

March 23, 2021 – Zoom Meeting

PRESBYTERY OF CENTRAL NEW JERSEY MEETING ON ZOOM TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2021

The stated meeting of the Presbytery of Central New Jersey, held on Zoom, on Tuesday, March 23, 2021 was called to order at 6:32pm with greetings from Synod New Jersey Missional Communities Administrative Commission (NJMCAC) by the Rev. Shelley Donaldson, member of the AC and moderating this meeting. The Rev. Donaldson opened the meeting with prayer.

Rev. Chris Houtz acknowledged that land within our geographical bounds was taken from those who were native to the land, specifically the Munsee Lenape and the Lenni-Lenape.

Rev. Donaldson welcomed the commissioners and asked all to put their name in the chat.

Worship

Rev. James Klotz preached on Mark 11:1-11. Music was provided by the Lincroft Presbyterian Churchy Singers.

Formation of the Roll

Roll of Presbytery's Commissioners

A quorum was present. The following teaching elders were in attendance:

Larissa Kwong Abazia (AL)	Stephen Heinzl-Nelson (V)	William Morris (V)
Lindsay Anderson-Beck (V)	Karen Hernandez-Granzen (V)	Robert Morrison (HR)
Marie Bacchocchi (V)	Christina Hindley (HR)	Lori Neff LaRue (AL)
Natalie Bell (V)	Edmund Hoener (V)	Alan Olson (V)
Barbara Booth-Jarmon (V)	Charles Holm (HR)	Cynthia Parker (V)
Cynthia Bowman (V)	Linda Hora (HR)	Joanne Petto (V)
David Bowman (V)	Christopher Houtz (V)	Jean Pinto (HR)
James Brumm (V)	Douglas Hughes (V)	Victoria Pruner (V)
Rory Geoff Chambers (V)	Mary Jane Inman (V)	Marianne Rhebergen (V)
Douglas Chase (HR)	Christian Johnson (V)	Paul Rhebergen (V)
Tae Su Cheong (HR)	Justin Karmann (V)	Dayle Rounds (V)
Katherine Cunningham (HR)	Jill Kitsko (V)	Ann Schoonover (V)
David Davis (V)	James Klotz (V)	Jonathan Seitz (V)
Lisa Day (V)	Marcus Lambright (V)	Byron Shafer (HR)
Walter DeGunya (V)	Jenny Lee (V)	Susan Smith (V)
Miriam Diephouse McMillan (V)	Sang Hyun Lee (V)	Theresa Swenson (AL)
Jessica Dixon (V)	Marcia Lewis (V)	Lydia Tembo (V)
Sharyl Dixon (V)	Robert Louer (V)	Glory Thomas (V)
Marguerite Dykstra (V)	Hannah Lovaglio (V)	Julie Thompson-Barrier (V)
George Erlandson (V)	Janet Macgregor-Williams (HR)	Jan Willem Van Der Werff (V)
Gary Filson (V)	Jessica Malek (V)	J Michael Walker (HR)
Diane Ford (V)	Melissa Martin (V)	Wendi Werner (V)
Frederick Garry (V)	Conrad Massa (HR)	David Widmer (V)
Linda Goeddel (AL)	Lauren McFeaters (V)	John L Williams (HR)
Katherine Gruening (V)	Nancy Mikoski (V)	Robbie Ytterberg (V)
	John Monroe (V)	

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The following teaching elders laboring within the bounds and serving churches were present:
Donna Lepsky

The following Commissioned Ruling Elders were present:
Julissa Alvarez-Garcia
Rick LaFever

The following churches were represented by the Elder Commissioner(s) indicated:

Allentown (R. Bruins, N. Tindall)	G. Van Der Wal, A. Young)
Avenel (G. Patrouch)	Lincroft (D. Irwin)
Brick (E. Salto)	Manasquan (K. Dioguardi)
Cranbury (K. Gordon)	Neptune-MLK (T. Laws)
Dutch Neck (D. Redman, M. Redman, C. Stillwell)	Matawan (J. Godbehere, S. Tse))
East Brunswick-Trinity (B. Bodor)	Middletown (J. Pillarella)
Englishtown (R. Musser)	Nassau (L. Cornell, P. Griffin, C. Wehrheim)
Ewing-Covenant (D. Lovitt)	New Brunswick (B. Meyer)
Farmingdale (H. Dunbar)	Ocean (S. Lofthouse)
Forked River (L. De Lotto)	Pennington (H. Anderson, S. Gregg)
Freehold (L. Schmidt)	Perrineville (C. Heller)
Grace-Kendall Park (P. Godinez)	Red Bank (K. Park)
Hamilton Square (M. Meduski, P. Neu, J. Woodman)	Shrewsbury (J. Davies)
Hightstown (T. Dilger)	Slackwood C. Belles)
Iselin (A. Harrison)	South Amboy (E. Lopez)
Jackson-Cornerstone (A. Moyer)	Tennent (S. Hughes)
Jamesburg (D. Chase)	Tinton Falls (S. Buckley)
Kingston (F. Perren-Diaz)	Toms River (G. Bright, D. Raisch)
Lakewood First (A. Gilman)	Trenton First (L. Herrick)
Lakewood Hope (P. Williams)	Trenton Westminster (A. Belmont)
Lawrenceville (J. Everett, D. Sung,	Woodbridge (M. Hora)
	Yardville (G. Hanewald)

The following elders, who are officers, Mission Council members, Trustees, Former Moderators, were present: Sharon Campbell, Linda Gilmore, Sue Henry, Kurt Kaboth, Jan Margolis, Cherry Oakley, Adebisi Shofu, Kathryn Starzer-Farrell, Nancy Stout, Walter Vincent.

Also, in attendance were:

Rev. Ilene Black (Staff), David Byers, Jeremy Campbell, Edward Carlson, Betsey Christensen, Shelley Donaldson, J.J. Flag, Trudi Folkes (Staff), Dilys Henninger, Sal Lalama, Ray Lewis, Jr., David Luck, Marie Luthringer (Staff), Inna Nikoljukin, Thia Reggio, Olivia Sandel, Dale Selover, Tom Sheffield, Nancy Talbot, Ron Thompson, Terri Youn.

There was a motion and a second to form the roll. **Approved.**

The Rev. Sue Smith, Acting Stated Clerk provided zoom instructions for recognition and voting.

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There was a motion to seat the following as corresponding members: Rev. Dr. SanDawna Ashley, Minnesota Valley Presbytery, Rev. Shelley Donaldson, Presbytery of Southern New England, Rev. Nancy Talbot, Presbytery of NYC, Rev. Thia Reggio, Presbytery of NYC, Rev. Jeremy Campbell, Presbytery of Northeast NJ, Rev. Paul La Montagne, Presbytery of the Highlands of NJ. **Approved.**

Approval of the Docket

Upon motion, the docket for this Stated Meeting of the Presbytery was **approved.**

Business docketed at this meeting included:

- The Presbytery Convenes with Prayer
- The Formation of the Roll
- Zoom Instructions
- Seating of Corresponding Members
- The Motion to Approve the Docket
- Greetings from the Synod of the Northeast
- Report of the Synod Administrative Commission
- Nomination of Co-Moderators
- Installation of the Co-Moderators
- Policy Approvals
- Relationship Building – Breakout Rooms
- Core Transition Team
- Training, Education and Learning Opportunities
- Relationship Building – Breakout Rooms
- Unfinished Business
- Motion to Adjourn
- Closing Prayer

Greetings from the Synod of the Northeast

The Rev. Dr. SanDawna Ashley, Transitional Leader of the Synod of the Northeast, brought greetings from the Synod.

Synod Administrative Commission

Rev. Shelley Donaldson introduced herself as the liaison from the NJMCAC. She emphasized that there are a number of unknowns as the presbytery forms, and that is okay. While the presbytery must do its own work, she is available to assist. She announced the NJMCAC approval of the senior staffing positions: Acting Stated Clerk, Rev. Sue Smith, Head of Staff/Communications/Committee on Ministry/Education/Liaison with the AC, Rev. Larissa Kwong Abazia, Staff and Resource for the Core Transition Team, Rev. Paul LaMontagne, and Committee on Preparation/Technology, Rev. Jeremy Campbell. She also announced that the NJMCAC voted for and approved to constitute the Core Transition Team to function as the Interim Council to the Presbytery of Central New Jersey while the staffing and structure model is developed and nominating is undertaken for the resulting structure.

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Nomination of Co-Moderators

Rev. Karen Hernandez-Granzen made a motion to elect as interim co-moderators of the Presbytery of Central New Jersey Rev. Diane Ford, Elder Jan Margolis, and Elder Cherry Oakley. The motion was seconded and **approved**.

Installation of the Co-Moderators

Rev. Donaldson led a liturgy for the installation of co-moderators Rev. Ford, Elder Margolis and Elder Oakley. She closed this time with a prayer.

The role of the moderator was assumed by Elder Oakley.

Policy Approvals

Elder Kathryn Starzer-Farrell made a motion to approve and adopt the Presbytery of Central New Jersey Bylaws. The motion was seconded and **approved**. (Appendix B)

Elder Starzer-Farrell made a motion to approve and adopt the Presbytery of Central New Jersey Policy on Sexual Misconduct. The motion was seconded and **approved**. (Appendix C)

Elder Starzer-Farrell made a motion to approve and adopt the Presbytery of Central New Jersey Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy. The motion was seconded and **approved**. (Appendix D)

Relationship Building – Breakout Rooms

Rev. Diane Ford introduced the time of breakout rooms inviting the participants to answer the question, “When you consider our gathering of this new missional community, what energizes you about the possibilities.” Participants were placed into breakout rooms for 15 minutes.

Elder Jan Margolis assumed the role of moderator.

Core Transition Team

The Core Transition Team members who are point persons for each transition team gave a short explanation of the team’s work and an invitation to join in the work. The following teams were presented: Communications, Rev. Hannah Lovaglio, Congregational Support, Elder Jan Margolis, Finance, Rev. Wendi Werner, Justice & Outreach, Rev. Chris Houtz, Ministries, Rev. Glory Thomas, Pastoral Care, Rev. Linda Goeddel, Relationship Building, Rev. Diane Ford, Staffing & Structure, Elder Jan Margolis, and Worship, Rev. Marcus Lambright.

Training, Education and Learning Opportunities

Rev. Larissa Kwong Abazia gave an overview of upcoming opportunities to learn and grow including a presentation on COVID19, vaccinations and the new normal, a workshop on Vital Congregations, and workshops on burnout and self-care, and antiracism practices.

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Relationship Building – Breakout Rooms

Rev. Diane Ford introduced this time of breakout rooms inviting the participants to reflect on something they see in their church or former presbytery that is a strong example, or need improvement, in living into the Great Commission or the Great Commandment. Participants were placed into breakout rooms for 15 minutes.

Rev. Diane Ford assumed the role of moderator.

Unfinished Business

Rev. Ford announced that the next meeting of the Presbytery of Central New Jersey will be held on May 11, 2021, beginning at 6:30pm

Note that the minutes of the Board of Trustees are appended to these minutes. (Appendix A)

Adjournment

The Presbytery adjourned at 8:38pm to reconvene on May 11, 2021, at 6:30pm.

The Co-Moderators, Rev. Diane Ford, Elder Jan Margolis and Elder Cherry Oakley offered the closing prayer.

Attest: Rev. Sue Smith, Acting Stated Clerk

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Appendix A

**Minutes of the Trustees of
the Presbytery of Central New Jersey,
Formerly the Presbytery of New Brunswick**
17 March 2021 — by Zoom

Present: elder Cherry Oakley, moderator; the reverend Dave Davis; elder Linda Gilmore, treasurer; elder Angie Olsen; elder Joe Tully; the reverend Sue Smith, stated clerk; D. Paul La Montagne, secretary

The meeting was convened at 11:08 am with prayer by moderator Oakley.

The treasurer reported on meetings of the treasurers, both the seven treasurers of the former New Jersey presbyteries, and the three treasurers of the presbyteries contributing congregations to the new Presbytery of Central New Jersey.

There are concerns for how to prepare budgets going forward. Many of us did not prepare budgets for 2021 because of the transition. The various presbytery treasurers are preparing inventories for the transfer of assets. The closing for the transfer will not take place until the inventories are prepared. But it appears that we will be moving forward as quickly as we can.

The audit the Presbytery of New Brunswick is required to perform by the ecclesiastical agreement that established the new presbyteries and dissolved the old can be a review by a financial team much as we have done before. The trustees agreed that the treasurer should convene the last financial review team and see if they are willing to perform the necessary financial review.

The treasurers seem to be agreed that using part-time bookkeepers is short sighted. It may turn out to be best to use an outsourced bookkeeping service, as there may not be enough work for a full-time bookkeeper. The possibility of shared bookkeeping services with other presbyteries will be considered.

The question was raised what to do about the lease for office space at Pennington Presbyterian Church. We are required to notify them by 31 March if we want to continue using the space. Deliberation made it clear that we need to keep the office space for the present, and may want to continue in it for a longer term. For now, the Trustees voted to ask for an extension until 31 August 2021. A sixty day notice will be required before that date of what our intentions are. The secretary will contact John Coats of Pennington Presbyterian Church. Reverend Davis reported that the Staffing and Structure transition team has been looking at a variety of staffing plans of presbyteries and synods from around the country. They are trying to blue sky their deliberations, to consider the most open and interesting possibilities.

Following the instructions of the synod Administrative Commission, and as agreed to and

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authorized by the vote of the presbytery on 10 November 2021 to participate in the New Jersey Missional Communities plan, the Trustees voted to change the name of the Presbytery of New Brunswick to the Presbytery of Central New Jersey. The Trustees further voted to accept the kind offer to do the filing for this name change through Ellen O'Connell for a sum of \$200.

The Trustees then heard some of the plans for the presbytery meeting of 23 March 2021.

The Trustees will publish their minutes, just as we have always published our minutes as part of the meeting documents for presbytery meetings. But the Trustees have no need to make a verbal report at this coming meeting. The Trustees heard that we will be proposing to elect three co-moderators, and that the next presbytery meeting will be scheduled for 11 May 2021.

The trustees adjourned at 11:45 am with prayer.

Respectfully submitted
D. Paul La Montagne
secretary to the Trustees.

Presbytery of Central New Jersey Bylaws

Adopted March 23, 2021

CHAPTER I. THE PRESBYTERY ORGANIZATION

Section 1. The Presbytery of Central New Jersey was organized March 1, 2021, by the Synod of the Northeast of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Section 2. The Presbytery of Central New Jersey is an entity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and consists of all the churches and ministers of the Word and Sacrament located in Mercer, Middlesex, and Monmouth Counties in New Jersey, and the portion of Ocean County in New Jersey from Lacey Township northward.

Section 3. The Presbytery is a New Jersey Corporation not for profit (Title 16), originally incorporated April 28, 1910, under the name Presbytery of New Brunswick. The Presbytery of Central New Jersey has 501(c)3 status as an entity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Section 4. The Presbytery is governed by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), comprised of the Book of Confessions and the Book of Order. The Book of Order is comprised of the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity, the Form of Government, the Directory for Worship and the Rules of Discipline. The Parliamentary authority for the Presbytery is Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

CHAPTER II. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The members of the Presbytery of Central New Jersey are:

- a) CHURCHES that have been constituted by the Presbytery, represented by elder commissioners elected by their Sessions according to the provisions of the Form of Government.
- b) MINISTERS OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT who have been received into membership of the Presbytery according to the provisions of the Form of Government.
- c) RULING ELDERS who are serving as officers of the Presbytery, as members of the Council, or as members of the Presbytery's Board of Trustees, for the duration of their term of office, according to the provisions of the Form of Government (G-3.0301).

Section 2. The Presbytery may make provision in its Administrative Manual for YOUNG ADULT ADVISORY DELEGATES, who shall have privilege of the floor, but not vote, in meetings of the Presbytery.

CHAPTER III. MEETINGS

Section 1. The Presbytery shall hold at least four Stated Meetings each year.

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Section 2. The Presbytery may hold Special Meetings as may be necessary to conduct business, as indicated in the Form of Government (G-3.0304).

Section 3. The quorum for meetings of the Presbytery shall be not fewer than eight ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are members of the Presbytery and eight ruling elder commissioners from five different congregations.

Section 4. Electronic meetings of the Presbytery shall be conducted under the provisions in the Presbytery Manual of Administrative Operations.

CHAPTER IV. OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers shall be the Moderator, the Vice Moderator, the Stated Clerk, the Treasurer and the President of the Board of Trustees. The President of the Board of Trustees is the President of the Corporation, the Treasurer is the Treasurer of the Corporation and the Stated Clerk is the Secretary of the Corporation. Terms of office and election process are found in the Presbytery Manual of Administrative Operations.

Section 2. The duties of the officers elected by the Presbytery shall include but not be limited to the following duties:

- a) The Moderator shall fulfill such duties prescribed for that office in the Form of Government (especially G-3.0104), including convening, adjourning and presiding at Presbytery meetings and appointing members to special committees and working groups when called upon to do so by the Presbytery. When an action is brought according to the Rules of Discipline, the Moderator shall have authority to appoint ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders to serve on Investigating Committees (D-10.0200), Committees of Counsel (D-6.0302) and other working groups necessary to advancing the case, reporting such appointments to the next meeting of the Presbytery.
- b) The Vice Moderator shall perform the duties of the Moderator in his or her absence, or when requested by the Moderator to do so. The Vice Moderator shall ordinarily succeed the Moderator.
- c) The Stated Clerk shall perform those duties set forth in the Form of Government (especially G-3.0104), together with such other tasks as may be prescribed by the Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly.
- d) The Treasurer shall oversee the finances of the Presbytery, having such authority as may be necessary to receive, invest, transfer and disburse funds on behalf of the Presbytery, always subject to the Presbytery's rules, policies and oversight.
- e) The President of the Board of Trustees, or in that person's absence a Trustee designated by the President, shall preside at meetings of the Board, and shall fulfill all corporate responsibilities on behalf of the Presbytery, in accordance with New Jersey law.
- f) When a person is elected to serve the Presbytery as a member of the Council, a member of the Board of Trustees, a member of the Permanent Judicial Commission, a member of an Administrative Commission or Investigating Committee, or as an officer of the Presbytery and that person acts on behalf of the Presbytery in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the Bylaws and Administrative Manual of the Presbytery of Central New

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Jersey, that person shall be indemnified against personal financial loss, defended and held harmless for actions or omissions during their term of office or service.

CHAPTER V. AMENDMENTS

Section 1. These Bylaws may be amended, subject to the laws of the state of New Jersey and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), by approval of the Presbytery at any stated or special meeting called for this purpose at which a quorum is present, by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting, provided that a full reading of the proposed changes or a printed distribution of the same shall have been given at the previous stated meeting at which a quorum was present. These Bylaws may not be amended contrary to or so as to not include the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) or in violation of the laws of the state of New Jersey

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Appendix C

Presbytery of Central New Jersey
POLICY ON SEXUAL MISCONDUCT
Adopted March 23, 2021

INTRODUCTION

The Presbytery of Central New Jersey, in an effort to further the peace, unity and purity of the church through the prevention and remediation of sexual misconduct within the church, has adopted the following policy. This policy applies to all Teaching Elders, Commissioned Ruling Elders (CRE), Certified Christian Educators (CCE), presbytery staff, ongoing volunteers serving at the request of the presbytery, and those under care of presbytery, all of whom are hereafter referred to as “presbytery representatives”. The structures and procedures for responding to allegations of sexual misconduct are mandated by the Book of Order.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Define sexual misconduct by presbytery representatives
2. Provide policy for
 - a. The enforcement of ethical behavior consistent with the Reformed tradition and secular law, and
 - b. The prevention of sexual misconduct
3. Describe the judicial and pastoral process, for reporting, addressing and responding to sexual misconduct in the Presbytery
4. Implement this policy

THE DEFINITION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Sexual misconduct is an abuse of authority and power, breaching Christian ethical principles by sexually misusing a trust relationship. It is the comprehensive term used in this policy to include, but not be limited to, sexual abuse of adults (including any incapable of meaningful consent), rape or sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual abuse of children. Categories of sexual misconduct are described below.

1. Sexual abuse occurs whenever a person in a position of trust engages, with or without consent, in a sexual act or sexual contact with another person to whom s/he owes a professional and pastoral responsibility. Such abuse shall include, but not be limited to the following:
 - a. Any sexual act or sexual contact involving inducement, threat, coercion, force, violence, or intimidation of another person
 - b. Any sexual act or contact where there is a professional relationship, including consensual physical relationships and when an inherent imbalance of power undermines consent
 - c. Any other act defined as “sexual abuse” (or equivalent) under criminal laws, as they may exist from time to time, of the jurisdiction where the act occurs
2. Rape or sexual contact by force, threat or intimidation

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3. Sexual harassment or conduct (such as offensive, obscene or suggestive language or behavior, unacceptable visual contact, unwelcome touching or fondling) that is injurious to the physical or emotional health of another, including sexual bargaining relating to the conditions of a person's employment or participation.
4. Child sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to, any interaction between an adult and a child for the purpose of sexual stimulation of the adult or a third person, including the use of electronic media. The interaction may or may not involve touch. Sexual interaction and/or dating between an adult and a child (a person under the age of 18) is abuse.

POLICY FOR THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

1. Sexual misconduct is never permissible. It is a violation of the principles set forth in Scripture, of the Reformed confession, as well as of ministerial, pastoral, employment, and professional relationships. Sexual misconduct by a presbytery representative is a serious violation of the ordination vows of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
2. All presbytery representatives shall satisfy the requirements of a training program established by COM. Training will be offered by the presbytery or another source satisfactory to the Committee on Ministry (COM) or the applicable presbytery staff.
3. Whereas this policy addresses sexual misconduct by those under the authority of the presbytery, each congregation and organization in the presbytery is responsible for developing a policy for church professionals, officers, members, non-member employees, and volunteers, which is consistent with this policy.
4. The presbytery and its congregations shall periodically obtain from their insurance agents confirmation that their insurance policy covers sexual misconduct liability for its programs and activities.
5. As a help to people struggling with boundary issues, and for the protection of all concerned, when a presbytery representative and a person with whom the presbytery representative is in a professional/pastoral relationship are considering exploring a relationship which could develop into a long-term commitment ("dating"), governing/authoritative bodies concerned with the individuals (most likely, the session and COM), and any individuals supervisor, shall be consulted. Such consultations shall result in recommendations on any delay before a dating relationship begins and shall determine that the individuals concerned have other pastoral care.
6. The conviction of any Teaching Elder, CRE or CCE of sexual misconduct may be grounds for the revocation of ordination/certification as per the Book of Order. No candidate or inquirer convicted of the same will be permitted to continue in the preparation process without action by the Restoration Committee (RC). No one convicted by either a civil or ecclesiastical court of sexual misconduct will be considered for any position within the presbytery or its churches without action by the RC.
7. Concealing or failing to report sexual misconduct tends to perpetuate misconduct. All persons governed by this policy who know of, or reasonably suspect, sexual misconduct on the part of individuals governed by this policy have a duty to report such sexual misconduct to the Stated Clerk of the presbytery, according to the procedural requirements of this policy and the Book of

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Order [D-10.0000], when such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0302. Presbytery representatives also have a duty to report sexual misconduct to civil authorities where required by law, when

- a. Such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0301
 - b. She or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or
 - c. She or he reasonably believes that there is a risk of future physical harm or abuse
8. The presbytery shall maintain a standing Response Coordinating Team (RCT). The purpose of the RCT is to assure that the presbytery provides pastoral care for alleged victim(s), offender(s), affected persons and families, and any affected congregation.
 9. The presbytery shall maintain and train a pool of Presbyterians in good standing from whom the RCT may draw representatives to carry out the duties necessary to fulfill the work of the judicial and pastoral care processes after the filing of a complaint of sexual misconduct.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

1. Availability of Policy and Procedures
 - a. The Stated Clerk shall make copies of this policy available to all persons subject to it, and each recipient shall acknowledge in writing within one month that s/he has received it and agrees to comply. A copy of this policy shall be maintained on the Presbytery of Central New Jersey website, and signed copies of acknowledgement kept on file by the Stated Clerk of the presbytery.
 - b. Within twelve months of having received this policy, all presbytery representatives shall be trained by COM on the nature and prevention of sexual misconduct, or in the case of a candidate under care, by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM). The Stated Clerk of the presbytery shall keep a record of all who have completed the training and all who have failed to complete the training. Continuing members of the presbytery shall be required to take refreshed training no less than once every three years.
 - c. The presbytery, through the RCT, shall train members of the Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC), and anyone sitting on an Investigative Commission (IC) where sexual misconduct is alleged, in sexual ethics and misconduct issues prior to their undertaking their charge.
2. Pre-Employment Screening
 - a. Reference checks
 - i. Screening of Teaching Elders, CREs and CCEs shall include specific questions related to previous complaints of sexual misconduct. This screening shall include review of the Sexual Misconduct Information of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Personal Information Form (PIF) when interviewing persons seeking ministerial calls.
 - ii. The Presbytery Leader is responsible for making reference checks through Synod Executives, other executive presbyters, or other authorized persons to ascertain any history or sexual misconduct. The Presbytery Leader shall report

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findings to COM. Applicants shall be given an opportunity to correct or respond to information regarding sexual misconduct obtained from a reference check.

- iii. Persons within the presbytery authorized to give a reference is obligated to give truthful information regarding complaints, inquiries, and administrative or disciplinary action related to sexual misconduct by the applicant. A given reference shall be updated if subsequent events require it.

b. Background Checks

- i. As part of the COM clearance process, all incoming clergy shall be required to sign a written consent and release form authorizing a background check and credit history.
- ii. The Presbytery Leader and/or designee and the Stated Clerk shall order and review the background reports. The discovery of criminal or ecclesiastical conviction will not automatically exclude the person from entry into the presbytery. How the presbytery makes use of the background report will be determined on a case by case basis. The Presbytery Leader and/or designee and COM will counsel both with the candidate and the calling organization where appropriate.
- iii. The Presbytery Leader and/or designee and the Stated Clerk shall ensure the confidentiality and appropriate retention of background reports. A candidate who claims that the information in a report is inaccurate, false or incomplete shall have the right to dispute it with the investigative firm.

3. The Judicial and Pastoral Response to Allegations

- a. The submission of an allegation of sexual misconduct triggers various responses within the presbytery's disciplinary structure. These responses include the initiation of both a judicial process and a pastoral care process. The judicial process is initiated by the Stated Clerk according to the Book of Order. The pastoral process is initiated by the presbytery executive staff.
- b. The responsibilities, structures and procedures for responding to allegations of sexual misconduct are mandated, in part, by the Book of Order. Particularly, the roles of COM, the IC and the PJC are outlined in G-3.0307, D-10.0000 and D-11.0000
- c. Initiating the Judicial and Pastoral Processes
 - i. The judicial and pastoral processes begin with a written report to the Stated Clerk of the presbytery
 - ii. Sexual acts involving minors (under age 18), allegations of rape, sexual assault or other misconduct that violates criminal law shall be immediately reported to the civil authorities and to the Stated Clerk.
 - iii. There is no statute of limitations for sexual abuse allegations (D-10.0401b)
 - iv. In accordance with the Book of Order, the Stated Clerk shall appoint an IC as close to two weeks as practicable after receipt of a written complaint of sexual misconduct.

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- v. If an accuser is unable or chooses not to submit a written allegation, the Stated Clerk shall notify the Presbytery Leader who will direct the RCT to offer pastoral support.
 - vi. The Stated Clerk shall inform the Presbytery Leader when a complaint has been filed. The Presbytery Leader shall notify the moderator of the RCT in order that the pastoral care process may be initiated.
 - vii. If the Stated Clerk or Presbytery Leader determines that the complaint has been subject of civil or criminal litigation, they shall consult legal counsel for the presbytery.
 - viii. Concerns about the provision of any service related to a complaint should be directed to the Stated Clerk. The Stated Clerk will notify the appropriate person, committee or team moderator, and the Presbytery Leader or designee of all concerns received so that they may make good faith efforts to address all concerns quickly and sensitively.
 - ix. All inquiries from the media regarding any alleged incident of sexual misconduct shall be referred to the Presbytery Leader and/or designee, who shall confer with the Stated Clerk and legal counsel for the presbytery prior to responding to the media.
- d. The Judicial Process
- i. Through the RCT, the presbytery shall train all persons assigned to participate in the judicial process to function appropriately in their assigned tasks
 - ii. Any IC shall have at least two members present when meeting with an alleged victim, accused, accuser, or witness. Such meetings should include at least one person who is of the same gender as the person being interviewed.
 - iii. Administrative leave shall be administered in accordance with the Book of Order and the presbytery's Administrative Leave Policy in effect at the time the initial allegation is made,
 - iv. The victim and/or accuser has the right to an advocate as described in D-10.0203a,b. The presbytery extends the same right to the accused. The accused also has the rights described in D-10.0203c, including the right to counsel.
 - v. The person being accused, or the victim may petition the PJC to review the procedures of the IC.
 - vi. The Stated Clerk shall treat the names of the accuser(s) and the victim(s) with strict confidentiality, and they shall not be listed in the report of the PJC to the presbytery. Records of all investigations will not be sealed but will be available only at the discretion of the Stated Clerk.
 - vii. When a determination of guilt has been made by the PJC or a plea of guilty has been received, the Stated Clerk shall read the decision and any censure at the next stated meeting of the presbytery (D-11.0701). When a pastoral relationship is dissolved as the result of a finding of guilt, the calling organization shall not be required to provide severance beyond the date of dissolution.

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- viii. If a Teaching Elder renounces jurisdiction, remuneration or severance shall not be given past the effective date of renunciation.
 - ix. If censure or a guilty verdict or plea precipitates the retirement of the Teaching Elder, the status of “Honorably Retired” shall not be conferred.
 - x. When a Teaching Elder is found not guilty by the PJC, vindication will be pursued vigorously by the presbytery as outlined in D-9.0000
 - xi. Any records and files, regardless of medium, pertaining to a complaint, investigation, trial, or settlement discussion, shall be kept confidential. At the conclusion of the case, all related records and files shall be delivered to the Stated Clerk. No committee or its members shall keep copies of related documents.
 - xii. The Stated Clerk’s annual report to presbytery shall include statistics on the number of sexual misconduct complaints and a summary of the disposition of each
- e. Restoration
- i. Anyone who has been removed from the exercise of office due to sexual misconduct may apply for restoration to office by writing the Stated Clerk. A Teaching Elder desiring restoration may apply to the governing body that imposed censure by submitting a written request for restoration to the Stated Clerk (D-12.0201)
 - ii. The Presbytery Leader and/or designee, and the moderator of COM and RCT shall select persons to serve on a RC to consider the Teaching Elder’s request and make a recommendation. The members of the RC shall, when possible, include persons who were involved in the judicial and pastoral care processes of a case
 - iii. The RC shall give written notice of the Teaching Elder’s application for restoration to the victim(s) and Session/agency affected by the misconduct. All affected parties shall be given the opportunity to speak to the RC.
 - iv. Among considerations toward restoration, the RC should take into account the following:
 - Unequivocal acknowledgement of responsibility for harm done
 - Conveyance of written apology and offer of restitution to the victim(s)
 - Genuine remorse and repentance demonstrated by a fundamental change in behavior and understanding
 - Psychological assessment of the Teaching elder’s readiness to return to office
 - Active participation in a congregation of the presbytery for at least one year, and the support of the session of the church
 - v. When the RC recommends restoration to office for a Teaching Elder seeking it, the presbytery shall consider fundamental the affirmative answer to the question “Can you be assured with reasonable certainty that this person will not

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again violate the boundaries of a ministerial relationship through sexual misconduct?”

f. The Pastoral Process

i. The pastoral care response is carried out by the RCT. The RCT will work in parallel with the judicial process. The RCT will not investigate an allegation or in any way usurp the roles of presbytery officials or committees. It will begin its work upon the reception of a written or oral request by the Presbytery Leader.

ii. The work of the RCT will be pastoral in nature and its responsibilities include:

- Coordinating a process of care that addresses the specific needs of the accuser(s), alleged victims and their families, those accused and their families, and any affected congregation throughout the process of accusation, review and healing.
- Assisting the presbytery to establish and maintain a RCP, or collection of Presbyterians in good standing to serve in the various functions of the pastoral care and judicial process
- Providing education and training for all members of the RCT and its agents
- Providing pastoral support for any who have made verbal allegations
- Reporting to the Presbytery Leader and COM the status and conclusion of coordinated care surrounding each incident or response.

iii. The membership of the RCT

The RCT shall be nominated by COM and approved by the presbytery. The RCT shall consist of members on staggered terms, with aggregate expertise, as far as possible, in the following areas:

- The dynamics of sexual abuse
- Psychological counseling
- Child advocacy
- Legal
- Conflict management
- Insurance
- Personnel management
- Pastoral practices
- Church governance and policies
- Public relations

The moderator of the RCT shall be a member of COM, appointed by the COM in consultation with the Presbytery Leader or designee.

iv. Members of the RCT and any individuals participating in the work of the RCT shall sign a pledge of confidentiality which shall be submitted to the Presbytery Leader.

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4. “Teaching elders serving congregations are required to organize annual trainings for officers, and all those who work with children and youth, concerning the church’s Sexual Misconduct Policy and Child Protection Policy.”

DEFINITIONS

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

ACCUSER is the person claiming knowledge of sexual misconduct by a person whose conduct is covered by this policy. The accuser may or may not be the person aggrieved by the alleged sexual misconduct.

ADVOCATE is a person offered by the RCT to the accuser, victim, accused or any affected family member, that accompanies the same at any or all stages of the process of complaint review. In this policy, “advocate” does not denote legal representation.

CONFIDENTIALITY is the assurance of and respect for the privacy, reputation and records required on the part of all those dealing with any allegation of sexual misconduct. Information related to any accusation will only be available to those persons officially related to the ongoing process described in this policy.

INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE (IC): The IC is a body formed by the Stated Clerk for the purpose of investigating a complaint of sexual misconduct by one of the presbytery representatives covered by this policy. The presbytery and Book of Order (D-10.0100) outline the formation, responsibility and conduct of the IC. The IC is charged to make determination of the sufficiency of evidence to bring charges against the accused.

MANDATED REPORTER: Under New Jersey law, persons who, in the course of their employment, occupation or practice of their profession, are required to report any and all suspected incidents of child or elder abuse. Clergy are specifically names as mandated reporters when confidential communication causes them reasonable belief that there is risk of imminent bodily harm to any person.

MEANINGFUL CONSENT is consent for a sensual or sexual relationship given by an adult. Meaningful consent is possible only when no professional relationship exists between the presbytery representative and the adult. Neither a minor (under age 18) nor anyone without sufficient mental capacity is able to give meaningful consent.

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION (PJC): The continuing body elected by the presbytery to conduct trials when an IC files charges. The PJC’s structure and duties are described in D-5.0000.

PRESBYTERY REPRESENTATIVE: For the purpose of this policy, the term presbytery representative refers to Teaching Elders, CREs, CCEs, presbytery staff, candidates under care of the presbytery, and ongoing volunteers serving at the request of the presbytery.

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RESPONSE COORDINATING POOL (RCP): The RCP is a pool of Presbyterians in good standing, both clergy and lay, trained and maintained by the RCT at act as the pool from which the necessary committees and teams for the judicial and pastoral care process related to a complaint of sexual misconduct against a presbytery representative may be drawn.

RESPONSE COORDINATING TEAM (RCT): The RCT is the body of Presbyterians selected to oversee pastoral care for alleged victims, offenders, and affected families and congregations. It maintains a pool of Presbyterians (the RCP) to serve in the presbytery's pastoral as well as judicial responses to allegations of sexual misconduct. It is responsible for the training of all such responders.

RESTORATION COMMITTEE (RC): is the body formed by the Presbytery Leader and/or designee, the Moderators of COM and RCT, to respond to a request of a presbytery representative to be restored to office after having been found guilty of sexual misconduct. The members of the RC will be appointed as needed.

SEXUAL ABUSE occurs whenever a person in a position of trust engages, with or without consent, in a sexual act or sexual contact with another person to whom s.he owes a professional and pastoral responsibility.

VICTIM is the person alleged to have been sexually abused by a person covered under this policy

**Presbytery of Central New Jersey
Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
Adopted March 23, 2021**

I. Introduction

The Presbytery of Central New Jersey Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy was developed and approved by the Presbytery of Central New Jersey to establish a proactive policy to maintain a safe environment for children, youth, and adults at Presbytery-sponsored activities. This policy does not cover activities organized by individual congregations within the Presbytery. Instead, each congregation is responsible for maintaining a safe environment and establishing their own specific policies to do so.

II. Definitions

Adult - Persons aged eighteen years and older.

Child or Children - Persons from birth through fifth grade.

Youth - Persons from sixth grade through and including age seventeen, as well as any youth who turns eighteen during the school year, i.e., September through August.

Vulnerable Adult - Any person eighteen years old or older without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent.

- III. Scope:** This policy aims to prevent all child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse, including sexual abuse. As defined as in the Book of Order: “Sexual abuse of another person is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to (1) any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone over the age of eighteen years without the mental capacity to consent; or (2) any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position.” (Book of Order, D-10.0401c).

The Presbytery will not tolerate any act or failure to act that results in the physical, sexual, or emotional mistreatment, neglect, or exploitation of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. It also forbids any use of technology that results in the harassing or abusing of a child, youth or vulnerable adult. This includes using technology to send suggestive messages and images to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult.

At no time shall any adult working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults pursue a dating, sexual, or romantic relationship with a child, youth or vulnerable adult in person or through technology or social media.

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The Presbytery of Central New Jersey's Council is committed to all involved being aware of and following this policy. To this end, the policy shall be posted on the Presbytery website and distributed to event organizers and leaders.

The Stated Clerk shall be responsible for ensuring the required screening, detailed below, has been completed and documented.

The Committee on Ministry or another qualified team assigned by the Council shall be responsible for responding to any reports or accusation of questionable or inappropriate behavior toward children, youth, or vulnerable adults that occur in or on Presbytery-sponsored premises or at any Presbytery-sponsored activities and insuring all appropriate and legally required action has been taken.

III. Reporting Procedures

A. Obligation to Report

When an adult leader receives information about prior abuse or has reason to believe abuse has occurred at any Presbytery-sponsored activity or event, a report must be made to the Stated Clerk within 24 hours. For purposes of this Policy, the term “reason to believe” shall mean evidence which, if presented to individuals of similar background and training, would cause those individuals to believe that a child, youth, or vulnerable adult may be a victim of abuse or neglect.

B. Reporting Steps

1. No matter who the alleged abuser is, if there is reasonable cause to suspect that abuse or neglect of a child or youth has occurred, the reporting person who suspects, believes or witnesses the inappropriate treatment of a child or youth shall contact the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Child Abuse Hotline (State Central Registry) at 1-877-NJABUSE (1-877-652-2873). If the possible victim is a vulnerable adult, the report should be to the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services, Adult Protective Services in the appropriate county office which can be accessed by calling 609-588-6501 or 800-792-8820 or by referring to the attached listing. If the person is in immediate danger, the report should also be made to **911**.
2. If the alleged abuser is a member of a congregation in Presbytery of Central New Jersey, a report shall be made to the Stated Clerk, according to the provisions of D-10.0101 of the *Book of Order*.
3. If the alleged abuser is a minister of the Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elder) in the PCUSA, a report shall be made to the Stated Clerk and the Moderator of the Committee on Ministry (for a member of the Presbytery of Central New Jersey), or the Stated Clerk of the presbytery of membership, according to the provisions of D-10.0101.

4. Once the Department of Children and Families or the Department of Human Services has been contacted, the presbytery's insurance carrier shall also be notified.

IV. Immediate Response to Suspected Abuse or Neglect Against a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult at a Presbytery Event

- A. Remove the accused from direct contact with Child, Youth, Vulnerable Adult
- B. Provide immediate medical attention as the situation demands
- C. Call the appropriate authorities (police, ambulance, medical professional, parents)
- D. Record the names of those present for an incident report
- E. Provide the appropriate care to all participants
- F. Inform the Stated Clerk about the incident

V. Screening Procedures

This section sets forth the screening procedures that shall be used for staff and volunteers at Presbytery-sponsored activities who are responsible for the supervision of children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

The Presbytery relies on local congregations for providing qualified volunteers for Presbytery sponsored activities. Approval and/or disapproval of any volunteer shall be at the discretion of the event supervisor and the Stated Clerk. The Presbytery of Central New Jersey expects that minimally, volunteers from the local congregation be:

1. Persons known by a congregation at least six (6) months.
2. Persons who have completed screening by the congregation

A. Criminal Background Checks

Because of its concern that the community of faith should be a place of trust and safety for all members, but especially for the most vulnerable among us, the Presbytery of Central New Jersey will perform a criminal background check on all staff at Presbytery-sponsored events. In addition, volunteers who have not had a criminal background check done by their local congregation will be subject to this procedure as well.

1. Prior written permission will be obtained from the person to be checked using an application which includes their Social Security number. If the person has not been issued an SSN but has been issued an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN), this ITIN can be supplied instead. If neither are available, then the volunteer will need to use the alternate verification process that is name-based and includes providing copies of government issued photo identification

as well as written recommendation of a Pastor of a member church in our Presbytery in order to check the name and date of birth against the information the volunteer provided in the screening process.

2. Criminal background checks will be conducted by a reputable outside firm, using standard criteria for the purposes of child, youth and vulnerable adult supervision. For any staff or volunteers driving as part of a Presbytery-sponsored event, the background check must include a Motor Vehicle Report.
3. The Stated Clerk of the presbytery is authorized to conduct the background checks and to maintain a secure record of all persons checked. If a background check identifies anything that makes the person ineligible, that person shall be notified. Among others, any convictions or pending prosecution of an allegation of child abuse, pedophilic behavior, incest, rape, assaults, indecent exposure, pornography, sodomy or endangerment of a minor would disqualify a person from being in contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults.

VI. Training Procedures

All staff and volunteers shall complete training as prescribed by the Council and/or activity organizers, to include but not be limited to receiving a copy of this policy and signing a document that they have received and will adhere to this policy.

This policy was adopted by Presbytery of Central New Jersey on (date).

NEW JERSEY ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Atlantic

Atlantic County Division
of Intergenerational Services
Shoreview Building
101 South Shore Road
Northfield, NJ 08225
Phone: 888-426-9243
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency
www.atlantic-county.org

Bergen

Bergen County Board of Social Services
218 Route 17 North
Rochelle Park, NJ 07662
Phone: 201-368-4300
After Hours: 1-800-624-0275
www.bcbss.com

Burlington

Burlington County Board of Social Services
795 Woodlane Road
Mount Holly, NJ 08060
Phone: 609-518-4793
After Hours: 856-234-8888
www.bcbss.org

Camden

Camden County Board of Social Services
600 Market Street
Camden, NJ 08102
Phone: 856-225-8178
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency

Cape May

Cape May Division on Aging and Disability
Services
4005 Route 9 South
Rio Grande, NJ 08242
Phone: 609-886-2784, ask for Intake Social Worker
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency

Cumberland

Resources for Independent Living
614 East Landis Avenue, 1st Floor
Vineland, NJ 08360
Phone: 856-825-0255
After Hours: contact local police or 911

Essex

FOCUS, Hispanic Center for Human Dev., Inc.
441-443 Broad Street
Newark, NJ 07102
Phone: 866-903-6287
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency

Gloucester

Gloucester County Division of Social Services
400 Holly Dell Drive
Sewell, NJ 08080
Phone: 856-582-9200
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency

Hudson

Hudson County Adult Protective Services, Inc.
6100 Adams Street
West New York, NJ 07093
Phone: 201-537-5631
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency

Hunterdon

Hunterdon County Division of Social Work Services
P.O. Box 2900
Flemington, NJ 08822-2900
Phone: 908-788-1300
After Hours: 908-782-4357
www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/depts/social/socserv.htm

Mercer

Mercer County Board of Social Services
200 Woolverton Street
Trenton, NJ 08650
Phone: 609-989-4346
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency
www.mcboss.org

Middlesex

Family and Children's Services
191 Bath Avenue
Long Branch, NJ 07740
Phone: 732-745-3635
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency
www.fcsmonmouth.org

Monmouth

Family and Children's Services
191 Bath Avenue
Long Branch, NJ 07740
Phone: 732-531-9191
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency
www.fcsmonmouth.org

Morris

Morris County Office on Aging, Disabilities and
Community Programming
340 West Hanover Avenue
Morristown, NJ 07960
Phone: 973-326-7282
After Hours: 973-326-7282
www.morrishumanservices.org

Ocean

Ocean County Board of Social Services
1027 Hooper Avenue
Toms River, NJ 08754
Phone: 732-349-1500
After Hours: 211
www.co.ocean.nj.us/socialservices

Passaic

Passaic County Board of Social Services
80 Hamilton Street
Paterson, NJ 07505
Phone: 973-881-2616
After Hours: 973-345-2676
www.pcbss.org

Salem

Salem County Office of Aging and Disabilities
110 Fifth Street, Suite 900
Salem, NJ 08079
Phone: 856-339-8622
After Hours: 911 in case of emergency
www.salemcounty.nj.gov

Somerset

Somerset County Board of Social Services
73 East High Street
P.O. Box 936
Somerville, NJ 08876
Phone: 908-526-8800
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency
www.socialservices.co.somerset.nj.us/aps.htm

Sussex

Sussex County Division of Social Services
83 Spring Street, Suite 203
P.O. Box 218
Newton, NJ 07860
Phone: 973-383-3600
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency

Union

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese
of Newark (CCAN)
505 South Avenue E
Cranford, NJ 07016
Phone: 908-497-3902
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency

Warren

Warren County Division of Aging
and Disability Services
165 County Route 519 South
Belvidere, NJ 07823
Phone: 908-475-6591
After Hours: Call local police or 911 in case of
emergency
www.seniorservices.co.warren.nj.us

For additional information:

NJ Department of Human Services • Division of Aging Services • PO Box 812, Trenton, NJ 08625-0812
Phone: 609-588-6501 • Emergency or After Hours: 911 or local police
www.state.nj.us/humanservices/doas/services/aps

Presbytery of Central New Jersey Program Guidelines

These guidelines review best practices, and it is the Presbytery's desire to abide by them, and to encourage all local congregations in the Presbytery to do so as well. It is expected that for each Presbytery-sponsored event (in-person or virtual), the event coordinators provide written documentation as to how they are handling each of the items below. This written document needs to be provided to the Council for approval at least six weeks before the event.

Approval and/or edits shall be provided back to the event coordinator at least three weeks before the event. Prior to the event all staff and volunteers should be provided appropriate training on all policies and procedures.

A. Registration and Attendance

All children, youth, and vulnerable adults must be registered to attend Presbytery-sponsored programs and activities by a parent or guardian. Attendance must be taken for both leaders and participants and records provided to the Presbytery within 48 hours after the event. For virtual events, appropriate security measures must be employed to prevent non-registered attendees.

B. Adult Supervision

All events must be staffed with at least two (2) unrelated adult leaders who are 22 years or older. Activities in different rooms require two (2) unrelated adult leaders per room. If a one-on-one conversation is necessary with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, it shall be held in view of others.

C. Special Accommodations

Parents and guardians are encouraged to notify the event organizers if their child, youth or vulnerable adult needs any accommodations that would require adaptation to this policy. The event organizers will work with the family, leaders, and/or special consultants to provide reasonable and appropriate adaptations that will allow for a positive experience for all involved.

D. Child and Youth Bathroom Procedures

The Event Coordinator will specify age-appropriate procedures for restroom use.

E. Driving

When transporting children or youth (other than a parent or guardian's own child, youth, or vulnerable adult) during Presbytery-sponsored programs or activities, written

permission must be provided by the parent/guardian. All authorized drivers must be twenty-five (25) years or older and have a copy of a valid operator's license and current automobile insurance on file with the event organizer. Background screenings for authorized drivers must include a Motor Vehicle Report.

1. The license plate number of the vehicle and the cellular telephone numbers of the driver and other adults shall be provided to the event organizer before departing.
2. No adult should be alone in a vehicle with only one child, youth or vulnerable adult.
3. The number of persons per vehicle should not exceed the number of seat belts in the vehicle. All occupants must use seat belts at all times.

F. Youth Overnight and/or Off-Site Activities

The required adult to youth ratio for overnight chaperones for any ministry with children or youth shall be 1:6 (although 1:4 is preferred). Gender balance is required. At least one (1) of the adult leaders shall carry with him/her duplicate copies of the permission slips and medical releases for each youth attending the activity. All overnight activities must have at least two (2) unrelated adults supervising the activities. If the group is coeducational, there must be at least two (2) adult males and two (2) adult females to accompany and supervise the group. Separate sleeping areas for male and female participants must be provided. Adults shall not share dormitory or hotel rooms with youth, unless the two are related, except in situations where only one large sleeping area is provided for all youth and adults.

G. Proper Display of Affection

The event coordinator will provide guidance based on the age of children or youth participants to all leaders regarding appropriate displays of affection being mindful of necessary boundaries.

H. Appropriate Relationships and Communications with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults

The event coordinator will provide guidance based on the age and ability of children, youth or vulnerable adult participants to all leaders regarding appropriate relationships and communications, including electronic communications such as texts, emails, and social media. All electronic communication should be preserved so that it can be reviewed by parents, guardians or event organizers if the need arises.

I. No Alcohol, Drugs, Tobacco, or Vaping

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All adults working with children, youth or vulnerable adults in a Presbytery-sponsored activity, program, or event shall refrain from vaping, and consuming or using illegal drugs, alcohol, and tobacco during the entire course of the event.

J. Gifts

Adult staff and volunteers shall not give gifts to individual children, youth or vulnerable adults. Gift giving should be done on a group basis for special occasions only. Gifts should not be elaborate and should be appropriate to the occasion.

K. Discipline

Any interaction regarding discipline needs to carefully consider a child, youth, or vulnerable adult's dignity and well-being. Gentleness, respect, and understanding must guide all actions and words. Discipline will be carried out through instruction, correction, and positive reinforcement. Reinforce good and appropriate behavior with praise and thanks. Event organizers and leaders should provide training on age-appropriate and effective means of discipline and should be available throughout events to assist and supervise volunteers with discipline as needed.

