

St. Paul's United Methodist Church
SAFE SANCTUARIES PROJECT
Fall 2002

Our church is beginning a Safe Sanctuaries Project that is designed to ensure that our church is a safe and holy place for our children and youth, as well as the people who work with them. We hope that by undergoing this Safe Sanctuaries Project, we can show our commitment to demonstrating the love of Jesus so that each child and adult is "...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).

The following are our recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS

When "Church Group" is used, it means a group within our church that involves children or youth, including but not limited to, the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Middle High United Methodist Youth Fellowship, Senior High United Methodist Youth Fellowship, Council on Youth Ministries, Acolytes and Crucifers, Youth Choir, Carol Choir, Praise Choir, Youth Bell Choir (if any), Youth Disciple Classes (if any), the nursery, persons providing and receiving childcare for special activities, and the youth basketball team.

When "Supervising Worker" is used, it means a paid or volunteer adult who works with children or youth in a supervisory capacity on a part-time or fulltime basis, such as the Church School teachers.

When "Occasional Worker" is used, it means a paid or volunteer adult who works with children or youth on only an occasional basis in a non-supervisory capacity, such as the parent volunteers who occasionally help out in the Church School.

When "Worker" is used, it means a Supervising Worker or an Occasional Worker.

1. OVERALL POLICY

We recommend that the Church Council adopt a new Policy Regarding Safety of Children and Youth (Attachment A). This Policy is based on the resolution adopted by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in April 1996. It sets forth the commitment of our church to the safety and spiritual growth of all children and youth participating in church-sponsored activities, as well as the people who work with them.

2. SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT OF WORKERS

Background Checks.

We recommend that the church conduct background checks on all non-clergy, full-time, paid staff, regardless of whether they would be considered a Supervising Worker, an Occasional Worker, or neither.

The Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church ("B-W Conference") currently does not require background checks of clergy. However, it soon will require background checks on all incoming clergy. In the meantime, we suggest that the church conduct background checks on all three current clergy members. By allowing these background checks, our clergy will signal to the congregation their commitment to the Safe Sanctuaries Project. In addition, they will serve as models for the other paid staff who will be required to have them.

The Staff-Parish Relations Committee or the Board of Trustees, as appropriate, should determine how to obtain and store these background checks.

Liability Insurance.

The Board of Trustees should review the liability insurance policy for the church to be sure that it provides for what it feels is an adequate amount of protection with respect to child and youth safety, and specifically with respect to sexual misconduct claims.

Questionnaires.

On an annual basis all Supervising Workers and unappointed clergy must complete and sign the Questionnaire and Response Form on Sexual Misconduct for Lay Persons & Unappointed Clergy (Attachment B). The church should use its best efforts to have all Occasional Workers complete and sign the Questionnaire as well.

All appointed clergy are required to complete and sign a similar Questionnaire on an annual basis.

The Staff-Parish Relations Committee is responsible for collecting, examining and storing all Questionnaires. The Staff-Parish Relations Committee will work with the Minister of Education and the Church School Superintendent to create a procedure that results in efficiently obtaining the signed Questionnaires while maintaining their confidentiality. It is suggested that a short letter of explanation accompany the Questionnaire.

Outside groups who use the church facility either must require all those who work with children or youth to complete and sign the Questionnaire, or must provide a signed statement attesting that all those who work with children or youth have been screened and asked questions equivalent to those on the Questionnaire. The Board of Trustees should be responsible for working with outside groups and ensuring that they comply with this requirement.

Youths (persons ages 10 to 17) will not be required to complete and sign the Questionnaire prior to serving as youth aides at a Church Group activity. Instead,

(1) the church will permit a person to serve as a youth aide for a Church Group activity only if there are 1 or 2 adult Workers present, and

(2) the church will hold occasional orientations for youth aides that will educate them about, among other things, appropriate interactions with children, and

(3) any Church Group desiring the help of youth aides should consider requiring those youth aides to sign some type of participation covenant in which they would agree to abide by the Basic Procedures Regarding Safety of Children and Youth and any other procedures applicable to that Church Group. A sample of such a participation covenant is attached hereto as Attachment C.

Abuse Survivors.

We strongly recommend that if one is aware of a person who is interested in working with our children or youth who is an abuse survivor, one should encourage that person to prayerfully consider discussing that experience with one of the pastors or another counselor prior to working with our children or youth. The Church Council should convey this message to all Church Group leaders and instruct them to pass it along as they see fit.

Employment Application.

We recommend that the church use the attached Employment Application (Attachment D) when engaging in the process of hiring a paid worker.

Form for Reference Check.

We recommend that the church also use the attached Form for Reference Check (Attachment E) when engaging in the process of hiring a paid worker. It provides a more organized and thorough means of obtaining useful information when doing a reference check.

3. BASIC PROCEDURES

Basic Procedures Regarding Safety of Children and Youth

Each Church Group should review its own operational procedures with an eye toward protecting the safety of our children and youth, as well as the people who work with them. Attached are the Basic Procedures Regarding Safety of Children and Youth (Attachment F). Each Church Group should incorporate these Basic Procedures into their own procedures and practices.

Code Blue and Code Red

In light of recent events, we recommend that the Board of Trustees consider establishing Code Blue and Code Red procedures for all Church Groups. These procedures should be consistent with the procedures followed by the Montgomery County public schools.

4. PHYSICAL FACILITIES

Proposed Changes to Physical Facility

In an effort to make the physical church facility as safe as possible for our children and youth, we recommend that the church make the physical changes set out on the attached Proposed Changes to Physical Facility (Attachment G) in the order of priority, and within the time frame, set out therein.

5. EDUCATION OF CONGREGATION

Education and Orientations

We recommend that on at least an annual basis the church conduct orientations for all persons working with children or youth, including Supervising Workers, Occasional Workers, youth aides, and all parents

and/or guardians of children or youth participating in church-sponsored activities. In addition to other subjects, these orientations should familiarize these people with appropriate interactions with children, permissible methods of discipline, the realities of child abuse and neglect, the possible indicators of child abuse and neglect, the Basic Procedures Regarding Safety of Children and Youth, and any other applicable procedures.

Attached is a summary of suggested points to be made at each orientation (Attachment H).

As part of the announcement of the church's new Policy Regarding Safety of Children and Youth, a pastor should educate the congregation by providing some background on this issue during a regular Sunday service. For guidance, he or she may want to review Attachment H. In addition, we would suggest that a pastor, or the person in charge of the Safe Sanctuaries Project Task Force, write an epistle article to further educate the congregation on these issues. Finally, we suggest that the pastor who conducts the new member orientations mention our new Policy, as well as the requirement that all Supervising Workers and Occasional Workers sign a Questionnaire. The pastor might consider having Questionnaires available at the orientation so that new members may complete them there.

6. PROCEDURE FOLLOWING ALLEGATION OF CHILD ABUSE OR SUSPICION OF CHILD NEGLECT

The procedure to be followed after an allegation of child abuse is set out in paragraph 2820 of the United Methodist Church manual. We have supplemented this procedure with the Local Procedure Following Allegation of Child Abuse (Attachment I), which includes some requirements that are more specific to our church, as well as the local reporting requirements. Everyone involved with an allegation of child abuse should be sure to comply with both sets of procedures.

Also attached is the Procedure Following Suspicion of Child Neglect (Attachment J) that sets out the local reporting requirements in the event someone at the church begins to suspect child neglect with respect to one of our children or youth.

Also attached is a form of Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse or Neglect (Attachment K) to be filled out after an allegation of child abuse has occurred or when someone at the church begins to suspect child neglect.

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Safe Sanctuaries Task Force
DATE: April 15, 2003
RE: New Safe Sanctuaries Policy

I am happy to announce that the Church Council of St. Paul's UMC has adopted a Safe Sanctuaries policy and approved all the documents and procedures relating to it. The Safe Sanctuaries policy was adopted to help ensure that our church is a safe and holy place for our children and youth, as well as the people who work with them.

In drafting the policy and accompanying documents and procedures, the Task Force tried very hard to balance the need to protect our children and youth with the need to conduct our children and youth programs in a flexible and volunteer-friendly manner. Please remember that we hope that this policy will be a positive change here at St. Paul's UMC. Before informing someone that they may not do something due to this new policy, please be sure to read this package carefully or give me a call for any clarification.

The Safe Sanctuaries policy, documents and procedures are not set in stone. If you find that a procedure that we have drafted is not workable, please be sure to contact me. I will keep a list of suggested changes in anticipation of a fine-tuning of these documents within a year or two. Thanks for your help and support!

The attached package includes the following:

1. Summary of Recommendations
2. Policy Regarding Safety of Children and Youth (Attachment A)
3. Sample Safe Sanctuaries Questionnaire (Attachment B- V1 and V2)
4. Sample Participation Covenant (Attachment C)
5. Sample Employment Application (Attachment D)
6. Sample Form for Reference Check (Attachment E)
7. Basic Procedures Regarding Safety of Children and Youth (Attachment F)
8. Proposed Changes to Physical Facility (Attachment G)

9. Points to Be Made at Church Orientations (Attachment H)
10. Local Procedure Following Allegation of Child Abuse (Attachment I)
11. Procedure Following Suspicion of Child Neglect (Attachment J)
12. Sample Report of Suspected Incident of Child Abuse or Neglect (Attachment K)

The sections that warrant a particularly careful review are the Summary of Recommendations at the front of the package and the Basic Procedures Regarding Safety of Children and Youth (Exhibit F).

St. Paul's United Methodist Church
SAFE SANCTUARIES
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**POLICY REGARDING SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH
[Attachment A]**

Introduction

In April 1996 the General Conference of The United Methodist Church adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child sexual abuse in the church. The adopted resolution includes the following statement:

Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes [a] child . . . welcomes me." (Matthew 18:5). Children are our present and our future, our hope, our teachers, our inspiration. They are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God.

Jesus also said, "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones . . . it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18:6). Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the children. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state that ". . . children must be protected from economic, physical and sexual exploitation, and abuse."

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, exploitation and ritual abuse (ritual abuse refers to abusive acts committed as part of ceremonies or rites; ritual abusers are often related to cults, or pretend to be) occur in churches, large and small, urban and rural. The problem cuts across all economic, cultural and racial lines. It is real, and it appears to be increasing. Most annual conferences can cite specific incidents of child sexual abuse and exploitation in their churches. Virtually every congregation has among its members adult survivors of early sexual trauma.

Such incidents are devastating to all who are involved: the child, the family, the local church and its leaders. Increasingly, churches are torn apart by the legal, emotional, and monetary consequences of litigation following allegations of abuse.

God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from sexual and ritual abuse. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults grow safe and strong. (From The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church—1996. Copyright © 1996 by The United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission. [pp. 384-386])

Thus, in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, we adopt this Policy Regarding Safety of Children and Youth in our church.

Purpose

Our congregation's purpose for establishing this Policy Regarding Safety of Children and Youth is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the safety and spiritual growth of our children and youth. This commitment is reflected in our congregation's statement of purpose which states our determination to help all "grow as disciples of Christ".

Statement of Covenant

Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, we pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all children and youth participating in church-sponsored activities, as well as the paid staff and volunteers who work with them.

We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of all paid and volunteer workers.

We will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events.

We will undertake to ensure that the physical facility of the church is as safe as possible for children and youth.

We will educate all of our paid and volunteer workers regarding child neglect, child abuse and the use of appropriate procedures to protect against child abuse.

We will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected or confirmed incident of child abuse or neglect that conforms to the requirements of state law.

So that we will be more accountable in implementing this policy, we will be prepared to respond to media inquiries, if an incident occurs.

Conclusion

In all of our ministries with children and youth, this congregation is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each child 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).

[Attachment B, V1]
Questionnaire

(Please check the appropriate box. If more space is needed, please use an additional sheet of paper.)

Name _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____

Occupation _____ Employer _____

Work Phone _____

1. Have you ever been accused, in a written and signed statement, of sexual misconduct with a child or a youth? Yes No

2. Have you ever been accused, in a written and signed statement, of sexual misconduct with an adult? Yes No

3. Have you ever been dismissed from any position, volunteer or salaried, because of accusations of sexual misconduct on your part? Yes No

4. Have you ever resigned from any position, volunteer or salaried, because of an accusation of sexual misconduct on your part, or to avoid being dismissed because of an accusation of sexual misconduct on your part? Yes No

5. If your response to any of the foregoing questions (1 through 4) is "yes", please provide on a separate sheet of paper all details regarding each accusation of sexual misconduct that has been made with respect to you, including a description of the alleged conduct, the name of the person who made the accusation, the date of the alleged misconduct, and the name of your employer at the time of the alleged misconduct.

6. Have accusations of sexual misconduct on your part ever resulted in civil or criminal court proceedings at any level (e.g., indictment, arrest, trial, etc.)? Yes No

If yes, please provide the complete details of those proceedings (including dates, circumstances, the jurisdiction where the proceedings occurred, the nature of the accusations, and the result of the proceedings) on a separate sheet of paper.

- 6a. Have accusations of sexual misconduct against you resulted in civil or criminal court proceedings on more than one occasion? Yes No

7. Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance and care of young people? Yes No

8. Please provide three adult references (names, addresses, phone numbers) of persons who are not related to you by blood, marriage or other family relationship and are not employed or supervised by you, who can, to the best of their ability, provide statements in support of your good character and clean record in regard to sexual misconduct with children, youth, and adults.

Name	Address	Phone
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Questionnaire Response Form

(To be signed by all lay persons and unappointed clergy who work with children or youth within St. Paul's United Methodist Church. If under 18, a parent or guardian must also sign.)

I verify that the answers I have provided on this Questionnaire are true and accurate to the best of my ability. I understand that false answers, as well as the failure to sign this Response Form, will result in my being denied the position for which I am being considered.

Signature

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian:
(if under 18) _____
Signature

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

[Attachment B, V2]
Questionnaire

(Please check the appropriate box. If more space is needed, please use an additional sheet of paper.)

Name _____ Phone Number _____

Address _____

Occupation _____ Employer _____

Work Phone _____

1. Have you ever filled out this questionnaire for St. Paul's United Methodist Church?
 Yes No

If no, please answer questions 2 through 9 below.

If yes, give the date: _____

Have any answers changed since you filled out that copy? Yes No

If no, please sign and return this form.

If yes or you are unsure, please answer questions 2 through 9 below.

2. Have you ever been accused, in a written and signed statement, of sexual misconduct with a child or a youth? Yes No

3. Have you ever been accused, in a written and signed statement, of sexual misconduct with an adult? Yes No

4. Have you ever been dismissed from any position, volunteer or salaried, because of accusations of sexual misconduct on your part? Yes No

5. Have you ever resigned from any position, volunteer or salaried, because of an accusation of sexual misconduct on your part, or to avoid being dismissed because of an accusation of sexual misconduct on your part? Yes No

6. If your response to any of the foregoing questions (1 through 4) is "yes", please provide on a separate sheet of paper all details regarding each accusation of sexual misconduct that has been made with respect to you, including a description of the alleged conduct, the name of the person who made the accusation, the date of the alleged misconduct, and the name of your employer at the time of the alleged misconduct.

7a. Have accusations of sexual misconduct on your part ever resulted in civil or criminal court proceedings at any level (e.g., indictment, arrest, trial, etc.)?
 Yes No

If yes, please provide the complete details of those proceedings (including dates, circumstances, the jurisdiction where the proceedings occurred, the nature of the accusations, and the result of the proceedings) on a separate sheet of paper.

- 7b. Have accusations of sexual misconduct against you resulted in civil or criminal court proceedings on more than one occasion? ___Yes ___No
8. Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance and care of young people? ___Yes ___No
9. Please provide three adult references (names, addresses, phone numbers) of persons who are not related to you by blood, marriage or other family relationship and are not employed or supervised by you, who can, to the best of their ability, provide statements in support of your good character and clean record in regard to sexual misconduct with children, youth, and adults.

Name	Address	Phone
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Questionnaire Response Form

(To be signed by all lay persons and unappointed clergy who work with children or youth within St. Paul's United Methodist Church. If under 18, a parent or guardian must also sign.)

I verify that the answers I have provided on this Questionnaire are true and accurate to the best of my ability. I understand that false answers, as well as the failure to sign this Response Form, will result in my being denied the position for which I am being considered.

Signature

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian:
(if under 18) _____
Signature

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

PARTICIPATION COVENANT STATEMENT [Attachment C]

The congregation of St. Paul's United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children and youth, as well as all paid staff and volunteers who participate in children and youth ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statements 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.

1. No paid staff person or volunteer who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) may work with children or youth in any church-sponsored activity.

2. Survivors of child abuse need the love and support of our congregation. Any survivor of child abuse who desires to work as a paid staff person or volunteer in some capacity with children or youth is encouraged to discuss his/her willingness with one of our church's ministers before accepting an assignment.

3. All paid staff and volunteers involved with children or youth of our church must abide by the attached Policies and Procedures.

4. All paid staff and volunteers involved with children or youth of our church must attend regular training and educational events provided by the church related to their job or volunteer assignment, including those providing information about church policies and state laws regarding child abuse.

5. All paid staff and volunteers shall immediately report to their supervisor any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate.

Please answer each of the following questions:

1. As a paid staff person or volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to inform a minister of this congregation if you are convicted of child abuse?
___Yes ___No

2. Please answer the following question only if you are a survivor of child abuse. As a paid staff person or volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to discuss with a minister of this congregation your experience as a survivor of child abuse? ___Yes ___No

(Answering yes to this question does not automatically disqualify you from volunteering with children or youth.)

3. As a paid staff person or volunteer, do you agree to observe and abide by the attached Policies and Procedures?

___Yes ___No

4. As a paid staff person or volunteer, do you agree to participate in regular training and educational events provided by the church related to your job or volunteer assignment, including those providing information about church policies and state laws regarding child abuse?

___ Yes ___ No

5. As a paid staff person or volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior to your supervisor?

___Yes ___No

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

Signature

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____
(if under 18)

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

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EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION
[Attachment D]

Name: _____
Last First Middle

Are you over the age of 18? ___Yes ___No

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home phone: _____

Position applied for: _____

Date you are available to start: _____

Qualifications:

Academic achievements (schools attended, degrees earned, dates of completion):

Continuing education completed (courses taken, dates of completion):

Professional organizations (list any in which you have membership):

First aid training? ___ Yes ___ No Date completed _____

CPR training? ___ Yes ___ No Date completed _____

Previous Work Experience:

Please list your previous employers from the past five years. Include the job title, a description of position duties and responsibilities, the name of the company/employer, the address of company/employer, the name of your immediate supervisor, and the dates you were employed in each position.

Previous Volunteer Experience:

Please list any relevant volunteer positions you have held and list the duties you performed in each position, the name of your supervisor, the address and phone number of the volunteer organization, and the dates of your volunteer service.

Are there any other circumstances or matters that might lead someone to question the appropriateness of your employment by this church?

___ Yes ___ No

If yes, please explain:

References:

Please list three individuals who are not related to you by blood or marriage as references. Please list people who have known you for at least three years.

1. Name: _____
Address: _____
Daytime Phone: _____
Evening Phone: _____
Length of time you have known reference: _____
Relationship to reference: _____

2. Name: _____
Address: _____
Daytime Phone: _____
Evening Phone: _____
Length of time you have known reference: _____
Relationship to reference: _____

3. Name: _____
Address: _____
Daytime Phone: _____
Evening Phone: _____
Length of time you have known reference: _____
Relationship to reference: _____

Waiver and Consent:

I, _____ hereby certify that the information I have provided on this Employment Application is true and correct. I authorize this church to verify the information I have provided on this Employment Application by contacting the references and employers I have listed, by conducting a criminal

records check, or by other means, including contacting others whom I have not listed.

I authorize the references and employers listed in this Employment Application to give you whatever information they may have regarding my character and fitness for the job for which I have applied. Furthermore, I waive any rights I may have to confidentiality or to pursue damages against the church caused by the reference's response.

In the event that this Employment Application is accepted and I become employed by St. Paul's United Methodist Church, I agree to abide by and be bound by the policies and procedures of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, and to refrain from inappropriate conduct in the performance of my duties on behalf of St. Paul's United Methodist Church.

I have read this waiver and the entire application, and I am fully aware of its contents. I sign Employment Application freely and under no duress or coercion.

Signature of Applicant

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

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**FORM FOR REFERENCE CHECK
[Attachment E]**

Applicant name: _____

Reference name: _____

Reference address: _____

Reference phone: _____

1. What is your relationship to the applicant?
2. How long have you known the applicant?
3. How well do you know the applicant?
4. How would you describe the applicant?
5. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to children and/or youth?
6. How would you describe the applicant's ability to relate to adults?
7. How would you describe the applicant's leadership abilities?
8. How would you feel about having the applicant as a volunteer worker with your child and/or youth?

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**BASIC PROCEDURES
REGARDING SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH
[Attachment F]**

The following Basic Procedures Regarding Safety of Children and Youth demonstrate the commitment of our church to creating and maintaining a safe and holy place for our children and youth, as well as the people who work with them. Each church group that sponsors activities for children or youth should incorporate these into its own procedures and practices.

When "Church Group" is used, it means a group within our church that involves children or youth, including but not limited to the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Middle High United Methodist Youth Fellowship, Senior High United Methodist Youth Fellowship, Council on Youth Ministries, Acolytes and Crucifers, Youth Choir, Carol Choir, Praise Choir, Youth Bell Choir (if any), Youth Disciple Classes (if any), the nursery, persons providing and receiving childcare for special activities, and the youth basketball team.

When "Supervising Worker" is used, it means a paid or volunteer adult (18 or older) who works with children or youth in a supervisory capacity on a part-time or fulltime basis, such as the Church School teachers.

When "Occasional Worker" is used, it means a paid or volunteer adult (19 or older) who works with children or youth on only an occasional basis in a non-supervisory capacity, such as the parent volunteers who occasionally help out in the Church School.

When "Worker" is used, it means a Supervisory Worker or an Occasional Worker.

Supervising Workers

A person may be designated a Supervising Worker only if he or she (1) has signed the Questionnaire, and (2) either has been a church member for 6 months, or is known to the church community by other church members as a caring and nurturing person. At any Church Group activity one, or if practical two, adults should be designated as the Supervising Workers.

Occasional Workers

The church should use its best efforts to have all Occasional Workers complete and sign the Questionnaire.

Visitors

An adult who is simply visiting a Church School activity as a guest speaker, observer, or one-time helper need not complete and sign a Questionnaire. However, one or two Supervising Workers should be present while the visitor is there.

Required Forms.

Each Church Group should require a parent or guardian of a child or youth to complete any forms needed for the participation of that child or youth in that Church Group's activities, such as a Church School registration form, a Vacation Bible School registration form, permission slips, consents and releases. Permission forms are mandated for any activity which takes place away from the church property, or which involves an overnight where the parent or guardian is not present.

If the person in charge of a particular Church Group activity has not received the required forms with respect to any child or youth, that child or youth should not be allowed to participate in that Church Group activity.

Dismissal.

Each Church Group should review its dismissal procedures. Supervising Workers should dismiss any child in 4th grade or younger only to a person who is authorized in writing to pick up that child.

Advance Notice and Full Information

Each Church Group should give written advance notice and full information to all parents with respect to any event in which children or youth are participating. In this way, a parent or guardian will have the option not to allow his or her child or youth to participate if he and she feels uncomfortable with any aspect of it.

Age Appropriate and Safe Equipment and Materials.

Each Church Group should make sure that all equipment used is age-appropriate and safe. The Church Group should request that its Workers immediately report to the department head or the Church School Superintendent any unsafe equipment or conditions.

Orientations.

On at least an annual basis, the church should conduct orientations for all persons working with children or youth, including Supervising Workers, Occasional Workers, youth aides, and the parents and guardians of children or youth participating in church-sponsored activities. In addition to other subjects, the orientation should familiarize these people with appropriate interactions with children, permissible methods of discipline, the realities of child abuse and neglect, the possible indicators of child abuse and neglect, these Basic Procedures Regarding Safety of Children and Youth, and any other applicable procedures. Our church has some resources available for these orientations, including a document entitled "Points to Be Made at Church Orientations".

Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect.

When a Worker becomes aware of an allegation of child abuse in the context of church or home, or begins to suspect child neglect, that Worker should report the allegation or suspicion immediately to the department head, the Church School Superintendent, the Minister of Youth and Christian Education, or one of the pastors.

Adult Involvement in Church Group Activities.

Each Church Group should attempt to have at least 2 unrelated adult Workers present during any child or youth activity (the "2-adult goal"). Any adult Worker should be at least 3 years older than the oldest child or youth participating in the activity (the "3-years-older rule"). Youth aides (ages 10 to 17) need not meet the 3-years-older rule, but should not be used to meet the 2-adult goal. In addition, a Worker who is under 21 and working with high school youth should not be considered an adult Worker for purposes of the 2-adult goal. Each Church Group should determine under what circumstances the 2-adult goal is practical. We recommend that the 2-adult goal be mandatory with respect to any activities held away from the church facility. On the other hand, in the upper grades of the Church School (1st grade and up), the Church Group may decide it is more practical to use "floaters" instead of a second adult Worker in each classroom.

Youth Aides.

Youth between the ages of 10 and 17 may occasionally serve as aides for certain designated activities and in specific circumstances (such as, where an adult Supervising Worker will oversee the activity). Youth aides need not comply with the 3-years-older rule, but should not be used to meet the 2-adult goal. Any Church Group desiring the help of youth aides should consider requiring them to sign some type of participation covenant in which they would agree to abide by these Basic Procedures Regarding Safety of Children and Youth, and any other procedures applicable to that Church Group. As described above, the church should conduct orientations at least annually to educate youth aides and adult Workers about, among other things, appropriate interactions with children.

Overnight Activities.

Notwithstanding the 2-adult goal, we recommend that at least 3 adult Workers be present for overnight activities (regardless of whether the overnight activity is held at or away from the church facility), with at least one adult Worker from each gender represented. For overnight activities, wherever possible and safe, adult Workers should sleep in a space that is separate and apart from the space where the youths sleep. Although some overnight activities may be in one room at the church facility, each youth participant should have his or her own sleeping bag and the adult Workers should sleep in a space that is as far apart from where the youth are sleeping as is possible and safe.

Discipline.

Each Church Group should review its method of discipline. It should be clear and understandable, and it should include adequate warnings to the child or youth, good communication with the parent or guardian, and if necessary, the involvement of the supervisor of the Worker doing the disciplining. Each Church Group should educate its Workers annually with respect to its method of discipline.

Window/Open Door Policy.

Every room used for children or youth activities should have at least one window. Pastoral or other counseling of children or youth should not occur behind an entirely closed door.

Diaper Changing Policy and Child/Youth Departures from Rooms.

Any Worker changing a child's diaper should ensure that there is at least one other adult present in the room. If for any reason, including going to the restroom, a child or youth leaves the room where a Church Group activity is being held, the Supervising Worker should monitor that child or youth to the extent possible. The Supervising Worker should use his or her best judgment in deciding how closely that child should be monitored.

Substitutes.

Each Church Group should create a list of approved substitutes for its activities. When a Supervising Worker is unable to participate in a scheduled activity, he or she should arrange for someone on the approved list to substitute. If unable to find a substitute, he or she should call his or her supervisor to make other arrangements.

Attendance.

Each Supervising Worker should take attendance for each activity and keep written records as to which Workers or other adults were present as well.

Emergencies.

Each Church Group should periodically review its emergency procedures to make sure that they are adequate. Each Church Group should familiarize its Workers with the evacuation plan and the specific route applicable to their activity. In addition, each Church Group should instruct its Workers that in the event of an evacuation, the Worker should take his or her attendance sheet and take attendance once outside.

First Aid/CPR Training

Each Church Group should consider designating at least two people to take the required first aid and CPR training on an annual basis.

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PROPOSED CHANGES TO PHYSICAL FACILITY
(in order of priority)
[Attachment G]

By September 2003 -- Stairwell leading up to choir practice room is open on the side at the bottom. Crawling toddler could squeeze under and fall several flights. Should replace current metal screening with the screening elsewhere in the building that goes all the way down to the stair.

By September 2003 -- Room 204 is the kindergarten room. Currently has doors on both ends of the room and difficult for teachers to keep track of children exiting. Suggested that some sort of partition be constructed along the length of the room with a single opening into the areas used by the class. Should be tall enough to discourage climbing over it.

By September 2003 -- Repair small section of carpet binding in Room 301 before someone trips.

By September 2003 -- Replace broken windowpane in Room 205.

By September 2004 -- Where practical, should consider adding locks to a number of closets and rooms, including closet next to Room 110, closet across from Room 109, custodial closet facing All-Purpose Room, closet in Room 205, closet beside men's room on first level, music closet, closet by stairway next to Mountain Way, janitor's closet by Room 202, mechanical room, electrical room, and carillion door. Locks should prevent both children and unwanted adults from getting in.

By September 2004 -- All-purpose room needs plastic covers over ceiling lights to prevent basketball from breaking them. Shattering glass could fall on youth playing there.

Stairwell near church office is open and dark underneath. Possible solution would be turning it into a locked space for office storage.

Continue upgrade of lighting in passageway from parking lot to north side church door and in memorial garden.

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POINTS TO BE MADE AT CHURCH ORIENTATIONS
[Attachment H]

Attached is a section of the Safe Sanctuaries guidebook that relates to educating the church concerning the provision of a safe environment for all children and youth. We suggest that anyone conducting one of the recommended orientations read this section carefully. The following is a summary of some of the key points that should be made.

1. The Safe Sanctuaries Project has been in the pipeline for a long time and was not a response to any particular incident at the church.
2. The Safe Sanctuaries Project was geared toward the general safety of children, not just their protection against child abuse.
3. The people involved with the Safe Sanctuaries Project tried to be very sensitive to the desire that our church remain a volunteer-friendly place. In other words, they tried to ensure that any new procedures and requirements did not create a significant burden on our volunteers.
4. The changes made under the Safe Sanctuaries Project were designed to protect not only the children and youth of our church, but the people who work with them. Although there are many, many cases of child abuse each year, there also are many false allegations. Many of the new rules will minimize the possibility of a false allegation by providing, among other things, that there is another adult present whenever there is interaction between an adult and a child or youth.
5. Child abuse unfortunately is a reality in our society and within some churches.
 - In 1997 over 3,000,000 child abuse or neglect cases.
 - Approximately 1 out of 3 girls is sexually abused before the age of 18.
 - 2000 deaths attributable to child abuse and/or neglect occur each year.
6. There are many types of child abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and ritual abuse.
7. Abusers are usually familiar adults trusted by children. Less than 20 percent of child abuse occurs at the hands of a stranger.
8. The child victim is never responsible for causing the abuse.

9. Indicators of child abuse and neglect -- see page 17 to 18 in attached section.

10. Refer to Basic Procedures Regarding Safety of Children and Youth. Highlight some of them.

SUMMARY OF ORIENTATIONS TO BE CONDUCTED

We recommend that the church conduct the following orientations in order to educate our congregation concerning the safety of our children and youth:

- Orientation for Sunday School teachers and youth group leaders
- Orientation for parents of Sunday School students and youth group members
- Orientation of youth who will be working with children
- Short orientation of congregation at a service at which the new Policy Regarding Safety of Children and Youth is introduced
- At new member orientation, should mention our new Policy and procedures, as well as the requirement that any volunteer working with children or youth sign a Questionnaire [maybe even have Questionnaires on hand]

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**LOCAL PROCEDURE FOLLOWING ALLEGATION OF CHILD ABUSE
[Attachment I]**

The procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of child abuse at any church-sponsored activity is set out in paragraph 2820 of the United Methodist Church manual. The following procedure supplements that procedure by including requirements specific to our church, as well as local reporting requirements. It should be modified to the extent required by the facts and circumstances of the specific incident. Anyone involved with an allegation of child abuse should be sure to comply with both sets of procedures.

1. The person first hearing the allegation should immediately contact a pastor (David Argo or Ann Harrison) and give them a full description of the allegation.

Done ____ Date/Time: _____

2. The pastor should notify the parents of the child or youth. If applicable, the pastor should assure the parents that their child or youth will be kept safe until they arrive.

Done ____ Date/Time: _____

3. The pastor should immediately remove the alleged abuser from contact with other children.

Done ____ Date/Time: _____

4. The pastor should promptly call the District Superintendent or the bishop.

Done ____ Date/Time: _____

5. The pastor should contact by phone the Child Welfare Services Division of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (the "local department") to give them a verbal report of the allegation. Phone number (24 hours) is: 240-777-4417.

Done ____ Date/Time: _____

6. The pastor should contact the Bethesda District of the Montgomery County Police Department and give them a verbal report of the allegation. Phone number is: 301-652-9200.

Done ____ Date/Time: _____

7. The pastor should notify Amy Miller at the National Church Group Insurance Agency and give her a verbal report of the allegation. Phone number is: 703-777-6500. The Agency will submit a claim with our insurance company, Brotherhood Mutual. Brotherhood Mutual will assign an adjuster and their legal department will contact the church about what should be done next.

Done ____ Date/Time: _____

8. The pastor should call a meeting of the Leadership Team as soon as possible. The Leadership Team consists of the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, Minister of Youth and Christian Education, President of the Board of Trustees, Administrative Council Chair, Staff Parish Relations Committee Chair, Finance Committee Chair and Sunday School Superintendent. The Leadership Team should designate a spokesperson and agree on any statement to the congregation or media with respect to the allegation. The statement should not mention the names of any parties involved.

Done ____ Date/Time: _____

9. The pastor should contact an experienced attorney.

Done ____ Date/Time: _____

10. Within 48 hours of the alleged incident, the pastor should fax and mail a written report (see attached report form) to the local department. Fax number is: 240-777-4161. Mailed copy should go to:

Child Welfare Services
Department of Health and Human Services
1301 Piccard Drive
Rockville, MD 20850

and to the

Montgomery County State's Attorney
50 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Done ____ Date/Time: _____

11. Keep a written record of the steps the church has taken in response to the allegation.
12. In performing all of the above, all persons involved should keep in mind that the confidentiality of the parties involved is of utmost importance.

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**PROCEDURE FOLLOWING SUSPICION OF CHILD NEGLECT
[Attachment J]**

The following is the procedure to be followed in the event of a suspicion of child neglect. It should be modified to the extent required by the facts and circumstances of the specific incident.

1. The person first having a suspicion of child neglect should immediately contact a pastor and give them a full description of the suspicion.

Done ____ Date/Time: _____

2. The pastor should contact by phone the Child Welfare Services Division of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (the "local department") to give them a verbal report of the allegation. Phone number (24 hours) is: 240-777-4417.

Done ____ Date/Time: _____

3. Within 48 hours of the alleged incident, the pastor should fax and mail a written report (see attached report form) to the local department. Fax number is: 240-777-4161. The mailed copy should go to:

Child Welfare Services
Department of Health and Human Services
1301 Piccard Drive
Rockville, MD 20850

Done ____ Date/Time: _____

4. Keep a written record of the steps the church has taken in response to the suspicion.
5. In performing all of the above, all persons involved should keep in mind that the confidentiality of the parties involved is of utmost importance.

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**REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT
[Attachment K]**

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) who observed, or received a report of, alleged child abuse or neglect:

2. Date/time/place of worker's observation or receipt of report:

3. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) who had initial conversation with the child concerning alleged child abuse or neglect:

4. Date/time/place of initial conversation with child:

5. Child's name: _____

6. Child's age/date of birth: _____

7. Child's address: _____

8. Mother's Name: _____

9. Mother's Address (if different from child's): _____

10. Father's Name: _____

11. Father's Address (if different from child's): _____

12. Name and address of any other individual responsible for the care of the child:

13. Present location of the child: _____

14. Names and ages of other children in the home: _____

15. Name of person accused of abuse: _____

16. Relationship of accused to child (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other): _____

17. Specific nature and extent of injury, abuse or failure to provide proper care of and attention to the child, and any information concerning possible previous abuse or neglect:

18. Any other information that might aid in establishing the cause of injury, assist in identifying the individual(s) responsible for the abuse or neglect, or relate to the identification of risk:

19. If suspected child abuse or neglect involves a mental injury, a description of the substantial impairment of the child's mental or psychological ability to function that was observed and identified:

20. If suspected child abuse or neglect involves a mental injury, an explanation of why the reporter believes the mental injury is attributable to maltreatment or failure to provide proper care and attention:

Signature of Person Filling Out Report

Print Name: _____

Date: _____