

Safe Sanctuary Policy

**First-Centenary
United Methodist Church**

**Approved:
Charge Conference – November 14, 2017**

Safe Sanctuary Policy

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Safe Sanctuary Policy
First-Centenary United Methodist Church

I. Safe Sanctuary Policy

In all of our ministries with children*, youth*, and vulnerable adults**, First-Centenary United Methodist Church 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). Our Safe Sanctuary Policy demonstrates our commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all our children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

As a United Methodist congregation, we pledge to reduce the risk of abuse to children, youth, and vulnerable adults, and to protect children youth, and vulnerable adults, as well as adult workers (either paid or volunteer) who interact with those children, youth, and vulnerable adults in any church activity.

1. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers.
2. We will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events.
3. We will educate all of our workers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults regarding the use of appropriate policies and methods.
4. We will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law.

II. Recruitment, Screening and Selection of Workers

The following forms are included in First-Centenary's recruitment, screening, and selection process for volunteer and paid workers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults:

- Volunteer Application Form (Appendix A)
- Consent to "Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check" Form (Appendix B)
- Participation Covenant Statement (Appendix C)

*Children, youth are defined as a person under the age of 18

**Vulnerable Adult is defined as a developmentally challenged adult (person age 18 or older) and/or an adult who may be incapacitated in any form

All current and future volunteer and paid workers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults are required to complete the Volunteer Application Form and Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check Form.

When a volunteer or worker is selected, they must sign and submit the Participation Covenant Statement. These forms and records will be maintained by the designated staff person and kept in a locked file cabinet. Any information from the criminal background check that raises concerns by the designated staff person will be discussed with the Senior Minister and the Youth or Children's Director and appropriate action will be taken. It is the intent of this Policy and Procedure that any actions will err on the side of protecting our children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Prior to beginning work as a volunteer or paid worker with our children, youth, or vulnerable adults, each volunteer or staff member must complete appropriate Safe Sanctuary training as designated by the appropriate staff person. This training will be documented and records of the training will be kept by the designated staff person.

III. Procedures and Rules for Working with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

The following rules shall be a part of the Safe Sanctuary policy for First-Centenary United Methodist Church:

1. The Two-Adult Rule As a matter of safety for both the children and adults it is required that no fewer than two adults be present at all times for any church sponsored program, event, or ministry involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults. This is inclusive of the nursery area. For the purpose of this rule married couples working with the same age group are considered one adult. If only one adult is present in a classroom then the door must remain open and an approved worker must be present in the hallway.
2. The Eighteen-Age Limit Rule Persons hired to work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults must be at least eighteen years of age. Any person serving as a helper, who is under the age of eighteen, must be supervised by adult staff at all times.
3. The Five-Year Rule It is required that any volunteer or paid worker be at least five years older than the group with which they are to supervise. For example, if a junior (20-21 years old) in college is recruited to supervise youth as a "leader," he/she must be at least five years older than the group they are to lead.
4. Off-Site Advance Notice Rule Parents or guardians shall be given advance notice of and full information regarding any off-site ministry involving their child. Parents or guardians must give written permission for their child's participation.
5. State Reporting Rule All workers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults are required by law to report any suspected cases of abuse to the proper authorities. First-Centenary will use the Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse form

(See Appendix E) to capture the necessary information regarding allegations of abuse. This procedure will be covered in more detail in Section IV.

6. The Six-Month Rule Persons supervising children, youth, or vulnerable adults must have been attending First-Centenary UMC for at least six months prior to serving.

IV. Implementation of the Safe Sanctuary Policies and Procedures

1. Staff persons will conduct an orientation on Safe Sanctuary policies for paid workers and volunteers prior to their first day of work. In addition, parents of youth and children shall receive a copy of the Safe Sanctuary Policy. New members shall receive this information as a part of their new member packet.
2. Every two years, First Aid/CPR training shall be required for all paid workers with children and youth and offered to all other Church Staff and workers as well as parents. A first aid kit will be maintained on each floor of the Education Wing and in the main Church Office.
3. When there is an accident of any type that involves a child, youth, or vulnerable adult, the Witness shall complete the Accident Report Form (See Appendix D). An accident review shall be convened by the designated staff person as soon after the accident as possible. The review will focus on developing steps that would prevent the accident from reoccurring. The Accident Report Form and the minutes from the Accident Review meeting shall be filed with the designated staff person.
4. There shall be windows on all classroom doors where children, youth, or vulnerable adults are present. If the door does not have a window the door shall remain open while the room is in use. In the event of a meeting with one child, youth, or vulnerable adult and a worker, there shall be an "open door" policy. There should also be another staff or volunteer in the vicinity even if they are not within actual listening distance.
5. There will be no child, youth, or vulnerable adult in a staff member or volunteer's home without a non-family member adult present regardless of the nature of the church- sponsored event, program or ministry.
6. There shall be an adult supervising the hallways during major use periods on the children's/youth floors.
7. The Safe Sanctuary Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. Any changes or updates will be approved by the Church Council or Charge Conference.

V. Plan for Responding to Allegations of Abuse

Every volunteer and paid worker with children, youth, and vulnerable adult must be trained to know Tennessee's requirements for reporting abuse to law enforcement authorities and child protection services. With any incident at the Church, the Chattanooga Police Department at 423-698-2525 and/or the Tennessee Department of Children Services at 1-877-237-0004 shall be notified. If an alleged incident of abuse happens away from the Church but involves Church activities, then the incident must be reported in that jurisdiction. If a volunteer or staff member suspects abuse of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult in a non-church situation, they are also obligated to report the alleged incident to the appropriate authorities. The 24-hour Child Protective Services hotline in Hamilton County is 423-266-0162.

The Senior Pastor will serve as a spokesperson for our Church in dealing with the congregation, the media and the public. In his/her absence, the Lay Leader will serve as the spokesperson. We will always protect the rights of the victim and the accused.

With guidance from a lawyer, the Senior Pastor shall initiate appropriate ministries and actions over a long period to enable healing by all affected people.

Quick Guide:

24- Hour Child Protective Services Hotline	423-266-0162
Chattanooga Police Department	423-698-2525
Tennessee Department of Children Services	1-877-237-0004

Appendix

APPENDIX A
FIRST-CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Volunteer Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

Special Interests, Hobbies, and Skills: _____

Do you have a valid driver's license? _____

Do you have liability insurance on your own vehicle? (List policy limits and name of carrier.)

Are you currently listed on First-Centenary's Approved Driver List for church vans?

Yes No

Why would you like to volunteer as a worker with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults?

What qualities do you have that would help you work with children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults?

Have you ever been charged, convicted of, or pled guilty to a crime, either a misdemeanor or a felony (including but not limited to drug-related charges, child abuse, other crimes of violence, theft, motor vehicle violations)?

Yes No

If yes, please explain fully: -----

Do you prefer periodic volunteer training sessions on:

Sunday morning _____ Weekday morning _____ Weekday evening _____

Other (Please Explain): _____

APPENDIX B
FIRST-CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check

I, _____, hereby authorize First-Centenary United Methodist Church to request that *Protect My Ministry* perform a criminal and sexual abuse offender search to the extent permitted by state and federal law. I release said *Protect My Ministry* and First-Centenary United Methodist Church from all liability that may result from any such disclosure made in response to this request.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Print Applicant's Full Name: _____

Print All Other Names that have been used by Applicant (if any):

Date of Birth: _____ Place of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

For Office Use Only

Request sent to: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Date Background Check completed: _____

Name of person completing Background Check: _____

APPENDIX C
FIRST-CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Participation Covenant Statement

The congregation of First-Centenary United Methodist Church (FCUMC) is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, vulnerable adults and persons who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by FCUMC. The following policy statement reflects our congregation's commitment to preserving FCUMC 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.

1. Any adult who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) may not work with children or youth in any FCUMC-sponsored activity.
2. All adult supervisors involved with children, youth, or vulnerable adults of FCUMC must have been attending First-Centenary for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.
3. Adult volunteers and staff with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall observe the "Two Adult Rule" at all times so that no adult is ever alone with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
4. Adult volunteers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall attend regular training and educational events provided by FCUMC to keep volunteers informed of FCUMC policies and state laws regarding child abuse.
5. Adult volunteers shall immediately report any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate to the appropriate authorities, and a Children's or Youth Director, the Senior Pastor, or the designated staff person.

Please answer each of the following questions:

1. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe and abide by all FCUMC Policies and Procedures regarding working in ministries with children, youth, and vulnerable adults? Yes No
2. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe the "Two Adult Rule" at all times? Yes No
3. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to abide by the six-month rule before beginning a volunteer assignment? Yes No
4. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to participate in training and education events provided by FCUMC related to your volunteer assignment? Yes No
5. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior to the area supervisor or other appropriate person? Yes No
6. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to inform a minister of this congregation if you have ever been charged with child abuse? Yes No

I have read this Participation Covenant, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

Print Full Name _____

(This is to be signed every year at the yearly review)

APPENDIX C-1
FIRST-CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Participation Covenant Statement
For The Centenary

The congregation of First-Centenary United Methodist Church (FCUMC) is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, vulnerable adults and persons who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by FCUMC. The following policy statement reflects our congregation's commitment to preserving FCUMC 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

1. Any adult who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) may not work with children or youth in any FCUMC-sponsored activity.
2. All adult supervisors involved with children, youth, or vulnerable adults of FCUMC must have been attending First-Centenary for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.
3. Adult volunteers and staff with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall observe the "Two Adult Rule" at all times so that no adult is ever alone with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
4. Adult volunteers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall attend regular training and educational events provided by FCUMC to keep volunteers informed of FCUMC policies and state laws regarding child abuse.
5. Adult volunteers shall immediately report any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate to the appropriate authorities, and the Director of The Centenary or the Senior Pastor.

Please answer each of the following questions:

1. As a volunteer in this program of FCUMC do you agree to observe and abide by all FCUMC Policies and Procedures regarding working in ministries with children, youth, and vulnerable adults?
 Yes No
2. As a volunteer in this program, do you agree to observe the "Two Adult Rule" at all times?
 Yes No
3. As a volunteer in this program, do you agree to participate in training and education events provided by FCUMC related to your volunteer assignment? Yes No
4. As a volunteer in this program, do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior to the area supervisor or other appropriate person? Yes No
5. As a volunteer in this program, do you agree to inform a minister of First-Centenary UMC if you have ever been charged with child abuse? Yes No

I have read this Participation Covenant, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

Print Full Name _____

(This is to be signed every year at the yearly review)

**APPENDIX D
FIRST-CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Accident Report Form**

Please print all information

Date of accident: _____ Time of accident: _____

Name of child/youth injured: _____

Address of child/youth: _____

Location of accident: _____

Parent or guardian: _____

Name of person(s) who witnessed the accident:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Description of accident:

Name of person completing form _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E
FIRST-CENTENARYUNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse

Quick Guide:

24- Hour Child Protective Services Hotline	423-266-0162
Chattanooga Police Department	423-698-2525
Tennessee Department of Children Services	1-877-237-0004

For reporting suspected incident of child abuse, contact the 24-Hour Child Protective Services Hotline. With any incident at FCUMC contact the Chattanooga Police Department, and/or the Tennessee Department of Children Services. See contact information above.

Be prepared to provide the following information:

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse:

2. Victim's name: _____

Victim's age/date of birth: _____

3. Date/place of initial observation/conversation with/report from victim: _____

4. Name of person accused of abuse: _____

Relationship of accused to victim (Paid Staff, Volunteer, Family Member, Other):

Complete the following information:

Call to 24-Hour Child Protective Services Hotline (423-266-0162):

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____

Summary of conversation: _____

Call to Chattanooga Police Department (423-698-2525):

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____ Summary of conversation: _____

Call to Tennessee Department of Children Services (1-877-237-0004):

Date/time: _____

Spoke with: _____ Summary of conversation: _____

Your immediate supervisor and Senior Pastor:

Name: _____

Date/time: _____

Summary of conversations: _____

Signature

Date

Note: *It is imperative that the person filling out this report be familiar with the Tennessee law reporting requirements before taking any action or completing this report*