

Presbyterian Women & the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns

Joint Statement on Sexual Injustice Louisville, KY, January 24, 2018 —

As courageous women, children, and youth from across the United States share their #MeToo and #ChurchToo stories, we reflect on the PW mission which says, in part, that Presbyterian Women will build an inclusive caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), works for justice and peace, and witnesses to the promise of God's realm. As a committee called by the church to be a prophetic voice to and for the church on issues of gender justice, ACWC is a partner to PW in this mission. Together, we respond with empathy for the experiences of injustice due to sexual violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and other violence and discrimination against women. Together, we issue a call for repentance and justice-seeking. We offer this statement in hope of continuing conversations and healing actions within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at both the local and national levels. God has created all people equally and directed us to love others as we love ourselves. Our Creator's teachings must be demonstrated in our actions as well as in our conversations. Jesus models for us how to live out the gospel of justice and peace. The energy surrounding sexual assault issues has created an opportunity for our denomination to take the next step toward healing. How do we correct the culture that allows sexual abuse? How do we empower women to help themselves? How do we neutralize the harmful ripple effects of sexual violence and other forms of abuse? Presbyterian Women, in covenant with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, encourage women to speak up and speak out when they experience abuse, whether it occurs at home, in the work place, or in our churches. At the same time, the faith community must confess and hold itself accountable for fostering environments that allow for abuses and encourage silence, repent and create systems where justice for victims is accessible, and offer resources to support healing for victims and secondary victims of abuse. We must individually and collectively begin to deconstruct ideologies that perpetuate maleness as superior to femaleness, whether in our imagery for God or in our references to one another, and think of one another in a way that lets us see our gender differences as blessings to be respected and celebrated.

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