ACTION REQUEST #9
2022 OREGON-IDAHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

TITLE: Amend the Sexual Ethics Policy for Clergy
SPONSORING GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL: Board of Ordained Ministry
SPOKESPERSON: Laura Jaquith Bartlett, BOM Administrative Coordinator
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I/We petition the Oregon-Idaho Annual conference to take the following action:
Amend the "Sexual Ethics Policy for Clergy of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference of The
United Methodist Church" as follows:

1) Change the title to "**Sexual Ethics Policy for Clergy and Lay Pastoral Leaders of the
Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church**"

2) In the section titled, "Implementation of Policy," replace the fourth paragraph, including
its bullet points, as follows:

~~All Oregon-Idaho clergy members (see definition of "clergy" above) and all other clergy currently
appointed by the Oregon-Idaho Bishop are required to complete the three requirements outlined
below:~~

- ~~Successfully complete an annual online knowledge test on the Sexual Ethics Policy.
When requested, provisions will be made for the online test to be taken via telephone or
videoconference.~~
- ~~Complete the Annual Disclosure Form and submit it to the district office.~~
- ~~Attend one "Sexual Ethics, Abuse Prevention, and Healthy Boundaries" training each
quadrennium. The Board of Ordained Ministry provides the "Sexual Ethics, Abuse
Prevention, and Healthy Boundaries" training within the quadrennium. A non-Board of
Ordained Ministry training can be reviewed by the Board of Ordained Ministry to
determine if the training is equivalent to the training promoted by the Board of Ordained
Ministry. Considerations will include the training's number of contact hours, content, and
the qualifications of the workshop leader(s).~~

These persons are expected to know and abide by this policy:
- **All clergy members (as defined by the current Book of Discipline) of the Oregon-
Idaho Conference**
- **All Honorably Located clergy listed on Oregon-Idaho's current Business of the
Annual Conference Report under Questions 39 and 40**
- **Any non-member clergyperson currently serving under appointment by the
Oregon-Idaho bishop**
- **All Certified Lay Ministers**
- **All Oregon-Idaho Diaconal Ministers and Deaconesses/Home Missioners**
- **Any layperson assigned by the district superintendent to a pastoral role**
**If a person residing in Oregon-Idaho is in a ministerial leadership role but is not covered
in any category above, at the discretion of the district superintendent, that person may
be included in these requirements.**

The persons named above must complete each of these three requirements biannually, during the odd-numbered years, between May 1 and May 31:

- **Undergo a criminal background and records check; as determined by the Board of Ordained Ministry.**
- **Sign and submit a disclosure form, including a certification that the sexual ethics policy has been read;**
- **Complete half of the quadrennial Healthy Boundaries training. (Note that the Healthy Boundaries training will include abuse prevention practices that are applicable to the Safe Sanctuaries certification process during the odd-numbered years, but the Safe Sanctuaries training will still need to be done separately in the even-numbered years, for those persons participating in that certification.)**

3) In the "Implementation of Policy" section, delete the following paragraph:
~~The appropriate District Superintendent shall insure that lay persons assigned or appointed to ministry settings within Oregon-Idaho (including Lay Persons Assigned, Certified Lay Members, Diaconal Ministers, Deaconesses, and Home Missioners) receive appropriate sexual ethics training and are knowledgeable about the Oregon-Idaho Conference Sexual Ethics Policy and standards for preventing sexual misconduct, abuse, and harassment.~~

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

What will this action accomplish?

For the past several months, collaborative work has been done with representatives from the Board of Ordained Ministry, the Cabinet, Connectional Ministries, and the Safe Sanctuaries task force. The focus of this work has been to strengthen, streamline, and coordinate the processes of training and abuse prevention that we carry out in the annual conference. An overall process is being developed, but in order to launch it, the current policy needs to be amended to allow for these new methods of training and tracking. The proposed amendments will allow the conference to move forward with new and better-coordinated abuse prevention processes. The three new ethics requirements will be required biannually, and will allow for healthy boundaries training to take place twice during the quadrennium. This also introduces a regular background check for all clergy and lay pastoral leaders—an important safety tool that has been lacking in OR-ID, even though most annual conferences require a regular background check.

Why is it important?

Protecting persons—especially children, youth, and vulnerable adults--from sexual abuse and sexual harassment is of prime importance in our shared ministry. It is essential that clergy and others who work in ministry leadership are aware of appropriate boundaries in order to keep others safe. But when our systems are confusing and overlapping, it becomes challenging to keep track of requirements, which sometimes seem redundant and so may be ignored. By amending this policy, the door is opened for a new process to address these issues.

1 **How will it be carried out? By whom?**
2 The Board of Ordained Ministry oversees implementation of the sexual ethics policy, with
3 support from the district superintendents. The Ministerial Services Manager tracks compliance
4 with the policy.
5
6 **How much will it cost? Where will the money come from?**
7 There is no cost to changing the policy.