

Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky

November 11, 2023

PROPOSED RESOLUTION FROM THE SESSION

OF HARVEY BROWNE MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WHEREAS the need for mental health support is growing while community resources are overwhelmed, pastors and congregations are increasingly dealing with mental health situations that are beyond their training and qualifications and can, in crisis situations, present a danger to the staff, the congregation as well as the individual involved; and

WHEREAS while the church, in its calling to nurture the spiritual life of people (G-1.0101), realizes that mental and emotional trauma can be at the root of spiritual issues and desires not to stigmatize those struggling with such issues, pastors may encounter situations where individuals' mental and emotional state worsens rapidly and may present a risk to themselves or others, harassment, threats or retaliation against the pastor, staff or the church through explicit or implicit actions; and

WHEREAS the Book Of Order (G-3.0307) charges the presbytery to be a pastor, counselor and advisor to its ministers of Word and Sacrament and congregation:

“Presbyteries shall be open at all times to communication regarding the life and ministry of their congregations. Each presbytery shall develop and maintain mechanisms and processes to serve as pastor and counselor to its ministers of the Word and Sacrament, commissioned pastors (also known as commissioned ruling elders), and certified Christian educators of the presbytery; to facilitate the relations between the presbytery and its congregations, ministers of the Word and Sacrament, commissioned pastors, and certified Christian educators; and to settle difficulties on behalf of the presbytery where possible and expedient.”

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky will create processes and procedures that would:

1. Provide pastors (and sessions when appropriate) with support from mental health professionals who could advise and guide pastors in determining the mental health status of individuals involved, the potential for escalation and potential risks as well as inform the pastor as to community mental health support in their area.
2. Provide pastors and sessions with a model of best practices to provide a safe and secure working and worshiping environment should a situation escalate to implicit or explicit threats.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the above processes and procedures be brought to the February 2024 stated meeting of Mid-Kentucky Presbytery for its approval.

Submitted by the session of Harvey Browne Memorial Presbyterian Church
October 16, 2023

FOR ACTION: that the resolution be referred to the Commission on Ministry for implementation.