

Radical Welcome: An Anti-Discrimination Policy

Parkwood Presbyterian Church | Jenison, MI

Approved by Session on December 15, 2025

I. A Theology of Radical Welcome

1.1 - The gospel of Jesus Christ is good news for all people – humans of every income level¹, every race and ethnicity², every culture³, every age⁴, every gender⁵ and sexuality⁶, every ability and disability⁷, every family makeup⁸, and every language.⁹

In baptism, we are made one with Christ and with God's people throughout time and space.

1.2 - Parkwood's mission statement declares: "rooted in Christ's love, we seek to grow in love for God and neighbor."

But we cannot love God and hate our neighbors.¹⁰ We cannot claim to love our neighbors and at the same time treat their culture, their history, their appearance, their language, or their family with disdain or contempt.¹¹ We cannot claim to love our neighbors and at the same time treat them as though they are repulsive or incomprehensible.

1.3 - The Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (USA) also makes our responsibility for radical welcome exceedingly clear: "*A congregation shall welcome all persons who trust in God's grace in Jesus Christ and desire to become part of the fellowship and ministry of his Church (F-1.0403). No person shall be denied membership for any reason not related to profession of faith. The Gospel leads members to extend the fellowship of Christ to all persons. Failure to do so constitutes a rejection of Christ himself and causes a scandal to the Gospel.*"¹²

1.4 - The one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church belongs to Christ, and we as leaders are stewards of it. As stewards of the faithful at Parkwood Presbyterian Church, we commit ourselves to the following:

II. Welcome & Worship

2.1 - The Pastor, The Session, and its committees shall regularly evaluate worship practices to ensure that worship is accessible to as many people as possible.

¹ Luke 6:20-21 & James 2:1-6

² Galatians 3:28

³ Acts 10:34-35

⁴ Matthew 19:14; 1 Peter 5:5

⁵ Galatians 3:28

⁶ Acts 8:36-38

⁷ John 9:3

⁸ Ruth 1:16-17

⁹ Revelation 7:9-10

¹⁰ 1 John 2:9

¹¹ Luke 18:9-14

¹² Book of Order 2025-2027, G-1.0302

2.2 - The Pastor and the Worship Team shall regularly evaluate worship to ensure that worship practices are culturally relevant for the congregation *and* allow for cross-cultural education and experiences.

III. Welcome & Membership

3.1 - The only defining requirements of membership in the PC(USA) Book of Order are faith in Jesus Christ and a desire to be part of the ministry of Christ's church. The Session shall not deny church membership due to race, ethnicity, nationality or national origin, skin color, financial status, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability or disability, marital status, immigration status, or political affiliation.

3.2 - Freedom of conscience is a hallmark of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and no member shall be required to accede to a specific statement of belief in order to become a member of Parkwood Presbyterian Church, or continue their membership.

IV. Welcome & Leadership

4.1 - Each person has spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit, and practical gifts and skills they have developed. Those who wish to use those gifts in service to the church should be allowed to do so.

4.2 - Some volunteer and staff positions require additional scrutiny, including those working with children, vulnerable adults, church finances, and confidential information. In those cases, the Pastor and the Session reserve the right to screen volunteers based on specific criteria in the Child Protection Policy and Manual of Operations.

4.3 - The Session, when writing or reviewing policies and procedures, shall take into account this responsibility to radical welcome and ensure that Parkwood's policies do not lead to or allow for discrimination.

4.4 - All hiring decisions, including the pastoral call process, shall take into account this commitment to radical welcome and anti-discrimination.

4.5 - The Nominating Committee shall not discriminate against any potential nominee for Ruling Elder or Nominating Committee positions due to race, ethnicity, nationality or national origin, skin color, financial status, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, immigration status, or political affiliation.

4.6 - Any modifications made to the building or grounds shall take into account the needs of people with varying abilities and disabilities.

V. Welcome & Education

5.1 - The Pastor and the Session shall regularly educate the congregation via sermons, educational opportunities, and public statements on our responsibility to welcome all people.

VI. Welcome & Accountability

6.1 - A spirit of welcome, in and of itself, cannot be demanded, policed or regulated. But a truly welcoming community is a community with clear boundaries and accountability. In order to sustain this love for God and neighbor at Parkwood, we must agree to hold one another to specific expectations.

6.2 - All members, attendees, staff and leaders are expected to follow the regulations within the Book of Order and the policies and procedures adopted by the Session. This includes the anti-harassment policy, child protection guidelines, financial policies, and sexual misconduct policy. Failure to do so will result in church discipline from the appropriate body – Personnel, Session, or the Presbytery of Lake Michigan. Consequences for violating this policy or any other may include mediation, counseling, and corrective action up to and including removal from the church.

6.3 - To report a violation of this policy or an act of discrimination, contact the Pastor or any actively serving member of the Session. The person taking the report shall write down the names of people involved, any witnesses, the date and time incident(s) occurred, and any other relevant information, and present it to the Session within seven (7) days. The Session shall then follow the investigation and discipline procedures in the Book of Order and/or the Employee Handbook.