



SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY

REDUCING THE RISK OF ABUSE IN THE CHURCH

Church Street United Methodist Church

Revised February 2026

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Overview of Safe Sanctuary Policy at Church Street UMC

Purpose

We believe that the church is a holy place of sanctuary for the children of God. We acknowledge that the church may be the only place where some individuals find the unconditional love and care they so desperately need to grow, thrive, and become faithful people. Our church must be a place where people of all ages can come together for worship, study, fellowship, and service with the assurance that they are safe and secure in the community of faith.

As Christians, we take our responsibilities to our members and participants very seriously and realize that we fail in our commitment when we neglect to take proper precautions against abuse in our church. We must take steps to love and protect all participants in our community of faith.

Statement of Covenant

Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, Church Street UMC pledges to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all. Church Street UMC will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of volunteers and employees. Church Street UMC will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events. We will educate all of our employees and volunteers regarding the use of all appropriate policies and methods (including first aid and methods of discipline). We will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law. Church Street UMC will be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs. Additionally, at no time while serving in ministry to children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults may workers (paid or unpaid) carry firearms or weapons of any type, use or possess tobacco, alcohol, vapes, or illicit drugs or drug paraphernalia.

What does the term Safe Sanctuaries Encompass?

Safe Sanctuaries, as referred to by the Holston Conference, encompasses the policies and procedures made by a local church, district, or the Conference to reduce the risk of abuse to children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults and to protect those adult workers (either paid or volunteer) who interact with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults in any church activity, whether on-site or away from the church building.

The level of Safe Sanctuaries care must be tailored to and provided by each individual local church or district based on the specific needs of that church or district and the specific needs of a given activity. Being recognized as a Safe Sanctuary church or district indicates to individuals entering your building that a highest level of care and protection is being provided in that local church, at the district, or at the Conference event.

Why do we need a Safe Sanctuaries Policy?

For the Holston Conference, the physical and emotional safety, as well as the spiritual growth of all God's children, youth, and vulnerable adults, is important. As a Conference, we are committed to the holistic well-being of each child, youth, and adult entrusted to us.

Church Street United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, vulnerable adults and/or volunteers who participate in the ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The Safe Sanctuaries Policy, adopted by the church for protection of children, youth, and vulnerable adults, reflect our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter, and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

Conclusion

In all our ministries with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults, this congregation is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each person will be "surrounded by steadfast love, ... established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal" {"Baptismal Covenant II," *United Methodist Hymnal*, p. 44).

Definitions of Terms Used in This Policy

"Child" and "Youth" and "Adult"

Following the public-school system, a "child" is anyone **in** 5th grade or younger. A "youth" is anyone **in** 6th -12th grade. Youth can participate in activities until the Promotion Sunday after their High School graduation, when they no longer qualify as a youth. An "adult" is anyone 18 years of age or older and not currently in high school. If an individual is over 18 years and still in high school, they will still be considered "youth" for the purpose of Church Street United Methodist Church programming and policies.

"Vulnerable Adult"

Vulnerable adults are defined as people aged 18 or over:

- Who are receiving or may need community care services because of learning, physical, or mental disability, age, or illness AND/OR
- Who are or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

"Paid Staff Person" and "Screened Adult"

A Paid Staff Person is someone paid by the church and is overseen by the Staff Parish Relations Committee and is screened.

A Screened Adult is a volunteer who has gone through the screening process as described **in** this policy. These persons may or may not be members, but they must be active attendees for at least six months (see policy for exceptions).

Policies and Procedures for Church Street United Methodist Church (CSUMC)

Applicability

This policy applies to church staff members (full-time or part-time), paid workers, and volunteers who are engaged in ANY activity and ministry with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults of Church Street United Methodist Church (CSUMC).

CSUMC uses Safe Gatherings for abuse awareness, protection training, and background checks. Each program ministry area has access to Safe Gatherings and is responsible for running background checks and scheduling training for their ministry area, either through Safe Gatherings or in-person, as well as additional training specifically required for that ministry area.

Each ministry area must also maintain records of staff and volunteers who interact with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults in the church database. Ministry Pastors, Directors, or Assistant Directors may train any person in need of training, regardless of the ministry area in which the volunteer or staff member will serve. Acknowledgement of having received training shall be a completed Safe Sanctuaries Covenant Agreement signed by the trainee or a certificate of completion provided by Safe Gatherings (Reference Appendix A). A list of all those trained will be kept in the church database program. The CSUMC Business Administrator will ensure proper records are kept and up to date.

Training/Retraining

All church staff (full-time or part-time), paid workers, and volunteers who are engaged in ANY activity and ministry with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults must review and sign the Safe Sanctuaries Policy for CSUMC prior to involvement in the activities. Additionally, all church staff (full-time or part-time), paid workers, and volunteers who are engaged in ANY activity and ministry with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults must complete the Safe Gatherings training program, in compliance with the standards and expectations of the Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Retraining/Rescreening - All persons trained in the Safe Sanctuaries policy (including the Safe Gatherings online curriculum) will be retrained, with a new background check completed, every 3 years, which aligns with conference requirements for pastors.

Screening*

In order to receive approval to work (paid or unpaid) in ministry with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults, the following must be completed:

1. Church Membership/Active Relationship - All persons desiring to work with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults must have been a church member **OR** in an active relationship with CSUMC for a minimum of six months. (Those considered in an active relationship attend worship and/or small group activities at **a minimum of two times per month**.) Exclusion from the six-month rule may be provided as follows:
 - a. Persons who are employed by the Church Street Preschool or outside programs in which employment is not a basis of church membership or affiliation need not meet this requirement, as they undergo the screening procedures for those ministries and/or programs.
2. Volunteer/Employment Application - All persons wishing to volunteer to work with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults must complete the training and screening programs through Safe Gatherings, our Safe Sanctuary screening platform.
3. Background Check - All persons (paid or unpaid) who wish to work with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults must have a completed background check. Background checks (including Motor Vehicle Records) will be conducted through Safe Gatherings and are at the expense of the church. Information collected will be available to the applicant and ministry staff.

*CSUMC will repeat background checks for those who become inactive in the ministries of CSUMC for one year and wish to return to active status. If the length of time of inactivity is unable to be determined, a new background check must be completed. CSUMC reserves the option to repeat background checks as deemed appropriate.

Exclusions To Working or Serving with Children, Youth, Or Adults

No individual will be allowed to serve in any position (paid or unpaid) if that individual has previously been indicted, convicted of, pled guilty, or pled no contest to any crime arising out of any act or conduct involving physical or sexual abuse OR any act or conduct which is of a physical, sexual, molesting, seductive, or criminally deviant nature, whether or not such conduct involved a child.

No individual will be permitted to serve in any position (paid or unpaid) if that individual has a verdict or judgment rendered against them in any civil action arising out of any personal act or conduct related to physical or sexual abuse of a child, youth, or adult. These prohibitions will strictly apply regardless of the length of time elapsed since the conviction or verdict.

No individual will be permitted to serve in any position (paid or unpaid) if that individual has an open County, State, or Federal investigation pending regarding suspicion of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse of a child, youth, or an adult. Any such pending action suspends any activity in ministries in which children, youth, or vulnerable adults may be participating.

Standards of Behavior

While the primary focus of this policy is for the protection of children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults from abuse, it is the explicit desire of this congregation that children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults are protected not only physically but emotionally from abuse. Therefore, **all persons** (paid or unpaid) who work with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults are expected to guard their language, attitudes, and behaviors such that children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults are protected from any form of prejudice (race, gender, ethnicity, etc.), inappropriate or profane language, or other behavior that demeans the value and worth of everyone. This applies to events where children, youth, and adults are together, as well as any form of communication such as texting, email, and social media. See our Social Media Policy for guidelines on social media use.

Additionally, at no time while serving in ministry to children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults may workers (paid or unpaid) carry firearms or weapons of any type, use or possess tobacco, alcohol, vapes, or illicit drugs or drug paraphernalia.

Specific Safety Information & Procedures for Supervision of Children and Youth

Definition of Abuse of Children and/or Youth

For purposes of this Policy, child/youth abuse is defined as any of the following:

- **Physical Abuse:** Violent non-accidental contact which results in injury. This includes, but is not limited to, striking, biting, or shaking. Injuries include bruises, fractures, cuts, burns, or anything that requires medical supervision.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Any form of sexual activity with a child/youth, whether at the Church, at home, or any other setting. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or a minor.
- **Emotional Abuse:** A pattern of intentional conduct which crushes a child's/youth's/adult's spirit or attacks his/her self-worth through rejection, threats, terrorizing, isolating, or belittling.
- **Neglect Abuse** in which a person endangers a child, youth or vulnerable adult's health, safety, or welfare through negligence.

Rules & Procedures

In order to provide for a safe environment for children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults the following rules/procedures should be observed:

1. **Two Adult Rule** - There will be two unrelated adults in each classroom, nursery, or other activity with children and youth present. All volunteer adults will be at least 18 years of age and at least 5 years older than the oldest children and/or youth in the program being supervised.

Floater - In a circumstance where two adults are not available per room, then an adult "floater" should be available to monitor multiple rooms.

Video Surveillance - Should a circumstance arise where a second adult becomes unavailable, a video recording of the single adult may be used. This video should cover the entirety of the interaction with the child or vulnerable adult, and a copy should be given to, and maintained by the ministry director.

No volunteer or worker under the age of 18 will have the sole responsibility for, nor be left alone with any children.

In the event of youth volunteers in the nursery, preschool, or children's ministry area, the two adult rule still applies. Two Safe Sanctuary approved adults must be available.

2. **Adult-to-Child Ratios** - The following ratios are adapted from the State of Tennessee's **Licensure Rules for Child Care Agencies** minimum adult to child ratios for preschool, day care, and after-care programs (**Rule 1240-04-01-.22**):

- Infants (birth through 11 months) - 2:8
- Toddlers (12 through 35 months) - 2:12
- Pre-school (ages 3 - 5) - 2:18
- Elementary (grades K-5) - 2:40
- Youth (grades 6-12) - 2:40

While all children and youth programs must adhere to the state minimum ratios, the appropriate ratio must be considered for each individual event, and higher adult-to-child ratios are encouraged.

3. **One-on-One Meeting with Children and Youth** - a person should not spend time with a youth or child alone in a room unless that space has a window whereby participants in the room can be seen, and other forms of observation can be used as outlined under the Two Adult Rule.

In addition to personal contact with children and/or youth as related to counseling, workers (paid or unpaid) should refrain from using emails, text, and other forms of social media to counsel children and/or youth. See our Social Media Policy.

If at any time, the child or youth is threatening harm to themselves or to another, the adult is responsible for contacting appropriate emergency personnel, parents, and ministry area leader or pastor. The ministry area leader will then contact the Senior Pastor regarding the child and/or youth in their ministry area.

4. **Windows and Doors** - Each room or space where children and/or youth are being supervised, shall have a window in the door OR the door shall be left open. All activities should occur in open view.
5. **Non-Single Bathroom** - When children and/or youth are using a large multi-stall bathroom, the doors leading into the bathroom should be propped open as long as privacy is still able to be maintained. There should be two adults standing outside. If a child needs assistance, the corresponding adult will go in to assist, while the other one remains outside to monitor.
6. **Training and Background Checks** - CSUMC recognizes that working with children and youth requires specific and special training. Background checks will be performed for all volunteers working with the children and/or youth ministries. Training for these ministry areas will be arranged by the ministry leader(s).

Offsite Trips/Outings

Permission Slips - All children/youth participating in church-sponsored outings will have a permission slip signed by parents or guardians, which give current personal and emergency contact information, along with medical and insurance information. Permission forms should include a consent form for emergency medical attention. These forms should be kept by the supervising adult of the child/youth and be readily available in the event of an emergency. Guardians are required to update the annual release forms which may be used in place of forms for each individual event.

1. **Lodging** For trips that use overnight travel, the following policies apply:
 - i. **Dormitory-style rooming (rooms with bunk style sleeping with multiple beds)** - Rooms will hold female counselors in same room with female participants and male counselors in the same room as male participants. Where it is deemed appropriate or necessary for adults to room with children or youth, two adults (unrelated) must be in each room with the children or youth.
 - ii. **Hotel style rooming** - Youth will be assigned to rooms and adults will be assigned to separate rooms.

NO adult shall sleep in the same bed with a child or youth unless that adult is the parent or guardian of that child. No adult should be alone in any room with any child or youth. Boys and girls should not be in one another's room without at least two adults present. (Additional rules may be implemented for specific events or trips.)

2. **Dressing/Bathing** - Adults accompanying children and/or youth should never dress in sight of children and/or youth. Adults will shower at different times than children and/or youth when having to use the same facilities. Children and/or youth on trips should never be in visual range of adults while dressing or bathing, and adults should take every precaution to ensure privacy for children and/or youth as they bathe or change clothing.

Additional Information

Open Door Policy

Parents, volunteers, care providers, or staff of the church will be permitted, as reasonableness dictates, to visit and observe all programs and classrooms at any time. However, for security reasons, please be aware that safety of all concerned is of primary importance. Hence, doors may be locked and access to certain areas may require advanced notice during the weekdays.

Sign-in/Sign-out Procedure

Adults responsible for children from infants through 5th grade should sign-in their child and indicate the names of the authorized person(s) to whom the child may be signed-out. Releasing children to non-authorized adults is forbidden. Youth siblings can pick up only their sibling after parents have communicated that to the Children's Director.

Photo and Social Media Notice

CSUMC reserves the right to post and publish pictures and videos of church-sponsored events, which may include images of children and youth, on all church media and social media platforms. Parents and guardians may request that the church refrain from using images of their children or youth by writing to the appropriate ministry director(s) AND the Communications Director. The use and guidelines for social media and photo releases are available in our Social Media Policy.

Supervision of Non-Classroom Activities

The "rule of two" policy will be followed for all non-classroom activities involving children and/or youth. This includes both on campus and off campus activities regardless of location.

Transportation Guidelines

Relating Specifically to Children and/or Youth - The "two adult rule" will be followed in vehicles carrying children and/or youth. In trips involving 100 miles or more, it is recommended that there be two adult drivers in each vehicle, and that driving duties are shared between drivers to ensure the safety of the passengers from driver fatigue.

If traveling in church-owned vehicles (including leased vehicles), all rules relating to use of the vehicles (insurance requirements and seatbelt usage) should be strictly followed. All drivers using their personal vehicles shall require that all riders always wear seatbelts and each driver should adhere to the stated speed limits. Proof of insurance should be filed with the office prior to use of personal vehicles and updated regularly.

Church Street UMC Preschool

Church Street UMC Preschool offers ministries and care for children. Church Street UMC Preschool has its own training and supervision for the protection and safety of children. Church Street UMC Preschool should adhere to the minimum standards CSUMC Safe Sanctuaries Policy, recognizing that due to state regulations, their policies may contain more stringent standards.

Specific Safety Procedures for Care of Vulnerable Adults

In regard to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults, vulnerable adults are defined as people aged 18 or over:

- Who are receiving or may need community care services because of learning, physical, or mental disability, age, or illness.
- Who are infirm or diminished in capacity due to age, illness, or disability.
- Who are ministered to in their home (by Pastoral Care Visitors, Stephen Ministers, or others).
- Who are wholly or partially dependent upon one or more other persons for emotional, psychological, or physical care or support.
- Such dependency may be temporary as in the case of an accident, illness, or birth of a child.
- Who are or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

"Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons" (No Secrets: Department of Health, 2000) Abuse may be carried out deliberately or unknowingly. Abuse may be a single act or repeated acts.

Abuse includes:

- **Physical abuse:** including hitting, slapping, punching, burning, misuse of medication, inappropriate restraint.

- **Sexual abuse:** including rape, indecent assault, inappropriate touching, exposure to pornographic material. Vulnerable Adult abuse would be any sexual activity that is without consent.
- **Psychological or emotional abuse:** including belittling, name calling, threats of harm, intimidation, isolation.
- **Financial or material abuse:** including stealing, selling assets, fraud, misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Neglect and acts of omission:** including withholding the necessities of life such as medication, food or warmth, ignoring medical or physical care needs.
- **Discriminatory abuse:** including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment

In caring for the needs of vulnerable adults associated with CSUMC, the following policies will be followed:

Training and Background Checks

CSUMC recognizes that caring for vulnerable adults requires specific and special training. Background checks will be performed for all volunteers working with the vulnerable adult community. Training for these ministry areas will be arranged by the ministry leader(s).

Visitation

For the safety of the vulnerable adult and the visitor, if visiting in the home of a vulnerable adult, the visit must be coordinated in advance with the ministry leader(s).

When visits to skilled-care facilities, assisted-living communities, and senior adult living communities occur, care should be taken to sign-in to the appropriate logbooks given for each facility and when possible, to visit in open spaces or with open doors.

Counsel & Advice

Persons visiting the vulnerable adults are acting as an outreach of the church and thus should be primarily concerned with the spiritual health of the one being visited. Visiting persons should not give advice or counsel regarding financial, fiduciary, medical, or family matters. However, if one finds the vulnerable adult in need of emergency medical care, contact emergency personnel as quickly as possible. Report any signs of abuse or neglect immediately to the appropriate agency as listed in this policy, following the procedures outlined.

Transportation

Members who volunteer to serve with the vulnerable adult population may be asked to help persons to doctor's appointments, grocery stores, or other such errands. Such assistance should be infrequent and is entirely up to the volunteer to assent to or decline to provide such assistance.

Outside Groups

It is a priority of CSUMC to protect the safety of children, youth, vulnerable adults, and adult volunteers. Therefore, CSUMC requires that all non-CSUMC groups seeking to utilize our facilities involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults agree to the conditions stipulated in Appendix B.

REPORTING ABUSE OR SUSPECTED ABUSE

Reporting Procedures - All persons witnessing or suspecting abuse in any form are required to report it as follows:

1. **For children and youth abuse:** The person (paid or unpaid) who observes alleged abuse or to whom such alleged abuse is reported is **required** to report the incident immediately to the Child Abuse Hotline **877-237-0004**. **Reports can also be filled out online <https://www.tn.gov/dcs/program-areas/child-safety/report-child-abuse.html>**. **Call 911 if there is a life-threatening emergency.**

"Everyone in Tennessee is a mandated reporter under state law. Any person with reasonable cause to believe a child is being abused or neglected must, under the law, immediately report to the Tennessee Department of Children's Services or to local law enforcement. The reporter can remain anonymous. Failure to report abuse is a violation of the law and a Class A misdemeanor, carrying a sentence of up to three months imprisonment, a fine or both. Those who report and "act in good faith" are immune from any civil or criminal charges which may result. The reporter has the right to remain confidential and anonymous."

2. **For elder (vulnerable) abuse:** By law in Tennessee, everyone is a mandatory reporter. Tennessee law provides that "any person having reasonable cause to suspect that an adult has suffered abuse, neglect, or exploitation, shall report or cause reports to be made" giving such information to the Department. In an emergency, always call **911**. Contact **Adult Protective Services (APS) 24/7 - 1.888.277.8366**. Reports can also be filed online at: https://onedhs.tn.gov/csp?id=cs_aps_assessment_landing_page&sysparm_lang=en

3. **For Domestic Abuse** - Tennessee Domestic Violence Hotline **1-800-356-6767**

Actions- Once an incident of abuse occurs or allegation of an incident is made, it must be dealt with speedily and in a clearly outlined manner. Report by calling the appropriate number or through the online form (listed above). Then, forms for reporting can be obtained from the Business Administrator's office, the front office, and children's and youth areas (Reference Appendix C). Reports will be collected and reviewed by ministry director(s), clergy, and the business administrator.

If the abuse allegation involves church volunteers or staff:

1. If the accused is actively involved in a church-sponsored program or event at the time of the accusation: immediately, yet with dignity and respect for the sacred worth of the accused, remove the accused from further involvement with children and/or youth or vulnerable adults, and then contact the proper authorities. If the accused is not actively involved in a church sponsored program or event at the time of the accusation, then immediately contact the proper authorities.
2. Once the safety of the child, youth and/or vulnerable adult is secured and the proper authorities have been contacted, the senior pastor or other designated person(s) should inform the accused that abuse has been reported. If the accused is the appointed clergy or a member of their family, the allegations shall then be reported to the District Superintendent. The District Superintendent will take responsibility and act according to established rules of *The Book of Discipline* with respect to claims against a pastor. If the District Superintendent is not available, the incident should be reported to the bishop's office.
3. The Senior Pastor shall notify the related staff as deemed necessary. Should the abuser be the Senior Pastor, then the Senior Pastor Designate or Associate Pastor will be contacted and shall act as the pastor's designee until an administrative decision is reached by the District Superintendent.
4. Complete an incident report of the accusation and submit it to the proper authorities. After the incident report is submitted to the proper authorities, the senior pastor or other designated person will provide a copy of the report to the District Superintendent.
5. After permission from the authorities is received, the clergy or their designee shall reach out to the guardians of the victim and take whatever steps are necessary to assure the safety and well-being of the victim until the guardian(s) arrive.

If the abuse allegation does not involve church volunteers or staff:

1. If a child/youth or vulnerable adult is claiming to have been abused, immediately report the allegation to the proper authorities. If another person reports that a child/youth or vulnerable adult has claimed to have been abused, immediately have that person contact the proper authorities.
2. Follow all recommendations given by the proper authorities.
3. Report the allegation to the Business Administrator and Senior Pastor and then complete an incident report to keep on file. The forms for reporting can be obtained

from the Business Administrator's office, the front office, and children's and youth areas (Reference Appendix C).

Additional Expectations

1. Take all allegations seriously. Show care and support to help prevent further hurt. Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed. The care and safety of the victim takes priority over all else. Respond in a positive and supportive manner to the victim and the victim's family.
2. In any removal of a person from any activities, care should be taken to handle this in a discreet manner, recognizing that an investigation is still being conducted.
3. Should the situation require statements to the media, **only** the Senior Pastor or Communications Director is authorized to make such statements.
4. The church should provide a supportive atmosphere to all those who are affected, offering both objectivity and empathy as it seeks to create a climate in which healing can take place.

APPENDIX A - SAFE SANCTUARIES COVENANT AGREEMENT

The congregation of Church Street United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, vulnerable adults and/or volunteers who participate in the ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The Safe Sanctuaries Policy, adopted by the church for protection of children, youth, and vulnerable adults, reflects our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter, and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

As a Screened Volunteer or employee in this congregation, please respond to the following questions?

1. Do you agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults?

YES NO

2. Do you agree to complete Safe Sanctuaries training and participate in other education events provided by the church related to your volunteer assignment?

YES NO

3. Do you agree to report, as soon as possible, the abusive or inappropriate behavior as noted in the Safe Sanctuary Policy?

YES NO

I have read this **SAFE SANCTUARIES COVENANT AGREEMENT**, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth in the Safe Sanctuaries Policy.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Please print name

APPENDIX B - SAFE SANCTUARY REQUIREMENTS FOR OUTSIDE GROUPS

It is a priority of Church Street United Methodist Church to protect the safety of children, youth, vulnerable adults, and adult volunteers. Therefore, CSUMC requires that all non CSUMC groups seeking to utilize our facilities involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults agree to the following conditions:

1. **Abuse Training** - All adult leaders and volunteers from the outside group will complete an abuse awareness training course. Church Street United Methodist can provide this training through Safe Gatherings (at the expense of the outside group) if the outside group cannot offer a comparable approved option.
2. **Background Checks** - All adult leaders and volunteers from the outside group will pass a multistate background check. Church Street United Methodist can provide this training through our ministry partners for a fee if the outside group cannot offer it. The outside group will ensure that:

No individual will be allowed to serve in any position (paid or unpaid) if that individual has previously been indicted, convicted of, pled guilty, or pled no contest to any crime arising out of any act or conduct involving physical or sexual abuse OR any act or conduct which is of a physical, sexual, molesting, seductive or criminally deviant nature, whether or not such conduct involved a child.

No individual will be permitted to serve in any position (paid or unpaid) if that individual has a verdict or judgment rendered against him or her in any civil action arising out of any personal act or conduct related to physical or sexual abuse of a child, youth, or adult. These prohibitions will strictly apply regardless of the length of time elapsed since the conviction or verdict.

No individual will be permitted to serve in any position (paid or unpaid) if that individual has an open County, State or Federal investigation pending regarding suspicion of physical, emotional or sexual abuse of a child, youth, or a adult. Any such pending action suspends any activity in ministries in which children, youth or, adults may be participating.

3. **Mandatory Reporting** - Should any form of abuse (including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect) be suspected by or reported to a leader or volunteer, the leader will immediately report the incident as follows:
 - a. **For children and youth abuse:** The person (paid or unpaid) who observes alleged abuse or to whom such alleged abuse is reported is **required** to self-report the incident immediately to the Child Abuse Hotline **877.237.0004**. **Reports can also be filled out online <https://www.tn.gov/dcs/program-areas/child-safety/report-child-abuse.html>**. **Call 911 if there is a life-threatening emergency.**

"Everyone in Tennessee is a mandated reporter under state law. Any person with reasonable cause to believe a child is being abused or neglected must, under the law, immediately report to the Tennessee Department of Children's Services or to local law enforcement. The reporter can remain anonymous."

- b. For elder (vulnerable) abuse: By law in Tennessee, everyone is a mandatory reporter. Tennessee law provides that "any person having reasonable cause to suspect that an adult has suffered abuse, neglect, or exploitation, shall report or cause reports to be made" giving such information to the Department. In an emergency, always call **911**. Contact **Adult Protective Services (APS) 24/7 - 1.888.APS.TENN or 1.888.277.8366**. Reports can also be filed online at https://onedhs.tn.gov/csp?id=cs_aps_assessment_landing_page&sy_sparm_lan_g=en
- c. For Domestic Abuse - Tennessee Domestic Violence Hotline 1.800.356.6767. The group leader will then immediately notify the group's CSUMC Staff Representative and/or the Administrative Pastor.

4. **Policies and Procedures** - The outside group agrees to the following rules for children and youth:

- a. Two Adult Rule - There will be two unrelated adults in each classroom, nursery, or other activity with children, youth, or vulnerable adults present. All volunteer adults will be at least 18 years of age and at least 5 years older than the oldest child and/or youth participant in the program being supervised.
- b. Bathroom Rule - No adult will be permitted to use a restroom at the same time as a child or youth. If a child requires help from an adult while in the bathroom, the Two Adult Rule will apply.
- c. Non-Single Bathroom - When children and/or youth are using a large multi-stall bathroom, the doors leading into the bathroom should be propped open as long as privacy is still able to be maintained. There should be two adults standing outside. If a child needs assistance, the corresponding adult will go in to assist, while the other one remains outside to monitor.
- d. Dressing/Bathing - Adults accompanying children and/or youth should never dress in sight of children and/or youth. Adults will shower at different times than children and/or youth when having to use the same facilities. Children and/or youth on trips should never be in visual range of adults while dressing or bathing, and adults should take every precaution to ensure privacy for children and/or youth as they bathe or change clothing.
- e. Lodging - Any outside group using the church facilities overnight will treat it as dormitory lodging. (See our Safe Sanctuary policy, page 12).
- f. Windows and Doors - Each room or space where children and/or youth are being supervised, shall have a window in the door OR the door shall be left open. All activities should occur in open view.
- g. Adult-to-Child Ratios - The outside group must ensure that the following Adult to-Child Ratios are followed in each area/room that they utilize:
 - Infants (birth through 11 months) - 2:8
 - Toddlers (12 through 35 months) - 2:12

- Pre-school (3 to 5 years} - 2:18
- Elementary (grades K-5) - 2:40
- Youth (grades 6-12} - 2:40

I understand these rules and expectations and agree to follow them as a condition of use of the Facility at Church Street United Methodist Church. I understand that failure to implement these policies will result in a termination of the use agreement.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Organization Name/ Address

APPENDIX C- CHILD/YOUTH/VULNERABLE ADULT INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

In the event of any incident in which any type of abuse is suspected or witnessed, whether it be emotional, verbal, or physical, those suspecting or witnessing such will complete the following information:

Reason for Report:

Date of Incident: Time:

Place of Incident:

Name of Reporter:

Name of Victim:

Briefly describe the incident:

Names of other witnesses (if applicable):

List actions you have taken during or after the incident:

List notifications you have made including reports to protective local/state/federal agencies, pastors and other supervisory staff.

Signature of Reporter:

Date:

Report Submitted to:

Date: