

Saint Luke's Presbyterian Church  
Dunwoody, Georgia

**Sexual Misconduct Policy**  
Adopted by Session April 27, 2025

**Purpose:** The Sexual Misconduct Policy of Saint Luke's Presbyterian Church is grounded in the concept that human sexuality is a gift from God and when rightly used, leads us to the wholeness of life that God intends for all people. Those in the Church bear particular responsibility in making manifest the goodness of God's gift of sexuality. Scripture reminds us, "As God who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct." (I Peter 1:15), and from the Presbyterian Church (USA) Book of Order (F.1.0302b), "Holiness is God's gift to the Church in Jesus Christ...Because in Christ the Church is holy, the Church, its members, and those in its ordered ministries strive to lead lives worthy of the Gospel we proclaim."

**Scope:** This policy applies to church members, officers, pastors, teaching elders, ruling elders, deacons, employees, and volunteers working in, with, and for the Church.

**Definition:** Sexual Misconduct is the comprehensive term used in this policy to include, but is not limited to, child sexual abuse, sexual abuse of another person, sexual harassment, and production or distribution of pornography. The Church strives to maintain the integrity of ministerial, congregational, employment, and professional relationships at all times. Sexual misconduct is a violation of these relationships and is never permissible or acceptable. Sexual misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexual Abuse includes, but is not limited to, any contact or interaction between an adult (at or over the age of consent) and either a child (under the age of consent) or an adult who lacks the mental capacity to consent. Abuse is when the child or adult without capacity to consent is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult or of a third person. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult, or between an adult of diminished capacity and another adult, is always considered forced whether or not consented to by the child or the adult with diminished capacity. By law, child sexual abuse must be reported to civil authorities. (Note: current Georgia statute OCGA §16-6-3 defines age of consent as 16 years of age.)
- Misuse of office or position refers to sexual conduct committed by one while functioning in relationship to the victim within the context of a ministerial or lay professional (i.e., Director) role. It remains the responsibility of the minister or director to maintain appropriate boundaries and to decline to engage in a sexual relationship arising from their role.
- Sexual Harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal and physical conduct when submission to such conduct is made, either implicitly or explicitly, a condition of an individual's employment or status in the church, is used as a basis for an employment decision affecting the individual, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or general church environment.
- Production or distribution of pornography is defined and discussed in the policy statement of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) entitled: "Pornography: Far from

the Song of Songs,” adopted by the 200th General Assembly (1988). See [www.pcusa.org/resource/pornography-far-song-songs/](http://www.pcusa.org/resource/pornography-far-song-songs/).

**Retaliation:** Saint Luke’s Presbyterian Church does not tolerate any form of retaliation against any victim, or witness, who reports a violation of this Sexual Misconduct Prevention Policy. Any person who believes that they have been retaliated against should initiate a complaint under this policy.

**Complaint Procedure:** It is appropriate, but not required, for any person who feels that they have been party to sexual misconduct by another person, under the definition of this policy, to address the behavior first with the offending party, if it is possible to do so without significant conflict or danger.

If the harassing behavior is repeated, pervasive, and/or overly offensive, the complaint should be taken to the Senior Pastor/Head of Staff and/or Clerk of Session, and/or, in the case of employees, to the Chair of the Human Resources Committee. All complaints will be investigated promptly and, to the extent possible, with regard for maintaining confidentiality. If the investigation confirms conduct contrary to this policy has occurred, the Church will take immediate, appropriate, corrective action, as determined by the Senior Pastor/Head of Staff, the Human Resources Committee, and/or the Session.

In addition to the procedures described above, allegations against a teaching elder or a commissioned ruling elder must be reported to the stated clerk of the Presbytery.

To the extent required by Georgia law, allegations of child sexual abuse must be reported to the State of Georgia Division of Family and Children Services of the Department of Human Services. Verbal reports can be made at Central Intake, 1-855-GACHILD. More information is available at [Child Abuse & Neglect | Georgia Department of Human Services Division of Family & Children Services](#).

**Reviews:** All clergy, including retired clergy serving a church in some capacity, must receive or repeat the Boundaries Training course, provided by the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, every three years.

As part of Saint Luke’s officer training, newly elected leaders of the Church will review this policy and acknowledge their understanding and agreement to comply.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Session.

The broader church membership, to which this policy also applies, will be made aware of this policy annually, and a copy of the policy provided by the Clerk of Session upon request.