



LAKEWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Operations Manual 2026

"We are God's people doing God's work in our community."

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MISSION STATEMENT

We are God's people doing God's work in our community.

We believe that God created Lakewood Presbyterian to invite and include all people to participate in the worship and ministry of the church.

Worship, which includes the sacraments, is central to the life of each individual and is expressed best by fully incorporating the diversity of the community.

We believe we have a responsibility to encourage and provide for life-long learning throughout our individual and shared faith journey.

As Christians, we are obedient to Christ and, therefore, reach out and serve others.

We value our relationships with one another. We believe that, through our experiences within the church, we grow in our ability to share God's truth in our everyday lives.

ORGANIZATIONAL VISION STATEMENT

We at Lakewood Presbyterian Church exist to invite the people of God to gather and learn, so we can live our individual and collective lives intentionally and speak with a well-reasoned voice on important issues at all levels of social policy within the church and the world.

STATEMENT OF INCLUSION & WELCOME

At Lakewood Presbyterian Church, we are a small, progressive church in Lakewood, Washington that welcomes people of all ages! We welcome all people to our congregation regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental ability, socioeconomic status, marital status, family structure, country of origin, or immigration status. All are welcome to participate fully in worship, service, baptism, communion, membership, ministry, and leadership. We value our relationships with one another. We believe that through our worship experiences, we grow in our ability to share God's truth in our everyday lives. Our doors are always open, and we welcome everyone to join us on this journey of faith.

With open hearts we the people of Lakewood Presbyterian Church (LPC) seek to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God. LPC is a small and intimate church with its own unique story that reflects both God's love of us (even as imperfect people), and God's call to us to be radically transformed in the spirit of that love.

BYLAWS

Article I. Name

The Lakewood Presbyterian Church of Lakewood, Washington, being a particular congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA) recognizes the constitution of said church is in all its provisions obligatory of it and its members.

Article II. Meetings

Section 1

There shall be a called meeting of the congregation held (usually) in the month of November at the time and place designated by the session of the church for the election of elders, deacons, personnel committee, and nominating committee for the succeeding year. There shall be, in January, an annual meeting of the congregation for the presentation of annual reports and at which the transaction of all other business properly coming before such a meeting may be discussed. This meeting shall include a review and approval of the pastors' salaries.

Section 2

All meetings of the congregation may be scheduled by the session or the Presbytery. Such calls shall clearly state the purpose of such called meeting and no other matter save that specified in the notice shall be considered. Session shall be required to call a meeting if one fourth of active members of the congregation present a written request.

Section 3

Public notice of time, place, and purpose of any congregational meeting shall be announced during worship service on two consecutive Sundays preceding the meeting.

Section 4

The pastor shall preside at all congregational meetings. If the pulpit is vacant, or if the pastor and the active members agree that the subject to be discussed necessitates a moderator other than the pastor, the Presbytery shall be invited by the session to preside. This invitation shall be cleared through the Commission on Ministry of Olympia Presbytery. If the pastor is ill or otherwise unable to be present, a member of session may preside.

Section 5

The clerk of session shall be the secretary of all meetings of the congregation. The clerk of session must be an ordained elder. If the clerk of session is unable to attend a congregational meeting, the session shall designate a secretary in her/his place.

Section 6

The active members shall be in good standing as defined in the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA). All active members are eligible to vote at congregational meetings save on issues where members under the age of 18 are precluded by the State of Washington.

Section 7

Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the general rule governing bodies adopted by the Presbyterian Church USA.

Section 8

All church related meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer.

Section 9

A quorum shall consist of one fourth ($\frac{1}{4}$) of the total church members if the membership is 100 or less; if more than 100 members a quorum shall consist of 25 active members or 1/10 of the active membership, whichever is greater.

Article III. Governing Bodies

Section 1

The session shall be the only administrative body of the congregation. The session may appoint committees or individuals as necessary and prudent for obtaining advice, counsel, and assistance from the diverse talents and capabilities of the congregation. Each commission of session shall be chaired by an active member of the session. Friends of the congregation will be invited to serve on committees; however, communicant members of the congregation shall comprise a majority.

Section 2

There shall be between 6 and 8 active elders divided into 3 classes. One class shall be elected each year at the annual meeting, or at meeting called for that purpose, for a three-year term. No active elder shall serve on the session for consecutive terms either full or partial, aggregation more than 6 years. An elder is eligible to be elected to a new term after one year of inactivity has elapsed.

Section 3

There shall be between 5 and 7 active deacons divided into 3 classes. One class to be elected each year at the annual meeting, or at a meeting called for that purpose, for a three-year term. No deacon shall serve on the board of deacons for consecutive terms in the full or partial aggregation more than 6 years. A deacon is eligible to be elected for a new term after one year of inactivity has elapsed.

Section 4

The personnel committee shall consist of 5 members, one of whom shall be named as chairperson from and designated by the session, one deacon from and designated by the board of deacons, and 3 communicant members from and elected by the congregation. The 3 communicant members shall be elected at the annual meeting or at a meeting called for that purpose for three-year term of office. No personnel committee member shall serve on the personnel committee for consecutive terms either full or partial aggregating more than 6 years. The personnel committee member is eligible to be elected to another term after one year of inactivity has elapsed.

Section 5

There shall be a nominating committee elected for one year, chosen in accordance with the Book of Order the Presbyterian Church USA. This committee shall consist of 2 elders (one must be active and one may be inactive) designated by the session. The active elder shall be named as chairperson; one deacon from and designated by the board of deacons; and four communicant members from and elected by the congregation. The committee shall bring to the annual meeting or meeting called for that purpose, nominations of one eligible person for each office to be filled; additional nominations of qualified active members may be made from the floor by any active member of the congregation provided the nomination has the consent of the nominee.

Section 6

All persons of legal age (18 years) elected for a term on session are also elected for a term as trustee of the Corporation. He/she shall serve as a trustee only for the specified term. Any active elder becomes a trustee upon his or her 18th birthday. (Washington state law requires that trustees of corporations be 18 years of age.)

Section 7

The session shall elect the president and vice president of the Board of Trustees at its stated meeting in January. The Clerk of Session shall be the secretary and the church treasurer shall be the treasurer of the Board of Trustees.

Section 8

A quorum of the session shall consist of the moderator and one-third of the active elders.

Section 9

The pastor shall be an ex officio member of all committees except the nominating committee. The pastor may attend nominating committee meetings in a consultative position.

Article IV. Amendments

Section 1

These bylaws may be amended subject to the charter of the corporation and laws of the state of Washington and Constitution of the Presbyterian Church USA after said changes have been available to the congregation; at any congregational meeting or by congregational delegation of power to the session and at any annual meeting or any called meeting by two thirds votes of the voters present.

Section 2

These bylaws or the charter of the Corporation may not be amended contrary to or so as not to include the provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church USA.

PERSONNEL HANDBOOK

See [Personnel Handbook](#)

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND HARASSMENT POLICY

We firmly believe that God intends all human life to have worth and dignity in all relationships. Through these relationships, we are bound to serve and respect the dignity of every human being (F-1.0301). This respect and dignity afforded to all of God's creation is through the creation and maintenance of a safe environment within our community, free of harassment.

This policy applies to staff, volunteers, and members of the congregation.

- **Verbal Harassment:** Verbal harassment is harassment established by a pattern of conduct of unwelcome or unwanted spoken or written comments. Those comments can include, without limitation, insults, jokes, slurs, false and misleading information and threats. This could also include and is not limited to stereotyping based on a person's nationality, origin, race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, body, medical conditions, disability, and appearance.
- **Nonverbal Harassment:** Nonverbal Harassment includes, without limitations, distribution, display, or discussion of any graphic material that ridicules, denigrates, insults, or belittles. This may also include and is not limited to a show of hostility, aversion, or disrespect toward an individual or group because of nationality, origin, race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, body, medical conditions, disability, and appearance.
- **Both Verbal and Nonverbal Harassment** include, without limitation, persistent unwanted contact (verbal or nonverbal), bullying, intimidation, and interference in the ministry of the church or organization.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Sexual Harassment is the behavior characterized by the making of unwelcome and/or inappropriate sexual remarks, physical advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal and/or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment may take many different forms including, but not limited to, verbal, nonverbal, and physical sexual harassment. See more definitions under Sexual Misconduct.
- **Electronic Harassment:** Electronic Harassment is the use of electronic communication to harass a targeted person or group, including, but not limited to, emails, blogs, social networking websites, online games, forums, instant messaging, Zoom, and other virtual conferencing modalities, text messaging, and mobile phone pictures and videos. Harassment perpetrated through these online media have come to be known as "cyber bullying."
- **Retaliation:** Retaliation is any hardship, loss of benefit, or penalty imposed on any person in response to filing or responding to a bona fide complaint or discrimination or harassment.

Definition of Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- **Sexual Harassment:** Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates a hostile or intimidating environment.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Any sexual activity, contact, or behavior involving a minor, a non-consenting adult, or someone unable to give consent.
- **Exploitation:** Using a position of authority or trust to engage in or coerce sexual activity.

In our efforts to create a church where all persons are treated with respect and dignity, Lakewood Presbyterian Church commits to:

- Provide anti-harassment training for our staff and leaders to encourage education, understanding, and growth;
- Acknowledge and thoroughly investigate all allegations of harassment, providing support through the use of Book of Order defined processes and procedures outlined in LPC's Safe Conduct Policy .
- Strive to create a church where harassment of all kinds is not tolerated or accepted, where all people of God are welcome and safe.

REPORTING AN ALLEGED VIOLATION OF THIS POLICY

Any person who feels that he or she has been subject to any type of harassment, including sexual misconduct, is encouraged (but not required) to firmly and promptly notify the offender that the behavior is inappropriate and violates this Policy. Moreover, an individual who believes he or she has been the victim of or who has witnessed harassment, including sexual misconduct, should promptly bring such conduct to the attention of their supervisor; the Personnel Chair; and/or our Pastor/Head of Staff.

If a member becomes aware that harassment or discrimination is occurring, either from personal observation or as a result of an individual coming forward, the member should immediately report it to the Personnel Chair; and/or our Pastor/Head of Staff or Clerk of Session, as appropriate. Failure to promptly report incidents of harassment will hinder our ability to initiate investigation of a complaint of harassment and may limit our ability to stop and prevent further harassment. Cooperation in reporting acts of harassment is essential to an anti-harassment policy.

Any person who believes that a filed report has not been satisfactorily resolved should promptly report the matter to the Pastor/Head of Staff or, if the Head of Staff is unavailable or is the alleged harasser, to the Clerk of Session.

Lodging a complaint will in no way be used against the complainant, nor shall it have an adverse effect on such an individual's status. Retaliation is a serious violation of this Policy and should be reported immediately.

ADDRESSING COMPLAINTS OF HARASSMENT, INCLUDING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The following general procedures and potential consequences are applicable when addressing a complaint of harassment, including sexual misconduct.

Investigations will be conducted by either the Presbytery (if the accused is a member of the ordained staff or is a ruling elder commissioned to pastoral service in congregations of the presbytery), the Session (if the accused is a Church member) or the Personnel Committee (if the accused is a non-member employee, volunteer or independent contractor).

Such investigation shall be carried out with due regard for the personal dignity and privacy of all parties involved.

Regardless of who conducts the investigation, we will take preliminary measures reasonably designed to ensure that no harassment occurs while such an investigation is in progress.

Following the conclusion of the investigation, appropriate corrective action will be taken as follows:

- if it is determined that a person has violated this Policy, such person will be subject to appropriate corrective measures commensurate with the seriousness of the particular offense or other relevant circumstances;
- if it is determined that no violation of this Policy has occurred, or that the investigation was inconclusive, we reserve the right to take appropriate corrective measures;
- if it is determined that the complaining party falsely accused another of harassment, knowingly or in a malicious manner, the complaining party will be subject to appropriate corrective measures. In all cases, the person who made the complaint and the alleged harasser will be advised of the outcome of the investigation.

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATION OF THIS POLICY

Allegations Against a Person Subject to the Book of Order

Based on the seriousness of the offense, disciplinary action involving a person subject to the Book of Order may include any of the forms of censure specified in the Book of Order (see Section D-12.0101).

In the event a person subject to the Book of Order is serving as an employee, volunteer or independent contractor, a violation of this Policy could also result in one or more of the consequences listed below.

Allegations Against a Person not Subject to the Book of Order

Depending upon the status of the person being disciplined, consequences for violation of this Policy could include verbal or written reprimand, suspension or termination of employment, removal from a position of leadership or other responsibility and/or contract termination.

SAFE CONDUCT POLICY

for Children, Youth, and Adults with Vulnerabilities

Purpose

1. Recognizing God's tender love and concern for the most vulnerable among us, we believe it is our responsibility to do all that is reasonably possible to protect children and vulnerable adults from being physically or sexually abused while they are under our care.
2. The first and most important priority of the Safe Conduct Policy is to provide a caring, safe, and secure environment to the children, youth, and vulnerable adults of Lakewood Presbyterian Church by limiting risk for abuse and harm.
3. The second purpose is to help Lakewood Presbyterian Church reduce risk and liability by doing our due diligence to keep all minors, staff and volunteers safe.

Definitions

- A. **Children:** Infants–5th grade
 1. **Nursery:** Ages 0–5 (not yet in Kindergarten)
 2. **Preschool:** 3–Pre-K
 3. **Elementary:** K-5th grades
- B. **Youth:** 6-12th grade
 1. **Middle school:** 6-8th
 2. **High School:** 9-12th
- C. **Adult:** 18+ or has graduated from high school
- D. **Adult With Vulnerabilities:** Any person 18+ or older with intellectual and developmental disabilities who may be unable to protect themselves and/or who may require adult supervision. From here forward, children/youth/persons with physical and/or intellectual disabilities, will be referred to simply as “youth” or “child” and is intended to refer to all of these individuals who are in need of special protections.
- E. **Volunteer:** refers to people who are engaged and involved in activities at the church that are not paid.
 1. **Long-term volunteers**
 - i. Any adult who will have greater than normal contact with children and youth that places them in a position of responsibility, authority or supervision. This includes regular Sunday School teachers, Nursery volunteers, Godly Play volunteers, and volunteers for trips, retreats, and fellowship activities both inside the church building and out.
 2. **Short-term volunteers**
 - i. These are “auxiliary service” volunteers who will have contact with children or youth but do not regularly have direct responsibility for children. This includes, but is not limited to coffee hosts, VBS station leaders, other task oriented jobs around children and youth, and temporary volunteers (such as filling in to teach Sunday School). Short term volunteers do not need to fill out background checks or attend volunteer orientation. If a short-term volunteer begins regularly volunteering, they will need to be background checked and attend volunteer training.

- F. **Staff:** refers to people who are employed and paid by Lakewood Presbyterian Church in Lakewood, WA

Requirements of staff and long-term volunteers working with Minors at Lakewood Presbyterian Church

- A. Adults will be permitted to volunteer with children only after they have been a member or constituent of the church for six months, or by special permission by Session if attending for less than six months.
- B. A background check will be required for:
 - a. All Paid Staff
 - b. Long-term volunteers who work directly with children and youth this includes but is not limited to nursery volunteers and Sunday School Teachers
- C. Signed code of conduct on file

Disqualification for working with Children at Lakewood Presbyterian Church

It is not our intention to cause anxiety about small infractions that may appear on a background check, the purpose of the background check is simply to ensure that there are no criminal behaviors that would put children and youth at risk. The only people who will directly see the results of the background check will be the Pastor and Personnel chair. We are not expecting anyone to have a perfect history, listed below are what would disqualify someone from working with children. The Session and Pastor reserve the right to use their discretion in special cases.

Disqualification from working with youth:

- 1. Violent Crimes in the past 10 years
- 2. Any criminal history of abuse
- 3. Any criminal history that involves a minor

Training and Education

- 1. Because all church volunteers and church officers are mandatory reporters, and to ensure this policy is known and followed, all volunteers must complete an initial Volunteer Training covering:
 - a. the contents of this policy,
 - b. mandated abused reporting rules, and
 - c. appropriate behavior and boundaries.

Volunteers must be re-trained at least every three years. If one is unable to attend the safety briefing, they will be assigned an online course through Praesidium University and should make plans to review the meeting minutes and sign the codes of conduct.

Expected Codes of Conducts for all volunteers and staff working directly with children and youth

- A. **Two Adults Rule:** It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adults* (see exceptions) will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session.
 - i. When there is only one adult present in the classroom, the program must take place while other adults are present on the premises AND another church

- volunteer or staff member shall be allowed to periodically check in on the class. Doors or windows to the classroom must remain open and there must be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.
- ii. Short-term volunteers are never to be the sole caregiver to children. A fully screened and trained long-term volunteer will always be present with a short-term volunteer.
- B. **Ratios:** The following ratios of children to adults should be maintained at all church activities, while also maintaining the **Two Adults Rule**.
- i. Nursery: 4:1
 - ii. Elementary and Youth: 10:1
- C. **Open Classrooms:** Children should never be in an enclosed space with adults where there are no windows to see in. There will never be a time that parents and guardians are not allowed to visit or sit in on a children or youth program, including in the nursery.
- D. **Discipline:** It is the policy of LPC *not* to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Staff or volunteers should consult with the pastor or an elder if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.
- E. **Bathrooms:** Parents should encourage their children to use the restroom before programming begins. Adults should never be alone with a child in a restroom. Adults may escort children to the bathroom but should not assist a child in using the restroom without permission from parents. The door to the hallway should be open while the adult volunteer stands outside the stall. Children in the nursery who need assistance going to the bathroom can be assisted with written consent from their parents on their child's nursery intake form.
- F. **Social Media:** Lakewood Presbyterian Church will not post photos of children or youth without the verbal permission of a parent/guardian. In regards to the Sunday Service which is live-streamed a notice will be in the bulletin to inform parents/ guardians that their children may appear on the livestream.
- G. **Youth helpers:** Teenage members of the congregation may be volunteers in the children's program or nursery starting at age 15. They will be held to the same accountability standards as adult helpers, and will need to go through volunteer training. Background checks are not needed for teenagers. Teenage volunteers or nursery staff are never to be the sole caregiver to children. An adult will always be present with a youth helper.
- H. **Nursery:**
- i. Only approved staff and screened volunteers shall be responsible for children in the nursery during programming. Parents of nursery children may be in the nursery with the permission of the Nursery Attendant.
 - ii. If needed, diaper changes will be done by Nursery staff or volunteers in full view of the rest of the nursery.
- I. **Youth:** All one-on-one conversation, mentoring, tutoring and instruction must take place in a public setting where two or more persons are within view. Adults may not be alone with youth or in any location that is not in full public view—including the home of the adult, youth or child; secluded office or classroom locations; bathrooms or workrooms; secluded parks, trails or recreation areas; and any other areas not in public view. Staff or regular

volunteers must have permission from parents to drive children or youth for church programming purposes.

- J. **Medical Release:** Children must always have a signed permission slip/medical release form in order to participate in all activities outside the building. A permission slip/medical release form may grant permission for the entire year.

K. **Exceptions**

- i. In the case when the two leaders are related, the program must take place within the building while other adults are present AND another church volunteer shall be allowed to periodically check in on the class.

Reporting Abuse

It is our job as people who have committed to nurturing youth to do our best to protect them from abuse and neglect. If a situation were to arise where a child or youth confided in you that they were experiencing abuse or if you were to suspect abuse/neglect **it is the policy of Lakewood Presbyterian Church that all staff and volunteers act as if they are mandated reporters.**

If you observe a volunteer or staff not adhering to the codes of conduct as listed in this document, but their actions do not meet the definitions of abuse listed below, notify the Pastor or Personnel Chair so we can review the codes of conduct with them and take further action if necessary.

Definitions of Abuse

Children: make a report when you have reasonable cause to believe that physical abuse, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, negligent treatment or maltreatment, or abandonment occurred to a child.

Vulnerable Adults: make a report when you have reasonable cause to believe that abuse, abandonment, neglect, or financial exploitation occurred to a vulnerable adult.

1. **"Reasonable cause to believe"** means it is probable that an incident of abuse, abandonment, neglect, or financial exploitation happened. Probable means that, based on evidence or information readily obtained from various sources, it is likely the incident occurred.
2. **"Reason to suspect"** means it is possible that an incident of sexual or physical assault occurred. Possible means that, based on information readily obtained from various sources, the incident could have happened.

When to report abuse:

1. If a staff member or volunteer has reasonable cause to believe that a child or vulnerable adult is undergoing abuse, they must immediately report it to the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families. Staff members are required to notify their supervisor.
 - a. The Pierce County reporting line is: 1-888-713-6115. You can also call the Washington State 24 Child Abuse Hotline: 1-866-363-4276
 - b. More information can be found at: <https://dcyf.wa.gov/safety/report-abuse>
2. If you need assistance reporting abuse, you may contact the pastor of Lakewood Presbyterian Church or an elder and they will assist you.
3. If a volunteer files a report based on information that they have obtained while volunteering at Lakewood Presbyterian Church, they are required to notify the pastor or member of Session within 24 hours of reporting.

How Lakewood Presbyterian Church will respond:

1. If suspected abuse is reported Lakewood Presbyterian Church will assist the individual who observed the suspected abuse in filing a report to the proper authorities within 24 hours of when the suspected abuse is reported.

I _____ have read the Lakewood Presbyterian Church Safe Conduct Policy and promise to adhere to the policies.

_____ *Signature* _____ *Date*

Reporting Procedures – Additional Information for Session & Staff

Washington State law requires the mandatory reporting of all suspected child abuse or neglect within 24 hours. In our desire to protect and serve children and youth, LPC fully supports and cooperates with this mandatory reporting requirement. LPC and its staff and volunteers are not required to **investigate** or **prove** abuse; however, they are required to report all **suspicions** of abuse.

Washington statute defines child abuse or neglect:

'Abuse or neglect' means sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or injury of a child by any person under circumstances which cause harm to the child's health, welfare, or safety... or the negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for or providing care to the child. (RCW 26.44.020).

Negligence is further defined as:

'Negligent treatment or maltreatment' means an act or a failure to act, or the cumulative effects of a pattern of conduct, behavior, or inaction, that evidences a serious disregard of consequences of such magnitude as to constitute a clear and present danger to a child's health, welfare, or safety, including but not limited to conduct prohibited under RCW 9A.42.100. When considering whether a clear and present danger exists, evidence of a parent's substance abuse as a contributing factor to negligent treatment or maltreatment shall be given great weight. The fact that siblings share a bedroom is not, in and of itself, negligent treatment or maltreatment. Poverty, homelessness, or exposure to domestic violence as defined in RCW 26.50.010 that is perpetrated against someone other than the child does not constitute negligent treatment or maltreatment in and of itself. (RCW 26.44.020).

If volunteers or employees see indications of suspected abuse or a child shares such information with them, they are required to report to their supervisor or staff contact immediately. Indicators may include the following:

- Unusual or frequent bruises or cuts
- Welts
- Fractures
- Burns
- Internal injuries
- Injuries to genital or anal areas
- Injuries that are not consistent with the child's explanation
- Injuries inconsistent with the child's age and developmental phase
- Presence of multiple injuries in various stages of healing
- Age inappropriate sexually explicit conversations, drawings and/or descriptions
- Sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge or interest in sexual activity
- Comments from the child indicating physical or sexual harm

For the Reporter:

- Even suspected abuse must be reported to the state. This information should be considered sensitive and extremely confidential. Do not discuss your observations with other teachers, the child or the parents. Any person who in good faith makes a report or gives testimony in regard to possible child abuse or neglect is immune from civil or criminal liability.
- In addition to reporting to the state, the volunteer or staff member should also report their suspicions to the pastor. If the volunteer or staff member is uncomfortable reporting suspicions to the pastor, they may also report to an elder.

- If a child shares information with a volunteer or staff member, they should be aware that they may not promise confidentiality due to the mandatory reporting requirements, although they should use discretion when a child or youth reports an incident of abuse.

For the Elder/Staff:

- When an elder/ staff member makes a report to the state or is made aware that a report has been made by a volunteer based on information received at Lakewood Presbyterian Church, this person should:
 - i. Write a written description of what was observed or reported and submit a copy to the Session **within 24 hours** of receiving the initial facts. All information is confidential and should not be shared with anyone outside of Session until Session has met. If a member of Session is involved in the report in any way, they shall be temporarily excused from Session deliberations and decisions until allegations are substantiated or cleared.
 - 1. If the senior clergy is involved in any way in the abuse, the Presbytery should be immediately notified to provide a temporary moderator for the Session until allegations are substantiated or cleared.
 - ii. After receiving the written report, Session will:
 - 1. Immediately review together the information on the Report Form (they will not investigate or question those involved).
 - 2. Staff and volunteers should not attempt to investigate the situation or interview the possible victim—in-depth questioning of suspected victims of child abuse can hinder the legal process and may be considered interference with the child’s testimony.
 - 3. Immediately contact the Insurance Carrier as necessary.
 - 4. If the abuse happened by a church staff member or volunteer while on church property or during church programming, the Session should immediately obtain legal counsel.
 - 5. Adequate care should be shown for the well-being of alleged victims.
 - 6. Session should appoint a qualified spokesperson and develop a prepared public statement that can be used to communicate to the congregation and, if necessary, the media. Be careful to safeguard the privacy of those involved. Try to remain neutral, avoid spelling out details of the accusation in public. Make no statements about the incident to anyone without prior consultation with the Church’s legal representative.
 - 7. Treat the accused with dignity and support. If the accused is a volunteer, that person should be relieved of their duties until the investigation is complete. If the person is a paid employee, arrangements should be made to relieve the person of their duties until the investigation is complete. Decisions to maintain or suspend his or her income until the allegation is substantiated or dismissed will be determined in the sole discretion of the church leadership.
 - 8. Law enforcement agencies must present identification before interviewing anyone involved with the incident. If possible, a neutral party and church representative should be present during questioning. No church representative should speak with law enforcement agencies without first consulting with the church’s legal representative

ANTI-RACISM POLICY

Racism and all forms of discrimination and marginalization are sins against humanity and God, inconsistent with our Christian and corporate values and unacceptable within the church and this congregation.

Racism is contrary to the Gospel mandate to love God and our neighbor as ourselves. Scriptures teach us that though we are individually unique, we are collectively, as children of God, one in God's eyes, equally beloved by God. As disciples of Jesus Christ, our congregation will engage in the transformative work to build the beloved community of Christ where there is neither "Jew nor Greek...no longer slave or free...no longer male or female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28.

We lament that racism is often a barrier to forming the kind of Beloved Community that Christ calls us too. Racism is more than individual acts of bigotry or prejudice. Racism is any system, institution, or cultural practice or tradition, which protects or prefers the lives, property, and status of one race over another. It is any system, institution, or cultural practice or tradition which gives power to one race over another.

The leadership of Lakewood Presbyterian Church, including the pastor, elders, deacons, and staff, are committed to modeling anti-racist behavior and upholding the principles of this policy. As a congregation, we will seek to gain a deeper awareness of the sin of racism and its corrosive effects and discern how we may become agents of racial justice and reconciliation.

We acknowledge that this work will not be easy. But, as our church wide antiracism policy affirms: *"Because of our biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, the PC(USA) must stand against, speak against, and work against racism. Antiracist effort is not optional for Christians. It is an essential aspect of Christian discipleship, without which we fail to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ."*¹

COMMITMENTS

As we strive to be an antiracist congregation, we commit to:

1. Repenting of the role we collectively and individually have played and continue to play in creating and maintaining white supremacy and systemic racism;
2. providing antiracism and cultural humility training for pastors, officers, employees, and members as directed by the church wide antiracism policy;
3. using financial resources to support projects and organizations to disrupt and dismantle racism and oppression in the church, our community, and the world; and
4. seeking to act as faithful disciples of Christ in ministering and caring for the marginalized in our congregation, our community, our world, and as a witness of God's love for all creation.

¹ ["Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community"](#) PC(USA), 2016.

FINANCE POLICIES

1) Role of Treasurer

- a) The Treasurer shall keep accurate records of all financial transactions and report to the Session monthly and the congregation at least once yearly (G-3.0113).
- b) A summary of financial activities shall be available for review by the congregation quarterly.
- c) An annual financial report, including a comparison of actual expenditures to the approved budget, shall be presented at the church's annual meeting.
- d) Manage employee benefits and payroll
- e) Lead Finance Committee

2) Role of Financial Secretary

- a) Collects weekly monetary amounts (offertory, building use, fundraising, etc) and deposits funds into the church's bank account
- b) Keeps accurate records of pledges and donations from members
- c) Gives a weekly Financial Statement Report to Treasurer for any income to the church
- d) All offerings shall be counted and recorded by at least two duly appointed persons, or by one fidelity bonded person (G-3.005)

3) Role of Finance Committee

- a) The church shall establish a Finance Committee, consisting of the Treasurer, Pastor, and at least one additional member from the congregation.
- b) The Finance Committee is responsible for overseeing all financial activities, preparing budgets, ensuring compliance with this policy and all other responsibilities designated by Session.
- c) Determine the use of undesignated funds and other financial responsibilities as they arise.
- d) The committee will designate spending authorities on an annual basis after leadership responsibilities are determined for the implementation at the time of leadership change (typically December to January)
- e) The committee will review check signers in the first quarter of the calendar year and authorize changes as needed.

4) Fiscal Year, Church Budget Process

- a) Fiscal Year is January 1 to December 31
- b) A preliminary budget will be created by the Finance Committee using the Stewardship Committee's pledge report as a guideline.
 - i) Finance Committee will review the budget quarterly
 - ii) Early November - pledges will be determined by members
 - iii) Early November - church leaders and staff will make budget requests to the Finance Committee.
 - iv) Finance Committee will create a budget and present it to session for approval by no later than December
 - v) The congregation will approve the budget at the Annual Meeting in early February

5) Procedure for Stewardship and Pledging

- a) Stewardship Season is September to November

- i) Stewardship Committee meets in September to create plan and create a letter in conjunction with the pastor
 - ii) Deliver (pass out, mail, email, etc) letter to members with pledge form
 - iii) Pledges are due by end of October/early November
 - b) Goal is for the congregation to make pledges to the church for the following year
 - i) Pledges can be made monthly, yearly, or a one time giving
 - ii) Pledges are given to the financial secretary to create a report for Finance Committee
- 6) Undesignated/Designated Funds Giving Procedure
 - a) Designated gifts will be used exclusively for their stated purpose. If the purpose is no longer valid, the donor shall be consulted for an alternative use or permission to reallocate the funds.
 - b) Undesignated Gifts/donations from the congregation will be reviewed by the Finance Committee in order to recommend designation of the funds
 - c) All donations/gifts are deemed final unless otherwise agreed by Session
 - d) No announcement of any donation will be made without permission from the donor but it will be on church record that they donated to a designated purpose.
- 7) Reimbursements
 - a) Requests for reimbursement should be made within 30 days of the expense.
 - b) Original receipts and an Expense Reimbursement Form are needed for request of reimbursement and will be retained by the church to substantiate the expense.
 - c) Receipts shall include: date, amount, description of product/service, name and address of company/vendor.
 - d) All mileage expenses will be reimbursed at the IRS rate. A Mileage Reimbursement Form must be filled out and any receipts to accompany travel expenses must be included.
Note: Miles to commute to work will not be reimbursed.
 - e) Per IRS regulations, requests for reimbursement for meals must also include:
 - i) List of attendees (self if alone)
 - ii) The business purpose of the meal
 - f) Reimbursements will be issued within two weeks of the request.
- 8) Authorization, Checks, and Payments
 - a) All spending needs prior authorization by the spending authority.
 - b) Emergency expenses may be authorized by the Pastor, the Treasurer, and one Finance Committee Member.
 - c) Anticipated or expected budget overages require prior session approval.
 - d) All checks must be signed by either of the three authorized individuals. Authorized signers shall not include immediate family members (the treasurer will not be authorized to sign checks made payable to themselves). Payments should include an invoice or receipt as supporting documentation.
- 9) Major Spending
 - a) All expenditures over \$2,500 require prior approval from Session.
 - b) Two estimates/bids are required for all projects over \$1000. If a second bid cannot be obtained despite repeated requests, committees may vote to approve a contract to the single bidder.
- 10) White Locked Box in the Narthex and Safe
 - a) Codes will be maintained by the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary.

- b) These will be checked a minimum of twice a month per Cash Handling Policy

Credit Card Policy

Credit Card Policy and Agreement between Lakewood Presbyterian Church and Its Leaders

Objective: To allow certain leaders of Lakewood Presbyterian Church (LPC) access to efficient and alternative means of payment for approved expenses in an efficient and transparent way.

Policies:

1. LPC credit cards are issued with the approval of the Finance Committee. The Treasurer has the authority and discretion to revoke use of credit cards.
2. Credit cards will only be used for expenses relating to LPC programs over which an employee/volunteer leader has been given spending authority. Purchases made on LPC accounts where the cardholder is not the primary spending authority will be verified by the primary spending authority.
3. The LPC credit card cannot be used to obtain cash advances, bank checks, traveler's checks, or electronic cash transfers.
4. Misuses of the card will result in cancellation of the card, withdrawal of LPC credit card privileges and disciplinary action, up to and possibly including termination of employment. Personal purchases of any type are not allowed. If any employee uses an LPC credit card for personal purchases in violation of this policy, the cost of said purchase(s) may be recovered in full from the employee's next paycheck. Volunteer leaders who use an LPC credit card for personal purchases in violation of this policy will have their card frozen until the cost of the purchase has been returned to the church.
5. A detailed reconciliation report and copies of all receipts must be completed within 7 business days of receiving the statement. Approvals of the reconciliation form must be completed by the end of the 7 business days.
6. All credit card purchases are accountable to the same policies outlined in the Finance Policies.
7. The Treasurer must submit their reconciliation form and receipts to the Clerk of Session for approval. The Pastor and all other users must submit their reconciliation form and receipts to the Treasurer for approval.
8. Continued or repeated non-conformance to this policy will result in cancellation of the card and such other actions as appropriate.
9. Lost or stolen cards must be reported immediately to the Treasurer and the card issuer.
10. Any credit card rewards accrued are the property of Lakewood Presbyterian Church and will be used at the discretion of the Finance Committee.
11. The Treasurer shall be responsible for making payments on time to pay off the statement monthly.

Credit Card Authorization Agreement

I, _____, hereby make application for a credit card for Lakewood Presbyterian Church. I understand that improper use of this card may result in disciplinary action as well as personal liability for any improper purchases. As a cardholder, I agree to comply with the terms and conditions of this agreement, and follow the attached LPC Credit Card Policies and Procedures agreement. I acknowledge receipt of said Agreement and Policies and Procedures and confirm that I have read and understand the terms and conditions. I will strive to obtain the best value for LPC when purchasing merchandise and/or services with this card.

I understand and agree that:

- **I bear ultimate responsibility for the card.**
- I will not use the LPC credit card to withdraw cash.
- I will not use the LPC credit card for personal expenses and will use it only for official business on behalf of LPC and the programs over which I have spending authority.
- If I have any questions as to whether a purchase is allowed, I will clarify with the account's spending authority prior to making the purchase.
- If I misuse the card (i.e., use it otherwise than in accordance with the instructions given to me in this agreement or related policies) or otherwise fail to reconcile my expenditures within the prescribed procedures and timeframe, I authorize LPC to recover the funds through payroll deductions (paid staff) or repay the expense(s) (volunteers) for any amounts incorrectly claimed or for reconciliations that are one month in arrears.
- If the LPC credit card is lost or stolen, I will report it immediately. If I resign from LPC, I will return the card with a final reconciliation of all expenditures prior to departure.

Signature _____ Date _____
(Leader)

Signature _____ Date _____
(Treasurer)

Money Handling Policies

1) Counting Contributions

- a) Contributions should remain in the safe at church until it is taken to the bank to be deposited. Church funds should not be taken to anyone's home.
- b) Sunday Offering
 - i) There should be two unrelated cash counters every Sunday
 - (1) Authorized counters are current leadership (elders and deacons), other than the Treasurer and the Financial Secretary, to assure that no less than two are available on all occasions at which funds are to be counted.
 - (2) If current leadership isn't available, then previous leadership shall be authorized.
 - (3) If there are not two current or previous leaders available, the leader will choose one member to count as a one time event
 - ii) The counting team on any given occasion shall perform double counts on all receipts immediately following worship.
 - (1) Counters will complete one Money Count Sheet and each counter will sign to verify accuracy. A copy of the Money Count Sheet shall be kept for a minimum of three years in the church office for reference if needed.
 - (2) Assure that the amount within the envelope matches the amount written on it and write cash on the envelope if cash is in it.. A counter may fill in the amount but only when envelopes have a name on it. This should be verified and initiated by both counters. Envelopes containing cash, but with no name should be recorded as loose plate with no charitable credit issued.
 - (3) Envelopes containing cash not matching the amount written on the envelope, will be followed up by the counters who will seek out the individual in the building for confirmation. If the individual is not in the building, both counters will record and initial the actual amount received on the envelope. The Financial Secretary will later notify the individual of the discrepancy.
 - (4) Envelopes containing a check not matching the amount written on the envelope, will be changed to the amount on the check and initialed by both counters
 - (5) Loose checks in the offering plate will be recorded on the Loose Checks Form.
 - (6) The counting team will put the Money Count Form, Loose Check Form, all envelopes with information written on them, checks, and cash into an envelope and dropped into the safe.

c) Mail Services

- i) The person checking the locked mailbox removes all mail from the mailbox and then pulls all checks.
- ii) The person checking the locked mailbox will place these mailed checks in the safe or if checked before worship will be dropped in the offering plate

- iii) If there are loose checks in the safe, the Financial Secretary will count the checks on the Report of Receipts and then add it to the deposit with all other contributions for that deposit time period.
- d) Hand Deliver
 - i) When donations are hand delivered to a staff person or volunteer, they should be immediately put into the white locked box located in the narthex. If it is cash, it shall be put in an envelope indicating purpose and amount.
 - ii) See Mail Service steps for counting and recording.
- e) Vanco Online
 - i) At the beginning of the month, the Vanco donations get deposited into LPC's checking account and the Treasurer will use the reports from Vanco to record the online donations and expenses
 - ii) The Financial Secretary will get a report quarterly from the Treasurer and record the contributions to each family's contribution record
- f) Deposits
 - i) A minimum of twice a month, the Financial Secretary comes into the church office to collect all the monies to be deposited into LPC's checking account.
 - ii) When preparing the deposit the Financial Secretary will check the locked white box in the narthex and the safe to retrieve any monies and record anything that hasn't been processed on the Record of Receipt.
 - iii) The Financial Secretary takes the Report of Receipts, along with the checks and cash entered, compares the two and verifies and records any memos on the envelope and/or checks that state if the donation is to be used in a specific manner.
- 2) Financial Secretary
 - a) After the contributions have been properly counted, the Financial Secretary is responsible for recording the contributions to each family's contribution record and then depositing the funds in the bank in a timely fashion as established by the Finance Committee.
 - b) Enters offering amounts into the Record of Receipts
 - c) Complete a deposit slip based on the Record of Receipt, entering cash amount and will total checks
 - d) Copy of deposit slip or receipt from the bank as well as the Money Count Sheet will be kept in the church office in a secured location in a timely manner
 - e) Distribute the Record of Receipts to the Treasurer on a weekly basis
 - f) Anything received documenting designated giving will be filed with the confidential pledged documents held by the Financial Secretary
 - g) The Loose Check Form goes to the Financial Secretary to be filed with confidential pledge records

Adopted: 05.19.26

Amended: 07.14.26

BUILDING USE

Mission Partnerships Policy

Lakewood Presbyterian Church believes we are God's people called to be doing God's work right here where we are planted. We are a congregation that joyfully gathers together to worship and experience God's presence in an open and affirming love for one another, in all our diversity, including our LGBTQ brothers and sisters. We value our historical role of offering a suburban, tolerant, accepting and progressive space in the wide continuum of the Presbyterian denomination. We strive to be a thinking and transformed community, guided by the spirit of radical love and acceptance of Christ.

The God who loves all of creation asks us to be engaged in the repair and missional needs of our world. We perceive the call to build beloved community through acts of earth care, racial justice, and safe refuge for people harmed by conflict, violence, oppression or loss of opportunity to thrive. We know that to leave a legacy for the future, we especially must respond to the crisis of our urgent environmental and climate challenges. And we want to nurture and teach our children and youth, contributing to their development and wellbeing so that they and future generations may flourish.

We are actively exploring possible mission projects and partnerships to help further this work. Our congregation, finances, building and grounds are amazing resources, and we seek to integrate them with good partners who share in our values and our sense of mission and purpose. As we meet with individuals and organizations to consider working agreements, we will ask for open, respectful and substantive dialogue about what is important to each party. We do not wish to simply be in a landlord-tenant role, but expect and encourage an active and reciprocal partnership. Our hope will always be for a mutual transformation that contributes to the betterment of our world and all parties involved.

BENEVOLENCE POLICY

Lakewood Presbytery Church (hereinafter referred to as the 'Church') shall maintain a Discretionary Benevolence Fund (hereinafter referred to as the 'Fund') for use in filling urgent financial needs of congregation members and community members affiliated with the congregation. Rooted in Jesus' call to "feed my sheep", this fund at Lakewood PC seeks ways to support and connect people with resources needed for daily life. We work to meet these needs through the following ways:

- 1) Providing funds for urgent needs such as utilities and gas assistance.
- 2) Connecting people to community resource ministries such as: Food Pantries, LASA, and others.
- 3) Offering spiritual support and a safe community: offering prayer and welcome to worship services

The Benevolence Fund, maintained as a line item in the Deacons fund, shall be funded only through special offerings collected and designated for the Benevolence Fund, and will not be funded by the general Church budget. Individual contributions to the Fund may be accepted by the Church at any time, but disbursement of the Fund is subject to the discretion of the Board of Deacons.

The Fund will be overseen and funded by the Deacons and shall be administered in coordination with the Pastor, with payments made by the Church Treasurer. No payment shall be made directly to individuals. For example, when a request is made for housing assistance, checks will be written directly to utility or rental companies.

Beneficiaries of the Fund are not made public, but the Deacons will keep digital records including the name of the recipient, date, amount disbursed, and type of expenditure made. Individuals may receive up to a maximum amount of \$350 from the Benevolence Fund per calendar year.

As with all other congregational monies, the Fund is subject to the Church's annual audit or review of the congregation's funds.

1) Application Process for Benevolence Funds:

- a. The individual seeking assistance will fill out a Benevolence Request Form and give it to a Deacon or the Pastor.
- b. The completed form is reviewed by the Deacons and put to a vote, requiring a simple majority.
- c. The individual seeking assistance will be notified within three business days of whether their request has been approved or denied.
- d. The pastor will also look for other ways to bridge needs through connecting to other community resources and spiritual support.