

Safe Sanctuaries

Policies and Procedures for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse



Trinity United Methodist Church

313 Main St.
Emmitsburg, MD

May 2014

SAFE SANCTUARIES PROGRAM ACKNOWLEDGMENT

These policies and procedures have been designed to guide and assist you when working with children. Trinity UMC reserves the right to make changes in the content or application of this program and to implement those changes with prior notice to those signing this acknowledgment.

I have received a COPY OF Trinity UMC's **Safe Sanctuaries, Policies and Procedures for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse**. I understand it is my responsibility to become familiar with and adhere to the information contained herein. I understand that these policies are the property of Trinity UMC. If I wish to volunteer or become a paid employee at Trinity UMC, I am required to follow these policies and procedures in addition to completing the Questionnaire provided by Trinity UMC. All information that I provide will be kept private and confidential unless I violate the policies and procedures of this document wherein this information could be released as requested to a church attorney.

Print Name

Signature

Date

POLICY STATEMENT

In accordance with the Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church, and as mandated by the Baltimore-Washington Conference of that Church, we adopt the following policy for the prevention of child sexual abuse at Trinity United Methodist Church, Emmitsburg, Maryland.

This policy demonstrates our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth. This congregation is in agreement with the Baptismal Covenant of the United Methodist Church (United Methodist Hymnal, pg. 44) so that each child will be “surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal.”

INTRODUCTION TO THIS HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to establish a standardized set of procedures which will apply to all of the various ministries of Trinity United Methodist Church, Emmitsburg, Maryland, regardless of their location, regarding its efforts to prevent child sexual abuse from occurring.

Material contained in this handbook was assembled and prepared from various sources as suggested by the United Methodist Church and Church Mutual Insurance Company, including websites and seminars. The Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) is responsible for its content and distribution. Any established procedures utilized by groups within Trinity's internal organization, including any pastoral care and counseling, should be in accordance with the policies and procedures established herein.

In the absence of any other rules, policies, or procedures, the information contained herein should be considered the official policy of Trinity United Methodist Church, Emmitsburg, Maryland. All provisions and policies of The Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church regarding the topic of sexual abuse and/or sexual misconduct will be followed. These provisions and policies shall be available for use and reference by request to the SPRC and be maintained in the administrative offices of Trinity United Methodist Church.

For purposes of definition throughout, the term child, children, and/or youth shall mean any individual or any group of individuals made up of those who have not reached the age of 18 years. All others shall be identified or referred to as adults.

Procedures to be followed in this handbook are designed not only to protect the children and youth participating in the ministries at Trinity, but are also for the protection of the adult volunteers, workers, and members of the paid church staff. It is the Committee's desire and belief that adherence to the procedures outlined herein will best serve as protection from allegation being brought against anyone who is working with children and youth as a member of the Trinity Church family.

These policies will be addressed to all types of child abuse as follows:

1. **Physical abuse** – deliberate and intentional bodily harm (battery with a weapon, burning, shaking, kicking, choking, fracturing bones, and other non-accidental injuring).
2. **Emotional abuse** – spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty (messages of worthlessness, badness, undeserving of love and care).
3. **Neglect** – endangering a child’s health, safety, or welfare through negligence (withholding food, clothing, medical care, education, affection and affirmation).
4. **Sexual abuse** – contact between adult and a child that can not give consent or is not able to resist contact (fondling, intercourse, incest, exploitation and exposure to pornography).
5. **Ritual abuse** – inflicted regularly, intentionally and in a stylized manner, often in the name of a “higher power”.

Further explanation of these abuses can be found using reference material mentioned in the Appendix of this handbook.

PERSONNEL PROCEDURES

Adult volunteer children and youth workers are valued and appreciated for their giving of themselves for the betterment and spiritual growth of Trinity’s youth. Such volunteer workers are eligible to work with children and youth at Trinity once they have either established church membership and have regularly attended worship services for a six-month period, or, at a minimum, have established a record of regular attendance at worship services for a minimum of six months. However, an individual who has not established one of these relationships with Trinity may work with children and youth if a second adult is present who meets the minimum tenure requirements as outlined above.

Implementation – At least two non-related adults are to be present when working with children and youth in any setting at church or in any church-sponsored event or trip away from church property. They should be within sight or sound of the other or within sight or sound of at least one, preferably two, other children or youth. Youth aged thirteen years old or older may assist in working with children with the conditions that they will be observed at least once an hour during this work time by an adult who meets the previously stated qualifications of tenure.

The SPRC shall present on an annual basis an overview of these established procedures to all individuals who work with children and youth at least once a year. The purpose of this overview is to educate regarding the practices to be adhered to as stated in this handbook.

At the end of the overview, participants should be familiar with the handbook's contents and should have a clear understanding of the following reason why compliance is mandatory:

- safeguard the children and youth of Trinity from sexual molestation,
- protect church staff and volunteer workers from the potential of allegations of sexual abuse, and
- limit the extent of Trinity Church's legal risk and liability due to sexual abuse.

The SPRC will make an annual report to the Trinity Church Church Council on the state of measures in place to eliminate instances of child sexual abuse from occurring at Trinity.

Church children and youth workers should be proactive in their understanding of the degree of care they are expected to provide in the parents' or guardians' absence. The parents' or guardians' expectations regarding the level of care the church children and youth workers are to provide should also be clearly understood by the church children and youth workers.

WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN:

- Give "side hugs" rather than "bear hugs" whenever possible.
- If you need to change diapers or underwear for bathroom accidents, please make sure another worker is near. Inform parents of the change.
- Be kind.
- Speak in a normal tone.

SCREENING PROCEDURES

Various screening procedures may be involved for any adult who expresses a willingness to help or work with children and youth at Trinity. The level of screening may be dependent upon several factors, including but not necessarily limited to:

- the adult's past involvement in working with children and youth,
- whether or not the adult position is a paid staff position or volunteer position, and
- whether the position is being filled by a church member or a regular Trinity attendee.

Sexual Misconduct Questionnaire

All adults who work with children and youth in any capacity at Trinity are required to complete the Sexual Misconduct Questionnaire (attached). The questionnaire is to be completed once in its entirety. Then, on an annual basis at a time selected by the SPRC, respondents may either

- complete a new questionnaire, or
- sign a statement which attests to there being no changes since the original completion of the document.

New questionnaires will be required regardless of change status every 5 years.

All members of SPRC and all paid church staff members shall personally complete the questionnaire, regardless of their involvement in working with children and youth at church.

These completed questionnaires will become the property of the SPRC and will be kept in a locked file in the administrative offices of Trinity United Methodist Church. Only members of SPRC and the facilitator of this policy will have access to this information.

Background Checks

Adult children and youth worker positions which are to be filled by newly hired **paid** church staff members will require completion of a formal application, participation in a formal interview, and a complete background check through one of the agencies listed from references noted on the Appendix page of these procedures.

Any changes to these procedures shall be established and implemented if they are deemed appropriate by the responsible church ministry team or staff member in consultation with the SPRC.

BUILDING AND PROCEDURES

Facility doorways should remain open whenever practical to allow visual monitoring from common areas. Windows should not be covered in a manner to prevent observation by designated adults. Bathrooms should be checked periodically during the occasions when the building is in use. Knocking on a locked door and waiting for a response is all that is required unless it is deemed necessary for other measures to be taken.

All bathrooms and closets should be checked before leaving an event.

Children and youth counseling and other private individual meetings shall be held on a scheduled basis when other adults are present or in a public place. Although privacy is a paramount concern in such settings, doorways to office where such meetings are held should be left ajar. A “Knock Before Entering” sign would be appropriate in this instance.

Effective March 2012, the back door and the side door will be locked during worship times and those wishing to enter the sanctuary must use the front door. This was incorporated in the policy to further protect those persons in the church Nursery or those using the rest rooms.

TRAVELING WITH CHILDREN/YOUTH

When it is necessary for an activity to travel away from the church, permission must be given in writing by the parents or guardians before the child or youth can travel with an adult worker.

Depending on the length and destination of the travel, forms to be completed by the parents or guardians are:

1. Parent/Guardian Consent Form (attached)
2. Parent/Guardian Consent to Medical, Dental, or Hospital Care (attached)

Originals of these documents will be retained by the adult workers during travel with copies kept in a secure file at the church.

The adult worker should be questioned concerning their driving record and a copy of their driver's license should be retained as well. It may be deemed necessary to check with local police if there is doubt about the driving abilities of the worker.

RESPONSE PROCEDURE

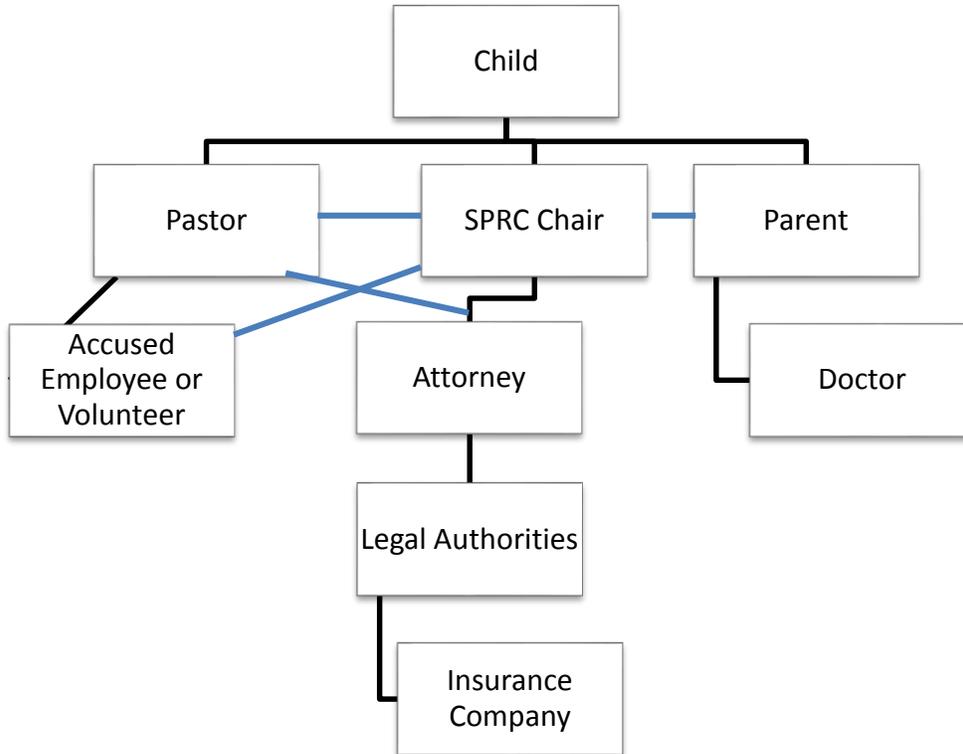
Any reported instance or suspicion of child sexual abuse will be dealt with immediately. Confidentiality will be protected to the extent possible given the individual circumstances. Individuals who witness or who have reason to believe that child sexual abuse has occurred should immediately inform the pastor or a member of the SPRC.

If the incident involves the pastor, the District Superintendent or a member of the Board of Ordained Ministry should be contacted.

If allegations of sexual abuse are made, Trinity United Methodist Church is committed to assisting appropriate church and legal authorities in the conduct of an immediate investigation into the charges being made. The church's liability insurance carrier (Church Mutual Insurance Company) will be notified of the allegations.

All provisions and policies of The Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church regarding instances of reported sexual misconduct will be followed. These provision and policies shall be available for use and reference and be maintained in the administrative office of Trinity United Methodist Church.

RESPONSE PROCEDURE



SPRC Committee 2014	
Bill Wivell, Chair	(301) 447-3766 (h); (301) 473-2275 (m)
Pastor Tiffany	(301) 447-3470 (o); (770) 364-9403 (m)
Christy LaBarbera	(240) 307-0974 (h)
Janet Cool	(717) 642-5717 (h)
Jeffrey Simmons	(717) 830-0556 (m)

SEXUAL OFFENDERS AT TRINITY

In accordance with Baltimore-Washington Conference guidelines, an Addendum to Safe Sanctuary Policies and Covenant Letter for Registered Sex Offenders documents are being added and are attached to this Policy.

These documents address the response of Trinity UMC should a registered sex offender attend worship or become a member of the congregation.

POLICY CHANGES

Any questions, comments, exceptions, or other types of discussion regarding the material contained in this handbook should be directed to the chairperson of the SPRC of Trinity United Methodist Church, Emmitsburg, Maryland.

This policy will be reviewed and revised as changes arise or as deemed necessary by the writers and/or the Baltimore-Washington Conference.

APPENDIX A

These references were instrumental in completing this Safe Sanctuaries Policy and will be retained with the original copy in the administrative offices of Trinity United Methodist Church.

- Safe Sanctuaries by Joy Thornburg Melton, book
- “Safety Tips On a Sensitive Subject: Child Sexual Abuse” by Joy Thornburg Melton, produced in partnership with Church Mutual Insurance Company, pamphlet and training DVD
- Additional DVD as above, except produced in partnership with the law firm of Hermes, Sargent, Bates
- FAQs from the Baltimore-Washington Conference
- FAQs regarding background check agencies
- Policy Statement of Fairview UMC, Columbia, MO
- Sample guidelines from Church Mutual Insurance Company website www.churchmutual.com
- Basic Facts About Child Sexual Abuse, sixth edition, by Prevent Child Abuse America Publications

APPENDIX B

Addendum II

1 August 2012

This addendum to Trinity's Safe Sanctuaries Policy addresses the safety and security of those who attend worship services and those who are in the building on church business. These suggestions were discussed and adopted by an *ad hoc* church security committee consisting of the Pastor, the Church Council chairperson, the Worship Committee chairperson, and the chairperson of SPRC.

These changes will take place effective August 1, 2012 and will remain in effect unless deemed unnecessary at a later date:

1. The back and side doors will remain locked at all times. The back door has a crash bar if there is an emergency.
2. Signs will be placed on the back and side doors asking visitors to use the front entrance.
3. Door bells will be installed at the back and side doors to alert anyone alone in the building to visitors. A window is available on the back door for viewing. It is suggested if anyone rings the bell at the side door, they are asked to go to the back door for identification through the window.
4. It is recommended that the church pastor should not be responsible for transporting church attendees to church or their home except in cases of extreme emergencies.
5. All first-time visitors to Trinity will be encouraged to participate in worship but will be observed for behavioral issues. Anyone who leaves the sanctuary during worship time will be followed by an appointed church member(s) and addressed about our concern for the safety of our congregation. If they do not cooperate, or exhibit violent behavior, a 911 call should be made.

APPENDIX C

Addendum III to Safe Sanctuary Policies

4 June 2013

Maryland, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia and West Virginia all maintain registries of sex offenders, which attempt to list all persons residing anywhere in those jurisdictions who have been convicted by a court of law of any of a very wide variety of sexual offenses. The registry in all four jurisdictions is available for public review and may be searched online at (1) <http://www.dpsscs.state.md.us/sorSearch> for Maryland; (2) <http://www.pameganslaw.state.pa.us/Main.aspx> for Pennsylvania; (3) <http://sexoffender.dc.gov> for the District of Columbia; and (3) <https://apps.wv.gov/StatePolice/SexOffender/Forms> for West Virginia. Contrary to popular belief, these Sex Offender Registries are *not* limited to listing convicted “pedophiles,” which, strictly speaking, describes persons with a primary sexual interest in prepubescent children aged 13 or younger. Rather, the Registries include sex offenders whose victims, depending on the crime, may include minors as old as 17 years of age or even adults.

From time to time, a local church pastor or church leader learns that a member, or any person who regularly frequents church premises for worship or other reasons, is a registered sex offender. If that happens at Trinity UMC, and even while resolutely affirming every person’s need to be part of a faith community and receive redemption, we hold in balance the imperative to do all we can to keep all of our parishioners safe, especially (but not only) our children and youth. To that end, in striving to maintain an environment of love and safety for all, Trinity’s response to such information shall include the following components:

1. Maintenance of List: The Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) should establish and maintain a list of registered sex offenders who are members of the church, attend worship or are otherwise known to visit the church premises (buildings or grounds) on one or more occasions. The pastor and the chair of the SPRC will ensure that this list is updated in the following manner:
 - a. at least twice a year, by making a reasonably delineated geographical and name searches of the online versions of the registry maintained for Pennsylvania and Maryland, and
 - b. whenever it is brought to the attention of the pastor or the SPRC that another church member or visitor has become a registered sex offender. A current copy of the list will be delivered to the District Superintendent as soon as it is first prepared and whenever the list is updated.
2. Meeting and Covenant with the Registrant: Upon learning that a member or visitor is a registered sex offender, the pastor and the Chair of the SPRC chair, or another member of the SPRC designated by the Chair, will have an in-person meeting with the registered

person (Registrant) and another adult of the Registrant's choosing to discuss the procedures the congregation will follow in order to allow the Registrant to continue to participate in the life of the congregation or visit the church premises for any purpose. During that meeting, the pastor and SPRC representative will:

- a. indicate that they have been made aware of the person's name on the registry;
 - b. summarize the congregation's principles and guidelines in such situations, as outlined here and in the attached "Covenant Letter";
 - c. explain and emphasize the importance of the "Designated Attendant" policy (as described below), both for the safety and well-being of the church community, and the well-being of the Registrant as well;
 - d. provide the Registrant with a Covenant Letter, signed by the pastor and the SPRC Chair, substantially in the form attached hereto; and
 - e. explain that the Covenant Letter must be counter-signed (in front of a witness), dated and returned to the pastor before the Registrant can be allowed to return to the church premises.
3. "Designated Attendants": Registrants should not be allowed in any church building or anywhere on church grounds, unless they are accompanied by an adult member of the congregation that has been approved by the SPRC to serve as a Designated Attendant for registered sex offenders.
- a. A list of Designated Attendants for registered sex offenders shall be maintained by the Chair of the SPRC.
 - b. Each Registrant shall be given the names and telephone numbers of two or more Designated Attendants they can contact to accompany them when they visit the church.
 - c. A Designated Attendant must be present to meet the Registrant in the church parking lot or on the outside walkway in front of the Church when the Registrant arrives at the church's property. The Designated Attendant must physically accompany the Registrant at all times while he/she is within the church building or anywhere on church grounds.
 - d. The Registrant is not allowed in the Fellowship Hall or kitchen when any children or youth (under the age of 18) are present in the Fellowship Hall.
 - e. It is the Registrant's responsibility to arrange to have a Designated Attendant present when they arrive at the church property. If a Designated Attendant does not appear for any reason, the Registrant may not enter any church building and may not stay on the church grounds.

- f. No person that is related to the Registrant by birth, adoption or marriage may serve as their Designated Attendant.
 - g. The SPRC will have the responsibility of securing Designated Attendants for Registrants. In the event that a time arises and no Designated Attendant is available, the person may not stay on the grounds of the church buildings.
 - h. The Designated Attendant requirement must remain in place for as long as the Registrant remains on the Sex Offenders Registry.
4. Exceptions: There should be no exceptions to these policies and procedures except on a case-by-case basis, and then only if (a) written approval is obtained from both the pastor and the SPRC, and (b) advance written notice of the exception, and an explanation of the reasons therefor, is provided to the District Superintendent fourteen (14) days before the proposed exception is to go into effect and the District Superintendent thereafter indicates in writing that there is no objection to allowing the exception.

Covenant Letter for Registered Sex Offender

Dear _____:

It has come to our attention that you are listed on the Sex Offender Registry for **[Maryland] [Pennsylvania] [the District of Columbia] [West Virginia]**. As a church family, we affirm every person's need to be part of a faith community such as ours, but we hold in balance the imperative to do all we can to keep all of our parishioners safe in body and spirit.

Under these circumstances, your participation in the life of Trinity United Methodist Church, or your presence on church premises, requires that a written and binding covenant be made – between you and the church – to adhere to the guidelines outlined below. By making this covenant and remaining faithful to it, without exception, we are hopeful that the pastor, the staff, and the congregation can be of assistance to you, and that the church will, in turn, benefit from your presence and participation in the church's ministry. Each of us is in need of the mercy and grace God offers.

The terms of the covenant are as follows:

1. Any time you are on the campus of the church, you must be accompanied by a "Designated Attendant." There will be at least two people who will be available to act as a Designated Attendant for you. The names and telephone numbers of those who have agreed to act as a Designated Attendant are listed at the bottom of this letter. You should make contact with one of them prior to coming to the campus on each occasion. One of these Designated Attendants must be present to meet you on the outside walkway in front of the church or at your car in the church parking lot and be in your company at all times while you are on the campus of the church. This includes accompanying you to the restroom. The Designated Attendant will accompany you to the walkway outside the front of the church or to your car in the church parking lot at the time you leave the campus.
2. You cannot serve in any positions of leadership or teaching.
3. You may not be present in the Fellowship Hall or kitchen when any children or youth (under the age of 18) are present in the Fellowship Hall.
4. You agree to allow the pastor or her designee to contact any law enforcement, probation officer or other governmental official – but not your attorney or any health care provider – in order to request or obtain information that the pastor believes may be of assistance in ministering to you or to the congregation or others in the church community. By signing this letter you agree that the law enforcement, probation officer or other governmental official may share any information with the pastor or her designee, and you release that person and their organization or employer from any liability as a result of releasing this information. This authorization and release specifically includes, without limitation, any information, written or verbal, the law enforcement, probation officer or other

governmental official has obtained concerning medical, psychological and psychiatric conditions or treatment.

5. You agree to meet and consult with the pastor upon her request for the purpose of providing assistance to you or for the protection and security of the congregation or others in the church community.
6. You understand and agree that the pastor and SPRC must keep other church staff and members apprised of your status and the guidelines agreed upon.

We trust you understand the reasons for these requirements. If so, and if you are committed to keeping this covenant, please sign and date this letter in the space provided below. If you cannot or are unwilling to do so, we regret that we cannot allow you to visit church premises again for any reason.

Please know that we are praying for you and for ourselves as we locate and follow an appropriate path for moving forward in faith. We look forward to what God will do in your life and in the lives of all members of this congregation and those who seek to participate in its ministries.

Sincerely,

Pastor

Chair, Staff Parish Relations
Committee

The Designated Attendants to be called any time you plan to come to the campus of the church are:

1. _____ Tel no. _____
2. _____ Tel no. _____
3. _____ Tel no. _____

I have read the above letter and agree to abide by the mandatory guidelines contained in the letter.

Date: _____

Witness Signature

Your Signature