

Gates Presbyterian Church

Manual of Operations



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Gates Presbyterian Church

Mission Statement

*As a joyful community
we are empowered by the Holy Spirit,
we worship God,
follow Jesus,
and love our neighbors.*

Adopted by Session 2014

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Gates Presbyterian Church

“MORE LIGHT” Church Status



The “More Light” movement dates back to 1978 when the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly voted that gays and lesbians should be welcomed into membership but not ordained as deacons, elders and pastors. Congregations dissatisfied with excluding an entire class of people from leadership began adopting resolutions that proclaimed gay and lesbian people should be included in Church leadership; these congregations became known as “More Light” churches.

Since then, the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) has been amended and all believers are welcomed into membership and leadership of a Presbyterian church.

In 2018, the Session of Gates Presbyterian Church, after prayer and discernment, approved the adoption by our church of the “More Light” designation to reflect our church’s desire to welcome all God’s children into the life of our church.

Adopted by Session 2018

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Matthew 25 Church



Matthew 25:44-46

“Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?” Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’”

In 2021, Gates Presbyterian became a Matthew 25 church within the Presbyterian Church USA. Matthew 25:31–46 calls all of us to actively engage in the world around us, so our faith comes alive and we wake up to new possibilities. Our focus is on:

- Building congregational vitality by challenging people to deepen their faith and get actively and joyfully engaged with their community and the world.

- Dismantling structural racism by advocating and acting to break down the systems, practices and thinking that underlie discrimination, bias, prejudice and oppression of people of color.
- Eradicating systemic poverty by working to change laws, policies, plans and structures in our society that perpetuate economic exploitation of people who are poor.

Adopted by Session: May 2021

Gates Presbyterian Church

Bylaws & Governance

1. Mission of the Church

As a joyful community empowered by the Holy Spirit, we worship God, follow Jesus and love our neighbors.

2. Relation to the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Gates Presbyterian Church (the "Church") is a member church of the Presbytery of the Genesee Valley in the Synod of the Northeast of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

3. Governance of the Church

The Church will be governed in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), Part II which is the Book of Order. Consistent with that Constitution, these bylaws shall provide guidance for the Church. The most recently revised version of Robert's Rules of Order shall be used for parliamentary guidance in all council meetings of the church. The Policies and Procedures Manual of the Session of Gates Presbyterian Church shall provide specific guidelines concerning the conduct of the worship activities, programs and events of the Church.

4. Meetings of the Congregation

Annual Meeting. There shall be an annual meeting of the congregation in the Church building on a Sunday in December or such other date to be designated by the Session. The agenda for the annual meeting shall include, but not be limited to, the following matters: (1) election of ruling elders, deacons and trustees to serve in the upcoming year, (2) review of the current year budget (information only).

Regular Meeting. There shall be a regular meeting of the congregation in the Church building on a Sunday in January or such other date to be designated by the Session. The agenda for the regular meeting shall include, but not be limited to the following matters: (1) consideration and approval of changes in the terms of call for the pastor, (2) presentation of the annual reports of the teams, committees and organizations of the Church (information only), (3) review of the budget for the current year (information only), (4) election of members to the Church Nominating Committee for the current year.

Special Meetings. Special meetings of the congregation may be called by the Session, by the Presbytery or by the Session when requested in writing by one-fourth (1/4) of the active members listed on the membership rolls of the Church. Such call shall state clearly the purpose of such special meeting, and business shall be restricted to that which is specified in the call.

All meetings of the congregation shall be opened and closed with a prayer.

5. Notice of Meetings of the Congregation

Adequate public notice of any meeting of the congregation shall be given verbally at worship services on at least two (2) successive Sundays prior to the meeting. The Sunday of the meeting date may be considered one of the two Sundays for giving notices. When the meeting is called for the purpose of electing a pastor, the notice shall be given verbally at worship services on two (2) consecutive Sundays at least ten (10)

days in advance of the meeting. In addition to verbal form, notices may be given in print or electronically.

6. Moderator of Meetings of the Congregation

The installed pastor shall moderate the congregation meetings. If it is impractical for the pastor to preside, he or she shall invite another teaching elder who is a member of the Presbytery, or a person authorized by the Presbytery to serve as moderator. If there is no installed pastor, or the installed pastor is unable to moderate and/or to name another moderator, the Presbytery shall make provision for a moderator.

7. Secretary of Meetings of the Congregation

The clerk of Session shall serve as secretary of the meetings. If the clerk is not present or is unable to serve, the congregation shall elect a temporary clerk for that meeting.

8. Minutes of Meetings of the Congregation

The minutes of a meeting shall be attested by the clerk of the meeting. Once the minutes of a meeting are approved by either the congregation or the Session, they shall be filed in the minute book of the Session. Copies of the minutes may also be posted within the Church and/or on the internet web page of the Church.

9. Quorum and Voting at a Meeting of Congregation

A quorum of a meeting of the congregation shall be the moderator, the clerk and at least 10% of the number of members of the Church listed in the most recent Annual Statistical Report on file with the General Assembly. The clerk shall determine that a quorum is present. Only active members listed on the membership rolls of the Church may vote.

Voting by proxy is not allowed. The vote of a majority of members present and voting at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the congregation. Voting on questions dealing with Church property and/or on such other matters that are determined to be strictly corporate business in nature shall be determined by civil law.

10. Nominating Committee

The congregation shall elect members of a nominating committee to select candidates to serve as elders, deacons and trustees of the Church. Session shall present a slate of nominating committee candidates to the congregation but the floor shall be open for nominations at the congregation meeting at which such slate of candidates is presented.

(a) *Members.* The Nominating Committee shall consist of no fewer than (5) members who are representative of the active members of the Church. Membership shall include at least the following: one (1) active ruling elder designated by Session whom shall be currently on the Session; one (1) active deacon designated by the Board of Deacons; one (1) active trustee designated by the Board of Trustees; two (2) members from the congregation who are elected by the congregation. The pastor shall be an ex officio member of the Committee without a vote. The active ruling elder serving on the Committee shall be moderator of the Committee.

(b) *Term.* Members of the Committee shall be elected annually for a one (1) year term. No member shall serve more than three (3) years consecutively.

(c) *Duties.* The Committee shall bring to the congregation names of candidates to serve as elders, deacons and trustees of the congregation only for the number of vacancies to be filled.

11. Ministries/ Officers of the Church

The officers of the Church are the teaching elders (ministers of the Word and Sacrament), ruling elders and deacons, each of which is elected by the congregation.

11.1 Ruling Elders

Session. The affairs of the Church shall be governed, managed, supervised and controlled by a council known as the Session of the Church. The Session shall consist of the pastor, and nine (9) ordained ruling elders in active service. A youth elder may serve as an additional elder upon the election by the congregation. The pastor shall be the moderator of the Session.

- (a) ***Election of Ruling Elders.*** The congregation shall elect nine (9) ruling elders. When deemed appropriate by the congregation, one (1) ruling youth elder may also be elected. The nine (9) ruling elders shall be divided into two classes, one of four (4) and one of five (5). Each class shall be elected to serve for a two (2) year term. The youth elder, if any, shall be elected to serve for a one (1) year term. No elder shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six (6) years. An elder having served a total of six (6) years shall be ineligible for reelection to the Session for a period of at least one (1) year.
- (b) ***Annual Meeting of Session.*** The Session, at its first meeting following the installation of officers, shall: (i) elect an elder to serve as clerk of Session, (ii) appoint elders to serve as Core Elders and as Coordinating Elders, (iii) elect a Church Treasurer, (iv) appoint a Financial Secretary, (v) appoint a Memorial Fund Secretary/Treasurer, and (vi) appoint one voting Commissioner to the Presbytery for the ensuing year. The Treasurer is not required to be an elder of the Church. The clerk and the Presbytery Commissioner each must be an elder but he/she does not need to be serving on the Session at the time of his/her election.
- (c) ***Meetings of Session.*** The date for the regular meetings of Session shall be determined from time to time upon the majority vote of the ruling elders then serving on Session. Special meetings of the Session may be called in accordance with the Book of Order.
- (d) ***Quorum and Voting.*** A quorum for a Session meeting shall be the moderator and at least one-third (1/3) of the elders. The vote of a majority of ruling elders present and voting at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Session. Voting by proxy is not allowed. Voting by electronic means is allowed only if participation in the meeting conforms to the requirements of these bylaws.
- (e) ***Electronic Participation in Meetings.*** Ruling elders may participate in a meeting of Session by means of telephone conference, video conference or similar electronic communications equipment. Such means must provide that all persons participating in the meeting be able to simultaneously hear and deliberate with

each other. Participation in a meeting pursuant to such means shall constitute presence in person at such meeting.

- (f) **Core Value Elders.** The four (4) core value ministries of the Church are: Worship, Spiritual Growth, Hospitality and Mission (the “Core Values”). Two elders shall be assigned to each Core Value ministry. The role of a Core value elder is to support, plan and coordinated activities and events throughout the Church related to the Core Value ministry to which he/she is assigned.
- (g) **Coordinating Elders.** The six (6) coordinating ministries of the Church are: Good News, Personnel, Trustees, Spiritual Gifts, Finance and Youth/Young Children (the “Coordinating Ministries”). One elder shall be assigned to each Coordinating Ministry. The role of a Coordinating Elder is to provide resources, encouragement and coordination required to implement the ministry of the Church to which he/she is assigned.

11.2 Deacons

The congregation shall elect twelve (12) deacons and one (1) youth deacon. The twelve deacons shall be divided into two classes of six (6) each, one class of which shall be elected each year for a two (2) year term. The youth deacon shall be elected annually to serve for a one (1) year term. No deacon shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six (6) years. A deacon having served a total of six (6) years shall be ineligible for reelection to the Board of Deacons for a period of at least one (1) year. The deacons shall be under the supervision and authority of the Session of the Church.

The Board of Deacons, at its first meeting following the installation of new officers, shall elect a moderator and a clerk from among its members and shall form such teams as necessary to carry out its work. The pastor or his/her designee from the staff of the Church shall be an advisory member of the Board of Deacons. A quorum for the Board of Deacons shall be one third (1/3) of the members, including the moderator.

12. Trustees

The congregation shall elect nine (9) trustees and one (1) youth trustee. A trustee must be a member who is listed on the active membership rolls of the Church. The nine trustees shall be divided into two classes, one of five (5) and one of four (4). One class shall be elected each year for a two (2) year term. The youth trustee shall be elected annually to serve for a one (1) year term. No trustee shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six (6) years. A trustee having served a total of six (6) years shall be ineligible for reelection to the Board of Trustees for a period of at least one year. The powers of the Trustees shall include those specifically contained in the Book of Order. The Trustees shall be under the supervision and authority of the Session of the Church.

The Board of Trustees, at its first meeting following the installation of officers shall elect a moderator and a clerk from among its members and shall form such teams as necessary to carry out its work. The pastor or his/her designee from the staff of the Church shall be an advisory member of the Board of Trustees. A quorum for the Board of Trustees shall be one third (1/3) of the members, including the moderator.

13. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be elected annually by the Session. The Treasurer shall have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, all funds of the Church. The duties of the Treasurer include: (i) maintaining the accounting systems in such a manner as to give a true and accurate accounting of the financial transactions of the Church, (ii) providing financial reports promptly to the Session at least annually and upon request of Session, (iii) insuring that all expenditures are made to the best possible advantage, and that all accounts payable are presented promptly for payment, and (iv) causing the books of account of the Church to be reviewed annually by a public accountant and submitting a report of such review to Session. In addition, the Treasurer shall perform such other duties incident to the office as Session may from time to time determine.

14. Administration of the Church

The Session may from time-to-time assign duties to other agents or staff of the Church to assist in administering the business of the Church. The following administrative positions shall be filled by Session, supervised by Session and report directly to Session. These positions are not officers of the Church.

Financial Secretary. The Financial Secretary shall be appointed annually. The duties of the Financial Secretary shall be such duties incident to the position as Session may from time to time determine and as contained in the Policies and Procedures Manual of the Session of Gates Presbyterian Church.

Counting Teams. The duties of the counting teams shall include: (i) receiving all funds coming to the Church and depositing such funds in banks selected by Session, and (ii) providing accurate weekly reports of deposits to the Treasurer. Each counting team, under the direction of the Finance Coordinating Elder and Session, shall consist of at least two (2) members.

Memorial Fund Secretary/Treasurer. The Secretary/Treasurer of the Church's Memorial Fund shall be appointed annually. The duties of the Secretary/Treasurer of the Memorial Fund shall be as determined from time to time by Session and contained in the Policies and Procedures Manual of the Session of Gates Presbyterian Church.

15. Vacancies, Removal and Resignation

Any person serving in an elected office, or an appointed position of the Church may resign at any time by giving written notice to the pastor and clerk of Session. Any such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein. Unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of a resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

If Session deems that a person is no longer able to effectively function in his/her elected office or appointed position, Session may dissolve the relationship in accordance with the Book of Order. A vacant elected office shall be filled by the election of a successor by the congregation. A vacant appointed position shall be filled by appointment by Session.

16. Contracts

Session may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Church. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized, no officer, agent or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the Church by any

contract or engagement or to pledge its credit or to render it liable pecuniarily for any purpose or in any amount.

17. Indemnification

Each person who is or was an ruling elder, deacon, trustee or any other officer of the Church, including the heirs, executors, administrators, or estate of such person, shall be indemnified by the Church to the full extent permitted or authorized by the laws of the State of New York, as now in effect and as hereafter amended, against any liability, judgment, fine, amount paid in settlement, costs and claim arising in connection with such persons conduct in his or her capacity, or in connection with his or her status, as an elder, deacon, trustee or officer of the Church. The indemnification provided by this bylaw provision shall not be exclusive of any other rights to which he may be entitled under any other agreement, or otherwise, and shall not limit in any way any right that the Church may have to make different or further indemnification with respect to the same or different person or classes of persons.

18. Amendments to the Bylaws

Any provision of these bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote (2/3) of the Session present and voting at a meeting at which a quorum is present except for the following:

Meetings of the Congregation, Notice of Meetings of the Congregation, Moderator of the Congregation Meetings, Secretary of the Congregation Meetings, Minutes of the Meetings of the Congregation, Quorum and Voting for a Meeting of the Congregation, Nominating Committee.

These exceptions may only be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the congregation present and voting at a meeting at which a quorum is present. Consideration of the proposed bylaw amendment(s) must be clearly noted in the notice of such meetings.

19. Repeal of Bylaws

Effective the date of adoption of these bylaws by the congregation, any and all bylaws which may have been previously adopted by the congregation of the Church are repealed and replaced.

Adopted by Session: August 25, 2016

Adopted by the Congregation: October 30, 2016

Amended: January 28, 2018

Amended by Session: August 15, 2023

Gates Presbyterian Church

Ministry

Committee / Team Descriptions & Responsibilities

Spiritual Journey (Spiritual Gifts Coordinating Elder)

- Plans faith explorations programs
- Supports women's ministries, men's ministries, young adult ministries
- Responsible for adult classes such as Bible studies, special programming upon request.
- Plans adult retreats
- Oversees Lenten and Advent activities
- Responsible for library
- Responsible for Women's Candlelight Dinner
- Provides support for FUSION Sunday intergenerational activities

Membership & Hospitality

- Plans new member receptions
- Coordinates confirmation breakfasts
- Reviews hospitality registers each week for comment and/or contact information of visitor's rolls
- Periodically reviews membership rolls and recommends changes to Session
- Arranges for parking lot valets
- Performs outreach to new people in the community

Mission & Peacemaking

- Studies and responds to social and political issues
- Advocates for and supports peacemaking efforts in families, communities, nations, and the world
- Addresses hunger issues in our community by:
 - collecting food and distributing it to local food pantries
 - coordinating the preparation of meals at local homeless shelter and community lunch programs several times per year
- Allocates funds on behalf of the GPC congregation to support local, national, and international organizations
- Supports GPC youth mission programs
- Communicates mission work of the church through mission fairs, bulletin boards, Harbinger, and Kiosk.
- Publicizes and receives One Great Hour of Sharing Offering, the Peacemaking Offering, and the Christmas Joy Offering
- Supports urban church linkages and ministries
- Encourages global partnerships in mission, e.g. Guatemala and Jamaica
- Establishes new and innovative mission projects that will either involve those whom the church has not yet been able to serve, or will provide new and better services for those to whom the church has already served
- Challenge and motivate the members of the church to become involved in the mission projects

Public Worship

- Provide support for regular worship experiences
- Recruit and organize annual lists of ushers, greeters, lay readers, and communion servers
- Order pulpit supplies (ex. candles, communion supplies, etc.)
- Assist with plans for special services (Easter, Advent, etc.)
- Order Advent and Easter flowers
- Music program:
 - Purchase robes as required
 - Arrange for tuning of pianos and organ
 - Oversee organist schedule
 - Relay comments about the music to the appropriate parties
- Set up and clean up communion
- Order palms for Palm Sunday
- Maintain hospitality registers and folders
- Collaborate with Youth Committee and Young Children's Committee on family services
- Fill baptismal font with water prior to baptism
- Change candles and paraments for each Liturgical season (purple, green, white, & red)
- Provide and hang Harvest and Advent wall hangings
- Organize decorating and un-decorating of the worship center and Christmas tree for Advent season

Generosity Team (Finance Coordinating Elder)

- Organize annual Generosity program
- Supervise all fundraising events
- In conjunction with the church Treasurer:
 - Develop the process for budget preparation
 - Work with other committees to determine financial needs for upcoming year
 - Establish proposed budget to present to Session for approval
 - Prepare/review monthly cash flow statements of church
 - Oversight of financial accounts and policies including: Memorial Fund, Endowment Fund, Mustard Seed Fund, Escrow Fund

Good News

- Coordinate with Office Manager to create slides of upcoming events to be displayed in worship center before worship and set up slides each Sunday
- Arrange for publication of newsworthy GPC events with local news media
- Write or edit press releases regarding newsworthy GPC events with input from Clergy, Session and/or members of the congregation
- Encourage Session committees to communicate newsworthy events
- Act as liaison between media outlets and GPC
- Maintain contact list of media outlets
- Develop and maintain template for GPC press releases

Note: Focus is on newsworthy events, not on advertising for fundraising events, which remain the responsibility of the fundraising groups. Will provide media contacts for fundraisers and assist with press releases, as appropriate.

Ministry with Young Children (Youth and Young Children Coordinating Elder)

Sunday School Program

The Committee, in conjunction with the Director of Youth, Children and Young Adult Ministries coordinates:

- Select/order curriculum
- Recruit and train teachers for Fall and Spring
- Plan and participate in Kick-off events for Fall and Spring Sunday School
- Plan Teacher recognition on the last Sunday of Church school: buy gifts for teachers, order hymnals and bibles to be presented to 6th graders, give thanks to all teachers and helpers for both semesters
- Keep communication between Sunday School teachers and committee current (upcoming events, changes, communion Sundays, season change-color of cloth changes, etc.)
- Continue to energize the program, with new ideas and initiatives that promote Christian values in our children, and support our church's mission statement
- Schedule superintendents every week during the church school year. (They collect offerings in each Sunday school classroom and check to see if teachers need anything. Also, they are available throughout class time in the event of an emergency).
- Schedule substitute teachers every week in case regular teacher is absent
- Coordinate volunteers for nursery/toddler room and teacher helpers including posting schedules and guidelines
- Check supply room and replenish and organize as needed
- Update resources for Sunday School teachers (music, books, videos)
- Provide seasonal candle, Bibles, teaching tools, furniture as needed for Sunday School classrooms
- Distribute palms on Palm Sunday (coordinate with public worship)
- Plan/coordinate Advent family festival for children on first Sunday of Advent
- Plan/coordinate Midsummer Family Fun night
- Write articles for Harbinger, bulletin, parent updates

Children's Day Service

- Plan service and coordinate with Junior Choir Director
- Organize classes participating in the service and coordinate with Sunday School teachers their role
- Maintain list of 6th graders and order Bibles and hymnals accordingly
- Prepare information sheets regarding this Sunday for parents

Ministry with Youth (Youth and Young Children Coordinating Elder)

- Recruit teachers and advisors for church school classes and youth groups
- Alert to and responds to the needs of the youth in our congregation
- Oversee and raise funds for mission, the Junior High local work project, the Senior High out-of town work project, and the international 12th grade work project. This is done with the approval of the Generosity Team and Session
- Plan and coordinate the mission projects of the youth
- Support the fall kick-off events, Wheel A Thon, end-of-year picnic, and other activities originated within the committee or from the advisors and teachers
- Be responsible for church school curriculum
- Support youth choir
- Committee membership to include adult members and youth members. Representatives can be elected by each of the youth groups to serve on the committee for one year.

Personnel Committee (Personnel Coordinating Elder)

- Liaison with staff – to be supportive and sensitive
- Interview all staff members once per year
- Responsible for evaluation process
- Maintain staff job descriptions current
- Establish salaries (Trustees work with custodians through Personnel Committee)
- Recommend to Session the pastor's annual terms of call, subject to congregational approval
- Develop and implement personnel policies
- Review/update GPC Employees Manual, as needed
- Review GPC Child Safety policy with all staff and volunteers and have signed by each annually.
- Conduct background checks on all new staff and volunteers, as needed
- Recognize staff members once per year during the church service
- Advertise, interview, and make recommendations to Session for staff positions as needed

Board of Deacons

Moderator: Conducts monthly meetings of the Board of Deacons. monitors the budget expenditures, prepares the annual budget request and writes the annual report. Orients new deacons and presents information to new member cases. Maintains the picture board and current deacon information.

Secretary: Takes minutes at the monthly meetings. prepares and provides copies of the "unapproved" minutes to Deacons at the meeting. Distributes copies of the "approved" minutes to the pastor, trustees and Session and absent Deacons. Takes attendance at the monthly meetings.

Program Coordinator: Arranges for monthly opening, stretch and closing devotional/prayers. Brings sign-up sheet to meeting every few months as needed.

Care and Concern Coordinator: Takes notes in church during the prayers of the people and follows up accordingly with cards. Responsible for finding another deacon to take notes in church in their absence. Sends card for illness, death in family, first anniversaries of death, weddings and births. You are responsible for purchasing cards and stamps. Save receipts and fill out form for reimbursement. Submit receipts and form to the church Treasurer. The moderator has a tax-exempt form for you to use for card purchases. Puts announcements of illness, deaths and births in the weekly bulletin and in the Harbinger. Reports on activity at the monthly Deacon meeting.

Homebound List and Visitation Log Coordinator: Keep an updated homebound list with name, address, phone number, birthday and Deacon visitor. Give this info to appropriate visiting deacon. Give copy to card coordinator. Maintain updated visitation log of homebound members. Pass this around at each meeting and monitor to make sure homebound members are being visited. Give a copy to the pastor and work with him/her to identify member to be included on homebound list. You will need to make sure that everyone on the homebound list is cared for by one of the two circles at church (Tabitha Circle and Rebecca Circle).

Visitors for the Homebound: Visits or calls assigned GPC homebound member at least once a month and reports at the monthly meeting.

Card Coordinator: Send cards to each homebound member on his/her birthday, and monthly. Also send cards to elder member that are not homebound but cannot make it to church every often. You need to pick up Thinking of you cards to be signed by Deacons at meetings. You are responsible for purchasing cards and stamps. Save receipts and fill out form for reimbursement. Submit receipts and form to the church Treasurer. The moderator has a tax-exempt form for you to use for card purchases. Christmas is the only time when cards are distributed differently. Bookmarks are made by the Circles and decorated and labeled on the back with the homebound person's address. 15 bookmarks per homebound person are made. They are distributed in church the second Sunday of Advent so that congregational members can each take one and send their own card the person on the back. How the bookmarks are made will be decided as a group by the Deacons each year. The card coordinator does not need to send any other cards other than birthdays for the month of December.

Transportation Coordinator: Responsible for setting up schedules for those needing rides to and from church.

Crisis Coordinator: The primary purpose is to provide meals for a family in need using the list of people willing to provide an emergency meal from the Time and Talent lists. Other support or help may be provided as needed.

Hospital Visitors: Makes hospital calls if the pastor is not available. You will be contacted by the main office if this is the case and you are needed to make a call. May follow through with the person once they are discharged with a phone call or visit. Contacts Crisis Coordinator if follow up services are required. Deacons are assigned to each of the following hospitals: Strong, Unity, RGH, and Highland.

Memorial Service Coordinators (3 deacons): Will receive notification of Memorial Services, work with pastor to determine how many people plan on coming and color preference of the family. Contact and arrange for as many ushers as needed from the list of those willing to serve at church memorial services. Will make arrangements for serving refreshments at the memorial service...usually punch, coffee, tea and cookies. Will contact and arrange for help with setup, service, and clean up. Will provide a room for the family to gather in before the service with tissues and water available. Will keep memorial cabinet stocked and organized. One deacon will serve at the cookie coordinator to make calls to various members for cookies.

Fellowship Coordinator: Buys supplies and stocks the cupboard for fellowship refreshments and tracks expenditures for fellowship supplies. Save receipts and fill out form for reimbursement. Submit receipts and form to the church Treasurer. The moderator has a tax-exempt form for you to use for card purchases.

Coffee/Punch Schedule Coordinator: Will be responsible for coordinating the CPG schedule, every two months having Deacons sign up, reviews schedule briefly at the monthly meetings, will email the schedule to Deacons periodically, will make copies of the filled in schedule for deacons without email, will provide reminder phone calls each week to those signed up, will provide schedule and any changes to the church office for printing in the bulletin.

Representatives to GPC Session Committees: The deacon representative is responsible for attending and assisting the committee at all scheduled meetings.

- Budget and Generosity: Monthly meetings. Assists committee and reports to the board of Deacons with appropriate updates.
- Building Use: Meetings scheduled as needed.

- Nominating: 3-4 meetings per year. Contacts by phone those who will be asked to serve as Church officers (Elders, Deacons, and Trustees).
- Personnel: Monthly meetings. Writes reviews of staff, assists in getting feedback from staff about their jobs, assists in rewriting job descriptions as needed.

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Gates Presbyterian Church

Baptism Guidelines

1. Baptism is authorized by Session.
2. Baptism normally is celebrated in a service of public worship and administered by the pastor with one elder participating. In extraordinary circumstances, baptism may be celebrated at the discretion of the pastor. In such cases care should be taken in accordance with the Book of Order.
3. Parents who are members in good standing of Gates Presbyterian Church may present their children for baptism.
4. Christian parents in good standing in another congregation may request baptism for their children (Book of Order). Session may, if convinced of the ongoing commitment of the parents, grant permission for baptism of a child of non-member parents. Two guiding principles would be regular worship attendance at Gates Presbyterian Church, and an indication of intention to join the congregation as soon as this can be arranged. If the parents are currently members of another church, a letter shall be sent to that church informing them of the baptism.
5. Prior instruction shall be given to all parents. (per Book of Order)
6. It is the responsibility of the Session to provide for continuing counsel, encouragement, and nurture for families. The congregation is responsible for nurturing baptized persons in Christian life. (per Book of Order).
7. All guidelines for baptism are subject to the Book of Order regulations on the sacrament of baptism.

Baptism of children witnesses to the truth that God's love claims people before they are able to respond in faith. Those presenting children for baptism shall promise to provide nurture and guidance within the community of faith until the child is ready to make a personal profession of faith and assume the responsibility of active church membership.

Revised 02/2020

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Gates Presbyterian Church

Wedding Guidelines

Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people, to love and support each other for the rest of their lives. The sacrificial love that unites the couple sustains them as faithful and responsible members of the church and the wider community. (Reference Book of Order, Directory for Worship).

In civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is also a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges. (Reference Book of Order, Directory for Worship).

If they meet the requirements of the civil jurisdiction in which they intend to marry, a couple may request that a service of Christian marriage be conducted by a pastor of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA) ("pastor") who is authorized, though not required, to act as an agent of the civil jurisdiction in recording the marriage contract. A couple requesting a service of Christian marriage shall receive instruction from the pastor, who may agree to the couple's request only if, in the judgement of the pastor, the couple demonstrate sufficient understanding of the nature of the marriage covenant and commitment to living their lives together according to its values. In making this decision, the pastor may seek the counsel of the Session which has authority to permit or deny the use of church property for a marriage service. (Reference Book of Order, Directory for Worship).

In selecting Gates Presbyterian Church, you are choosing a Christian service and asking for God's blessing upon your commitment to one another as a married couple. Your wedding is a sacred occasion. As the pastor and staff of Gates Presbyterian, we are ready to help in whatever way we can to make your wedding spiritually significant and meaningful.

These guidelines have prepared these guidelines to help you in your planning. The policies outlined here apply to all weddings held at Gates Presbyterian Church.

Officiant

Gates Presbyterian Church has one full time pastor. Please contact the pastor directly to request their services.

If you would like another pastor to participate in the service, please make arrangements with the officiating pastor from this church to issue an invitation. The officiating pastor from Gates Presbyterian Church must approve all matters regarding the conducting and order of the service. Please schedule your first pre-wedding consultation with the pastor at least three months prior to your wedding. The number of pre-wedding meetings with the pastor is determined by the pastor. Usually the pastor will meet with you at least 3 times before the wedding.

Music

Normally the church's organist will play for weddings. The couple should contact the organist at least one month before the wedding date about music desired and he or she will make suggestions. In special cases, other organists (e.g. friends of wedding party) may participate with the approval of the church's organist. This desire should be expressed when initial arrangements are made. An indication of their experience should be given to the pastor.

Music for the wedding should be chosen with discrimination and offered as praise to God. The organist will be happy to work to accommodate your music requests. The officiating pastor and organist will ultimately have final approval of all music chosen.

The organist requires at least one rehearsal with any soloist or instrumentalist. An additional fee of \$25 is required for each rehearsal.

Wedding Rehearsal

The officiating pastor will schedule the rehearsal at your first pre-wedding appointment. The entire wedding party, parents, and any others participating in your ceremony are expected to attend the rehearsal to ensure that the ceremony will proceed smoothly. The pastor is in charge of the rehearsal. The rehearsal is usually 45 minutes in length.

Photography & Videos

In order to preserve the dignity and sacredness of a Christian wedding, flash pictures are not to be taken during the worship service. As many pictures as are desired can be reposed following the service. Video recording is possible but only from the rear of the worship center, or at an unattended camera set up with the approval of the officiating pastor.

It is the responsibility of the bridal couple to make the photographer/videographer and guests aware of these restrictions.

Flowers & Decorations

- The normal arrangement is for one bouquet on the communion table, bouquets on pedestals supplied by florists, or bouquets attached to candelabras. Decorations may be delivered and set up one hour before the ceremony. You or your florist is responsible for removing the flowers following the ceremony and picture taking.
- The church does supply two candelabras upon request. A unity candle, if desired, is supplied by the bridal couple.
- Aisle runners do not work well in our worship center.

Use of the Building

- Rooms for dressing and gathering of the bridal party before the ceremony are available and the officiating pastor will show you where those are at the time of the rehearsal.
- Smoking is not allowed anywhere in the church building.
- Confetti and rice may not be thrown in the church or on the property.
- Birdseed may not be thrown inside the church building.
- Use of any alcoholic beverages for any purpose at any time is prohibited, including the parking lot. Violation of this policy will result in the immediate cancellation of the wedding and no refund of fees.

Fees

One check, payable to Gates Presbyterian Church, for wedding fees that apply to your wedding, must be sent to the church at 1049 Wegman Road, Rochester, New York 14624, two weeks prior to the wedding date, in order to process the checks for the participating parties.

MEMBER RATES:

Organist	\$200 (includes participation in wedding rehearsal)
Custodian	\$100*

Wedding Coordinator	<u>\$100</u>
Total	\$400

An honorarium for the pastor is at the couple's discretion.

*(A \$100 deposit is requested that can be returned in full or in part after the wedding has taken place based on the need, or lack of need, for custodian services)

NON-MEMBER RATES:

Organist	\$200 (includes participation in wedding rehearsal)
Custodian	\$100
Wedding Coordinator	\$100
Building Use	\$200
Pastor	<u>\$300</u>
Total	\$900

Revised 2016

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Gates Presbyterian Church

Christian Funeral/Memorial Service Policy and Guidelines

Purpose

The resurrection is a central doctrine of the Christian faith and shapes Christians' attitudes and responses to the event of death. Death brings loss, sorrow, and grief to all. In the face of death, Christians do not bear bereavement in isolation but are sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit and the community of faith. The Church offers a ministry of love and hope to all who grieve. As this is the basis of a Christian funeral as defined by the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., the Session of Gates Presbyterian Church (GPC) has developed and approved this policy for Funerals and Memorial Services held at the church.

The congregation, officers, and staff offer this policy as a faithful way to proceed at the time of death. In the name of our Risen Savior, we stand with those who grieve the loss of their loved ones and who celebrate the resurrection of Christ Jesus our Lord. By the great grace of God, may this policy guide us in faithfully honoring and celebrating the lives of our loved ones.

Planning a Funeral or Memorial Service at Gates Presbyterian Church

- The family or the funeral home should contact the Pastor (or the church office) as soon as possible. If you have not contacted the church prior to contacting the funeral home, please ask the funeral director to call the church immediately. Funerals and memorial services at the church can only be scheduled via coordination with the Pastor.
- The Pastor will contact the family to offer Pastoral care and guidance and to begin the process of planning the funeral or memorial service.
- The Pastor will work with the family and funeral home to ensure that the funeral or memorial is conducted with the utmost dignity and respect.

Pastor

Arrangements are to be made with the Pastor of Gates Presbyterian Church. Requests for the participation of a guest Pastor to assist in the service must be made to the officiating Pastor. If deemed appropriate, the GPC Pastor will extend an invitation to the requested guest.

Service at Church

GPC church members are encouraged to use the church for funeral or memorial services. Just as we are baptized by God in church and have been nourished by God through the church, so it is appropriate that thanksgiving to God for our lives should be offered in the church.

A Time of Worship

In the Presbyterian tradition a funeral or memorial service is considered a service of worship and will be conducted with the dignity and joyful celebration accorded worship. A typical order of worship will include prelude and postlude of sacred music; hymns and songs of praise and faith; scripture lessons from the Old and New Testaments; a message which expresses thanksgiving to God for the life of the deceased and reminds all of Christ's resurrection and promise of eternal life; prayers of intercession and thanksgiving; a benediction. In consultation with the Pastor, other elements, such as remarks from family members and friends, may be included in the service. The officiating Pastor shall make the final determination on the elements of worship.

Scheduling

The Pastor is the only full-time staff member of Gates Presbyterian Church. Those who provide support functions such as our Organist/Pianist and Technology Director are also employed elsewhere. We have found that scheduling services on Saturdays offers the best opportunity for assuring that the funeral or memorial service can be planned in full accordance with the wishes of the family.

Music

For funeral or memorial services to be held in the sanctuary, music should be selected thoughtfully and offered as praise to God. All music selections are to be approved by the Pastor officiating at the service.

The church Organist/Pianist will play for funeral or memorial services held at the church if he/she is available. If the church Organist/Pianist is not available, arrangements for an Organist/Pianist are the responsibility of the family. The Pastor may be able to offer suggestions if needed.

If the family wishes to include other musicians in the service, these arrangements are the responsibility of the family and the Pastor's approval is required. Arrangements for rehearsal(s), if needed, are the responsibility of the family and the musicians in collaboration with the Pastor or other GPC liaison.

Compensation of all musicians, including the church Organist/Pianist, for their participation in the funeral or memorial service and rehearsal(s) is the responsibility of the family and should be in accordance with their normal pay scale.

If the service is to be held at another venue, the family should arrange with the funeral director for any music to be played before and/or after the service.

Technology

- **Sound:** There is a microphone at the pulpit and two additional wireless microphones are available if needed.
- **Livestreaming** of the service may be available. Arrangements for this must be made in collaboration with the Pastor and Technology Director during planning of the service.
- **Slides and Video files:** If the family desires a photo slide show or video to be displayed prior to the start of the funeral or memorial service, arrangements must be made during the planning of the service. Photo slide shows and videos will not be displayed during the service. The family will need to provide video and/or photo files to the Technology Director at least two days prior to the service.
- **Audio files:** While not encouraged, audio files, when appropriate for Christian service, may be included. Requests should be made during planning of the service. Approval of the Pastor and the Technology Director is required.
- Other requests from the family may be accommodated at the discretion of the Pastor.

Cremains or Casket

Cremation is an appropriate alternative for Christians. Orders of worship and committal remain the same in cases of cremation, with the exception that the committal may take place on a different date from the service in the church. The cremains container may be present at the funeral service and is normally placed on a table near the pulpit.

While not common, if the family requests, the casket of the deceased may be present for the service and shall arrive at the church at least 45 minutes prior to the designated service start time. In order that worship may focus on God and the gift of resurrection, rather than upon the

earthly remains of the deceased, the casket will be closed during the service. If the family further requests that viewing be accommodated, the casket may be open prior to the start of the funeral service. Due to insurance limitations, the casket may not remain in the church overnight.

Photograph or Portrait

A picture of the person or other items capturing the character of the person who is honored at the service may be present in worship. These items will be placed on a small table next to the pulpit. Such items must always be approved in advance of the service by the Pastor who will be leading the worship service. The display of picture boards in the sanctuary is not appropriate.

Participation of loved ones in the Funeral or Memorial Service

- **Sharing of Memories/ Eulogy:** The sharing of personal memories and thoughts may be included in the service. Because family members sharing memories of their loved one are often quite emotional, it is recommended that spoken tributes during the service be limited to one or two persons sharing brief thoughts and memories. Remarks should be appropriate for inclusion in the Christian worship service.
- **Poetry or other readings:** These are appropriate as they capture characteristics of the person being remembered in the service. These should be appropriate for Christian worship and are normally shared with the Pastor for inclusion during the meditation.

Bulletins

Bulletins list the order for the worship service. Bulletins are provided by the church for most funerals or memorial services held in the sanctuary of the church. Since the church's copier is not capable of making color copies, the family is responsible for arranging for those bulletins which include color copies or photographs.

Guest book

Guest book(s) may be secured from the funeral director and placed in the narthex and/or at the reception.

Flowers

Flowers which are appropriate for funeral or memorial services may be arranged with local florists. The family should arrange with the funeral director for the disposition of any flowers brought to the sanctuary from the funeral home. Flowers that remain two days following the service will be disposed of by the church. It is important that arrangements for flower deliveries be coordinated with the church office to assure that someone is present to accept delivery.

Reception

A reception may be available following funerals or memorial services for those who were members of the church at the time of passing. Decisions regarding receptions are made in compliance with guidelines resulting from community health concerns.

The deacons of the church are often able to arrange for light refreshments including coffee, tea, punch and cookies. Planning for a reception are determined via collaboration between the family and a GPC liaison. Contact information for the liaison will be provided by the Pastor.

Receptions for the families and friends of those who were not members of the church at the time of passing may be arranged in collaboration with the GPC liaison. Refreshments are provided by the family but will be served by representatives of the church if available.

Use of the Fellowship Hall or Room #1 is available at no charge when the deceased was a member of Gates Presbyterian Church at the time of passing. If the deceased was not a GPC member, use of either of these rooms is subject to a charge in accordance with the GPC Building Use policy.

Memorial Gifts

Gifts given in memory of a loved one are appropriate and welcomed. Guidelines for directing such gifts to the church are outlined in Gates Presbyterian Church Gift Acceptance Policy.

Fees

When the deceased was a member of GPC at the time of their passing:

Church Organist/Pianist	\$200.00
Custodial Fee	\$50.00
Pastor	Honorarium*
Technology Director	\$100.00
Reception	No charge for use of Fellowship Hall or Room 1

** Our Pastors believe that funerals are a part of their call to ministry. They believe it is both a great responsibility and a great privilege to care for families in their time of loss and grief by ministering through their words and work the life and love of Jesus Christ. It is recognized that preparation for a funeral or memorial service is in addition to the time and talent required to serve the day-to-day needs of our church family. As such, the offering of an honorarium to the Pastor is welcome. Often families are uncertain about an appropriate amount, the following ranges are suggested as general guidelines for those wishing to provide an honorarium. Suggested range for honoraria are as follows:*

- *Officiating Pastor \$250-\$300*
- *Additional Pastor(s) \$100-\$150. Depending on the extent to which an additional Pastor participates in the planning, preparation and leading of the service.*

When the deceased was not a member of GPC at the time of their passing, and for friends and family of members:

Church Organist/Pianist	\$200.00
Custodial Fee	\$50.00
Pastor	\$300.00
Technology Director	\$100.00
Reception	Refer to Building Use Fee Schedule

*Adopted by Session: March 2013
Fees amended by Trustees February 2020
Adopted by Session: June 2020
Adopted by Session as amended: June 2024*

Gates Presbyterian Church

Memorial Garden Policies & Procedures

Purpose

The Memorial Garden of Gates Presbyterian Church in Rochester, NY is a place for the interment of ashes of our faithful departed. It is in the spirit of closing the ministry from birth to death that this garden has been created.

Ashes are placed directly into the soil without a container or in a biodegradable container, so that they become part of the living garden. The Garden is also used as a special gathering place for prayer and meditation. Visitors to the Garden should observe those purposes in thought and prayer.

There is great emotional, spiritual and psychological value in the time-tested traditions surrounding the way we bury our dead. Cremation can be used as an alternative to cemetery burial while maintaining the traditional funeral home calling hours and funeral/memorial service. The Memorial Garden increases our choices by providing a space on our church grounds to remember those who have died.

Arrangements

Arrangements for interment can be made through the Gates Presbyterian Church office or pastor. A church representative will contact the family to arrange the necessary paperwork. Placement may be pre-planned and pre-paid at any time during a person's life.

Eligibility for Placement

Eligible persons are:

- Gates Presbyterian Church members and former members, their spouses, children, parents, stepchildren and stepparents;
- Ordained ministers who have served Gates Presbyterian Church (or have had a direct relationship with Gates Presbyterian Church), their spouses, children, parents, stepchildren and stepparents;
- "Friends" of Gates Presbyterian Church, upon application and approval of the Session.
- Only human cremains may be interred.

Placement of Cremains

Placing cremains in a special area of the Memorial Garden is a continuation of church tradition by providing a place of interment. It is also a demonstration of a person's great love of the church and wanting to be always in this home by choosing to have his or her cremains part of the grounds.

Cremains will be placed directly into the ground in a small hole in a designated area. Only biodegradable containers approved by Gates Presbyterian Church will be used, no urns or any kind will be interred. The cremains will give nourishment to the soil and vitality to the plants growing there.

A plant will be placed in the garden near the cremains. The Memorial Garden Committee or Session will determine 2 or 3 choices of plants for the families to choose from. Knock Out Roses are the rose of choice. Every effort will be extended to care for the plant but we cannot guarantee the life of the plant.

Cremains will be interred in the Garden in a service overseen by a pastor of Gates

Presbyterian Church. A member of the family should be present.

Ashes are not recoverable or preserved intact.

No one may acquire any right to the physical location or appearance of the Garden.

There will be no signs, markers, pictures, memorials, plantings, or additional decorations (flags, wind chimes, cut flowers, etc.) permitted.

Placement of cremains will not take place between October 1st and May 15th due unfavorable temperature of the ground.

Memorial Bricks

A memorial brick may be purchased separately for and incorporated onto the pathway of the garden.

The brick will be engraved to include the person's name, birth year and death year etc. with up to 3 rows and with 17 characters per line maximum. A permanent record listing the names of the persons whose ashes are buried in the Garden is maintained in a Memorial Garden Memory Book.

The Memorial Garden Committee or Session will determine the location of the brick, no special requests can be made. Placement of bricks will not take place between October 1st and May 15th due unfavorable temperature of the ground.

On occasion a request for an engraved brick may come from the community outside of Gates Presbyterian Church. These requests may come from "Friends" of GPC and with GPC being proud to be a welcoming and inclusive community of faith an order form for a Memorial Garden Walkway brick should be provided to the requestor.

Once the brick order form is returned it should be reviewed by members of the Memorial Garden Committee to confirm that the message requested to be on the brick is in keeping with the mission and ministry of GPC.

Should there be any cause for concern raised related to a brick order form a review by Session should be considered.

Placement Fees

There is a \$400 fee for placement of ashes and services of a professional landscape company to prepare the site and complete the planting of the memorial plant and this cost shall be reviewed periodically by the Session. Once payment is made, there is no obligation for further payment. Fees will be invested for perpetual maintenance of the Garden.

The fee covers:

1. Preparation and finishing of the site of interment
2. Placement of ashes
3. Recording in Memory Book
4. Cost of Memorial plant placed in the garden
5. Maintenance and perpetual care of the Garden

(Fees do not cover the usual costs or honoraria of the funeral/memorial service.)

Perpetual care may include:

1. Routine maintenance

2. Enhancing landscaping and plantings of the Garden area
3. Inscription and installment of nameplates on the bricks
4. Insurance as may be required
5. Future additions, modifications, or repairs to the Garden
6. Other matters as determined by the Memorial Garden Committee and/or Session

All financial considerations must be completed prior to placement of the ashes.

If an individual or family member has prepaid and decides in the future not to use the Garden, a request for a refund must be submitted to the Session with reason stated. The payment may be refunded minus an administrative fee as determined by the Session.

Interment Rights

The purchase of interment rights is nontransferable. In the event that a reserved plot is no longer desired, it must be transferred back to Gates Presbyterian Church Memorial Garden Committee with the purchaser receiving a reimbursement of payment less an administration fee of \$200.

Contributions

Monetary donations for the development and perpetuation of the Garden are always welcome and may be made at any time. Designations for specific gifts – plantings, benches, or other hardscape items – will be reviewed by the Memorial Garden Committee and recommendations forwarded to the Session. All contributions will be reserved solely for the construction and permanent maintenance of the Memorial Garden area. The purchase of interment rights in the Memorial Garden is not tax deductible. However, donations to the Memorial Garden Fund are tax deductible and may be made at any time.

Oversight

The oversight of the Memorial Garden shall be the responsibility of the Gates Presbyterian Church Session.

Notice of Disclaimer

The Garden is not a cemetery. No rights or special privileges of any nature are deemed or granted to families of those interred. All rights are reserved by Gates Presbyterian Church, its officers and the Memorial Garden Committee and/or Session to make changes, now or in the future, including changes to the design and location of the Garden.

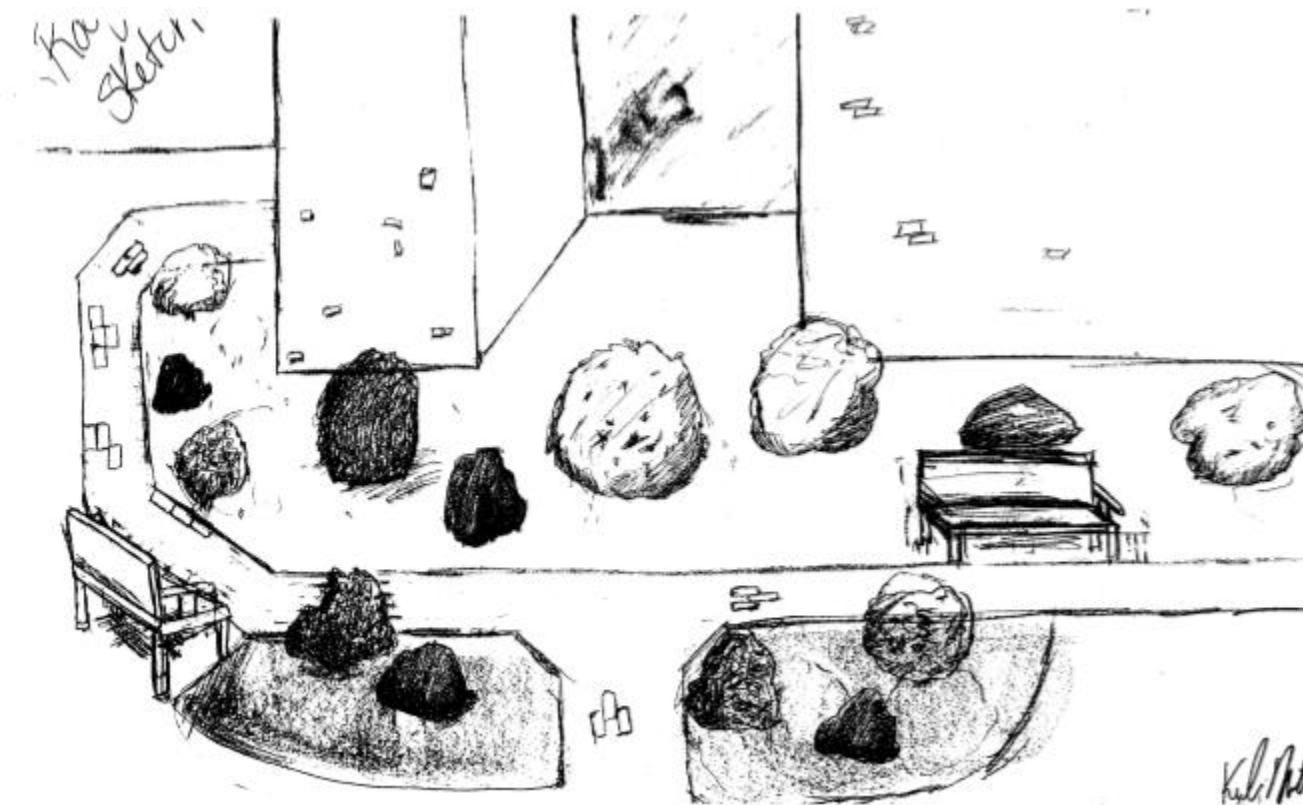
Policies

These policies have been adopted by the Session of Gates Presbyterian Church and can be changed only by that body. Any matters not covered by these policies shall be decided by the Session. The application and the acceptance, together with these Memorial Garden Policies, will constitute a legal contract between the applicant and Gates Presbyterian Church.

Appendices

1. Memorial Garden conceptual design
2. Request for the Interment of Ash Remains
3. Authorization for the interment of cremated remains
4. "Brick" Order Form

Memorial Garden Conceptual Design



Forms

The following forms can be obtained in person at GPC, downloaded from the GPC website, or email the office to get a copy:

- Request for the Interment of Ash Remains
- Authorization for the interment of cremated remains
- Memorial Brick order form

Amended: October 22, 2015

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Updated: December 21, 2021

Gates Presbyterian Church

Policy on Former Pastors Participation in Services

Former Pastors

The following are the requirements concerning participation by former pastors in church services occurring within the church. This includes preaching and/or leading special services (such as baptisms, funerals, weddings). This applies to any pastor following retirement or resignation.

The Moderator's permission is required. If there is no moderator (no current pastor) then Session approval is required.

This only applies to services occurring within the church. No permission is required if a former pastor leads a service outside the church.

Book of Order

G2.0905 After dissolution of the pastor relationship, former pastors and associated pastors shall not provide their pastoral services to members of their former congregations without the invitation of the moderator of session.

Excerpt from **Boundaries, Covenant Agreement** a Presbytery COM document required to be signed by a former pastor and the church.

"The former pastor may not accept invitations to preach in the former congregation or to assist or substitute for the installed pastor or interim pastor, except upon the invitation from the current pastor and Session, and within the Boundaries Covenant. If the former pastor is approached prior to contact being made with the present pastor, an appropriate response is '_____ (name) is now your pastor. It is inappropriate to continue this conversation until he/she has been consulted.' The current Moderator shall ordinarily perform all weddings and funerals rather than deferring to the former pastor. It is incumbent upon the former pastor to notify the interim or successor whenever such a request is received."

Pastors

If a pastor who is not a member of the Presbytery of Genesee Valley is asked to lead a worship or special service in our sanctuary, this request must be approved by Session.

Approved by Session: February 2020

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Gates Presbyterian Church

Report on Presbyterian Policy Regarding Comments from the Pulpit on Social and Political Issues

The Book of Order speaks as follows regarding the authority of the Pastor:

- a. The pastor as pastor has certain responsibilities which are not subject to the authority of the session. In a particular service of worship, the pastor is responsible for:
 - (1) the selection of Scripture lessons to be read
 - (2) the preparation and preaching of the sermon or exposition of the Word,
 - (3) the prayers offered on behalf of the people and those prepared for the use of the people in worship,
 - (4) the music to be sung,
 - (5) the use of drama, dance, and other art formsThe pastor may confer with a worship committee in planning particular services of worship.

The Stated Clerk of Genesee Valley Presbytery has confirmed that it is the Pastor's prerogative to speak out on controversial subjects, regardless of how uncomfortable it may make his constituents. It is, however, desirable to encourage and welcome dialogue on such issues. An atmosphere conducive to such dialogue is zealously maintained at Gates Presbyterian Church.

Historical Perspective

The Gospel is Both Personal and Social

The gospel of Jesus Christ is not only a personal gospel, it is a social gospel. It centers on the individual and that person's relation to God; it also focuses on institutions of society and ways they can bring new life to persons. The prophets and Jesus clearly model for us active participation in the social questions of the day. Church leaders as diverse in time and place as John Calvin in Geneva, Switzerland in the 1500's and Walter Rauschenbusch in Rochester, New York in the early 1900's believed that to be a Christian meant working through the economic, political and social systems of society to bring light in the midst of darkness. We the church are called to be active in the political and social issues of the day.

Separation of Church and State

The separation of church and state does not limit our political involvement. When the separation of church and state was called for by the founders of this country, it was at the insistence of church leaders like Roger Williams and John Clarke in New England who were seeking the protection of the church from the state. They had come from England where they had been coerced to worship as the King saw fit; in America they fought for a system in which the state could no longer dictate how or if they should worship. Separation of church and state was created not to protect the state from the church but to protect the church from the state. Furthermore, the state requests active participation from all institutions and persons in society, including the church to ensure that democracy will flourish.

The Sovereignty of God (God is the only absolute)

This country was founded on the principle of the separation of church and state, but it in no way meant a separation of religion and politics. Rather, the Christian is called to be actively involved in the world doing all that is possible to create a more loving and humane life for all, actions that strive to bring the Kingdom of God here on earth. Such actions are often political. Such actions may mean dissent with government. But according to Roger Williams, a Calvinist and founder of Rhode Island, one's ultimate loyalty must be to God and not to any lesser power including one's government.

On October 12, 1982, the Gates Presbyterian Church session affirmed that it encourages and actively supports comments from the pulpit on controversial matters.

On March 15, 2001, the GPC session reaffirmed that.

Reaffirmed by Session on March 17, 2011

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Reaffirmed by Session on January 13, 2021

Gates Presbyterian Church

Inclusiveness, Worship & Language

Gates Presbyterian is proud to be a diverse congregation made up of many backgrounds and political and theological persuasions. The ministry of the church is built upon this diversity, and openness and inclusiveness are extremely important. People of all ages, men and women, liberal and conservative, serve on church boards. Children are an essential part of the community. Our ministry is not simply to "our own" but there is an equal commitment to the needs of the hungry, oppressed, disabled, and needy.

In worship inclusiveness is expressed in the following manner:

1. Men and women and youth served as worship leaders, e.g. lay readers, ushers, etc.
2. Models of Christian living are given that refer to both men and women. For instance, there is Abraham and Sarah, Miriam as well as Moses.
3. A sincere effort is made to make all the "human language of the service (quotes in the meditation, prayers, announcements) reflective of our diversity.

New hymns selected for usage shall reflect this concern for inclusiveness, whenever practical. Those written by Jane Parker Huber, for instance, have been well received by the congregation and are inclusive. At the same time, the selection of an "older" hymn which contains some "non-inclusive" language should not be discouraged for that reason alone.

We feel that there is basic agreement on the above principles. Issues in which there is no common ground as of yet include the following:

1. *Making hymn texts more inclusive.* Strong feelings revolve around this matter because of questions regarding fairness to composers and what word changes do to the rhythm of the hymn. Staff, pastors, and musicians need to work together in this area, occasionally trying ways of being more inclusive but always respectful of musical integrity.
2. *Masculine language in scripture.* Recent scholarship suggests that translators have not always recognized the nuances of the original text and that the intent was more inclusive than the translation. Nevertheless, this is a sensitive area that requires more consideration.

The important point to keep in mind is that we are a diverse congregation and we need to do everything possible to make the worship experience stress inclusiveness (not only in language but also involvement of children, etc.). The real issue is not one's personal opinion but what will most enhance the opportunity for each and every human being who gathers at Gates Presbyterian to feel close to the Almighty.

The Public Worship Committee will continue to periodically review this policy and amend or edit this statement as the committee deems necessary, always keeping in mind our love for all humankind and the need to include everyone in as many aspects of worship as possible.

Adopted 2001

Updated 2011

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Gates Presbyterian Church

Fundraising Policy

As directed by Session the Generosity Team adopted the following guidelines to be used for church-oriented fundraising events.

1. All requests shall be cleared by the Generosity Team before submission to Session.
2. Any fundraising activities should not infringe on Sunday worship atmosphere. Items being sold before or after service on church campus should be at a specified table – preferably no more than two at a time.
3. No non-church-related group should use our congregation as a fundraising base.
4. Advertising concerning outside group activities should be confined to a bulletin board. Use of church facilities by outside groups is the responsibility of Trustees and must be approved by that group.
5. Groups may request that a portion of the net profits of their fundraising event be reserved for specific use. All such requests shall be submitted, in writing, to the Generosity Team for approval and recommendation to Session. For example, when hosting fund raising dinners - 10% of net profits can be set aside for replacement of kitchen equipment if requested by the Dinner Committee or Trustees.
6. Event chairperson can request pre-event funds through use of a Check Request. The Check Request form is to be used to authorize payment for expenses. It must have an approved signature stating the line item number and authorized signature. Check Requests can also be submitted for out-of-pocket expenses with receipts or backup attached. A Purchase Order form is to be used if the church will receive an invoice for items that were ordered or purchased and the item will be delivered to the church. This is given to the church Office Manager and will be used to match against the invoice when it is received.
7. When purchasing a taxable item in support of the church event, the event chairperson should request a Tax-Exempt certificate so that NYS sales tax is not charged.
8. To the best of the chairperson's ability, all Check Requests, expense receipts and income from fund raising events should be turned into treasurer within 14 days after the event.

Adopted June 2011

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Gates Presbyterian Church

Escrow Fund Policy

The Escrow Fund is established to hold funds that are earmarked for a specific purpose, or maintaining unspent designated funds.

Part I. Purpose

It is the purpose of Session to administer funds in Escrow in a manner consistent with the policies of the congregation and utilizing the use of the funds as originally intended.

Part II. Administration

1. All assets are to be held in the name of GATES PRESBYTEIAN CHURCH, ESCROW FUND, 1049 WEGMAN ROAD, ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14624.
2. The overall administration, management and use of the fund are the responsibility of Session.
3. The Treasurer, under the direction of the Generosity Team and Session, is responsible for the general operation of the fund.
4. Transfers to or from the Escrow Fund are to be used at the discretion of Session unless a specific request is made to restrict funds to a particular use. In the case of such a request, funds will remain in escrow for no more than two (2) years. After two (2) years those funds remaining in escrow, other than mission and peacekeeping, the pastor's emergency fund, and funds designated for capital improvements, will transfer to the general operating account for use in the current budget year.

Part III. Dissolution

In the event the Gates Presbyterian Church of Rochester, New York ceases to exist either through merger or dissolution, the disposition of transfer of the Escrow Fund shall be at the discretion of the Session in consultation with the Genesee Valley Presbytery and according to the Rules of the Denomination.

A. Receiving Transfers

Part I. Receipts

All Escrow transfers are to be referred to the Generosity Team of the church through the Treasurer after immediate and proper accounting. Funds will be placed into escrow in one of the following accepted categories:

1. Excess funds from a specific Gates Presbyterian Church group, event, or budget line item.
2. Mission and Peacemaking projects; such as Guatemala, Jamaica Basic School, Young Adult mission, etc.
3. Pastor's Emergency Fund
4. Funds designated for capital improvements.

Part II. Treasurer Responsibilities

1. Keep a listing of balances by purpose and dates received.
2. Record amounts with the date received or transferred by purpose.
3. Produce the financial report two (2) times per year (semi-annually) and distribute as follows:
 - Clerk of Session
 - Generosity Team
 - Pastor

4. The church's pastor may also periodically request a listing of funds received in the current year.
5. Request a status review by Generosity Team when restricted funds have been held for two (2) years.

Part III. Generosity Team Responsibilities

1. Review the Secretary/Treasurer's semi-annual reports.
2. Be knowledgeable of escrow balance status; and bring before Session the Escrow balance reports and recommendations in a timely manner.
3. Inform and instruct the Treasurer of all related Session decisions and requests.
4. Request a status review by Session when funds have been held for two (2) years, and provide committee recommendation, as appropriate, for use of funds or status change.

Part IV. Session Committee Responsibilities

1. Be knowledgeable of fund status and monitor the Treasurer's semi-annual report.
2. Make decisions as requested to either continue or remove the restriction on escrowed funds held for two (2) years.

B. Request for Use of Funds

Part I. Use of Funds

The requester for funds must complete an application for funds and forward the form to the Generosity Team through the church office.

Part II. Generosity Team Responsibilities

1. The Generosity Team will recommend to Session which escrowed funds are to be used on the request for funds.
2. Forward requests of \$400 or less to the Treasurer (per Part III below).
3. Forward requests of more than \$400 to Generosity Chair and Clerk of Session (per Part IV below).

Part III. Requests for Amounts of \$400 or Less

1. Upon direction from the Generosity Team, Treasurer has the authority to pay bills using appropriate escrowed funds.
2. The Treasurer will note pertinent information (i.e. check number, date paid. etc.) on the request forms.

Part IV. Requests for Amounts in Excess of \$400

1. Requires Session Approval through Generosity Team; or,
2. The Treasurer will note pertinent information (i.e. check number, date paid. etc.) on the request forms.

Part V. Approval vs. Disapproval Procedure

1. The Clerk of Session forwards all applications back to the Generosity Team following Session action for appropriate follow up.
2. The Treasurer maintains files on all requests for Escrow monies.
3. The Treasurer receives a copy of the Session minutes monthly from the Clerk of Session.
4. In the event of disapproval (or example, when an incomplete application is submitted, or approval is delayed or is given a qualified approval due to timing, availability of funds or some contingency, the. Chair of the Generosity Team will notify the requester of status of request for funds.

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Gates Presbyterian Church

Memorial Fund Policy

The Memorial Fund is intended to provide an opportunity for family and friends to donate money to the church in memory of a deceased loved one.

Part I. Purpose

It is the purpose of Session to administer gifts donated in memorial in a manner consistent with the policies of the congregation and recognizing the people's need to honor and remember deceased loved ones.

Part II. Administration

1. All assets of this fund are to be held in the name of the GATES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MEMORIAL and SPECIAL GIFTS, 1049 WEGMAN ROAD, ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14624.
2. The overall administration, management and use of the fund are the responsibility of Session.
3. The Generosity Team, under the direction of Session, has the responsibility for the general operation of the fund.
4. Gifts to the Memorial Fund are to be used at the discretion of Session unless a specific family request is made to restrict funds to a particular use. In the case of such a request, funds will be restricted for no more than three (3) years.

Part III. Dissolution

In the event the Gates Presbyterian Church of Rochester, New York ceases to exist either through merger, dissolution, the disposition of transfer of the Memorial Fund shall be at the discretion of the Session in consultation with the Presbytery of Genesee Valley and accord to the Rules of the Denomination.

Receiving Gifts

Part I. Receipts

All memorial gifts are to be immediately referred to the Memorial Fund Secretary/ Treasurer through the church office for immediate and proper accounting.

Part II. Secretary/Treasurer Responsibilities

1. Keep an annual listing of received gifts by deceased name and totals as of dates received.
2. Set up a ledger file in the deceased name. Should the immediate family request funds be restricted for a specific purpose, the Secretary/Treasurer will advise the Generosity Team and the Clerk of Session immediately and simultaneously. The ledger file will also indicate the same.
3. Record amounts with the date received with the name of the giver.
4. Send the donator a receipt for the gift.
5. Send the family of the deceased a listing of memorial donors as soon as possible. Note that this may have to be done several times.
6. Sunday Counters will make deposits to the proper account(s) at the bank and record the receipt in the counters' Excel spreadsheet.
7. The Church Treasurer will balance the bank statement each month.

8. Produce the financial report two (2) times per year (semi-annually) and distribute as follows:
 - Clerk of Session
 - Generosity Team
 - Trustees
 - Church Treasurer
 - Church Financial Secretary
 - Church Office file
 - Moderator/Pastor
9. The church's pastor may also periodically request a listing of funds received in the current year.
10. Expenses incurred by the Secretary/Treasurer in maintaining the Memorial Fund are to be covered by the interest earned in the account prior to interest being turned over to the Church Treasurer annually.
11. Request a status review by Session when restricted funds have been held for three (3) years.

Part III. Generosity Team Responsibilities

1. Review the Secretary/Treasurer semi-annual reports
2. Be knowledgeable of fund status; and bring before Session Memorial Fund reports and issues in a timely manner.
3. Alert Session on immediate family's requests for "restricted funds" status. The Clerk of Session will insure the "immediate family's request for restricted fund status is on the current Session meeting docket and reflected in the minutes of that meeting.
4. Inform and instruct the Memorial Fund Secretary/Treasurer of all related Session decisions and requests.
5. Request a status review by Session when restricted funds have been held for three (3) years, and provide committee recommendation, as appropriate, for status change requests.

Part IV. Session Responsibilities

1. Be knowledgeable of fund status.
2. Require the Secretary/Treasurer's semi-annual report since it is key to fulfilling Session's responsibilities.
3. Make decisions as requested to either continue or remove the restriction on restricted funds held for three (3) years.

REQUEST FOR USE OF FUNDS

Part I. The requester for funds must complete an application for funds and forward the form to the Generosity Team through the church office.

Part II. Generosity Team Responsibilities

1. The Generosity Team will recommend to Session which restricted or unrestricted funds are to be used on the request for funds application, and,
2. Forward requests of \$400 or less to the Memorial Fund Secretary/Treasurer (per Part III below).
3. Forward requests of more than \$400 to Generosity Team Chair and Clerk of Session (per Part IV below).

Part III. Requests for Amounts of \$400 or Less

1. Upon direction from the Generosity Team, the Church Treasurer has the authority to pay bills using appropriate unrestricted or restricted/ designated funds.
2. The Secretary/Treasurer will note pertinent information (i.e. check no., date paid, etc.) on the request forms.

Part IV. Requests for Amounts in Excess of \$400

1. Requires Session approval through Generosity Team; or,
2. When a higher amount needs expeditious payment, an exception is made for the GPC Pastor to approve a Memorial Fund expenditure. This exception is predicated on the presumption the Pastor has developed an understanding and supportive relationship with the family of the deceased during the family's period of grief.
3. If and when the exception process (paragraph 2 immediately above) is followed, completed request of funds applications will still be submitted to Session and Generosity Team for information purposes.

Part V. Approval Procedure

1. The Clerk of Session forwards all application back to the Generosity Team once voted on by Session for appropriate follow-through.
2. The Secretary/Treasurer maintains files on all requests for Memorial monies.
3. The Secretary/Treasurer receives a copy of the Session minutes monthly from the Clerk of Session.
4. It may not be necessary to send a notice to the family of the deceased regarding expenditures of either unrestricted or restricted funds. Reason: it may take a long time to spend the money.
5. The Memorial Fund Secretary/Treasurer verbally notifies the requester of funds of Session approval.
6. In the event of disapproval, for example, when an incomplete application is submitted, or approval is delayed or is given a qualified approval due to timing availability of funds or some contingency, the Chair of Generosity will verbally notify the requester of status of request for funds.

Use of Name Plates or Memorial Plaques

It is a historical policy of the Gates Presbyterian Church Session that name plates and/or memorial plaques will not be either displayed and/or attached to a physical memorial of a deceased loved one. The church will maintain a Memorial Book listing all gifts.

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Gates Presbyterian Church

Endowment Fund Policy

The faithful stewardship of the assets of Gates Presbyterian Church is the responsibility of everyone in our GPC Community: Clergy, Staff, Members, Attendees and Guests. This policy applies to the management and use of the GPC Endowment Fund.

The GPC Endowment Fund was established in 1991 as a means to grow investment in our future. The original stated purpose included providing a means by which members and friends of the church could help to fund future Ministry and Mission through such means as simple gifts, bequests, charitable gift annuities, beneficial life insurance, planned giving and/or gifts of assets (cash, stocks, bonds, real estate, etc).

Management of the Endowment Fund

It is a responsibility of Session to assure that the congregation is aware of the existence, purpose and use of Endowment Funds and to encourage participation in the continued growth of the fund. Session is also responsible to assure that the Endowment Fund is managed and monitored to reflect continued gratitude for the gifts that our GPC community has made to the fund, and to assure the continued appreciation of the assets and earnings.

Assets of the fund are held in the name of:

ENDOWMENT FUND OF THE GATES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1049 WEGMAN ROAD, ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14624.

The Endowment Fund is currently managed in partnership with the following:

Funds are held by: Fidelity Investment Services
Portfolio Manager: Elizabeth (Liz) Lewis, CFA, Senior VP, Partner
Maple Capital Management
535 Stone Cutters Way
Montpelier VT 05602
Phone: 802-229-2838

Session will designate a current Ruling Elder, or other Elder in good standing, to be responsible for the oversight of the Fund and to consult with the Portfolio Manager. This Elder will assure that information is shared with the Session and the Treasurer each month. This Elder will also provide an accounting of the status of the Endowment Fund for inclusion in the Gates Presbyterian Church Annual Report each year.

Gifts to the Endowment Fund

Gifts to the Endowment Fund are welcome and very much appreciated. Anyone wishing to make a gift, either currently or via planned giving, is welcome to contact the Pastor or a member of the Funds Management team. Gifts to the Endowment Fund may not be restricted.

Use of Endowment Funds

As noted above, the primary purpose of the Endowment Fund is to provide a means by which the Ministry and Mission of Gates Presbyterian Church may be enhanced.

- Gates Presbyterian Church is Mission driven. To augment the impact that we might offer our neighbors, 10% of any disbursement from the Endowment Fund will be allocated to furthering our mission efforts.
- Ministry is the core of our existence as a church body, Creative programming is the fuel that allows our community to continue to love and care for each other and our neighbors. It is an acceptable use of Endowment Funds to support programming beyond that which can be supported by annual income.
- **Special Disbursements:** At the discretion of Session disbursements from the Endowment Fund may be authorized for specific use in support of needs or efforts beyond the normal scope of GPC operations. Examples include:
 - Financial support of Capital Campaigns (e.g., Protect the Vision)
 - Contribution to funding of extraordinary events (e.g., Pastor retirement celebration).
 - Emergency Need. Consideration of the use of Endowment Funds may also be indicated to address emergency need for funds for circumstances outside normal operations of Gates Presbyterian Church where no other means of funding are available.

Disbursement of Endowment Funds

The GPC Endowment Fund has been very carefully and conservatively managed since it was established in 1991. The result of the faithful care and oversight is that there are now sufficient funds to safely revise the formula by which potential annual disbursements are calculated while maintaining a solid base for continued growth. Advice from reputable experts* indicates that annual disbursement of 4% to 5% is standard among faith organizations. Session has discussed and agrees to the revision to the annual disbursement formula as detailed below.

Annual Disbursement: Average of the Year End Balances for the prior 5 years x between 4% and 5%.

Session will determine the percentage (within the 4% to 5% range) for the following year's disbursement by the end of each calendar year.

The disbursement guidelines detailed above will remain in effect as long as the Endowment Fund holdings are greater than \$200,000, or until such time as the Session determines that revision is necessary.

Disbursement Logistics

Three (3) members of Gates Presbyterian Church are authorized to provide instruction to Fidelity Investments regarding disbursement of funds once disbursement is approved by the Session of Gates Presbyterian Church.

- Elder responsible for oversight of the Endowment Fund as designated by Session
- GPC Clerk of Session
- GPC Treasurer

Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of Gates Presbyterian Church, any remaining assets in the Endowment Fund will be allocated and/or reassigned in accordance with the relevant policies of the Presbytery of Genesee Valley.

* Maple Capital Management
Stewardship Kaleidoscope (conference presented by PCUSA)
Texas Presbyterian Foundation (TPF) (Key partner of PCUSA)

*Amended Policy Submitted March 2011 by Endowment Fund Committee.
Amended Policy Approved 2011 by Gates Presbyterian Church Session.
Amended January 2020; Adopted by Session: June 2020
Amended January 2024; Adopted by Session: January 20, 2024
Corrected and Adopted by Session: January 2025*

Gates Presbyterian Church

Mustard Seed Scholarship Program

History

In 1997, the Mustard Seed fund was established with a generous donation from Frank Roberts, a lifelong devoted member of Gates Presbyterian Church. In 2001, the fund had grown to the point where the Mustard Seed Committee felt that disbursements from the fund could begin. Initially, the disbursements to the youth of the church were in the form of a loan. After 4 years and 34 additional donations, the Mustard Seed Committee decided that a 4-year scholarship could be awarded starting in 2005. While the amount of the scholarship has been increased since the initial 4-year scholarship, the practice of awarding a 4-year scholarship continues as of this writing.

In 2021 the scholarship amount and disbursement plan were adjusted in order to more fully and equitably recognize the value that our youth bring to Gates Presbyterian Church. While a single awardee may have received \$6,000 over their college career, it was determined that one-time payments of \$3,000 would be disbursed on behalf of the two awardees. This change is the result of the faithful reflection of the Mustard Seed Committee, and Ad Hoc team from Session, the 2021 applicants and their families. It was concluded that this plan is a more appropriate and relevant reflection of the of the initial purpose of the fund and the mission and ministry of our church.

Part I. Purpose of Session and Fund

It is the purpose of the Mustard Seed Scholarship Program to make a financial contribution towards the higher education of a deserving youth who has been active in the life of the church. Higher education is defined as being post-High School (accredited college or trade school). It is a purpose of the Session to provide the members and friends of the congregation with a means of offering financial support the youth to the church who are pursuing higher education. The fund to support this program shall be known as *The Mustard Seed Scholarship Fund*. Financial gifts, which could take on various forms (cash, stocks, bonds, beneficiary of life insurance, etc.), shall be promptly credited to *The Mustard Seed Scholarship Fund* and are to be managed in a fashion establishing both permanence and stability of the fund. Session is responsible to encourage, receive and administer these gifts in a manner consistent with the guidelines described herein for the Mustard Seed Scholarship Program.

Part II. Promotion, Administration & Management of the Fund

Good fiscal management is important for the total life of a church. *The Mustard Seed Scholarship Fund* shall be administered as follows:

1. All assets of the Fund are to be held in the name of THE GATES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 1049 WEGMAN ROAD, ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14624.
2. The overall promotion, administration, management, and the granting of monies from the fund is the ultimate responsibility of the Session. A separate committee, the Mustard Seed Committee, shall be responsible for the administration of the Mustard Seed Program and will report to Session.
3. The assets of the Fund shall be managed separately from the general, operating accounts of the church. Mustard Seed funds "passing through" the general operating account of the church shall be designated for the Mustard Seed Scholarship Fund.
4. Session will utilize a professional financial management organization for the purpose of managing and protecting the integrity of this church asset and insuring fund growth and

income development. Currently funds are held by Fidelity Investments and managed by Maple Capital Management. Maple Capital Management provides an annual review of fund performance.

5. The annual amount of the funds allocated to the scholarship payments should be sustainable for the entire period of the scholarship. Considerable care should be taken prior to raising the amount of the scholarship to ensure the sustainability of the gift in case there are multiple youth receiving scholarship disbursements in any calendar year. Any change to the annual scholarship amount shall be recommended by the Mustard Seed Committee to Session for consideration. Session approval is required to implement any change in scholarship amount.
6. The books of the Mustard Seed Scholarship Fund shall be:
 - a. Maintained by the Gates Presbyterian Church Treasurer. The Treasurer will report current Mustard Seed Fund balance in their monthly report to Session.
 - b. Audited annually prior to the publication of the Gates Presbyterian Church Annual Report and the Annual Congregational Meeting.
 - c. Included in the Gates Presbyterian Church Annual Report.
7. Any amendment to this policy statement which will change or amend the purpose for which *The Mustard Seed Scholarship Fund* is established must be reviewed and approved by Session.
8. The Mustard Seed Committee will consist of five (5) or more active members of Gates Presbyterian Church. One member must be a currently serving elder. Suggested additional members may include the following:
 - Additional serving elder
 - Youth Advisor
 - Junior or Senior High Sunday School Teacher
 - Deacon

Part III. Mustard Seed Committee Responsibilities

1. Receipt of Gifts to the Mustard Seed Scholarship Fund

All gifts to the Mustard Seed Scholarship Fund shall be acknowledged by a thank you letter from the Mustard Seed Committee on GPC letterhead. The thank you letter shall contain the required Internal Revenue Code notice and the church's tax identification number. The following is the standardized IRC text that is currently in use.

In accordance with Internal Revenue Code, the Gates Presbyterian Church (tax ID# 16-6035808) provided no goods or services in exchange for your gift other than an intangible religious benefit. Please keep this letter with your tax records for verification purposes.

2. Disbursement of Funds

The Mustard Seed Committee chairperson, or other authorized designee of the Gates Presbyterian Church (other authorized designees shall be the Clerk of Session and the Treasurer), must request disbursement of funds from the Investment Advisor. All disbursements from the *Mustard Seed Scholarship Fund* shall be made payable to the Gates Presbyterian Church and will be deposited into the church's general account for subsequent disbursement on behalf of Mustard Seed Scholarship recipients.

3. Mustard Seed Scholarship Application & Selection

- Annual update of the Application to reflect current award details and due dates.

- Hosting mandatory informational meeting for candidates and parent/guardian.
- Review of applications.
- Interview with applicants
- Selection of the annual Mustard Seed Scholarship recipient(s).
- Notification of Committee selection to all applicants.
- Announcement of recipient(s) in Bulletin and Harbinger.

Part III. Dissolution

In the event the GATES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH of Rochester, New York ceases to exist either through merger or dissolution, the disposition or transfer of the Fund shall be at the discretion of the Session in consultation with the Genesee Valley Presbytery and according to the Rules of the Denomination.

Part IV. Miscellaneous

Monthly statements of the *Mustard Seed Scholarship Fund* balance are provided by Fidelity Investments and maintained by the Treasurer or other Session designee.

Amended Policy Submitted July 2011 by the Generosity Team and Budget Committee. Amended Policy Approved July 2011 by the Gates Presbyterian Church Session.

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Revised Policy Adopted by Session: 2021

The Mustard Seed Application package can be found on the GPC Website under About Us > Forms. You can also contact the current committee chair to get an application, or if you have questions.

Policy for Use of Mustard Seed Funds

Background

The original intent of the Mustard Seed Scholarship program was to recognize the youth of Gates Presbyterian Church and to provide financial assistance toward the costs of education beyond high school.

The Mustard Seed program, under its original plan and purpose, has had significant impact on our GPC youth and far-reaching impact on those who benefit from the knowledge, skills and talents that the, now adult, recipients share with the world.

Considerations

- Historically, one of the key assets of GPC was the strength of our Youth Program. We have been blessed to have many adults who have graciously served as mentors and partners in faith for our youth as advisors, Sunday school teachers, work project volunteers and cheerleaders. While our desire to offer Youth Programming continues, the number of youths who participate has declined particularly in the last 7-8 years. The waning of youth participation at GPC is not an anomaly; the same trend is seen nationwide.
- There has been an increase in the number of young children (under 13 years old) in worship and the energy they bring to the congregation is palpable. We are blessed and

grateful to be able witness and participate in their faith journeys through Sunday School, Junior Choir, Children's Messages and infant/toddler care.

- We want to build and maintain vibrant, engaging programs for our children throughout their growing in faith.
- Our membership has declined, and much of our congregation is retired and navigating the full spectrum of rising costs. The decline and the aging of our membership are not anomalies. In fact, GPC is blessed to be in a comparatively strong position thanks to the generosity of our congregation in sharing of their time, talent and treasure.
- Our financial needs continue to grow; we appreciate our staff and insist on compensating them accordingly, our building is aging, costs of utilities and supplies increase regularly.

Conclusion

Through faithful discernment, the Session of Gates Presbyterian Church has determined that Mustard Seed Funds may be allocated to support our children's ministries if necessary to assure the continuation of these ministries. This is in addition to continuation of the Mustard Seed Scholarship program and proposed use poses no risk to the on-going viability of the Scholarship program.

Guidelines

Use of Mustard Seed Funds must be approved by Session and is subject to the following:

- Maximum Annual Distribution of up to 7% of the average of the Year End Balances for each of the most recent four (4) years.
- Distribution guideline will be re-evaluated if the fund balance falls below \$100,000.
- Possible uses include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Salary of Junior Choir Director
 - Salaries of Infant and Toddler Care Staff
 - Program needs for Young Children and/or Youth
 - Financial support for participation in events, camp attendance, etc.

See Mustard Seed Scholarship Policy for information regarding requirements, application and current award plan.

Approved by Session: November 24, 2024

Gates Presbyterian Church

Gift Acceptance Policy

Gates Presbyterian Church has been the benefactor of many gifts from our generous and faithful church community. We are grateful for the benevolence of our members, friends and families which has allowed us to thrive in our living of God's will to love our neighbors.

To assure that representatives of Gates Presbyterian Church act in the best interest of the church, its community and the continued success of our Ministry and Mission, it is important to adhere to the requirements and guidelines detailed in this policy.

The decision to accept or decline any proposed gift resides with the Session of Gates Presbyterian Church.

Gates Presbyterian Church will encourage donors to seek guidance from their own professional advisors to assist them in determining the implications of making a gift to the church. Gates Presbyterian Church cannot provide this advice.

In general, Gates Presbyterian Church welcomes gifts in these forms:

- Simple gifts of cash, stocks and bonds
- Bequests
- Charitable gift annuities
- Beneficial life insurance
- Planned giving
- Certain other gifts, real property, personal property, in-kind gifts, non-liquid securities, and contributions whose sources are not transparent or whose use is restricted in any manner, must be reviewed by the Session of Gates Presbyterian Church for determination as to whether the proposed gift can be accepted.

Gifts that entail special obligations or the risk of liability on the part of Gates Presbyterian Church cannot be accepted.

Only gifts which can be used or expended in accordance with the Ministry and Mission of Gates Presbyterian Church can be accepted.

No irrevocable gift, whether outright or life-income in character, will be accepted if under any reasonable set of circumstances, the gift would jeopardize the donor's financial security.

Gates Presbyterian Church will not compensate, whether through commissions, finders' fees, or other means, any third party for directing a gift or a donor to the church.

Gates Presbyterian Church will provide acknowledgments to donors meeting IRS substantiation requirements for property received by the charity as a gift. However, except for gifts of cash and publicly traded securities, no value shall be ascribed to any receipt or other form of substantiation of a gift received by Gates Presbyterian Church.

Gates Presbyterian Church will respect the wishes of any donor who expresses their desire to remain anonymous. In these instances knowledge of the donor's identity will be restricted to only those staff members and/or church officers with a need to know.

Adopted by Session: June 2, 2024

Gates Presbyterian Church

Process and Policies for Receipt of Funds

In order to effectively serve and support the Ministry and Mission of Gates Presbyterian Church (GPC), it is important that all monies donated and/or paid to GPC be processed in accordance with guidelines recommended by our independent auditor.

It is the policy of Gates Presbyterian Church that all funds received be secured upon receipt for processing by the Counters and that they remain on the premises until bank deposit is made.

There are many methods by which funds are physically received by GPC as summarized below.

- Funds collected during worship services including fulfillment of giving intentions, special donations & purchases, etc.
Usher Team Captains or designee will ensure that collected funds are secured.
- Payments received by mail for any purpose (building use, offerings, memorials, etc.)
- Hand delivered donations including those from supported ministries such as 12-Step groups.

The Office Administrator will secure funds received by the office.

Special Donations & Purchases

GPC is often blessed to receive donations for purposes other than offerings to support our anticipated expenses. Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- Memorial donations
- Memorial bricks
- Mustard Seed
- Easter flowers
- Guatemala Partners Mother's Day Flower Sales
- Special Events (Cabaret, Women's Brunch, etc.)
- Anticipated Capital Improvements
- PCUSA 2nd Mile Giving

These donations are to be processed in the same manner as is the case for regular offerings.

Special donations should be clearly identified and then given to the Counting Team(s). As part of the processing of receipts, the Office Administrator will assure that notice of specific donations are provided to those who are managing the effort/event, and/or are responsible for providing acknowledgement of receipt to the donor.

Counters processing and deposit of funds

It is the policy of Gates Presbyterian Church that two unrelated Counters be present for processing of funds received and that processing and bank deposits be completed at least twice each month.

- Recording of receipts in the appropriate places in the Excel file provided by the Office Administrator. Accuracy of this data is critical as this is the means by which offerings and payments due to our church are recorded
- Dual verification of total cash and checks received.
- Scanning of checks for Office Administrator access.
- Preparation of deposit(s) and delivery to the appropriate bank.
- Return of deposit receipt for Treasurer use in verification/reconciliation of accounts.

Adopted by Session: June 2, 2024

Gates Presbyterian Church

Policy on Sexual Misconduct

- I. Preamble
- II. Conceptual Framework: Biblical and Confessional
- III. Principles
- IV. Terms and Definitions
- V. Preventive Procedures
- VI. Intervention Procedures

Attachments

- A. Ministry as Fiduciary Trust, Fiduciary Power, and Fiduciary Responsibility:
Resources for a Conceptual Framework
- B. New York State Social Services Law, Article 6, Title 6
- C. Congregational Disclosure
- D. Minister/Volunteer/Staff Certification
- E. Acknowledgment of Receipt
- F. Report of Suspected Sexual Misconduct

Gates Presbyterian Church (GPC)
Presbytery of the Genesee Valley (PGV)
Presbyterian Church, U.S.A (PCUSA)

Adopted by Session: October 21, 2019

Adopted by Session: June 2020

I. Preamble

A. Purpose

The six-fold purpose of this policy is:

- a. To safeguard members, congregants, and staff members of Gates Presbyterian Church (GPC), and the people we serve, especially those who are vulnerable, against any form of sexual misconduct, particularly the disciplinary offense of sexual abuse.
- b. To prevent sexual misconduct by creating an atmosphere in our church where acts of silence, ignorance, and minimization regarding sexual misconduct are overcome by acts of understanding, respect, care, and justice.
- c. To attain justice in cases that involve reports, complaints, or written allegations of sexual misconduct and/or sexual abuse within our church.
- d. To promote healing for all persons or entities in cases involving sexual misconduct and/or sexual abuse.
- e. To ensure the effectiveness of our church's administrative and judicial processes in cases of sexual misconduct and/or sexual abuse so that the truth shall be determined, due process rights shall be honored, wrongdoing shall cease, those who were victimized and those who are innocent shall be vindicated, and those who victimized others shall be held accountable for their actions.
- f. To teach church standards of ministry for lay persons; those ordained to office, and those commissioned and certified to serve in relation to sexual misconduct, in order to fulfill our individual and collective responsibility to preserve the integrity of those standards and our ministry.

B. Application

This policy applies to GPC as a council of PCUSA. All members, employees, volunteers, ordained officers, staff, and clergy are subject to the jurisdiction of GPC in the performance of their services to GPC, and are expected to adhere to this policy and its standards in order that we fulfill our inherent moral responsibilities as a community of people of faith.

Original jurisdiction for all disciplinary offenses, including sexual misconduct, is defined in the Book of Order, Rules of Discipline, D-3.0000 and D-4.0000.

C. Primary Sources

This policy contains components that derive directly from the following primary sources: Scriptures; Book of Order; Book of Confessions; New York State Social Services Law; and, personnel policies and practices for PGV and GPC.

Revision of these sources may affect components that are incorporated into this policy, and reference should be made to the current provisions of those sources as they are amended or revised.

II. Conceptual Framework: Biblical and Confessional

As God who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct. Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not under compulsion but willingly, not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge but be examples to the flock...

And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility...in your dealings with one another, for God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble...Discipline yourselves, keep alert. You know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness. I Peter 1:14; 5:2; 5:5b; James 3:1 (New Revised Standard Version)

The conceptual framework of this policy is based on the Scriptures and the Church's Book of Confessions. We are taught in the Scriptures and the confessions of the Church, and we believe and proclaim, that all people are created by God, that God values all human life, and that God intends that everyone -- men, women, and children -- shall share worth and dignity in all relationships. We further believe in justice for all persons. Sexual misconduct in the Church is an abuse of power and trust, and is therefore unjust and sinful. Power in ministerial relationships is inevitably unbalanced because of the inherent authority associated with the offices and roles of ministry, both historically and culturally.

In addition, those who engage in ministry, both clergy and lay persons, exercise actual power because the people to whom they relate repose trust in the offices and roles of ministry, and because those people served in ministry may be made vulnerable by their own life situations. Scripture and the Church's confessions demonstrate that religious leadership is authentically expressed in a covenant relationship that requires the trustworthy exercise of power on behalf of those for whom we care (see Attachment A).

A betrayal of this fiduciary trust is more than a personal tragedy for the victim. It reflects a tragic breakdown in the character of the abuser. Betrayal of trust seriously harms not only those immediately affected, but associate victims as well, like the families of victims. It also harms the well-being of the Church.

For too long, and in too many contexts, incidents of sexual misconduct have been ignored and/or rationalized, and the disposition of complaints subverted.

PCUSA, PGV, and GPC proclaim that sexual misconduct in all its forms is wrong, that the Church can never be served by overlooking an abuse of power and trust, and that allegations of misconduct must be responded to swiftly and fairly, and with compassion for both the accused and the accuser/victim. Our standard of practice for ministry, whether as a spiritual vocation or as a professional calling, is that sexual misconduct within the context of a ministerial relationship constitutes sexual malfeasance, and is wrongful, unethical, and a sin.

Thus, the Church sounds the note of liberation and healing, and calls all persons to the more abundant life of Christ. For those who commit sexual misconduct, this abundant life requires confession, repentance, and spiritual and behavioral transformation.

All employees, volunteers and lay persons at GPC are entitled to an environment free of sexual misconduct. The ethical conduct of all who minister in the name of Jesus Christ is of vital importance in the Church because these representatives convey to others an understanding of God.

III. Principles

Two primary principles guide this policy and are vital to our efforts to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct. Those principles are:

Principle of veracity, or truth

- Truth is an end in itself, and an expression of the respect we owe to others based on our Presbyterian covenants of trust and mutual obligation.
- Truth is a means to prevent foreseeable harm to others, especially those who are vulnerable and rely on the Church's care and guidance.
- Truth is a basis for the duty of the individual to act by disclosing or reporting, whether as a complainant, a witness, or the recipient of information pertaining to wrongdoing, and so avoid the collusion of silence that prevents wrongdoing from being restrained or corrected.

Principle of fidelity, or faithfulness

- Faithfulness is honored as an end in itself, and also as an expression of the respect we owe to others based on the fiduciary relationships of trust and confidence that we establish at GPC in the name of Jesus Christ.
- Faithfulness is a basis for our obligation to protect the rights of others, especially those who are vulnerable and rely on the Church's care and guidance.

IV. Terms and Definitions

At the time of its adoption and subsequent revision by GPC, this policy utilizes terms and definitions contained in the current edition of the Church's Book of Order and Book of Confessions. If either part of the Church constitution is revised after the effective date of this policy, the most recent edition of the Church constitution shall be the authoritative source for terms and definitions.

01. **Church** when capitalized refers to the PCUSA. In lower case format, **church** refers to GPC.

02. **congregant** is a person who, though not a formal member of GPC has participated in its witness, mission, or ministry. This may be, for example, someone who has attended worship services, sung in a church choir, received pastoral care or counseling, attended Christian Education programs, etc.

03. **volunteer** refers to those who provide services for GPC or its entities and receive no remuneration or monetary benefits. Volunteers include persons elected or appointed to serve on boards, committees, and other groups.

04. **entity of service** refers to any board, committee, council, or other body, the membership of which is elected or appointed by GPC.

05. **fiduciary** relationship describes a relationship founded on trust or confidence in which one partner holds something in trust for the other, e.g., a trustee who is designated by role to act and function in the best interests of another, including not committing harm against the one who entrusts her/his self and interests to the fiduciary. In the context of a ministerial relationship, the fiduciary is one, who by reason of her/his position or responsibilities, is acting in a capacity of authority, trust, or power. A fiduciary in the Church is expected to act with right motives and with personal attributes of character and integrity consistent with the position, office, or role. Because a fiduciary relationship is based on authority, trust, and power, it renders sexual misconduct inappropriate and wrong.

06. **member** as used in reference to GPC, pertains to all who belong to our church, per Book of Order, G-1.04

07. **offense** as defined by the Book of Order, Rules of Discipline, D-2.0203.b, a disciplinary offense “is any act or omission by a member or person in an ordered ministry of the church that is contrary to the Scriptures or the Constitution of PCUSA”. Behavior that violates this policy may be cited in a formal complaint or allegation of sexual misconduct filed with the Stated Clerk of PGV which accuses a member or officer of a disciplinary offense. If a formal disciplinary charge is filed, a violation of the GPC Policy on Sexual Misconduct may only be cited as the basis for a disciplinary charge.

08. **sexual abuse** of another person is a Church disciplinary offense that is defined by the Book of Order, Rules of Discipline, D-10.0401 c(1) and (2). “Sexual abuse as defined in Section D-10.0401c shall be considered contrary to the Scriptures or Constitution of the PCUSA and therefore an offense for purposes of these rules”.

This includes such actions as: rape; sexual conduct in relation to a minor; sexual conduct in relation to an adult who lacks the mental capacity to exercise informed consent (this could include incapacity due to a mental disease or defect, temporary incapacity due to the influence of a narcotic or intoxicating substance, or impaired capacity due to psychological, emotional, or spiritual vulnerability, e.g. due to grief resulting from a significant loss); use of force, threat, coercion, or intimidation (whether express or implied); misuse of an office or position by committing acts of sexual misconduct.

Child sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to, any inappropriate contact or interaction between a child, as defined by New York State penal law, and an adult when the child is used for the sexual stimulation of the adult or a third person. This contact or interaction between a child and an adult is always considered forced, whether or not it was consented to by the child.

09. **sexual harassment** refers to unwelcome and offensive, obscene, or suggestive sexual advances, or requests or demands for sexual favors. As a consequence, the victim may feel intimidated or violated. The context in which the action(s) occurs is an important factor. Repetitions of action(s) over time demonstrate the perpetrator’s intentionality. Sexual harassment may occur as non-physical contact or physical contact. (The term derives from Title VII of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964; the law enforced by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.)

As **non-physical contact**, sexual harassment may occur as visual or verbal behavior.

- a. **visual behavior** includes such actions as: sexual exhibitionism; showing sexually explicit pictures; making sexual gestures; leering at specific body sites; or, presenting a sexually-related gift, such as lingerie. It may occur as masturbation by the perpetrator in the presence of the victim.
- b. **verbal behavior** includes such actions as: making jeering or taunting remarks that include sexual content; telling demeaning jokes based on gender; asking questions or telling stories about sexual activity and/or thoughts, including fantasies; seeking sympathy in regard to the harasser’s partner’s sexual inadequacies; or, offering spiritual and theological rationale to justify questionable conduct, e.g. “God has brought us together.” The sexual content of the verbal behavior may be direct and explicit, or indirect, implicit,

and may include innuendo. The sexual content may include references to the subject's physical appearance and/or apparel. It may be in person, written, or online.

As **physical contact**, sexual harassment may include such actions by the perpetrator as: fondling; touching; stroking; pinching; leaning or brushing against the subject's body; and, kissing. It also may include touching that originates on the outside of the victim's clothes in order to establish contact with the subject's breasts, buttocks, or genitals. Sexual harassment as physical contact is defined as any touching that the victim may find confusing, discomforting, or upsetting. Harassment is differentiated from touching that results in vaginal or anal insertion, oral/genital contact, such as sexual intercourse.

Whether the action is non-physical or physical, this behavior is especially pernicious when preceded or accompanied by any of the following: necessity of the victim's submission as an explicit or implicit condition of her/his continuing role relationship or employment status; the purpose or effect of interfering with the individual's role or work performance by creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment, particularly one that is contrary to the Church's norms and morals.

10. **sexual malfeasance** refers to sexual misconduct committed by one while functioning in relationship to the victim in the context of a ministerial or professional role.

- A. In the context of a professional role relationship, it may occur as a sexual relationship by: a minister of Word and Sacrament with a church member or a congregant; a pastoral counselor in private practice with a client; a pastor with a music director; a youth group leader with a member of the group; a lay employee with a church member; a head of staff with a committee member who may be a lay person, an elder, or a minister of Word and Sacrament; a head of staff with a staff member; a campus minister with a student.
- B. This is especially deleterious to the victim when accompanied by the imposition of secrecy regarding the relationship, and/or the use of spiritual and theological rationale to justify the sexual conduct.

11. **sexual misconduct** is a comprehensive term that refers to all forms of wrongful behavior related to sexuality.

12. **staff** refers to a person who is either an employee or a volunteer sanctioned to perform a function on behalf of GPC.

V. Preventive Procedures

The following procedures are measures to prevent and eliminate any form of sexual misconduct at GPC.

Distribution

01. This policy shall be distributed to all of the following at GPC: clergy, session members, deacons, staff, and all volunteers who work with children within our church.

02. It is the responsibility of those identified in V. 01. above to communicate this policy to, and implement this policy with, volunteers who provide services for GPC.

03. This policy shall be made available to all persons who report or present allegations of sexual misconduct, and to all persons against whom allegations are filed.

Signed acknowledgment of receipt

04. Each commissioned officer, volunteer who works with youth, clergy, and employee at GPC is required to sign a written acknowledgment indicating that they have received, read, understands, and agrees to conduct themselves in accordance with this Policy (see Attachment E).

05. This signed acknowledgment shall be kept in either the person's personnel file or in secured files for their position (Sunday school teachers, etc). Electronic storage of these documents is also allowed.

Disclosure by clergy seeking to serve at GPC

06. All clergy seeking employment at GPC are required to complete the Personnel Information form, as distributed by the Call Referral Services office of the Church, including sexual misconduct information. If any falsehoods or omissions are discovered after application, this could be grounds for disciplinary measures and/or termination of employment.

07. All persons other than clergy who seek to serve GPC as employees or volunteer in leadership positions are required to complete the Minister/Volunteer/Staff Certification (see Attachment E). If any falsehoods or omissions are discovered after application, this could be grounds for disciplinary measures and/or termination of employment.

Responsibility to confirm

08. GPC's Session, or search committee appointed by Session, is responsible for contacting references for prospective clergy or employees who seek to serve GPC.

09. If a reference(s) provides negative information regarding the applicant and sexual misconduct, the applicant shall be informed and given opportunity to submit a response to the information and/or submit additional references.

Mandatory education

10. PGV requires that all clergy serving within its bounds shall complete a Presbytery-sponsored training workshop regarding sexual misconduct in fiduciary relationships.

VI. Intervention Procedures

The following procedures direct the response of GPC upon receipt of either a report or a written allegation of sexual misconduct.

A. Receipt of a written allegation or accusation of sexual misconduct

In accordance with the substantive and procedural requirements of D-10.0100 through D-10.0104, Rules of Discipline, Book of Order, a written allegation or accusation of sexual misconduct shall initiate the disciplinary proceedings of the Church.

A member or staff member of GPC may submit a written statement of allegation or accusation of sexual misconduct. The person may: a) make an accusation against a person covered by this

policy, b) forward information received from any source that an offense may have been committed by a person covered under this policy, or c.) make a self-accusation (D-10.0102, Rules of Discipline, Disciplinary Cases, Book of Order).

Others who are aware of sexual misconduct by a person covered by this policy is encouraged to present information about the misconduct to GPC. Information may be submitted to a Session member, the Head of Staff, the Clerk of Session or the Stated Clerk of Presbytery.

In accordance with the substantive and procedural requirements of D-10.0100 through D-10.0104, Rules of Discipline, Disciplinary Cases, Book of Order, the Session of GPC, the Head of Staff, or the Clerk of Session shall, upon receipt of a written allegation or accusation of sexual misconduct, report to PGV.

Forms that may be used to present an allegation(s) or accusation(s) of sexual misconduct are contained in the Book of Order. While not a formal part of the Church's constitution and therefore not required, these forms are sufficient and acceptable for use by GPC, (see Attachment F)

In the instance of **any submission of written information involving a minor** as defined by New York State law, under the "age of majority" of 18, the individual under jurisdiction of GPC who receives the report shall promptly inform a session member, the Head of Staff or the Clerk of Session AFTER reporting to the civil authorities. Disclosure to, and consultation with, civil authorities is the primary action to be achieved in this instance.

B. Receipt of a report of sexual misconduct

Upon receipt of a report of sexual misconduct within a fiduciary relationship, including a report from an informant(s) based on rumor or hearsay, GPC's Session shall initiate prompt action in accordance with its role and responsibilities (Book of Order, D-10.0106, D-10.0404a).

The action initiated by the Session shall be conducted in a confidential manner (that is, on a need-to-know basis, in contrast to the maintenance of strict privacy). The action initiated shall not be investigatory in nature, nor shall it interfere with the investigatory requirements of the Rules of Discipline, Book of Order, D-10.0200. The action shall express an intercessory role that is undertaken to accomplish three functions: information, initial assessment, and accountability.

The **information function** consists of communicating to the informant(s) the following items:

01. the policy on Sexual Misconduct of GPC;
02. the Rules of Discipline, Book of Order, as the authoritative source describing rights and responsibilities of disciplinary proceedings within the church.
03. basic legal options available to the involved parties.

The **initial assessment function** consists of making a preliminary evaluation of:

01. willingness of the informant (s) to present a report of the behavior reported.
02. reliability of the informant(s);
03. nature of the behavior that is reported to be sexual misconduct;
04. identity of parties involved in, or those significantly affected by this event; and
05. possible violations that may be subject to action by the Church or by civil authorities

The **accountability function** consists of a written report, to be included in the permanent records of the Session, consisting of three items:

01. status of actions to date in regard to the informational and initial assessment functions above;
02. basic options available to involved parties; and
03. recommended course of action, including any actions that may be required. The written report shall be given to the parties involved and shall become part of the personnel files maintained by GPC.

C. False accusation

False accusations that are intentionally made constitute unacceptable conduct and may be subject to ecclesiastical discipline.

D. Separation Practices

In cases of sexual misconduct, the possibilities exist for temporary separation (for example, suspension) and/or permanent separation (for example, resignation, dismissal, or dissolution) between the individual suspected and GPC.

In the case of an employee of GPC, whether salaried or hourly-paid, the applicable portions of this policy shall direct Session's response.

It is the policy of the PGV to require the imposition of automatic administrative leave in all instances involving a teaching elder when a written statement of an alleged offense of 'sexual abuse of another person,' as defined by D-10.0106, Rules of Discipline, Book of Order, has been submitted against the minister and formally filed with the Stated Clerk of PGV.

E. Civil authorities and obligation to cooperate and report

Each person to whom this policy applies shall cooperate with civil authorities in any pertinent misconduct investigations. Church disciplinary proceedings shall not interfere with a criminal investigation by civil authorities.

Each person to whom this policy applies shall follow child abuse and neglect reporting obligations as mandated by New York State Social Services Law, Article 6, Title 6, Sections 412, 413, 415, 419, and 420 (see Attachment B, this policy).

While clergy are not designated as mandated reporters by New York State (see Attachment B, Section 413), GPC recognizes that there are moral and ethical reasons for ministers and others to report child abuse to designated authorities, and acknowledges those reasons may be weighed against confidentiality principles applicable to the circumstances under which the person became aware of the behavior.

In the instance of events regarding child sexual abuse that are beyond the New York State statutes of limitations, any clergy, officer, or other leader at GPC shall promptly inform a member of Session, the Head of Staff, or the Clerk of Session. Disclosure to, and consultation with, civil authorities is the primary action to be achieved.

Clergy, elders, and deacons are expected to comply with Church-mandated abuse reporting provisions in the Book of Order applicable to their office or role: see D-2.0203, D-3.0101, D-10.0404

F. Media contact

Inquiries from the media regarding reported or alleged sexual misconduct shall be directed to the Head of Staff or to a Session member at GPC (585-247-5292).

For the Head of Staff or a Session member, the following principles shall guide media contact:

- be available and cooperate to the extent possible;
- be truthful to the extent possible;
- protect the ability and rights of the agent responsible, whether an ecclesiastical or a civil authority to conduct its investigation or trial;
- protect the privacy of the identified victim(s); and
- protect the person accused's rights to a presumption of innocence and a fair judicial process.

G. Disclosure

The practice of GPC shall be to disclose to an affected congregation the basic facts regarding commission of sexual misconduct, or other related matters.

Consideration of how a disclosure is accomplished shall:

- honor a primary commitment to the truth;
- recognize concerns for privacy and confidentiality;
- respect formal ecclesiastical and/or secular investigations; and
- be consistent with standards for risk management.

The decision of GPC's Session to disclose to its congregation should involve a representative(s) from PGV's Committee on Ministry. The process of designing a congregational disclosure should also involve said representative.

While leadership of a disclosure is the primary responsibility of GPC's session, it should be shared with representation from the PGV.

Attachment A

Ministry as Fiduciary Trust, Fiduciary Power, and Fiduciary Responsibility: Resources for a Conceptual Framework

- Ministry as a fiduciary responsibility entails the use of one's position and authority, or fiduciary power, to serve others.

Scriptures: Isaiah 40:10-11; Mark 10:42-45; Matthew 20:25-26; Luke 4:16-21; Luke 12:48; Luke 22:26; John 13:1-16; Ephesians 4:11-15; James 3:1. Confessions: Second Helvetic Confession, paragraphs 5.163-5.164; Larger Catechism, paragraphs 7.239-7.240.

- Doing harm to those who are vulnerable and for whom one is entrusted to care betrays ministry as a fiduciary trust and responsibility, and is a misuse of fiduciary power.

Scriptures: Jeremiah 23:1-4; Ezekiel 34:1-16; Zechariah 11:15-17. Confessions: Larger Catechism, paragraph 7.261; Confession of 1967, paragraph 9.47d.

- Ministry as a fiduciary trust and responsibility by God's people entails caring for those who are vulnerable.

Scriptures: Deuteronomy 10:17-18; Deuteronomy 26:12-13.

- Misusing one's power for one's own purposes at the expense of another is a betrayal of fiduciary power, trust, and responsibility in ministry.

Scriptures: Judges 11:29-40; 2 Samuel 11-12.

- Ministry is a fiduciary trust from God and the church exercised by those in positions of authority, or fiduciary power, for the benefit of others who are their fiduciary responsibility.

Scriptures: I Timothy 3; Titus 1:5-9; I Peter 5:1-3.

Attachment B

New York State Social Services Law, Article 6, Title 6
[Retrieved 10/18/2019 from the New York State Senate website:
<https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/laws/SOS/A6T6>]

Section 412. Definitions (General definitions)

Definition of Child Abuse [see New York State Family Court Act, Section 1012(e)]

An “abused child” is a child less than eighteen years of age whose parent or other person legally responsible for his care:

- (1) inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon the child serious physical injury, or
- (2) creates or allows to be created a substantial risk of physical injury, or
- (3) commits or allows to be committed against the child a sexual offense as defined in the penal law.

Definition of Child Maltreatment [see New York State Family Court Act, Section 1012(f)]

A “maltreated child” is a child under eighteen years of age who has had serious physical injury inflicted upon him by other than accidental means.

A “maltreated child” is a child under eighteen years of age whose physical, mental or emotional condition has been impaired or is in danger of becoming impaired as a result of the failure of his parent or other person legally responsible for his care to exercise a minimum degree of care:

- (1) in supplying the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, medical or surgical care, though financially able to do so or offered financial or other reasonable means to do so; or
- (2) in providing the child with proper supervision or guardianship; or
- (3) by unreasonable inflicting, or allowing to be inflicted, harm or a substantial risk thereof, including the infliction of excessive corporal punishment; or
- (4) by using a drug or drugs; or
- (5) by using alcoholic beverages to the extent that he loses self-control of his actions; or
- (6) by any other acts of a similarly serious nature requiring the aid of the Family Court.

New York State Social Services Law, Article 6, Title 6

Section 413 (Persons and officials required to report cases of suspected child abuse or maltreatment)

The following persons and officials are required to report or cause a report to be made when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child coming before them in their professional or official capacity is an abused or maltreated child, or when they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is an abused or maltreated child where the parent, guardian, custodian or the person legally responsible for such child comes before them in their professional or official capacity and states from personal knowledge facts, conditions, or circumstances which, if correct, would render the child an abused or neglected child:

any physician; surgeon; medical examiner; coroner; dentist; dental hygienist; osteopath; optometrist; chiropractor; podiatrist; resident; intern; psychologist; registered nurse; hospital personnel engaged in the admission, examination, care or treatment of persons; a Christian Science practitioner; school official; social services worker; day care center worker; provider of family or group family day care; employee or volunteer in a residential care facility defined (in this

chapter) or any other child care or foster care worker; mental health professional; peace officer; police officer; district attorney or assistant district attorney; investigator employed in the office of a district attorney or other law enforcement official...

New York State Social Services Law, Article 6, Title 6

Section 415. Reporting Procedure

Reports of suspected child abuse or maltreatment shall be made immediately by telephone (New York State Child Abuse and Maltreatment Register – 1 (800) 342-3720) and in writing within 48 hours after such oral report.

Written reports shall be made to the appropriate local child protective services on this form (Report of Suspected Child Abuse and Maltreatment, DSS-2221-A).

New York State Social Services Law, Article 6, Title 6

Section 419. Immunity from Liability

Any person, official, or institution participating in good faith in the making of a report, the taking of photographs, or the removal or keeping of a child pursuant to this title shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise result by reason of such actions. For the purpose of any proceeding, civil or criminal, the good faith of any person required to report cases of child abuse or maltreatment shall be presumed.

New York State Social Services Law, Article 6, Title 6

Section 420. Penalties for Failure to Report

1. Any person, official or institution required by this title to report a case of suspected child abuse or maltreatment who willfully fails to do so shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

2. Any person, official or institution required by this title to report a case of suspected child abuse or maltreatment who knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be civilly liable for the damages proximately caused by such failure.

Attachment C

Congregational Disclosure

1. Design

Our Presbytery endorses applying the critical incident stress debriefing model to disclose the basic facts of sexual misconduct and other related matters to an affected congregation. The intent is to implement a design that:

- A. creates a formal directed group process for disclosing potentially disturbing factual information to a congregation;
- B. presents opportunity for individuals to express their reactions to the facts;
- C. identifies implications and consequences of event(s);
- D. permits leadership of the congregation, with support from representatives of Presbytery, to function in a responsible manner.

2. Components

Core components of congregational disclosure include: opening prayer; context; background to event(s); report of known facts; rationale and convictions of Session; questions and answers in relation to reported facts; discussion of reactions and emotions; spiritual reflection; future steps by leadership; concluding prayer. Important factors to be considered in how disclosure is accomplished include:

- A. honoring a primary commitment to the truth;
- B. recognizing concerns for privacy and confidentiality;
- C. respecting formal ecclesiastical and/or secular investigations;
- D. being consistent with standards for risk management.

3. Leadership

The decision-making process by a session to disclose to a congregation should involve a representative(s) from Presbytery's Committee on Ministry. While leadership of the disclosure is the primary responsibility of a session, it should be shared with representation from Presbytery.

Attachment D

Minister / Volunteer / Staff Certification

To be completed by:

- 1) Clergy who are part of the life of GPC, whether retired or staff.
- 2) All persons who seek to serve GPC as staff, deacons, elders and leaders who work with children such as confirmation sponsors, Sunday school teachers, youth group leaders, and work project advisers.

I certify that (a) no ecclesiastical, civil, and/or criminal complaint of sexual misconduct has ever been sustained or is pending against me; (b) I have never resigned or been terminated or suspended from employment or a volunteer position for reasons related to sexual misconduct; and, (c) I have never been required to receive professional treatment for reasons related to sexual misconduct on my part.

NOTE: If you are unable to make the above certification, you may provide a description of the complaint, circumstances of termination, and/or course of professional treatment, giving dates, names, and addresses of employers and/or volunteer supervisors, churches served, and treating professionals, outcome of the situation, and any explanatory comments you care to add. If you provide false or misleading information, or withhold relevant information, you may be removed from consideration.

Release

The information I have provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I hereby authorize GPC to make any and all contacts necessary to verify my prior employment and volunteer history, and to inquire concerning any ecclesiastical records, criminal records, or any judicial proceedings involving me as a defendant. By means of this release, I also authorize any previous employer, volunteer supervisor, and any ecclesiastical or law enforcement agencies or judicial authorities to release any and all requested relevant information to GPC's Head of Staff or the Personnel Committee. I have read this release and understand fully that the information obtained may be used to deny me employment or any other type of position from the employing or supervising entity.

Signature

Date

Witness Signature

Date

Attachment E

Acknowledgement of Receipt

I hereby acknowledge that on **(date)** _____ I received a copy of the Policy on Sexual Misconduct of Gates Presbyterian Church, Presbytery of Genesee Valley, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. By my signature below I further acknowledge; that I have read the policy; that I understand its meaning; and that I agree to conduct myself in accordance with the policy. I understand that this acknowledgment shall be retained in church files.

Signature

Date

Print Name

Relationship to GPC: (check one)

Clergy

Elder or Deacon

Volunteer

Employee

This Attachment **must be signed** and returned by all clergy, staff, officers, and volunteers who work with children.

Please complete, sign, and return to:
Gates Presbyterian Church
1049 Wegman Road
Rochester NY 14624

Please retain a copy of this page for your records.

Attachment F

Report of Suspected Sexual Misconduct

Reported by:

Name _____ Title (if applicable) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Date of Report: _____

Person suspected of misconduct:

Name _____ Title (if applicable) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Other person(s) involved (witness or victims):

Name _____ Title (if applicable) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Name _____ Title (if applicable) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Gates Presbyterian Church

Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy

Introduction

Gates Presbyterian Church (the “Church”) is committed to maintaining a workplace free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a form of workplace discrimination. All employees are required to work in a manner that prevents sexual harassment in the workplace. This policy is one component of the Church’s commitment to a discrimination-free work environment. Sexual harassment is against the law.¹ All employees have a legal right to a workplace free from sexual harassment and employees are urged to report sexual harassment by filing a complaint internally with the Church. Employees can also file a complaint with a government agency or in court under federal, state or local antidiscrimination laws.

Policy

1. The Church policy applies to all employees, applicants for employment, interns, whether paid or unpaid, contractors and persons conducting business, regardless of immigration status, with the Church. In the remainder of this document, the term “*employees*” refers to this collective group.
2. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Any employee or individual covered by this policy who engages in sexual harassment or retaliation will be subject to remedial and/or disciplinary action (e.g., counseling, suspension, termination).
3. Retaliation Prohibition: No person covered by this policy shall be subject to adverse action because the employee reports an incident of sexual harassment, provides information, or otherwise assists in any investigation of a sexual harassment complaint. The Church will not tolerate such retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, reports or provides information about suspected sexual harassment. Any employee of the Church who retaliates against anyone involved in a sexual harassment investigation will be subjected to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. All employees, paid or unpaid interns, or non-employees² working in the workplace who believe they have been subject to such retaliation should inform the Head of Staff, Personnel Committee or Session. All employees, paid or unpaid interns or non-employees who believe they have been a target of such retaliation may also seek relief in other available forums, as explained below in the “Legal Protections” section.
4. Sexual harassment is offensive, is a violation of our policies, is unlawful, and may subject the Church to liability for harm to targets of sexual harassment. Harassers may also be individually subject to liability. Employees of every level who engage in sexual harassment, including pastors and church officers who engage in sexual harassment or who allow such behavior to continue, will be penalized for such misconduct.

¹ While this policy specifically addresses sexual harassment, harassment because of and discrimination against persons of all protected classes is prohibited. In New York State, such classes include age, race, creed, color, national origin, sexual orientation, military status, sex, disability, marital status, domestic violence victim status, gender identity and criminal history.

² A non-employee is someone who is (or is employed by) a contractor, subcontractor, vendor, consultant, or anyone providing services in the workplace. Protected non-employees include persons commonly referred to as independent contractors, “gig” workers and temporary workers. Also included are persons providing equipment repair, cleaning services or any other services provided pursuant to a contract with the employer.

5. The Church will conduct a prompt and thorough investigation that ensures due process for all parties, whenever the Head of Staff, Personnel Committee or Session receives a complaint about sexual harassment, or otherwise knows of possible sexual harassment occurring. The Church will keep the investigation confidential to the extent possible. Effective corrective action will be taken whenever sexual harassment is found to have occurred. All employees, including pastors and church officers, are required to cooperate with any internal investigation of sexual harassment.
6. All employees are encouraged to report any harassment or behaviors that violate this policy. The Church will provide all employees a complaint form for employees to report harassment and file complaints (see Appendix A).
7. Head of Staff, Personnel Committee and Session are **required** to report any complaint that they receive, or any harassment that they observe or become aware of.
8. This policy **applies to** all employees, paid or unpaid interns, and non-employees (such as contractors, subcontractors, vendors, consultants who provide services in the workplace) and all must follow and uphold this policy. This policy must be provided to all employees and should be posted prominently in all work locations to the extent practicable and be provided to employees upon hiring.
9. The Session of the Church has determined the definition of “non-employee” for this policy shall include those who are included in the New York State regulation definition, which is: “ individuals who volunteer or donate their services, usually on a part time basis, for public service, religious or humanitarian objectives, not as employees and without compensation or pay, and are not considered employees of the religious, charitable or similar non-profit organizations that receive their services.” (adopted at Session meeting on June 17, 2019)

What Is “Sexual Harassment”?

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is unlawful under federal, state, and (where applicable) local law. Sexual harassment includes harassment on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, self-identified or perceived sex, gender expression, gender identity and the status of being transgender.

Sexual harassment is unlawful when it subjects an individual to inferior terms, conditions or privileges of employment. Harassment need not be severe or pervasive to be unlawful. It may be any harassing conduct that consists of more than petty slights or trivial inconveniences.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome conduct which is either of a sexual nature, or which is directed at an individual because of that individual’s sex when:

- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, even if the reporting individual is not the intended target of the sexual harassment;
- Such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; or
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting an individual’s employment.

A sexually harassing hostile work environment includes, but is not limited to, words, signs, jokes, pranks, intimidation, or physical violence which are of a sexual nature, or which are directed at an individual because of that individual's sex. Sexual harassment also consists of any unwanted verbal or physical advances, sexually explicit derogatory statements or sexually discriminatory remarks made by someone which are offensive or objectionable to the recipient, which cause the recipient discomfort or humiliation, which interfere with the recipient's job performance.

Sexual harassment also occurs when a person in authority tries to trade job benefits for sexual favors. This can include hiring, promotion, continued employment or any other terms, conditions or privileges of employment. This is also called "quid pro quo" harassment.

Any employee who feels harassed should report so that any violation of this policy can be corrected promptly. Any harassing conduct, even a single incident, can be addressed under this policy.

Examples of Sexual Harassment

The following describes some of the types of acts that may be unlawful sexual harassment and that are strictly prohibited:

- Physical acts of a sexual nature, such as:
 - Touching, pinching, patting, kissing, hugging, grabbing, brushing against another employee's body or poking another employee's body;
 - Rape, sexual battery, molestation or attempts to commit these assaults.
- Unwanted sexual advances or propositions, such as:
 - Requests for sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning the target's job performance evaluation, a promotion or other job benefits or detriments;
 - Subtle or obvious pressure for unwelcome sexual activities.
- Sexually oriented gestures, noises, remarks or jokes, or comments about a person's sexuality or sexual experience, which create a hostile work environment.
- Sex stereotyping occurs when conduct or personality traits are considered inappropriate simply because they may not conform to other people's ideas or perceptions about how individuals of a particular sex should act or look.
- Sexual or discriminatory displays or publications anywhere in the workplace, such as:
 - Displaying pictures, posters, calendars, graffiti, objects, promotional material, reading materials or other materials that are sexually demeaning or pornographic. This includes such sexual displays on workplace computers or cell phones and sharing such displays while in the workplace.
- Hostile actions taken against an individual because of that individual's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and the status of being transgender, such as:
 - Interfering with, destroying or damaging a person's workstation, tools or equipment, or otherwise interfering with the individual's ability to perform the job;
 - Sabotaging an individual's work;
 - Bullying, yelling, name-calling.

Who can be a target of Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment can occur between any individuals, regardless of their sex or gender. New York Law protects employees, paid or unpaid interns, and non-employees, including independent contractors, and those employed by companies contracting to provide services in the workplace. Harassers can be a superior, a subordinate, a coworker or anyone in the workplace including an independent contractor, contract worker, vendor, client, customer or visitor.

Where can sexual harassment occur?

Unlawful sexual harassment is not limited to the physical workplace itself. It can occur while employees are traveling for business or at employer sponsored events or parties. Calls, texts, emails, and social media usage by employees can constitute unlawful workplace harassment, even if they occur away from the workplace premises, on personal devices or during non-work hours.

Retaliation

Unlawful retaliation can be any action that could discourage a worker from coming forward to make or support a sexual harassment claim. Adverse action need not be job-related or occur in the workplace to constitute unlawful retaliation (e.g., threats of physical violence outside of work hours).

Such retaliation is unlawful under federal, state, and (where applicable) local law. The New York State Human Rights Law protects any individual who has engaged in “protected activity.” Protected activity occurs when a person has:

- made a complaint of sexual harassment, either internally or with any anti-discrimination agency;
- testified or assisted in a proceeding involving sexual harassment under the Human Rights Law or other anti-discrimination law;
- opposed sexual harassment by making a verbal or informal complaint to, or by simply informing the Head of Staff, Personnel Committee or Session, of the harassment;
- reported that another employee has been sexually harassed; or
- encouraged a fellow employee to report harassment.

Even if the alleged harassment does not turn out to rise to the level of a violation of law, the individual is protected from retaliation if the person had a good faith belief that the practices were unlawful. However, the retaliation provision is not intended to protect persons making intentionally false charges of harassment.

Reporting Sexual Harassment

Preventing sexual harassment is everyone’s responsibility. The Church cannot prevent or remedy sexual harassment unless it knows about it. Any employee, paid or unpaid intern or non-employee who has been subjected to behavior that may constitute sexual harassment is encouraged to report such behavior to the Head of Staff, Personnel Committee or Session. Anyone who witnesses or becomes aware of potential instances of sexual harassment should report such behavior to the Head of Staff, Personnel Committee or Session.

Reports of sexual harassment may be made verbally or in writing. A form for submission of a written complaint is attached to this policy. All employees are encouraged to use this complaint form. Employees who are reporting sexual harassment on behalf of other employees should use this complaint form and note that it is on another employee's behalf.

Employees, paid or unpaid interns or non-employees who believe they have been a target of sexual harassment may also seek assistance in other available forums, as explained below in the section on Legal Protections.

Supervisory Responsibilities

If any member of staff or any officer of the church receives a complaint or information about suspected sexual harassment, observes what may be sexually harassing behavior, or for any reason suspect that sexual harassment is occurring, **they are required** to report such suspected sexual harassment to the Head of Staff, Personnel Committee or Session.

In addition to being subject to discipline if they engaged in sexually harassing conduct themselves, staff or officers will be subject to discipline for failing to report suspected sexual harassment or otherwise knowingly allowing sexual harassment to continue.

Staff or officers will also be subject to discipline for engaging in any retaliation.

Complaint and Investigation of Sexual Harassment

All complaints or information about sexual harassment will be investigated, whether that information was reported in verbal or written form. Investigations will be conducted in a timely manner and will be confidential to the extent possible.

An investigation of any complaint, information or knowledge of suspected sexual harassment will be prompt and thorough, commenced immediately and completed as soon as possible. The investigation will be kept confidential to the extent possible. All persons involved, including complainants, witnesses and alleged harassers will be accorded due process, as outlined below, to protect their rights to a fair and impartial investigation.

Any employee may be required to cooperate as needed in an investigation of suspected sexual harassment. The Church will not tolerate retaliation against employees who file complaints, support another's complaint or participate in an investigation regarding a violation of this policy.

While the process may vary from case to case, investigations should be done in accordance with the following steps:

- Upon receipt of complaint, the Head of Staff or Personnel Committee or Session will conduct an immediate review of the allegations, and take any interim actions (e.g., instructing the respondent to refrain from communications with the complainant), as appropriate. If complaint is verbal, encourage the individual to complete the "Complaint Form" in writing. If he or she refuses, prepare a Complaint Form based on the verbal reporting.
- If documents, emails, or phone records are relevant to the investigation, take steps to obtain and preserve them.
- Request and review all relevant documents, including all electronic communications.

- Interview all parties involved, including any relevant witnesses;
- Create a written documentation of the investigation (such as a letter, memo or email), which contains the following:
 - A list of all documents reviewed, along with a detailed summary of relevant documents;
 - A list of names of those interviewed, along with a detailed summary of their statements;
 - A timeline of events;
 - A summary of prior relevant incidents, reported or unreported; and
 - The basis for the decision and final resolution of the complaint, together with any corrective action(s).
- Keep the written documentation and associated documents in a secure and confidential location.
- Promptly notify the individual who reported and the individual(s) about whom the complaint was made of the final determination and implement any corrective actions identified in the written document.
- Inform the individual who reported of the right to file a complaint or charge externally as outlined in the next section.

Legal Protections and External Remedies

Sexual harassment is not only prohibited by the Church but is also prohibited by state, federal, and, where applicable, local law.

Aside from the internal process at the Church, employees may also choose to pursue legal remedies with the following governmental entities. While a private attorney is not required to file a complaint with a governmental agency, you may seek the legal advice of an attorney.

In addition to those outlined below, employees in certain industries may have additional legal protections.

State Human Rights Law (HRL)

The Human Rights Law (HRL), codified as N.Y. Executive Law, art. 15, § 290 et seq., applies to all employers in New York State with regard to sexual harassment, and protects employees, paid or unpaid interns and non-employees, regardless of immigration status. A complaint alleging violation of the Human Rights Law may be filed either with the Division of Human Rights (DHR) or in New York State Supreme Court.

Complaints with DHR may be filed any time **within three years** of the harassment. If an individual did not file at DHR, they can sue directly in state court under the HRL, **within three years** of the alleged sexual harassment. An individual may not file with DHR if they have already filed a HRL complaint in state court.

Complaining internally to the Church does not extend your time to file with DHR or in court. The three years is counted from date of the most recent incident of harassment.

You do not need an attorney to file a complaint with DHR, and there is no cost to file with DHR.

DHR will investigate your complaint and determine whether there is probable cause to believe that sexual harassment has occurred. Probable cause cases are forwarded to a public hearing before an administrative law judge. If sexual harassment is found after a hearing, DHR has the power to award relief, which varies but may include requiring your employer to take action to stop the harassment, or redress the damage caused, including paying of monetary damages, attorney's fees and civil fines.

DHR's main office contact information is: NYS Division of Human Rights, One Fordham Plaza, Fourth Floor, Bronx, New York 10458. You may call (888) 392-3644 or visit: www.dhr.ny.gov.

Contact DHR at (888) 392-3644 or visit dhr.ny.gov/complaint for more information about filing a complaint. The website has a complaint form that can be downloaded, filled out, notarized and mailed to DHR. The website also contains contact information for DHR's regional offices across New York State.

Civil Rights Act of 1964

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces federal anti-discrimination laws, including Title VII of the 1964 federal Civil Rights Act (codified as 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq.). An individual can file a complaint with the EEOC anytime within 300 days from the harassment. There is no cost to file a complaint with the EEOC. The EEOC will investigate the complaint and determine whether there is reasonable cause to believe that discrimination has occurred, at which point the EEOC will issue a Right to Sue letter permitting the individual to file a complaint in federal court.

The EEOC does not hold hearings or award relief but may take other action including pursuing cases in federal court on behalf of complaining parties. Federal courts may award remedies if discrimination is found to have occurred. In general, private employers must have at least 15 employees to come within the jurisdiction of the EEOC.

An employee alleging discrimination at work can file a "Charge of Discrimination." The EEOC has district, area, and field offices where complaints can be filed. Contact the EEOC by calling 1-800-669-4000 (TTY: 1-800-669-6820), visiting their website at www.eeoc.gov or via email at info@eeoc.gov.

If an individual filed an administrative complaint with DHR, DHR will file the complaint with the EEOC to preserve the right to proceed in federal court.

Local Protections

Many localities enforce laws protecting individuals from sexual harassment and discrimination. An individual should contact the county, city or town in which they live to find out if such a law exists.

Contact the Local Police Department

If the harassment involves unwanted physical touching, coerced physical confinement or coerced sex acts, the conduct may constitute a crime. Contact the local police department.

Appendix A – Sexual Harassment Complaint Form

Adopted by Session: November 2021

Revised and Approved by Session: November 22, 2022

Appendix A

Sexual Harassment Complaint Form

New York State Labor Law requires all employers to adopt a sexual harassment prevention policy that includes a complaint form to report alleged incidents of sexual harassment.

If you believe that you have been subjected to sexual harassment, you are encouraged to complete this form and submit it to the Head of Staff or Personnel Committee. If you are not comfortable with notifying either of them, then please submit it to the Session of the church. You will not be retaliated against for filing a complaint. The Office Manager of the church can help direct you to any of these people.

If you are more comfortable reporting verbally or in another manner, the Head of Staff (or Personnel Committee chairperson or Clerk of Session) should complete this form, provide you with a copy and follow the Church's sexual harassment prevention policy by investigating the claims as outlined in the next section.

Instructions to be followed by the Church

Upon receipt of a complaint about alleged sexual harassment, the process will follow the church's sexual harassment prevention policy.

An investigation involves:

- Speaking with the employee
- Speaking with the alleged harasser
- Interviewing witnesses
- Collecting and reviewing any related documents

While the process may vary from case to case, all allegations should be investigated promptly and resolved as quickly as possible. The investigation should be kept confidential to the extent possible.

Document the findings of the investigation and basis for your decision along with any corrective actions taken and notify the employee and the individual(s) against whom the complaint was made. This may be done via email.

COMPLAINANT INFORMATION

Name: _____ Job Title: _____
Address: _____ Phone: _____
_____ E-mail: _____

Select Preferred Communication Method: E-mail Phone In-person

COMPLAINT INFORMATION

1. Your complaint of Sexual Harassment is made about:

Name: _____ Job Title: _____
Address: _____ Phone: _____
_____ E-mail: _____

Other: _____

Relationship to you: Supervisor Subordinate Co-Worker _____

2. Please describe what happened and how it is affecting you and your work. Please use additional sheets of paper if necessary and attach any relevant documents or evidence.

3. Date(s) sexual harassment occurred: _____

Is the sexual harassment continuing? Yes No

4. Please list the name and contact information of any witnesses or individuals who may have information related to your complaint:

Continued on next page...

The last question is optional but may help the investigation.

5. Have you previously complained or provided information (verbal or written) about related incidents? If yes, when and to whom did you complain or provide information?

If you have retained legal counsel and would like us to work with them, please provide their contact information:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Gates Presbyterian Church

Child Safety Policy

Recommended Practices

The following procedures are measures to ensure child safety and eliminate opportunities for misconduct against children and should be followed during all GPC activities with children. Any person under the age of 18 is considered a child.

1. At no point should an adult be alone with an unrelated child, even when traveling to an event or using the bathroom. Ways to permit confidentiality or privacy without sacrificing safety are listed in point five.
2. There must be at least a five-year age difference between leaders and children. There will be no more than five children to each Child Care Provider for children under 10. There may be eight children to each leader / Child Care Provider for children between 10 and 18.
3. All indoor activity rooms must have doors with windows. Window shades and/or doors are to be open whenever possible.
4. Confidential discussions with minors shall be conducted with open doors or a door with a clear window, at times when others will be nearby and aware, or in a public location such as a restaurant.
5. Records should be kept of any private online contact or text messaging between an adult and a minor. If a record cannot be kept, this medium is inappropriate for using with minors. Public methods of communication are encouraged or including a parent on any message.
6. Parents must notify supervising adults if their children have food allergies or serious medical conditions. Medication provided by parents will be kept in an area which is easily accessible to the child in question and supervisors, but not other children.
7. Technology will not be used to bully others or view or send explicit material.
8. If an employee or volunteer suspects that a child may be in danger or abused in another context, they should contact the appropriate authorities (see Appendix A).

If any of these guidelines are violated, participants may be sent home immediately at their own cost, and an appropriate replacement supervisor should be found if needed. If there is any suspicion of sexual misconduct, a formal complaint should be lodged, and disciplinary actions will be taken as appropriate (see GPC's Sexual Misconduct Policy).

Distribution and Scope

1. This policy applies to all GPC clergy, staff, and volunteers who work with children. It should be reviewed and updated as needed by the GPC Session every three years.
2. This policy shall be distributed to all people who work with children at GPC, including but not limited to: childcare providers, youth group leaders, youth work project advisers, confirmation sponsors, clergy, choir directors, RAP teachers, and Sunday school teachers.
3. Each recipient is required to sign a written acknowledgment indicating that they have received, read, understand, and agree to conduct themselves in accordance with this Policy (see Attachment B). This signed acknowledgment shall be kept at GPC.
4. It is the responsibility of those identified above to communicate this policy to and implement this policy with others who provide services for GPC (work project host sites, etc.).
5. The Session of GPC requires that all GPC clergy, staff, and volunteers who work with children be provided with this Child Safety Policy on an annual basis prior to or as near as possible to the beginning of the program year in September. A signed copy of the Acknowledgment of

Receipt form is to be kept on file at GPC either in a file or as a digital copy. In addition, a signed background check authorization form will be required.

Intervention Procedures

The following procedures direct the response of GPC upon receipt of either a report or a written allegation of any misconduct against children.

A. Report of an allegation of misconduct against children

1. A written allegation or accusation of misconduct shall initiate the disciplinary proceedings of GPC. Any person may submit a written allegation of misconduct against children. The person may make an accusation against a person covered by this policy, forward information received from any source that an offense may have been committed by a person covered by this policy or make a self-accusation. This information may be submitted to the Clerk of Session, a member of the Personnel Team, or GPC clergy.
2. In the instance of any submission of written information involving a minor, the person who receives the report shall promptly inform the Clerk of Session, chair of the Personnel Team, and GPC clergy. Disclosure to civil authorities is required if there is an allegation that an illegal action (such as child abuse or neglect) has occurred.

B. Evaluation of a report

1. Upon receipt of a report of misconduct against children, the report shall be evaluated by the Session or another team consisting of session members, clergy, and personnel, youth, or young children's team members as appropriate.
2. This evaluation shall be conducted with confidentiality; information will be shared on a need-to-know basis. The evaluation group will work to gather information about the incident, determine accountability, and make recommendations for ensuring child safety in the future.
3. The group will assess the nature of the behavior that is reported, the people involved or significantly affected by this event, and any possible violations that may be subject to action by the Session or by civil authorities.
4. After the assessment, the group will determine if further action is needed, such as referring the report to other authorities, disclosing the incident, taking disciplinary action, requiring administrative leave, or limiting future interactions of involved adults with children. Disclosure will be truthful, recognize concerns for confidentiality, and respect formal investigations.
5. A written report will be filed with the Session, with the status of actions to date in regard to the procedure above, including actions recommended or required by the committee. The written report shall also be given to the parties involved.

Approved: September 16, 2019

Revised: November 21, 2022
Approved by Session: November 22, 2022

Attachment A

Resources for Reporting Misconduct Against Children

Reports of suspected child abuse or maltreatment or a child is in danger shall be made immediately by telephone to the New York State Child Abuse and Maltreatment Register at **1-800-342-3720** (24 hours/day, 7 days/week). Refer to the website: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/cps>

Reports of violating this policy shall also be made to the Clerk of Session, GPC clergy, a member of Session, or a member of the Personnel Committee as appropriate. This person will make sure that an evaluation of the claim is made, and appropriate action is taken. Making a report to GPC does not exempt a person from also making a report of child abuse to the civil authorities.

If a person is not certain whether they should report to the civil authorities, they should call Bivona Child Advocacy Center (Monroe County) to evaluate the situation at **585-935-7800**. All calls are confidential. Refer to the website: <https://www.bivonacac.org>

This help line is available for any congregation in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 24 hours/day and 7 days/week, and is staffed by Praesidium, Inc. (based in Arlington, Texas): Abuse Prevention Helpline **1-866-607-7233** (SAFE)

For information regarding the **Abuse Prevention Helpline** and other services available to PC(U.S.A.) congregations:
<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/Is-Your-Church-Safe-Brochure.pdf>

Attachment B

Acknowledgment of Receipt

I hereby acknowledge that I received a copy of the GPC Child Safety Policy. I have read the policy, understand its meaning, and agree to conduct myself in accordance with the policy.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____ *Date:* _____

Relationship to GPC: (check one)

- Clergy
- Employee
- Volunteer

Please complete, sign, and return to Gates Presbyterian Church.

Gates Presbyterian Church

Personnel Manual

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10/2018

Revised

Adopted by Session: June 2020

SECTION I: General Employment Policies

Introduction

This manual contains policies, procedures and benefits associated with employment at Gates Presbyterian Church. Those policies, procedures and benefits that apply only to clergy are not included in this handbook. For questions re: clergy, see the Board of Pensions website. These policies and benefits are reviewed periodically and amended as appropriate.

Any questions regarding employment policies or benefits should be directed to the Head of Staff and/or the Chair of the Personnel Committee.

Employment Procedure

Gates Presbyterian Church is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Employees are selected on the basis of qualifications for the job with reference to education and training, experience, aptitude, attitude, and ability.

All open positions are advertised in the Harbinger and via other channels as appropriate to the specific position to be filled. Job descriptions are available from the Personnel Committee or the Head of Staff. Resumes and applications will be received by the Personnel Committee or in the church office.

All staff members, with the exception of the pastors and custodians are hired by Session. The Pastors are called by the congregation. Custodians are hired by the Trustees in collaboration with the Personnel Committee.

The Personnel Committee reviews applications and resumes and assembles church members to form a search committee, appropriate for the position to be filled. Before a job offer is made, references are verified. Final approval of candidates recommended by the Personnel Committee is provided by Session for all but clergy and custodial positions.

Upon employment the new staff member is given a copy of the GPC Personnel Employee Manual, the appropriate job description, a Letter of Intent, and any other material pertinent to the position. The Personnel Committee notifies the church office and the Treasurer of new hires.

Employment at Gates Presbyterian Church is employment at will. This means GPC or the employee may terminate the employment relationship at any time. Policies and procedures may change from time to time as appropriate. If there are any questions concerning these policies or procedures, please contact the Chair of the Personnel Committee or Head of Staff.

Employment at Gates Presbyterian Church is employment at will. This means GPC or the employee may terminate the employment relationship at any time.

Policies and procedures may change from time to time as appropriate. If there are any questions concerning these policies or procedures, please contact the Chair of the Personnel Committee or Head of Staff.

Required Documentation for Employment

- **Social Security**

Social Security Law requires the employer to maintain a file of the current Social Security number, marital status, and address of each employee. To enable compliance with this

regulation all employees are required to provide this information at the time of hire. If an employee's name, address, or marital status changes after he/she is employed, the employee should notify the Church office immediately.

- **Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9)**

In compliance with U.S. Immigration laws and The Homeland Security Act of 2002, all employers must verify the identity and employment authorization of each person hired after November 6, 1986. Those who may legally work in the United States are citizens and nationals of the United States, lawful permanent residents, and aliens authorized to work. A copy of the I-9 form can be found in the appendix to this document. (Ref: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website: www.uscis.gov)

- **Background Check**

The Sexual Misconduct Policy requires that all GPC employees, and all volunteers who work with young children and teenagers undergo background checks to determine any history of inappropriate or unlawful conduct that may compromise the successful completion of their job/volunteer duties.

Performance Reviews

Performance Reviews of each staff member are completed annually. There are several components to the review process;

Primary responsibility for completion of the Performance Review document (see appendix) for each employee/staff position is as outlined below: It is recommended that input be solicited from members who interact regularly with each employee.

Pastor/Head of Staff for those positions listed below:

Office Manager	Financial Secretary
Custodian	Adult Choir Director
Junior Choir Director	Youth Choir Director
Bell Choir Director	Organist
Treasurer	

The Staff Interview Guidelines (see appendix) should be provided to each employee two to three weeks prior to Performance Review meetings. The intent of this document is to involve the employee in the review process and to provide an opportunity to offer any suggestions and/or raise any issues they might have.

Employees should be encouraged to review and prepare responses to the questions provided. The Interview Guidelines are also intended for use by the Head of Staff or Associate Pastor and representative(s) of the Personnel Committee in preparation for the Review Meeting with each employee.

Once the Performance Review document is complete, meetings are scheduled to present the review to each employee and to discuss the topics from the Interview Guidelines document.

The minimum number of attendees for each meeting should include the employee, the Head of Staff and one representative from the Personnel Committee. Participation of relevant committee members is acceptable.

All reviews, self-evaluation forms, and interviews are considered confidential. The Personnel Committee reviews only those matters needing resolution by the Committee.

Appeals Process

Gates Presbyterian Church aims to maintain good working relationships among its staff. The goal is to affirm the importance of each individual and his/her contribution to the work being done, to encourage mutual respect of employee and supervisor, to provide prompt answers to questions, to minimize misunderstandings, and to seek resolutions of differences as quickly as possible.

When possible and appropriate, questions and/or concerns should be first discussed with the Head of Staff.

Formal Appeals Procedure

If resolution of the complaint is not provided after a discussion with the Head of Staff, the complainant may present a formal appeal in writing to the Chair of the Personnel Committee. Copies of all written complaints shall be provided to the Head of Staff within 30 days from the time of appeal. Upon receipt of the appeal the following steps shall be taken:

1. After consultation with the Head of Staff and the complainant, the Personnel Committee shall review its findings with respect to the appeal and shall then give its decision in writing within 30 days from the time the appeal was received.
2. If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision from the Personnel Committee, the complainant may file in writing an appeal within 15 days to the Clerk of Session and request that the problem be discussed by Session.
3. Session will follow the same procedure as the Personnel Committee. Decision of Session must be put in writing and a copy given to all parties involved within two working days following the next regularly scheduled Session meeting. The letter shall contain a provision for the complainant to indicate his/her acceptance of the decision. The decision of the Session is final.

***THERE WILL BE NO RECRIMINATION OR DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST ANY EMPLOYEE WHO FILES A COMPLAINT OR PROBLEM.***

Termination

Termination of any employee must be approved by Session. Listed below are some examples of possible reasons for immediate termination:

- Verbal or physical abuse
- Verbal threats
- Conviction under any criminal code of law
- Falsification or omission of information given for personnel records
- Dishonesty/theft
- Misconduct
- Repeated absenteeism or lateness
- No Call/No Show for scheduled hours

Listed below are examples of possible reasons that Session may approve a future termination.

- Inability to meet performance standards
- Cutbacks due to budgetary concerns
- Other circumstances arising that are not the fault of the employee

At the time the employee is notified of the termination, the date of termination and pay will be addressed. Such pay will be given at the discretion of Session.

Voluntary Resignation

Resigning employees are asked to give a minimum of two weeks written notice.

Vacation paid at termination will be prorated based on the number of months worked in the current calendar year.

Exit Interview

A final exit interview by the Head of Staff and/or a member of the Personnel Committee shall be granted every employee leaving the employ of Gates Presbyterian Church.

Reporting Absence

An employee should telephone the appropriate person the day prior to an absence whenever possible. (For some employees, more specific details are contained in their job descriptions.)

SECTION II: Salary Administration

Payroll

- GPC payroll is established on a bi-weekly basis. The pay period for hourly employees begins on Monday and ends on Sunday. All employees are paid on Friday.
- Currently, pay may be delivered via a check or direct deposit.
- In January of each year the Session approves any changes in wage rates via budget approval. Any raises are retroactive to January 1st of that year.

Time Records

Employees in those positions for which compensation is calculated on an hourly basis record their hours on time sheets. Time sheets are submitted to the church treasurer on a bi-weekly basis for use in processing of payroll. Time sheets are kept on file with the payroll reports for a minimum of five (5) but no longer than seven (7) years.

Payroll Deductions

Normally there are 26 pay periods per year. Certain deductions are made from each paycheck as required by law. These deductions include, but are not limited to, Federal Income Tax, FICA, and New York State Income Tax.

SECTION III: Benefits

New York State Disability and Paid Family Leave

Gates Presbyterian Church carries Disability Insurance in compliance with New York State law. Disability Insurance provides an employee who suffers loss of wages due to illness or injury that occurs away from the job, 50 percent of average weekly wages up to the statutory maximum. Benefits are payable from the eighth calendar day of disability or following the last day of sick pay as specified in the individual's job description. In order to collect NYS Disability a medical provider has to certify the extent of the illness or injury on a form provided by the insurance company and available by contacting the church office.

Paid Family Leave is employee funded insurance that provides job-protected, paid time off to:

- Bond with a newly born, or adopted or fostered child;
 - Care for a family member with a serious health condition; or
 - Assist loved ones when a family member is called to active military service abroad.
- The employee may contact a member of the Personnel Committee or the Head of Staff for further information.

Workers' Compensation

In accordance with the laws of New York State, Gates Presbyterian Church provides coverage under the Worker's Compensation Laws of the State of New York for injuries or accidents sustained on the job. This coverage is provided at no cost to the employee. All accidents must be reported to the Head of Staff or to the Personnel Committee **within 24 hours** unless the employee is physically unable to do so. In that case, a report should be made as soon as possible.

Health Care Insurance

Gates Presbyterian Church does not provide health insurance for employees other than clergy.

FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act)

Gates Presbyterian Church is not subject to the regulations associated with FMLA. Organizations that employ fewer than 50 people are exempt from compliance to FMLA regulations and guidelines. (Ref: U.S. Dept. of Labor website, www.dol.gov)

Maternity Policy

Maternity leave should be provided to female clergy following the birth of a child.

Leave should be provided in the following way:

- eight (8) weeks at full compensation (including salary and housing), and
- vacation time may be taken in addition to the 8 weeks maternity leave extending the leave to twelve (12) weeks paid time off.

Maternity/Paternity Policy

Maternity or paternity leave should be provided to female or male clergy following the adoption of a child.

Leave should be provided in the following way:

- two (2) weeks at full compensation (including salary and housing), and
- vacation time may be taken in addition to the 2 weeks maternity/paternity leave extending the leave to six (6) weeks paid time off.

In each instance, the Session is responsible for providing pulpit supply

Leave of Absence

The Head of Staff and the Personnel Committee will consider a request for a leave of absence on a case-by-case basis. Requests for leaves of absence including implications to pay will be determined by Session.

Death in the Family

Staff members are eligible to receive up to three days of paid leave in the event of the death of a family member (spouse/partner, child, parent, or sibling). This paid leave is in effect for three days of absence for the employee's scheduled work hours from the day of death, or as arranged with the Head of Staff, with notification to Session. In the event that the Head of Staff is unavailable, arrangements should be made with the Personnel Committee Chairperson. This policy applies to both full- and part-time employees.

Jury Duty

GPC will pay the difference between jury duty pay and the employee's regular pay when jury duty results in loss of wages.

Training

The Head of Staff and the Personnel Committee will consider training requests involving time away from normal duties and/or tuition expense on a case-by-case basis and as budget allows.

Retirement

Gates Presbyterian Church does not maintain a pension plan nor offer any other retirement benefits for employees other than clergy.

SECTION IV: Employee's Responsibilities

Code of Conduct

All employees are to treat other staff members, members of Gates Presbyterian Church, and visitors with courtesy and respect at all times.

Confidentiality Policy & Agreement

In order to effectively serve and support the Ministry and Mission of Gates Presbyterian Church, we must ensure that the operations, activities, and affairs of Gates Presbyterian Church, our congregants and our staff are kept confidential to the greatest possible extent. If, during their employment, employees acquire confidential information relating to any of the above, such information shall be held in the strictest confidence and not discussed outside of the realm of the employee's stated responsibilities.

Employees will be asked to sign a statement agreeing to the confidentiality policy at the time they are hired and periodically throughout their term of employment acknowledging their awareness of, and reaffirming their commitment to, this Policy.

Employees found to be in violation of this Policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

By my signature below, I confirm that I have read and understand the GPC Confidentiality Policy and I agree to act in accordance with this Policy.

Signature

Date

Security

All employees should keep personal valuables out of sight and locked up, be alert to who else is in the building, and check and lock all exit doors when the employee is the last person to leave the building.

Fire Prevention

The employee should know where the fire alarms are located. In case of fire, the employee should leave immediately and call 911.

Background Check

GPC seeks to be a welcoming community where all of God's children have the opportunity to exist in a safe and loving environment. In 2011, the Session of GPC adopted a sexual misconduct policy, as part of our manual of operations for the purpose of keeping everyone safe. Implementing a procedure of conducting annual background checks is one way to achieve that.

Any potentially relevant personal information gained through this process may be shared with members of the Personnel Committee and pastoral staff, and if needed, with chairs of the Young Children and Youth Committees.

SECTION V: Rules & Regulations

Harassment

Gates Presbyterian Church (GPC) is committed to maintaining a worship, fellowship, work, and educational environment that is free of discrimination and/or harassment of any kind. In keeping with this commitment, GPC will not tolerate discrimination against, or harassment of, GPC employees or volunteers by anyone.

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical or visual, that is based upon a person's protected status such as sex, race, religion, national origin, age marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. GPC will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects tangible job benefits, that interferes unreasonably with an individual's work performance, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or volunteering environment.

Sexual harassment may include but is not limited to repeated offensive or unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions; continual or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature; graphic verbal commentaries about an individual's body; sexual degrading words used to describe an individual; and the display in the workplace of sexually-suggestive objects or pictures. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other physical, verbal, or visual conduct based upon sex constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to the conduct is an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment; (2) submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision; or (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

If an employee feels that he/she has experienced or witnessed harassment, he/she is to notify immediately a pastor or a member of the Personnel Committee. GPC forbids retaliation against anyone on the basis of reporting harassment. All such complaints will be promptly and to the extent possible confidentially investigated. If an investigation confirms that harassment has occurred, GPC will take corrective action as appropriate.

Such a definition shall also apply to those who volunteer or seek fellowship under the church's auspice.

Sexual Misconduct

See GPC's Sexual Misconduct Policy (under separate cover).

New York State Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy

See New York State Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy (under separate cover)

Personal Phone Calls / Internet Access / E-mail

Use of church telephones for personal business is to be kept to a minimum and must not interfere with the employee's performance and/or completion of assigned tasks. All employees are expected to reimburse the church for any personal long-distance calls or personal faxes. Use of other resources such as access to e-mail or Internet for personal business is not allowed.

Drugs

Any employee found in possession or under the influence of illegal drugs on the premises or at any church-sponsored gathering of church members or youth is subject to discipline, up to and including discharge and notification of Law Enforcement.

Alcoholic Beverages

Any employee found to be in possession of, or under the influence of, alcohol on the premises of Gates Presbyterian Church is subject to discipline, up to and including discharge. This regulation also applies to anyone working in an official capacity at any church sponsored gathering of members and/or youth.

Smoking

Gates Presbyterian Church is a smoke-free facility. Smoking is prohibited inside the building but is allowed in designated areas outside the building. Proper disposal of smoking materials is required.

Appendix A

Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9)



Instructions

Start Over

Print

Employment Eligibility Verification
 Department of Homeland Security
 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS
Form I-9
 OMB No. 1615-0047
 Expires 08/31/2019

▶ START HERE: Read instructions carefully before completing this form. The instructions must be available, either in paper or electronically, during completion of this form. Employers are liable for errors in the completion of this form.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE: It is illegal to discriminate against work-authorized individuals. Employers **CANNOT** specify which document(s) an employee may present to establish employment authorization and identity. The refusal to hire or continue to employ an individual because the documentation presented has a future expiration date may also constitute illegal discrimination.

Section 1. Employee Information and Attestation *(Employees must complete and sign Section 1 of Form I-9 no later than the first day of employment, but not before accepting a job offer.)*

Last Name (Family Name) ?		First Name (Given Name) ?		Middle Initial ?	Other Last Names Used (if any) ?	
Address (Street Number and Name) ?			Apt. Number ?	City or Town ?	State ?	ZIP Code ?
Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) ?	U.S. Social Security Number ?	Employee's E-mail Address ?			Employee's Telephone Number ?	

I am aware that federal law provides for imprisonment and/or fines for false statements or use of false documents in connection with the completion of this form.

I attest, under penalty of perjury, that I am (check one of the following boxes):

<input type="checkbox"/> 1. A citizen of the United States ?
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. A noncitizen national of the United States (See instructions) ?
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. A lawful permanent resident ? (Alien Registration Number/USCIS Number): _____
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. An alien authorized to work ? until (expiration date, if applicable, mm/dd/yyyy): _____ Some aliens may write "N/A" in the expiration date field. (See instructions)

Aliens authorized to work must provide only one of the following document numbers to complete Form I-9: An Alien Registration Number/USCIS Number OR Form I-94 Admission Number OR Foreign Passport Number.

1. Alien Registration Number/USCIS Number: ? _____ OR 2. Form I-94 Admission Number: ? _____ OR 3. Foreign Passport Number: ? _____ Country of Issuance: ? _____	QR Code - Section 1 Do Not Write in This Space
---	---

Signature of Employee ?	Today's Date (mm/dd/yyyy) ?
-------------------------	-----------------------------

Preparer and/or Translator Certification (check one): ?

I did not use a preparer or translator. A preparer(s) and/or translator(s) assisted the employee in completing Section 1.
(Fields below must be completed and signed when preparers and/or translators assist an employee in completing Section 1.)

I attest, under penalty of perjury, that I have assisted in the completion of Section 1 of this form and that to the best of my knowledge the information is true and correct.

Signature of Preparer or Translator ?		Today's Date (mm/dd/yyyy) ?	
Last Name (Family Name) ?		First Name (Given Name) ?	
Address (Street Number and Name) ?		City or Town ?	State ? ZIP Code ?

Click to Finish



Employer Completes Next Page



Appendix B

Staff Performance Review Form

Employee Name _____

Position _____

Job Responsibilities:

- Are the responsibilities of the position completed on time?
- Is the person able to prioritize responsibilities?
- Is help requested when needed?
- Is time used effectively?
- Does the person show initiative in taking on additional tasks when necessary?
- Has the person demonstrated the ability to solve problems independently? Is he/she empowered to do so?

Achievements / Accomplishments:

Please note specific achievements and/or accomplishments from the past year.

Strengths:

Opportunities for Improvement:

Development Plan / Goals:

Review Prepared By _____ **Date** _____

Discussed with Employee on _____

Signatures of Discussion Participants

Employee: _____

Reviewer: _____

Personnel Rep: _____

Other: _____

Employee Comments / Response (Optional):

Appendix C

Staff Interviewing Guidelines

Employee Name _____

Position _____

- What part of your job at GPC has brought you the most satisfaction or fulfillment?
 - In the past year?
- What part of your job has been the most difficult?
- Are the responsibilities of your position clear to you?
- Are you regularly doing things that you feel are beyond the responsibilities of your position?
Please explain.
- Are there duties or activities beyond your current responsibilities that you would like to pursue?
- Are you able to accomplish your duties in the time allowed?
- How would you characterize your interactions with fellow GPC staff members?
- How would you characterize your interactions with the people of the church?
- How would you characterize your interactions with those who use the building for non-GPC events?
- Do you have access to the tools you need to accomplish your responsibilities efficiently and effectively?
- If you could change one thing about your job, what would it be?
- What can the Personnel Committee do to support you in your position?
- Overall, how satisfied are you in your position?

Discussed with Employee on _____

Signatures of Discussion Participants

Employee: _____

Personnel Rep: _____

Other: _____

Appendix D

Background Check Authorization

Gates Presbyterian Church
1049 Wegman Road
Rochester, New York 14624
585-247-5292



Authorization for Background Checks

GPC seeks to be a welcoming community where all of God's children have the opportunity to exist in a safe and loving environment. In 2011, the Session of GPC adopted a sexual misconduct policy, as part of our manual of operations for the purpose of keeping everyone safe. Implementing a procedure of conducting annual background checks is one way to achieve that.

Any personal information gained through this process will be shared with members of the Personnel Committee and pastoral staff, and if needed, with chairs of the Young Children and Youth Committees.

I, _____, hereby authorize the **Personnel Committee of Gates Presbyterian Church** to investigate my background and qualifications for purposes of evaluating whether I am qualified for the position to which I am applying, or for the activities for which I am volunteering.

I also understand that I may withhold my permission and that in such a case, no investigation will be done. As a result, my application for employment will not be processed further, or my request to serve as a volunteer will be denied.

Signature of Employee

Date

Employee's Name – Printed

Appendix E

Background Check Authorization Form

Print Name: _____
(First) (Middle) (Last)

Former name(s) and dates used: _____

Current address since: _____
(Mo/Yr) (Street) (City/State/Zip)

Previous address from: _____
(Mo/Yr) (Street) (City/State/Zip)

Previous address from: _____
(Mo/Yr) (Street) (City/State/Zip)

Social Security Number: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Telephone No: _____ Driver's License # / State: _____

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I hereby authorize Gates Presbyterian Church and its designated agents and representatives to conduct a comprehensive review of my background causing an investigative consumer report to be generated for employment and/or volunteer purposes. I understand that the scope of the investigative consumer report may include, but is not limited to the following areas:

- Criminal Court Search
- National Federal Criminal Search
- National Criminal & Sex Offender Search
- Credit Report
- Social Security Number Verification
- Education Search
- Motor Vehicle Record Search
- Other Public Records

I further authorize any individual, company, firm, corporation, or public agency (including the Social Security Administration and law enforcement agencies) to divulge any and all information, verbal or written, pertaining to me, to Gates Presbyterian Church or its agents. I further authorize the complete release of any records or data pertaining to me which the individual, company, firm, corporation, or public agency may have, to include information or data received from other sources.

I hereby release Gates Presbyterian Church, the Social Security Administration, and its agents, officials, representative, or assigned agencies, including officers, employees, or related personnel both individually and collectively, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind, which may, at any time, result to me, my heirs, family, or associates because of compliance with this authorization and request to release.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Gates Presbyterian Church

Gambling Policy

We recognize that the Presbyterian Church (USA) has a long history of opposition to all forms of gambling as an abdication of generosity [PCUSA website: Presbyterian 101 – Ministries and Programs – Gambling]. In 1975, a Presbyterian General Assembly adopted a statement calling upon its members to “exert influence...to oppose all forms of legalized gambling...” A 1992 statement petitioned civic and government leaders to resist state sanctioned gambling.

It is therefore the policy of Gates Presbyterian Church that raffles and auctions will be allowed as long as the following guidelines are observed:

- Goods are exchanged for any monies collected
- Monies collected are used solely for church activities; missions; scholarships; not-for-profit entities; or particular person(s) in need of special assistance (i.e.: service dog, wheelchair, home lift)
- Each activity has prior approval of the Session

Prohibited are activities of a gambling nature where betting is done against the odds and winnings are paid in cash (i.e.: 50/50 raffles, bingo, lotteries, sports pools, casino nights).

Adopted by the Session of Gates Presbyterian Church: July 21, 2011

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Gates Presbyterian Church

Facilities Management / Trustees Responsibilities

Trustee Roles & Responsibilities

The congregation shall elect nine (9) trustees and one (1) youth trustee. A trustee must be a member who is listed on the active membership rolls of the church. The trustees shall be divided into two classes, one of five (5) and one of four (4) each for a two (2) year term. In addition, the youth trustee shall be elected each year to serve for a one (1) year term. No trustee shall serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six (6) years. A trustee having served a total of six (6) years shall be ineligible for re-election to the Board of Trustees for a period of at least one year. The powers of the trustees shall include those specifically contained in the Book of Order. The Trustees shall be under the supervision and authority of the Session of the Church.

The Board of Trustees, at its first meeting following the installation of officers shall elect a chair (moderator) and a secretary (clerk) from among its members and shall form such committees as necessary to carry out its work. The pastor or his/her designee from the staff of the Church shall be an advisory member of the Board of Trustees without a vote. An elder currently serving on Session, designated as the Trustee liaison, is an ex officio member of trustees, without a vote. A quorum for the Board of Trustees shall be one third (1/3) of the members, including the chair. Trustees usually meet monthly.

- **Chair (Moderator):** Preside over meetings; handle immediate problems that arise; in general keep contact with what is going on with all phases of the trustee's jobs. Provide an agenda for each meeting. Authorize check request forms and submit to the treasurer for payment. Update list of trustees, roles and contact information to be distributed to the committee and to the church office.
- **Co-Chair:** Assist with meetings. Preside over meetings when chair is absent. Take minutes when the secretary is absent.
- **Secretary (Clerk):** Take minutes of the meetings, type and distribute them via the email.

The general responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are:

- Plan, schedule, and handle regular maintenance issues
- Inventory church equipment regularly
- Manage access to the church—including keys to the building
- Manage various supplies relating to church maintenance
- Negotiate and recommend to session long contracts for use of the building by outside agencies/ groups
- Develop and execute a building use policy for use of the building by all parties outside of worship and church operations, including committee meetings and other church events.
- Provide for lawn care and snow removal
- Provide for the maintenance of all church equipment
- Recommend to Session large scale maintenance needs
- Create long-term facilities management strategy including a schedule of anticipated replacement expenditures.

Trustee assignments include the following:

Buildings, Grounds and Maintenance (minimum of 3 people): Take care of repair problems around the church, or find someone from the congregation to handle the task. Take charge of the maintenance of the lawn mowers and snow blowers.

Office equipment/IT: Manage IT systems including WIFI, phone, copier/printers, and computer software and hardware. Arrange for updates and repairs.

Insurance and Contracts: Keep up to date with Workers' Compensation information and review all insurance and contracts. Renew them on a timely basis and seek out other bids on contracts when necessary.

Kitchen Use: Seek out and coordinate people to keep the kitchen clean.

Special Projects (Spring and Fall Clean- up): Coordinate projects to be done in spring and fall, oversee the work, and write notices for the Harbinger and bulletin to solicit congregation participation.

Personnel Representative: Attend personnel committee meetings and report back to trustees.

Building Use: Oversee and coordinate any current and future building usage by outside organizations or persons or congregation members.

RAP (Rochester Area Preschool) Liaison: Work in collaboration with the Session appointed liaison to enhance the relationship between GPC and RAP; attend RAP board meetings; and help manage and monitor building/trustee issues.

Jeremiah's Liaison: Establish contract with Jeremiah's Restaurant for parking space rental. Ensure payments are received and any relationship issues are resolved.

Lawn Mowing Schedule: Develop list of volunteers to mow the church lawns, develop the mowing schedule and ensure volunteers are trained and following through the schedule.

Memorial Garden Liaison: Work with Memorial Garden committee to establish and follow through on any trustee related issues.

Sunday Lock Up Schedule: Solicit volunteers, develop schedule, maintain building lock up procedures, train volunteers and ensure the building is locked up each Sunday following worship.

Presbytery Liaison: Trustee to act as point of contact between Presbytery and church for all building issues.

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Gates Presbyterian Church

Building Use Policy

RULES & REGULATIONS FOR USE OF CHURCH FACILITIES

1. Any individual or group who wants to rent GPC must have a connection with a GPC member; the building use request form will ask for the member referral.
2. If a GPC member reserves the building for a relative or friend, the member must be present for the entire event.
3. Application to be made 30 days in advance of requested date.
4. Applications must be approved by the Building Use Committee.
5. End time for events, including clean up, is no later than:
 - Sunday – Thursday: 11:00pm
 - Friday – Saturday: 5:00pm
6. Church policy does not permit consumption of alcoholic beverage or illegal substances in building or on grounds.
7. Keys must be picked up during regular office hours.
8. Absolutely no smoking is allowed in the building. Smoking receptacles are located outside at the west entrance.
9. Adult supervision must be provided for youth groups. (Y=under 18)
10. ALL children must be well-supervised at all times.
11. Activities must be confined to areas approved for use.
12. No food or beverages are permitted in vestibule, hallways, or sanctuary.
13. Area used is to be left clean with furniture arranged as found or returned to proper carriers.
14. If kitchen is used, all utensils are to be cleaned and returned to their proper place. All surfaces and appliances are to be wiped clean.
15. If permission has been given to store equipment within the church, all such equipment and/or props must be neatly stored and out of sight in the approved, designated area.
16. Church equipment cannot be used without permission. In the event that damage is done to any borrowed or rented room, furnishings within that room, or church equipment, it is your responsibility to notify the church office the next business day or sooner. You will be responsible to cover damages.
17. Failure to adhere to the above rules and regulations may result in forfeiture of your privilege to use the facilities and forfeiture of your security deposit.
18. The detailed checklist is to be completed prior to leaving the building. (see Appendix)
19. Keys must be returned to the church office within 30 days following the event.
20. Security deposits will be returned when the key is returned or no later than 5 business days following the key return as long as the renter has adhered to the Gates Presbyterian Church Building Use Policy.

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Building Use Fee Schedule

One-Time Use

Room	Member Fee ⁽¹⁾	Non-Member Fee ⁽²⁾	
		1-4 hours	4-8 hours
Fellowship Hall, Room 24	\$35	\$80	\$110
Fellowship Hall & Kitchen	\$45	\$110	\$140
Kitchen, Room 27	\$40	\$65	
Adult Lounge, Room 1	\$25	\$75	\$100
Classrooms ⁽³⁾	\$35	\$60	\$80
Custodial Fee	n/a	\$55	
Key deposit ⁽⁴⁾	n/a	\$65	
Security Deposit ⁽⁵⁾	\$65	\$65	

Notes:

(1) Member fee applies to GPC member non-church related activities OR a community non-profit organization and service groups. An individual or group who wants to rent space at GPC must have a connection with a GPC member. The building use request form will ask for the member referral.

(2) If a GPC member reserves the building for a relative or friend, the member must be present for the entire event.

(3) When renting the fellowship Hall and/or Adult Lounge, classrooms may be added for a flat rate of \$10 per classroom

(4) Key deposit will be returned upon the return of the key(s). keys to be returned within 30 days following the event.

(5) Security deposits will be returned when the key is returned, or no later than 5 business days as long as the renter has adhered to the Gates Presbyterian Church Building Use Policy.

Reoccurring Use

If the group or organization does not have a written lease with GPC, the following terms apply...

Groups that are part of the mission of Gates Presbyterian Church are asked to make a minimum donation of \$15 per use for the first room plus \$10 per additional room. Any donations are expected to be made only within the group's reasonable financial means.

Groups that are not part of the mission of Gates Presbyterian Church are required to pay \$15 per use for the first room plus \$10 per additional room.

Room reservation must be done through the GPC Office Administrator. The Office administrator will identify possible room availability then forward the request to the GPC Trustees for approval.

GPC church activities take priority for all rooms at the church. On the occasion which GPC needs a previously scheduled room, the church will work to move the group to an equivalent room.

Updated: February 2026

Amended: February 2020

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Insurance for Building Use

The user of the property under this agreement shall fully insure itself, its officers, directors, employees, volunteers, and agents with the following coverage forms, limits, and policy endorsements:

Comprehensive General Liability Insurance with a limit for Personal Injury and Property Damage of no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence, \$3,000,000 annual aggregate, providing coverage for its use and occupancy of premises, its operations and its products or completed operations.

The policy shall be endorsed to:

1. Name as an additional insured: Gates Presbyterian Church
1049 Wegman Road
Rochester, NY 14624
2. Provide that the policy is primary insurance to any other insurance available to the additional insured with respect to claims arising out of this agreement and that the insurance applies separately to each insured against whom claim is made or suit is brought.
3. Provide that Gates Presbyterian Church shall be given 30 days advance written notice of the cancellation, non-renewal, or reduction in coverage.

A Certificate of Insurance evidencing all coverages and endorsements set forth above shall be furnished to the Gates Presbyterian Church no later than 10 days prior to the usage of the Gates Presbyterian Church facility.

A certified copy of the above-described policy shall be furnished if requested.

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Gates Presbyterian Church

Waiver for Building Use

(_____) hereby agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless Gates Presbyterian Church from expenses, including attorney fees and court costs, incurred as a result of or arising from any intentional or negligent act or omission of (_____), in regard to the use of occupancy of 1049 Wegman Road.

(_____) shall maintain in effect a policy or policies of liability insurance and when child care is provided on the premises a policy or policies of liability insurance protection for such child care activities.

12/13 -----

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Gates Presbyterian Church

Memorial Garden Policies & Procedures

Please see the section under Ministry

Gates Presbyterian Church

Policy for Office Closure / Cancellation of Worship

All day and evening activities of the church will be canceled whenever the Gates Chili School District closes due to weather. The church office will also be closed at such times.

The Office Manager or Elder Eric Vail will contact the 3 major Rochester TV news channels in order to add the church to the list of closed organizations. (She, Elder Eric Vail and the Clerk of Session have the code information necessary to make such requests to the news channels.)

Sunday worship services will be canceled whenever Monroe County issues a travel restriction due to weather. Members of Session and the Clerk of Session will confirm this determination on a case-by-case basis and will request that the Office Manager to notify church members via email.

Approved by Session: November 2019

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Gates Presbyterian Church

Policy for Athletic Teams

1. Sports teams provide a fellowship opportunity for our church members and should be supported by the church as would any other church social and fellowship organization.
2. Presently, these social organizations do not fall under the responsibility of any particular committee in our organizational structure. Our association is informal. Problems would, however, be addressed to Session.
3. The area beyond the parking lot is indeed a place for fellowship and sports and should, therefore, be considered a church recreation area and not just a ball field. This reinforces the intention of the original proposal adopted by Session.
4. Responsibility for the maintenance of the area rests with the Trustees. As a recreational area, it is an integral part of the church and its grounds and, therefore, should be maintained accordingly, receiving neither more nor less attention than the rest of our property.

Adopted: November 1987

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Gates Presbyterian Church

Electronic Meetings Policy

Electronic Meetings

The General Assembly and the Presbytery of Genesee Valley have provided guidelines for holding electronic meetings of governing bodies of churches. Such meetings may take place as long as the following criteria are met:

- Every participant has access to adequate technology that allows participation in the meeting.
- Meeting must provide for simultaneous audio or video (video is preferred, if available) communication so that discussion and deliberation among members may occur.
- Quorum must be present.
- Any action taken at an electronic meeting must be confirmed at the next in-person meeting and recorded in the minute book records of the church.
- Reasonable notice including purpose of the meeting has been given
- Email, text, Facebook or other such media meetings are not permitted (since these do not allow for simultaneous discussion).

GPC Session Meetings

The current bylaws of GPC allow for electronic meetings of Session. (below)

11.1(e) Electronic Participation in Meetings. Ruling elders may participate in a meeting of Session by means of telephone conference, video conference or similar electronic communications equipment. Such means must provide that all persons participating in the meeting be able to simultaneously hear and deliberate with each other. Participation in a meeting pursuant to such means shall constitute presence in person at such meeting.

GPC Congregational Meetings

Currently, the bylaws and policies of GPC do not provide for electronic meetings of the congregation. This would require an amendment to the bylaws. Amendments must be approval by 2/3 of the congregation at a meeting thereof.

Therefore, at the next in-person meeting of the congregation we will propose adding the following language to the bylaws of GPC:

Electronic Participation in Meetings of the Congregation. Members of the congregation may participate in a meeting of the congregation by means of telephone conference, video conference or similar electronic communications equipment. Such means must provide that all persons participating in the meeting be able to simultaneously hear and deliberate with each other. Participation in a meeting pursuant to such means shall constitute presence in person at such meeting.

Since we currently cannot hold an in-person meeting of the congregation, should an electronic meeting be required prior to approval of the amendment to the bylaws proposed above, we should apply the advice the Office of the General Assembly has provided to Presbyteries (see below).

Advice from the Office of the General Assembly: March 2020 Advisory Opinion- Church in an Emergency/Pandemic including the following excerpt:

Question: Church in an Emergency/Pandemic Question: What happens to actions and decisions that are taken before the Electronic Meeting Policy is approved by the Presbytery at a duly called in-person meeting?

Answer: Although the meeting is not constitutional, in the case of an emergency, the Presbytery could meet by electronic means with reasonable notice of the electronic meeting, the required quorum, and stated purpose. The meeting must be presided by at least one Moderator and the Stated Clerk. Only urgent, time-sensitive actions necessary during the emergency or public health order may be taken. "Reasonable notice" may vary according to the emergency and the needs of the community. These decisions will need to be ratified at a later properly called meeting, regular or special. Robert's Rules states that, if, at a special meeting, action is taken relating to business not mentioned in the call, that action, to become valid, it must also be ratified at a regular meeting (or at another special meeting properly called for that purpose).

Adopted by Session: April 2020

Adopted by Congregation: June 14, 2020

Adopted by Session: June 2020

Gates Presbyterian Church

Photograph & Video Recording Policy

Any person attending activities, open meetings, public events or worship services sponsored by the Gates Presbyterian Church (GPC) may be photographed or video recorded and the resultant images may be used by the church for promotional purposes in digital or print media.

People, by attending such events, do not have a reasonable expectation of privacy and therefore are implicitly granting permission for use of images. It is the participant's responsibility to inform event organizers that they do not wish to be depicted in any images.

- GPC will **not** identify a person by name in any photograph or video without their expressed permission which may be granted verbally or by email to the church Office Manager.
- No minor age child will be identified by name in any photograph or video without **written** parental or guardian permission submitted to the church Office Manager.
- Images that may depict participants as embarrassing, objectionable, or hurtful will not be used in any digital or print media.
- Requests to remove an image of oneself or one's child will be submitted to the church Office Manager, in writing or by email, who will do so as expediently as possible.
- Images of guest speakers will not be used for promotional purposes without their expressed permission which may be granted in writing or by email to the church Office Manager.

Adopted by Session: September 2020

Gates Presbyterian Church

Anti-racism Policy

Scripture and Theological Framework for Anti-racism Training

Gates Presbyterian Church ("GPC") seeks to form disciples whose lives and behaviors conform to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus sets a high standard for personal conduct which may be summarized in his commandment "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22; 37-39)

There are several Biblical references challenging any form of racism and encouraging our call to community. (All scripture quotes are from the NRSV Updated Edition)

Creation (Genesis 1)

We receive our existence as a gift from God. When humanity elevates one group over another, or falsely declares groups less good than others, we usurp God's place as creator of all that is. We deny our interrelation and proclaim our judgment more powerful than God's.

God's own image (Genesis 1:27):

*God created humans in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.*

While humans have many differences, we are all children of God, made in the image of God, and therefore of equal worth, value, and dignity. It is therefore falsehood and deception to deny the full humanity of any group of people.

God loves diversity (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

*For just as the body is one and has many members,
and all the members of the body, though many, are
one body, so it is with Christ.
For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—
Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.*

While focusing on the image of God emphasizes how all human persons are fundamentally the same, the differences between persons are also valuable. And the grace of God does not erase differences, but rather invites unity among them.

God loves justice (Jeremiah 9: 24)

*I am the Lord; I act with steadfast love,
justice, and righteousness in the earth,
for in these things I delight, says the
Lord.*

The prophets of the Hebrew Bible continually proclaim God's care for those who are oppressed and God's demand for just action. God delights in justice. Racism, as systemic inequality, is fundamentally unjust and therefore against the will of God.

What God Requires (Micah 6: 8)

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Throughout the Bible, scripture portrays God's vision of equality, equity, fairness, and justice. To fully live into this vision and love our neighbor as ourselves, we must seek to know and understand the effects of racism on our neighbors of color. Understanding racism and its traumatic effect on those who experience it, is of paramount importance if divisive racial barriers are to be torn down and structural racism is to be dismantled.

As a member church of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), GPC is part of an institution founded and historically run by white people, one that remains approximately 88% white. We must come to terms with those numbers and their implications for the work we do, and the audiences we reach. We are undeniably implicated in the entrenched legacies of racism and white supremacy that continue to shape the United States and our church.

As we strive to be an antiracist church, GPC commits to:

- repenting of the role we collectively and individually have played and continue to play in creating and maintaining white supremacy and systemic racism;
- providing anti-racism and cultural humility training for employees as required by the Book of Order;
- developing and implementing practices and strategies to disrupt and dismantle racism and oppression in the church and the world;
- striving for racial equity in recruitment, hiring, and retention of employees;
- managing church investments in ways that increase our witness to racial justice and equity;
- taking steps of reparation and restorative action in response to disparities of wealth created and sustained by white supremacy;
- acting courageously and creatively against acts and practices of systemic racism on federal, state, and local levels.

We acknowledge that this work will not be easy. Antiracist effort, though, 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.

Training

Per the Book of Order and the Anti-racism policy of the Presbytery of Genesee Valley, anti-racism training shall be required at least once every three years for all Ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are serving GPC as a pastor. Pastors shall participate in a training program within one year after this policy is adopted or within one year of assuming the role. This requirement shall be included in the terms of call. Note: Training for Ministers will be offered by the Presbytery four times a year.

Session members, youth leaders, Christian educators and music leaders are strongly encouraged to participate in anti-racism training.

The Clerk of Session shall maintain a record of persons who complete anti-racism training.

Policy adopted by Session of Gates Presbyterian on December 15, 2024

Gates Presbyterian Church

EMPLOYEE PROTECTION (WHISTLEBLOWER) POLICY

General

Gates Presbyterian Church requires Trustees, officers, volunteers, and employees to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As employees and representatives of Gates Presbyterian Church, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

If any employee reasonably believes that some policy, practice, or activity of Gates Presbyterian Church is in violation of law, a written complaint must be filed by that employee with the Pastor and Personnel Committee which will then inform the Session of the complaint.

Reporting Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all Trustees, officers and employees to report ethics violations or suspected violations in accordance with this Whistleblower Policy. It is the intent of Gates Presbyterian Church to adhere to all laws and regulations that apply to the organization and the underlying purpose of this policy is to support the organization's goal of legal compliance. The support of all employees is necessary to achieving compliance with various laws and regulations. An employee is protected from retaliation only if the employee brings the alleged unlawful activity, policy, or practice to the attention of Gates Presbyterian Church and provides Gates Presbyterian Church with a reasonable opportunity to investigate and correct the alleged unlawful activity. The protection described below is only available to employees that comply with this requirement.

No Retaliation

No Trustee, officer or employee who in good faith reports an ethics violation shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse employment consequence. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns within Gates Presbyterian Church, prior to seeking resolution outside Gates Presbyterian Church.

Gates Presbyterian Church will not retaliate against an employee who in good faith, has made a protest or raised a complaint against some practice of Gates Presbyterian Church, or of another individual or entity with whom Gates Presbyterian Church has a relationship, on the basis of a reasonable belief that the practice is in violation of law, or a clear mandate of public policy.

Gates Presbyterian Church will not retaliate against employees who disclose or threaten to disclose to a supervisor or a public body, any activity, policy, or practice of Gates Presbyterian Church that the employee reasonably believes is in violation of a law, or a rule, or regulation mandated pursuant to law or is in violation of a clear mandate or public policy concerning the health, safety, welfare, or protection of the environment.

Reporting Violations

Gates Presbyterian Church has an open door policy and suggests that employees and others share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with someone who can address them properly. In most cases, the Head of Staff, Pastor, is in the best position to address an area of concern. However, if you are not comfortable speaking with the Head of Staff, Pastor, or you are not satisfied with their response, you are encouraged to speak with someone on the Personnel Committee whom you are comfortable approaching. The Head of Staff, Pastor, is required to report suspected ethics violations to the Personnel Committee who will then decide if informing the Session is required. The Personnel Committee and the Session have specific and exclusive responsibility to investigate all reported violations. For suspected fraud, or when you are not

satisfied or uncomfortable with following the Gates Presbyterian Church open door policy, individuals should contact the Personnel Committee or a current Elder of the Session directly.

Acting in Good Faith

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

Confidentiality

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

Handling of Reported Violations

The Head of Staff, Pastor, and or the Personnel Committee will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within five business days. All reports will be promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

My signature below indicates my receipt and understanding of this policy. I also verify that I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions about the policy.

Employee Signature _____ Date

Adopted by Session January 2025

Gates Presbyterian Church

Forms Listing

Forms can be downloaded from the GPC website under About > Forms or you can request them from the Office Administrator.

Baptism Information Form
Building Use Application – Member
Building Use Application – Nonmember
Building Use Application – Multiple OR On-going Use
Building Use – Cleaning Checklist
Memorial Brick Order Form
Mustard Seed Scholarship Application Package
Request/Authorization for Internment
Wedding Information Form