

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING POLICY (Board approved revised policy August 20, 2024)

Bethel Congregational Church, UCC is committed to providing a work and ministry environment in keeping with Christian principles and free of unlawful harassment.

Bethel has a zero tolerance policy in regards to harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB) for any reason.

Bethel's anti-HIB policy applies to all persons involved in the operation of Bethel and prohibits HIB behavior by any employee, volunteer worker or congregant of the church. Furthermore, HIB behavior is unlawful if based on sex, gender, race, ancestry, physical or mental disability, mental condition, marital status or age, includes, but is not limited to, the following behavior:

- Verbal conduct such as epithets, derogatory jokes or comments, slurs or unwanted sexual advances, invitations or comments;
- Visual conduct such as derogatory and/or sexually-oriented posters, photography, cartoons, drawings or gestures;
- Physical conduct such as assault, unwanted touching, blocking normal movement or interfering with work;
- Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests as a condition of continued employment, or to avoid some other loss, and offers of employment benefits in return for sexual favors; and
- Retaliation for having reported or threatening to report harassment
- Bullying, generally defined as intentional act that causes harm to others, and may involve verbal harassment, verbal or non-verbal threats, physical assault, stalking, or other methods of coercion such as manipulation, blackmail, or extortion. It is aggressive behavior that intends to hurt, threaten or frighten another person. An imbalance of power between the aggressor and the victim is often involved.

Bethel will take seriously any allegations of HIB. As in all the church's relationships, we will seek to respect all persons, to be just in all our dealings.

The Complaint Process

Any employee, volunteer or congregant who is aware of any instances of HIB should report the alleged act immediately to one of the three designated members of the Safe Conduct Team, Pastor, or Moderator. Any employee, volunteer or congregant of the church who believes he or she has been subject to HIB should do the same. If the reporter is uncomfortable in discussing the

matter with the Safe Conduct Team, Pastor, or Moderator, the reporter should report the alleged act immediately to the Conference Minister of the Central Pacific Conference.

Any report or complaint should include details of the incident or incidents, names of the individuals involved and names of any witnesses. A thorough and objective investigation of the allegations will take place immediately and will be handled as confidentially as possible. Upon completion of the investigation, the appropriate parties will be notified of the findings.

Criminal Action

Should the investigation of the complaint suggest criminal activity, the proper authorities in that jurisdiction shall be notified immediately.

Retaliation Prohibited

We prohibit retaliation against anyone, including an employee, volunteer, or congregant who in good faith reports prohibited conduct. Retaliation against a participant in the investigation is also prohibited.

If it is determined that unlawful harassment has occurred, effective remedial action will be immediately taken in accordance with the circumstances involved.

Investigative Process

Upon receiving a complaint the Safe Conduct Team shall immediately notify the pastor or moderator who shall investigate the issue following the procedures outlined in Bethel's Safe Conduct Policy.