Medical Leave per year [G-2.0804], with as much advance notice as possible. Paid Leave may be used -- in accordance with need -- consecutively or intermittently. Types of Family Medical Leave include:

- Following the birth, fostering or adoption of a child
- In order to provide care to an ill or disabled family member
- To heal following a loss or tragic event

Family is defined as:

- Parent or Legal Guardian
- Stepparent
- Person who acted "In Lieu of Parent"
- Parent-in-Law
- Sibling
- Spouse or Partner
- Child(ren)/stepchild(ren)
- Grandparent
- Grandchild
- Other relatives residing in the same household

All leaves provided by this compensation policy must be taken with the consent of the session and such consent be recorded in the session minutes. When possible, pastors are encouraged to anticipate leave with sensitivity around the needs of the church/entity/body, including but not limited to temporary replacement and fulfillment of duties.

During Paid Leave, the pastor will continue to receive all benefits in their terms of call, including dues paid to and benefits provided by the Board of Pensions.

Following the period of Paid Leave, the pastor shall be entitled to return to the same position with the same title, terms of call, hours worked, and job description.

Pastors in temporary positions (Interim, Transitional and Temporary Supply) and Certified Educators. Such positions are established with contracts for a specific period of time. It is assumed they may receive family medical leave as described above; however, it must be approved by the COM as well as the church session. Contract renewal at the end of the contract period is not guaranteed.

LOANS

All loans to pastors by congregations shall be considered a term of call. The congregation and the COM on behalf of the presbytery must approve each such individual loan. Loans made to assist the pastor in obtaining or maintaining a home shall be recorded as a second mortgage or as a shared equity arrangement between the pastor and the congregation and so recorded in the mortgage. The COM strongly recommends consultation with a lawyer and/or accountant, for tax and legal implications, before finalizing such loans.

AMENDING THIS POLICY

The Compensation Plan, by its adoption here, becomes a policy of this Presbytery, and may be amended by majority vote of those present and voting at a Presbytery meeting. This Plan will incorporate recommendations for the compensation of all professionals in the Presbytery and its particular churches.

APPENDIX I



PRESBYTERY OF BALTIMORE

Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Policy and Procedures

I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight¹ not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it, not for sordid gain but eagerly. (1 Peter 5:1b-2 NRSVUE)

Context for this Policy

It is the policy of this presbytery, as it is of the denomination that all church members, church officers, non-member employees and volunteers of its member congregations, at all times, maintain the integrity of ministerial, employment and professional relationships. Sexual contact or sexualized behavior within the ministerial relationship is a violation of professional ethics. There is a difference in power between a person in a ministerial role and a person with whom there is a ministerial, counseling or pastoral relationship. Because of this difference in power, there cannot be meaningful consent in the sexual relationship. Sexual misconduct, or sexual abuse of any kind is a violation of scriptural teachings and of ministerial, pastoral, employment and professional relationships. It is never permissible nor acceptable.

Scope of this Policy

Those who provide leadership to the Presbytery of Baltimore and its churches are called to a high ethical and moral standard in all aspects of their lives. This policy covers sexual misconduct and prevention training for active Teaching Elders, Retired Teaching Elders serving on commissions or in congregations, Commissioned Ruling Elders, Inquirers enrolled by the Commission on Preparation for Ministry, Certified Christian Educators, paid local church staff who work with children and/or youth, and presbytery program staff (hereafter referred to as “religious leaders”). Each congregation and organization in the Presbytery of Baltimore is required to develop its own sexual misconduct policy and

harassment policy for church professionals, officers, members, non-member employees, and volunteers consistent with the Presbytery's Policy and to provide boundary and sexual abuse and misconduct training every 36 months for all members of the Session.¹

Definitions²

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT is a broad term which includes sexual abuse, sexual harassment and viewing, storing or transmitting pornographic material for any purpose on church property and/or with church-owned devices such as, but not limited to, computers or cell phones. Sexual misconduct can include behavior that is criminal as well as that which would typically be dealt with in a civil court.

Sexual misconduct can include physical contact from the person in the ministerial role, such as (but not limited to):

- Sexual touch and repeated 'accidental' touch of sexual areas of the body
- Tickling and playful aggression that seem uncomfortable to the recipient
- A prolonged hug when a brief hug is customary behavior
- Kissing on the lips when a kiss on the cheek would be appropriate
- Pressing up against the body when hugging
- An inappropriate gift
- Sexual intercourse

Sexual misconduct can also include verbal behavior, in person or by technological means, initiated by a person in a ministerial role when such behavior sexualizes a relationship, such as (but not limited to):

- Innuendo or sexual talk
- Suggestive comments
- Tales of one's exploits or experiences
- Questions about the intimate details of another's relationships
- Looking for sympathy about his or her partner's sexual inadequacies

¹ See G-3.0106.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT is a form of misconduct that includes unwelcome sexual advance, requests for sexual favors, or other unwanted verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature directed at another person.³

SEXUAL ABUSE is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone without the capacity to consent, or any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position. Sexual abuse is contrary to the Scriptures and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and is therefore always an offense for the purpose of discipline.⁴ Sexual abuse is almost always considered criminal.

SEXUAL ABUSE OF A MINOR is especially egregious consists of any sexual contact or sexualized behavior between an adult and an individual under the age of eighteen or one who allegedly lacks the mental capacity to consent, including accessing, promoting, or pandering of child pornography on church property and/or with church-owned devices such as computers, tablets or cell phones. Sexual abuse of a minor must be reported to ecclesiastical and civil authorities (see Mandated Reporter below).

ACCUSED is the person against whom a claim of sexual misconduct is being made.

ACCUSER/VICTIM is the person claiming knowledge of sexual misconduct by a person covered by this policy, or a person claiming to have been the subject of sexual misconduct by a person covered under this policy. The accuser may or may not have been the victim or target of the alleged sexual misconduct.

ADVOCATE is a person trained in the issues of sexual misconduct. Advocates are to provide support and emotional and physical presence, to either the alleged victim(s) and their family, to the Accused and their family, and to the congregation involved in a sexual misconduct case. An advocate also provides clarification of

³ <https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment>

⁴ D-7.0901

the investigative and judicial process of the church to the person(s) with whom he/she is assigned.

MANDATED REPORTER is described by the law of Maryland as a person who is required to report any and all suspected incidents of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, that come to their attention. Christian Educators and Youth Leaders are mandated reporters in the State of Maryland. Clergy are not mandated reporters by Maryland law, although clergy may fall into the mandated reporter category of “Educator” when acting as a Sunday school teacher, youth leader, or VBS leader.⁵ HOWEVER, the Book of Order mandates reporting by clergy:

*Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian educator employed by this church or its congregations, shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0301, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.*⁶

MEANINGFUL CONSENT can occur when two people are relatively equal in power and when fear, coercion or manipulation is completely absent from their relationship. Religious leaders who are seeking romantic relationships can do so outside their own congregations. If a religious leader becomes interested in dating or romance with a member of his or her congregation (though this is complicated and not advisable), the ministerial relationship between the religious leader and the other person must be severed before ethically pursuing a relationship of this nature.

Questions that need to be asked to evaluate if it is possible to pursue this type of romantic relationship include:

- Was the ministerial relationship minimal in nature (no counseling involved)?
- Is the religious leader willing to remove himself or herself from the ministerial relationship?

⁵ [Mandated Reporters - Maryland Department of Human Services.](#)

⁶ G-4.0302.

- Is the religious leader willing to be open about the relationship with the congregation?

Should such a relationship develop between a religious leader and a congregant or staff member, it is the responsibility of the religious leader to discuss this with the General Presbyter, the Committee on Ministry, and the Session in order to agree on a way to restore appropriate professional boundaries.

Sexual Misconduct Response Team⁷ (SMRT)

The purpose of the SMRT is to support the Presbytery in educating its members about this policy and in making an effective pastoral care response to allegations of sexual misconduct. The role of the SMRT is to provide the training mandated by this policy and to provide the pastoral care, support and advocacy where needed to the church, alleged accused, accuser, alleged victim, and other involved parties, in response to an accusation. This Team is to be comprised of at least three persons, diverse as to gender, race and clergy/lay. One member of the Team shall be an elected member of the Commission on Ministry (COM) and serve as a liaison between the two entities. Members on the SMRT who can be a resource in such areas as psychological counseling, child advocacy, law, conflict management, and insurance are particularly valuable. The Team will be appointed by the COM and under its supervision.

The SMRT WILL NOT INVESTIGATE ANY ALLEGATIONS. That is to be done by an Investigating Committee, in accordance with the Book of Order [D-7.09].

The SMRT WILL

- Provide support to the session and congregation as needed, in coordination with any Investigating Committee.
 - Assign advocates, if requested: for the accused, accuser, alleged victim, congregation, and any other appropriate parties.
 - Participate, itself, in education and training regarding sexual misconduct, its consequences and its prevention, and, then provide training of others in the presbytery as mandated by this policy and the Book of Order.
 - Support congregations in the development of required sexual misconduct policies and training by offering resources and counsel.

⁷ The Presbytery of Baltimore at its 755th meeting, June 23, 1993, established the Sexual Misconduct Response Team as Standing Rule VIII 9-6, Policy and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct.

- Maintain a file of existing congregational policies.

Pre-employment Screening and References

The Office of the General Presbyter is responsible for pre-employment screening/reference check for all teaching elders coming into the presbytery, to include questions related to previous complaints of sexual misconduct. Additionally, pre-employment screening will be conducted by the Presbytery for prospective incoming teaching elders which includes a mandatory Criminal History Background Check performed by a licensed firm that will access the misdemeanor and felony conviction records of courts in the US. All prospective incoming teaching elders shall be required to sign a written consent and release form authorizing such a background check. The call will not be approved until the background check has been completed. The cost for the background check will be shared equally by the Presbytery and the calling church or employing agency. If this is not possible, the cost shall be borne by the presbytery.

The General Presbyter and Stated Clerk are obligated to give truthful information regarding complaints, inquiries, and administrative or disciplinary action related to sexual misconduct when giving a reference.

Education/Prevention

The Presbytery is required to offer, provide resources for, and to publicize educational and training opportunities aimed at preventing sexual misconduct and abuse in the church. The SMRT will provide training for each of the following groups every 36 months:

All resident active religious leaders of the Presbytery as defined in this Policy are required to complete Baltimore Presbytery's boundary training program on this Sexual Misconduct Policy and child sexual misconduct prevention within one year after their arrival and once every three years thereafter. Certification of equivalent training in their former presbytery within a year of transfer will be considered sufficient for meeting the initial training requirement. Notation of their completion will be made in their permanent file. Failure to fulfill the required training within the specified time will result in administrative leave until it is completed. This requirement will be included in the terms of call. The Presbytery of Baltimore will

communicate to PNCs and presbyteries who are requesting references the status of candidates with respect to this requirement.

Mandated training provided by SMRT will include but is not limited to:

- Imbalance of power between pastor/educator and those in their care
- Appropriate boundary setting between pastor/educator and parishioners
- Identification of high-risk behaviors that may be perceived as unwelcome or an infringement on the rights of others.
- Identification of risk factors when counseling or doing spiritual direction, and the necessity of adhering to safe practices such as maintaining time limits, observing professional ethics regarding physical contact and conducting sessions only in locations that are in general use, thus maintaining confidentiality while avoiding isolation
- Need for peer supervision.
- Safe conduct related to children and child abuse protection including the Book of Order requirement to establish a Children and Youth Protection Policy⁸
- The importance of self-care in maintaining appropriate boundaries
- Mandatory reporting requirements

Procedure for Investigation of an Allegation of Sexual Misconduct

Allegations of sexual misconduct on the parts of individuals governed by this policy are to be reported to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery, according to the requirements of the Church Discipline and to other authorities where required.

Sexual abuse or harassment involving children or anyone who is believed to lack the mental capacity to consent, and allegations of rape, sexual assault or other misconduct that violates criminal law shall be reported to civil authorities and to the Stated Clerk.⁹

⁸ G-3.0106

⁹ G-4.03.02.

The investigation of an allegation of sexual misconduct will be governed by the requirements of Church Discipline, including the provisions of D-3.0102 and D.7.09.

Provision for Periodic Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed once every three years with a consultant trained in sexual misconduct prevention and recommended changes presented by the SMRT through COM to the Presbytery for approval.

History of this policy

Adopted June 23, 1994

Revised in September 2006

Revised March 2009

Revised June 2011

Revised August 2015

Revised September 2023

Revised September 2025

APPENDIX J

Presbytery of Baltimore Anti-Harassment Policy

As the Church of Jesus Christ, love is the rule of our relationships.

- a. Jesus said, “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets,” (Matt. 7:12), and “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35).
- b. The Book of Order states, “The Church is to be a community of love, where sin is forgiven, reconciliation is accomplished, and the dividing walls of hostility are torn down.” (F-1.0301, “The Calling of the Church: the Church is the Body of Christ”)

- c. Because we believe this, and because we seek to live it out in all aspects of our personal and corporate life, we believe that harassment in all its forms is incompatible with who we are as followers of Jesus.

I. Purpose

The Presbytery of Baltimore is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment for all employees, ministers, volunteers, members, and visitors. Harassment in any form is contrary to Scripture and the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and can violate both ethical standards and legal protections.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals affiliated with the Presbytery, including employees, teaching and ruling elders, deacons, volunteers, and congregants, in presbytery and church offices, , at church-sponsored events, and in any setting where individuals are representing or acting on behalf of the Presbytery.

III. Definition of Harassment

Harassment, simply put, is “*repeated unwanted behavior*.”

- a. *Behavior*: harassment consists of words or actions that demean, threaten, coerce, intimidate, offend, or humiliate another person.¹⁰ This behavior could occur in private or public, or in electronic communication such as email; offensive or demeaning social media posts; or stalking.
- b. *Unwanted*: teasing or humorous language that the person who is being teased finds offensive or demeaning. Intention is irrelevant; it is how the behavior is received that is determinative of harassment ..
- c. *Repeated*: Anyone who is subjected to unwanted behavior should communicate clearly to the person engaged in the behavior that is unwelcome and hurtful. Ideally, this leads to apology, forgiveness, and reconciliation. But when the behavior is repeated, it becomes harassment.
- d. It includes *unlawful harassment*, which is the same type of conduct, but is also a form of discrimination that violates one or more of the protected categories under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other federal authorities.

Harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- Unwanted physical contact or advances
- Derogatory comments, slurs, epithets or language intended to coerce or intimidate

¹⁰ This language is adapted from the National Archives document, “Factsheet about Workplace Harassment,” <https://www.archives.gov/files/eo/policy/facts-about-workplace-harassment.pdf>

- Inappropriate jokes or gestures
- Display of offensive images or materials
- Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature

IV. Reporting and Complaint Procedure

Anyone who experiences or witnesses harassment is encouraged to report the behavior immediately. Complaints can be made in writing or verbally to:

- The General Presbyter
- The Stated Clerk
- The Presbytery's Personnel Committee

All complaints will be taken seriously and investigated promptly, impartially, and confidentially to the extent possible. Retaliation against any individual who reports harassment or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited.

V. Investigation and Resolution

Upon receipt of a complaint, the Presbytery will:

1. Conduct a timely and thorough investigation, through the personnel committee or a team of three appointed by the General Presbyter and the Stated Clerk
2. Maintain confidentiality to the extent practical and appropriate.
3. Take appropriate corrective action if harassment is found to have occurred, which may include measures up to and including termination of employment or removal from leadership roles, but always guided by the values and goals of Church Discipline outlined in the Book of Order D-1.03
4. Provide support and resources to affected individuals as needed.
5. Any allegation presented to the stated clerk in accord with Chapter Seven of Church Discipline (Book of Order) will be governed by its process and procedures.

VI. Prevention and Training

The Presbytery is committed to preventing harassment by:

- Providing regular training for staff, clergy, and leadership in the context of required boundary trainings.

- Encouraging awareness and education regarding ethical behavior and conflict resolution.
- Promoting an environment of mutual respect and accountability.

VII. Compliance with Maryland and Federal Law

Nothing in this policy should be interpreted as a substitute for compliance with relevant state and federal regulations.

VIII. Conclusion

Harassment in any form is not tolerated in the Presbytery of Baltimore. By adhering to this policy, we seek to create a safe, welcoming, and Christ-centered community for all. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the Executive Presbyter, Stated Clerk or Chair of the Steering Cabinet.

Approved by the Presbytery of Baltimore Date: [Date]

Document Creator: Steering Cabinet

Approval/Amendment Authority: Presbytery

APPENDIX K

Presbytery of Baltimore Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures

General Purpose Statement

THE PRESBYTERY OF BALTIMORE (The Presbytery) seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for children and other vulnerable persons who participate in our programs and activities. As noted in the *PCUSA Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy*, “Children, [and] youth...are a gift from God and the Church has a divine mandate to provide for their safety and nurturing. The Church is called to be a place that reflects the open arms of Jesus.” The Presbytery of Baltimore has zero tolerance for abuse of any kind. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect children and vulnerable adults who are under the direct care by the Presbytery of Baltimore from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all persons (staff, volunteers, clergy, contractors) engaged in activities under the auspices of the Presbytery of Baltimore that involve:

- **Children** (ages 0–11),
- **Youth** (ages 12–17), and
- **Vulnerable Adults** (individuals 18 and over without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent).

Together, children and youth (*i.e.*, anyone under age 18) are referred to as “minors” under this Policy.

Programs and partnerships that include overnight or out of town activities will be required to have their own policies specific to the individual circumstances, in addition to adhering to the requirements of this policy.

DEFINITIONS

Abuse exists when there is endangerment of the physical or mental health or welfare of a minor or vulnerable adult due to injury by act or omission of a parent, household or family member, or an individual who has care or supervision of the minor or vulnerable adult. Abuse and neglect include the following:

- **Neglect** includes leaving a minor or vulnerable adult unattended or the failure, refusal, or inability on the part of a caregiver to provide necessary care in a

manner that harms the person's physical or mental health or welfare or creates a substantial risk of physical harm or mental injury to the person in their care.

- **Physical Abuse** includes physical injury inflicted by other than accidental means that indicates a minor or vulnerable adult's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of harm. Physical injury includes, but is not limited to, lacerations, bruising, fractured bones, burns, internal injuries, starvation, or other bodily harm. Conduct qualifying as Physical Abuse may include, but is not limited to, hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints, pushing, or other forceful physical contact which causes or creates substantial risk of causing injury.
- **Verbal Abuse** includes language that is degrading or threatening, and includes verbal interactions such as name calling, insults, cursing, derogatory remarks, belittling, and shaming.
- **Sexual Abuse** is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone without the capacity to consent, or any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position. Sexual abuse is contrary to the Scriptures and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and is therefore always an offense for the purpose of discipline. Sexual abuse includes sexual molestation or exploitation of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, including allowing or encouraging the person to engage in obscene photography, film, or poses, or a sexual offense in any degree. Sexual abuse also includes all conduct defined in Book of Order D-10.0401c.
- **Emotional Abuse** includes conduct that reasonably causes harm to a minor or vulnerable adult's psychological or intellectual functioning, which is exhibited by emotional damage such as severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or aggression. Emotional damage may be demonstrated by substantial and observable changes in behavior, emotional response, or learning, which are incompatible with the consumer's age or stage of development. Emotional Abuse includes the following: shaming, humiliation, and cruelty.

In addition to this policy, all clergy are subject to the Presbytery of Baltimore Sexual Misconduct Policy and the PCUSA constitution. Abuse may also occur by the misuse of technology and exploitive digital/online behaviors.

SCREENING

All persons who desire to work with minors participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

Six Month Rule

No person will be considered for any volunteer position involving contact with minors until they have been involved with a member church of the Presbytery of Baltimore for a minimum of six (6) months, or unless they have been known by a minister member of the Presbytery of Baltimore for a minimum of six months

Written Application

All persons seeking or recruited to work with minors or vulnerable adults must complete and sign a written application that requires disclosure of church membership, previous experience with minors or vulnerable adults, and at least two personal references.

Reference Check

Reference checks for the applicant's former employers and volunteer positions involving experience with minors or vulnerable adults and personal references shall be contacted before allowing a person to work with minors or vulnerable adults. If a reference is non-responsive, the program/activity supervisor should document at least three attempts to contact the reference.

Criminal Background Check

All applicants are required to Submit to a **criminal background check** (renewed at least every 3 years or per insurer's recommendation). Certain positions involving work with minors may require an FBI/CJIS fingerprint check in accordance with Maryland law.

Program/activity supervisors have responsibility for determining what type of background check is required for applicants.

CPS Background Clearance

All applicants who will work with minors must also submit to a Child Protective Services ("CPS") Background Clearance form, which provides information about any prior abuse or neglect investigations involving the person.

Documentation of the reference checks, the background check authorization form and results, and policy acknowledgement form will be maintained in confidence on file at the office of the Presbytery of Baltimore.

Disqualification includes, but is not limited to:

- Prior history of abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect, child pornography, or conviction of any crime that would render the person unsafe to have contact with minors or vulnerable adults, including any conviction for a sex offense in any degree, or for any "crime of violence" as defined in Section 14-101 of the Criminal Law Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, drug trafficking, or any crime involving a minor or vulnerable adult.
- Prior church disciplinary action related to abuse or misconduct.

TRAINING

All those approved to work with minors and or vulnerable adults must complete a training program approved by the Insurance Board on abuse prevention and response, including the following courses or their successors:

1. Foundations-Preventing Abuse in Youth Serving Organizations

2. Keeping Your Church Safe
3. Duty to Report-Mandated Reporter
4. Social Media Safety

All those approved under this policy must sign a **code of conduct and policy acknowledgment form**.

SUPERVISION AND CONDUCT STANDARDS

Two Adult Rule

a minimum of two unrelated adult workers must be present for all activities involving minors or vulnerable adults.

In addition, no adult may share sleeping quarters with a minor (except for parent/legal guardian with written consent) and separate bathroom/shower times for adults and minors are required at overnight events

Open Door Policy

Doors to rooms where events are held should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Bathroom Procedures

Children five years of age and younger should use a classroom bathroom if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the closest bathroom. They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone. The workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door, and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.

For children over the age of five, at least one adult male should take boys to the restroom and at least one adult female should take girls. The worker should check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty, and then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.

For the protection of all, workers should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child.

Technology and Social Media:

- No private messaging or one-on-one online interaction with minors.
- All digital communication must be transparent and include another adult or guardian.
- Photos/videos may only be taken or shared with written guardian consent.

RESPONDING TO SUSPECTED ABUSE

The Presbytery complies with Maryland laws regarding reporting suspected abuse or neglect to civil authorities and cooperates with all related investigations. If an incident of abuse or neglect is suspected by any person, regardless of where or when it occurred,, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. All civil reports required by Maryland Law and the Book of Order G-4.0302 will be made. A verbal report to CPS and/or law enforcement should be made as soon as possible, with a written report following within 48 hours.
2. The parent or guardian of the alleged victim will be notified provided CPS approves such notification and the parent or guardian is not the alleged perpetrator of abuse or neglect.
3. If the suspected abuse is alleged to have occurred at a program or activity sponsored by the Presbytery, the Presbytery's insurance company will be notified, and the Presbytery will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company. The Presbytery will fully cooperate with

the investigation of the incident by civil authorities and the insurance company.

4. The worker or program participant alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse will immediately be placed on leave.
5. The Stated Clerk of the Presbytery will be informed and, if the alleged perpetrator is a member of Baltimore Presbytery all relevant procedures required by *Church Discipline* [D-7] in the PCUSA constitution will be followed
6. Persons credibly accused of abuse, neglect, or other misconduct related to minors and/or vulnerable adults may be removed from their position working with minors and/or vulnerable adults at Presbytery sponsored events and programs unless and until the alleged abuse is “ruled out,” and/or the person is found not guilty of associated criminal charges. The Presbytery retains discretion to determine that a person should not be authorized to work with minors and vulnerable adults regardless of the outcome of a CPS investigation or criminal charges.
7. The privacy and confidentiality of those involved shall be protected to the extent reasonably possible, consistent with civil reporting requirements and the requirements of this Policy.

The Presbytery of Baltimore has zero tolerance for abuse. It is imperative that every employee or volunteer actively participates in the protection of children, youth and vulnerable adults. If employees or volunteers observe red-flag or inappropriate behaviors and/or policy violations by other employees or volunteers, or consumers, it is their professional and personal responsibility to immediately report their observations in accordance with the reporting procedures above.

ACCIDENTAL INJURIES TO CHILDREN

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child’s parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker’s supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

RESPONSIBILITY

Compliance with this policy will be the responsibility of the chairpersons of partnerships and ministry groups and/or organizers of specific activities and events under the auspices of the presbytery.

PCUSA Protection Policy

The values and procedures of this policy are rooted in the tenets set forth in the **Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and its Procedures**. That policy statement may serve as a guide for further interpretation of the present document and

should be consulted if questions or situations arise not specifically covered by the present statement.

Acknowledgement of Policy

As an employee or volunteer working with children, youth or vulnerable adults under the auspices of the Presbytery of Baltimore, I confirm that I have read and agree to comply with the this policy, including all abuse prevention training required.

Please Print _____ Name

_____ Date

_____ Program

_____ Church

_____ Signature

Please return this form to the Presbytery of Baltimore:

office@baltimorepresbytery.org OR

5400 Loch Raven Blvd. Baltimore, MD 21239