Harassment

Physical, verbal, or sexual harassment is not tolerated by employees, clergy, volunteers, members, vendors, contractors, visitors and beneficiaries of Horne Memorial ministries. Harassment at HMUMC includes conduct occurring on church property; during ministry activities; while traveling for church activities; and at church-sponsored social events. Harassment can take many forms such as (but not limited to): electronic conduct; including email; text messages; social media; and ministry communication platforms. Harassment is based on legally protected characteristics, including race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, religion, age, disability, genetic information, and any other status protected by applicable law. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual conduct; requests for sexual favors; and employment decisions conditioned on sexual or personal conduct. Harassment also includes bullying; intimidation; stalking; threats; and other inappropriate conduct, even when it may not meet the legal definition of unlawful harassment.

Horne Memorial United Methodist Church will follow these steps regarding any form of reported harassment:

- Communicate directly with the alleged harasser to tell him/her that what has been said or done is unacceptable behavior to you. This is not a required step.
- Immediately report the incident to the Lead Pastor, who then will report the incident to the Chairperson of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.
- For incidents involving church members, staff and clergy, the Lead Pastor will conduct an interview and investigation, with the Chairman of the Staff-Parish Committee attending, with the alleged harasser. The District Superintendent will be immediately informed of this charge and investigation process by the Lead Pastor or the Chairperson of the Staff-Parish Committee.
- Information will be shared only with those who reasonably need it to receive the report, protect those involved, conduct the investigation, obtain professional advice, or take corrective action. Complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Should the alleged harasser be the Pastor, the Chairperson of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee shall immediately inform the District Superintendent and participate in the North Carolina Annual Conference investigation and disciplinary procedures for the Pastor involved.
- Disciplinary procedures will be implemented after a thorough investigation is conducted. Disciplinary measures include but are not limited to the following:

- Contractors and Vendors: the accusation and investigation results will be shared with the HR department of the company represented; the company will be requested to replace the representative who works with Horne Memorial; if circumstances warrant, contracts may be terminated and replaced by a new provider.
- Beneficiaries will be advised that the words, behaviors and attitudes displayed are not acceptable within the Body of Christ. Should the behavior continue, they will be asked to leave by the staff person leading the beneficial ministry.
- Employees will be counseled about behavioral expectations. A written warning will be discussed, signed and placed in the employee's file. Should a second occurrence take place, or if the first occurrence is of such magnitude to merit dismissal from the staff, the Lead Pastor and chair of SPRC will meet with the employee with a letter of termination.
- Members and volunteers will meet with the staff person leading the ministry for accountability. Should circumstances warrant escalation, the Lead Pastor will meet with the individual. Possible outcomes include the removal of the individual from the ministry where the harassment took place, and supervision in worship and discipleship ministries.
- Clergy matters will be handled by the District Superintendent and NC Conference leaders.

Retaliation is prohibited against anyone who, in good faith, reports suspected misconduct, seeks guidance, assists another person in making a report, participates in an investigation, or opposes conduct reasonably believed to violate this policy. Concerns about retaliation should be reported through any of the reporting channels identified in this policy. Malicious or dishonest reports given in these instances will be handled as employee dishonesty under the disciplinary policy explained on these pages.

Horne Memorial United Methodist Church takes reports of harassment seriously and will respond promptly and appropriately. Nothing in this policy creates a contractual guarantee or limits any rights or responsibilities provided by applicable law or United Methodist polity.