

## *What to do?*

If you feel you have been subjected to sexual exploitation ...

- Say no to the perpetrator. Be direct and firm. Tell the person( s ), without apology, that you want this behavior to stop.
- Keep records of what happened and when. Document dates, times, places, witnesses, and the nature of the exploitation. Save letters, cards, or notes.
- Contact a member of the First Contact Team who will carefully listen and expediently act on your report. The First Contact Team members, whose names, addresses and phone numbers are listed on the back panel of this brochure, are accessible to hear reports of church-related sexual exploitation. They will reflect the Church 's care and concern for victims, and facilitate an appropriate response to stop the exploitation. Specific allegations against a named perpetrator will be relayed to the Bishop 's office. The members of this team will act as representatives of the Bishop of the North Great Lakes Synod of the ELCA.

## *Please remember...*

\*Do not blame yourself.

\*Do not delay.

( Exploitation may continue if you delay. )

\*Do not keep it to yourself.

( Unless you let someone know that you are being exploited, the exploitation may continue, and others may be victimized. You may help yourself and others by speaking out. )

**DON'T FORGET ... Sexual exploitation is a violation of Church policy and in many cases, violates the law.**

## *Who can help?*

If you believe that you are a victim of sexual exploitation or harassment, please contact the Synod Office or a member of the Northern Great Lakes Synod First Call for Help Team.

### **THE MEMBERS OF THE TEAM ARE:**

#### **Mary Lou Blomquist**

W9001 Frei Drive  
Iron Mountain, MI 49801  
906/774-8285

#### **Pam Durbin**

6758 Oak Bluff 23.7 Drive  
Gladstone, MI 49837  
906/428-4429

#### **Laurel Kniskern**

418 East Ohio Street  
Marquette, MI 49855  
906/226-6675

#### **Pastor Kari Vadis**

Trinity Lutheran Church  
235 N. Stevens Street  
Rhineland, WI 54501  
715/362-4258

#### **Pastor Margie West (UMC)**

440 E Prospect  
Marquette, MI 49855  
906/226-3314

### **OR CONTACT:**

The Bishop  
Northern Great Lakes Synod, ELCA  
1029 N. Third Street, Suite A  
Marquette, MI 49855  
906/228-2300

# *Keeping the Church A Safe and Sacred Place for All!*

Sexual Misconduct Prevention

First Contact Team

FOR THOSE  
WHO HAVE BEEN  
SEXUALLY EXPLOITED  
BY CLERGY

RESPONDING TO SEXUAL  
MISCONDUCT IN THE CHURCH



Northern Great Lakes Synod

## *What does sexual misconduct within the church include?*

- Sexual Advances, which may or may not include sexual intercourse.
- Requests for sexual favors.
- Verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature, such as:
  - sexual conduct or communication that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment;
  - requiring submission to sexual conduct or communication in order to obtain the services of the church, or to be employed there;
  - attempts to punish rejection of, or to read submission to, sexual conduct by one seeking services or employment within the church;
  - sexual conduct or communication that interferes with employment or the services received from the church, or those affiliated with the church.

Sexual exploitation most often occurs in situations where one person abuses the power he or she has over another person, thereby violating the boundaries and trust implicit in that relationship. Sexual misconduct, however, can also occur between equals.

## *Some examples*

- Sexual exploitation can result when those in positions of authority use that authority to create an intimidating or hostile environment.
- Verbal exploitation may include sexual innuendo, humor and jokes about sex or gender-specific traits, as well as implied or blatant verbal threats.
- Physical exploitation may include contact ( patting, pinching, brushing against the body ), blocking movements, attempted or actual fondling or kissing, or any other form of sexualized behavior. It does not necessarily involve sexual intercourse or physical assault.
- Nonverbal exploitation may include suggestive or insulting whistling, gestures, or leering.

## *The Church's concern...*

Every level of the Church and every agency and parish affiliated with the Church must be maintained free of sexual exploitation of any kind. Sexual exploitation of or by any of the following is unacceptable:

- Bishops of the Church
- Supervisors and employees of synodical and agency offices
- Faculty, staff and students at Church-affiliated colleges and seminaries.
- Pastors, rostered persons, and other employees of local congregation.
- Members of local congregations.

## *Mutual consent*

The belief that there was mutual consent does not exonerate the accused rostered individual. Sexual misconduct occurs when those

in positions of authority violate the *healthy emotional and relational boundaries* that are vital in establishing trust. In such cases, from the perspective of this synod, there is no mutual consent.

## *Sexual misconduct is against the policies of the ELCA*

Sexual exploitation is against the policies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The Northern Great Lakes Synod works in cooperation with member congregations to prevent, detect, and remedy the effects of sexual exploitation.

Sexual exploitation is intolerable regardless of whether the perpetrator and victim are of the same or opposite sex, and regardless of whether the perpetrator is male or female.

The Northern Great Lakes Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is strongly committed to working with the Church agencies and local parishes to ensure that the Church is at every level free from any form of sexual harassment or exploitation. All forms of sexual misbehavior are unacceptable within the Church and subject to appropriate mediation and/or disciplinary action. Such a policy complements the remedies provided in the civil and criminal laws for sexual exploitation and harassment.

The Church should be a safe place where people can worship, learn, work, and be helped in a manner that is free from sexual exploitation. When it is not, the integrity of the Gospel is impaired—particularly among those who are victimized.