



# ST. ANDREW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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*If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus..."*

*~Philippians 2: 1-5*

June 23, 2022

Beloved St. Andrew Community:

Hopefully you know already we have multiple, interrelated behavioral policies that help us to ensure health and well-being in our communion—especially those we consider most vulnerable among us. Our priority of care for our children and vulnerable adults is a sacred trust. It grows from the sacraments; from the promises we make in baptism and the insights we gain at the communion table.

First of all, there's baptism. In this sacrament we intentionally and with self-awareness gather around promises. Foremost are the promises we understand God to be making to all God's creation, to the church, and to individuals known in the stories of God's fidelity throughout the scriptures, and particularly in the self-giving of Jesus who is our pattern for life and ministry. Our own promises to and for one another emanate from the God who acts first. In response, as a congregation, we promise to care for the baptized *as if* they are our own:

- Do you, as members of the church of Jesus Christ, promise to guide and nurture [the baptized] by word and deed, with love and prayer?
- Will you encourage [him/her/them] to know and follow Christ and to be a faithful member of his church?

At table we are again reminded that our acts of self-giving are a response to the generosity and self-giving of God that sets us free, particularly in the one whose own body is broken and then reconstituted in the life of the church for the world. In the mystery of the sacrament, as we ourselves are nourished, we become Christ's body broken and shared for the sake of God's good creation.

Over the years we have identified a suite of three policies that work together to "flesh out" what this life, at its best and most promising looks like. You can find them on our website ([standrewpc.org](http://standrewpc.org)) in the File Cabinet section. They are also linked here in the online version of this letter:

- [Sexual Misconduct Prevention](#): This policy sets out a set of practices and behaviors to prevent sexual misconduct, while also outlining reporting and investigating procedures when misconduct is alleged.

- [Child Protection](#): This document sets out guidelines to protect children from all forms of abuse and the process to follow if abuse is alleged.
- [Ethical Conduct](#): This denominational resource sets out a professional code of ethics for all PCUSA officers and members, describing conduct that demonstrates fidelity to the gospel. Approved in 2004, this resource, adopted by St. Andrew's Session as the third of our suite of resources, offers rich commentary on life-giving behavior that follows the manner of Christ.

We provide regular training for all church staff and officers (ministers, elders, and deacons) on these policies and behavioral standards, understanding the promises church leaders make are even more specific and extensive than those baptismal promises we all make. Church officers, for example, understand ourselves to be mandatory reporters when it comes to reasonable concerns of abuse or neglect. Perhaps more importantly, we understand our ministry is to model healthy relational patterns that create a safe, healthy, and generative environment for all God's people. All adults who work with children or other vulnerable populations are also required to submit to background checks every three years as just one part of a wholistic prevention plan outlined in these policies.

We encourage you to have a closer look at the resources here. We recommend them for your scrutiny and instruction.

With love and gratitude,

Your St. Andrew Session

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