Wayne Presbyterian Church
Policy on Reporting a Concern, Complaint or Grievance

Guiding Principles from the Rules of Discipline

... the exercise of church discipline, is one for building up the body of Christ, not for destroying it, for redeeming, not for punishing. It should be exercised as a dispensation of mercy and not of wrath so that the great ends of the Church may be achieved.[1]

The purpose of discipline is to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ; to preserve the purity of the church by nourishing the individual within the life of the believing community; to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved; to correct or restrain wrongdoing in order to bring members to repentance and restoration; to uphold the dignity of those who have been harmed by disciplinary offenses; to restore the unity of the church by removing the causes of discord and division; and to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings. In all respects, all participants are to be accorded procedural safeguards and due process, and it is the intention of these rules to provide.[2]

The biblical duty of church people to "come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court …" (Matthew 5:25) is not abated or diminished. It remains the duty of every church member to try (prayerfully and seriously) to bring about an adjustment or settlement of the quarrel, complaint, delinquency, or irregularity asserted, and to avoid formal proceedings under the Rules of Discipline unless, after prayerful deliberation, they are determined to be necessary to preserve the purity and purposes of the church.[3]

Reporting a Concern, Complaint or Grievance for Staff Members

WPC recognizes problems, misunderstandings and frustrations may arise in the workplace and WPC encourages its staff to work through issues with open communication and mutual respect. If a staff member is unable to find resolution, the staff member should report the issue to their supervisor or church leadership. It is WPC's intent to provide an effective and consistently applied process for staff members to present issues in confidence and without fear of retribution, and have leadership respond and resolve/clarify the issues. All reports are held in the highest confidence. The identity of the staff member and the details of their report are disclosed solely on a "need to know" basis.

Confidentiality is of the upmost importance. To report a concern, complaint, or grievance, any staff member may use <u>any</u> of the following options and should make a report as soon as an issue is evident:

- Inform your supervisor, or
- Inform the Senior Pastor (or if the issue pertains to the Senior Pastor, inform another Pastor), or
- Inform the Chair of the Personnel Committee
- Clerk of Session

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[1] Book of Order, Rules of Discipline, D-1.0102.
[2] Ibid. D-1.0101
[3] Ibid. D-1.0103

The person receiving the report will meet with the staff member as quickly as possible to discuss and record the details of the issue. The Senior Pastor, the staff member's supervisor, and/or a member of the Personnel Committee will join the meeting. If the staff member has any documentation (emails, pictures, etc.), they should bring it to the meeting. The Senior Pastor and/or the staff member's supervisor will act to resolve the issue and restore a positive working environment. The Senior Pastor will advise the Personnel Committee of the resolution in writing.

If the issue is not resolved to the staff member's satisfaction, he/she should contact the Chair of the Personnel Committee for further discussion. If resolution remains unsatisfactory, the staff member should request the issue be discussed with the Clerk of Session. The Clerk of Session will initiate the process of ecclesiastical discipline as outlined in the Rules of Discipline, section D-10.

If there's an issue with the Senior Pastor, the staff member should contact the Chair of the Personnel Committee. Depending on the nature of the concern, Personnel will attempt to resolve this issue. Personnel will report it to both the Clerk and to COM. It is important to note that WPC pastors serve under the care of Presbytery. If a staff member has a concern, complaint, or grievance pertaining to a Pastor, the Chair of the Personnel Committee will take the complaint to the Clerk of Session who will notify the Commission on Ministry (COM) of the Philadelphia Presbytery. The COM will assume responsibility for initiating and/or implementing the Rules of Discipline, section D-10.

Reporting a Concern, Complaint or Grievance for Church Members & Volunteers

WPC encourages its church members and volunteers to work through issues with open communication and mutual respect. WPC intends to be responsive to issues received from its church members and volunteers, and to provide a means for those individuals to report an issue in confidence, without fear of retribution, and have church leadership respond and resolve/clarify the issue. All reports are held in the highest confidence. The identity of the church member or volunteer and the details of their report are disclosed solely on a "need to know" basis.

To report a concern, complaint, or grievance, a church member or volunteer should make a written report, as soon as an issue is evident. The reporting process varies depending on who the subject of the concern is:

- **Concerns pertaining to a staff member** are reported to the Senior Pastor and/or the Chair of the Personnel Committee. The Senior Pastor and/or the staff member's supervisor will meet with the staff member to discuss the issue and find resolution. The Senior Paster will inform the Personnel Committee of the outcome. If the issue is not resolved to their satisfaction, he/she may contact the Clerk of Session. The Clerk of Session will initiate the process of ecclesiastical discipline as outlined in the Rules of Discipline, section D-10. (See attached)

- **Concerns pertaining to church members or volunteers** are reported to the Senior Pastor and/or the Clerk of Session. The Clerk of Session and/or two Elder will meet with both parties to discuss the issue and find resolution. If the issue is not resolved to their satisfaction, he/she may contact the Clerk of Session. The Clerk of Session will initiate the process of ecclesiastical discipline as outlined in the Rules of Discipline, section D-10. (See attached)

- **Concerns involving an Associate Pastor** are reported to the Senior Pastor and/or Chair of the Personnel Committee who will discuss the issue with the Clerk of Session including whether the Commission on Ministry (COM) of the Philadelphia Presbytery must be notified. The Senior Pastor and a member of the Personnel Committee will meet with the staff member to discuss

the issue and find resolution. If the issue is not resolved to their satisfaction, he/she may contact the Clerk of Session who will notify the Commission on Ministry (COM) of the Philadelphia Presbytery. WPC pastors serve under the care of Presbytery and the COM assumes responsibility for resolving most issues pertaining to a Pastor. The COM will assume responsibility for initiating and/or implementing the Rules of Discipline, section D-10.

- **Concerns involving the Senior Pastor** are reported to the Chair of the Personnel Committee who will discuss the issue with the Clerk of Session including whether the Commission on Ministry (COM) of the Philadelphia Presbytery must be notified. Depending on the nature of the concern, Personnel will work to resolve the issue. If the issue is not resolved to their satisfaction, he/she may contact the Clerk of Session who will notify the Commission on Ministry (COM) of the Philadelphia Presbytery. WPC pastors serve under the care of Presbytery and the COM assumes responsibility for resolving most issues pertaining to a Pastor. The COM will assume responsibility for initiating and/or implementing the Rules of Discipline, section D-10.