

Revised January 13, 2013

SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY

**ST. PETER'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
240 SUNBURY ROAD
P.O. BOX 428
RIVERSIDE, PA 17821
570-275-1341**

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

St. Peter's United Methodist Church

Introduction

The General Conference on The United Methodist Church, in April 1996, 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 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, both 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. 384-3861])

Purpose

Our congregation's purpose for establishing this Child Abuse Prevention Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth.

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 of our children and youth as well as all of the workers with children and youth. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events; we will educate all of our workers with children and youth regarding the use of all appropriate policies and methods (including first aid and methods of discipline); we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law; and we will be prepared to respond to media inquires 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)

Safe Sanctuaries Procedures

The following procedures are to be followed to aid in protecting our children, youth and adult leaders in children and youth ministries.

A. Providing A Safe Environment

1. During Sunday School Class times, the Sunday School Superintendent or someone they designate will monitor the class room activity by roaming the hallways. Where possible the classroom doors can be left open.
2. St. Peter's United Methodist Church will offer annually
 - a. Orientation and training for all workers in children and youth ministries
 - b. First Aid/CPR Training as needed
3. A signed parental permission slip is required for all events which are held off site.
4. At least one parent is required to attend all youth group meetings and activities.
5. The primary or lead worker in all areas of children's and youth ministries will be at least eighteen years of age.
6. St. Peter's United Methodist Church will provide and maintain safe and appropriate equipment and supervision during church sponsored activities on church property.
7. St. Peter's United Methodist Church will offer on a regular basis opportunities for the entire congregation to be informed regarding children's issues, especially child safety and abuse of children and youth.
8. All volunteers and workers in children and youth ministries are requested to sign a written Covenant of Participation.

B. Hiring and Recruiting Workers

1. A completed application form will be required from all workers, paid and volunteer.
2. All volunteer workers with children and youth will have been a member of this congregation for a least six months before assuming the volunteer assignment in children and youth ministries.
3. All volunteers and workers with children and youth ministries will have

passed a criminal records check before assuming an assignment in children and youth ministries.

New Additions January 2013

Susquehanna Conference Cyber Safety

The internet and portable devices allow people to stay in contact with each other more easily than at any other time in the history of civilization. Some incredible ministry can take place using modern technology, but as with all forms of ministry there are some inherent risks involved with the use of electronic communications. However, following basic Safe Sanctuaries procedures can help to minimize those risks. There is no such thing as privacy in cyberspace.

Consider anything and everything on the internet as public information. Here are some recommendations: Receive parental/guardian permission. In addition to general permission to participate in a conference ministry, it is advisable to receive advance parental permission for children and youth and personal permission for vulnerable adults in writing for:

1. Posting photos of participants on any websites or sending them e-mail or cell phone messages or making videos for any use.
2. E-mailing, Instant Messaging (IM'ing), calling, texting, or sending data to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult by computer, PDA, or cell phone (keep in mind "free" minutes and data plans vary tremendously even with the same carrier); and.
3. The sharing of any full name or contact information.

Never post easily identifiable information online.

1. If you communicate by e-mail, do not use "broadcast" e-mails. Use the "Bcc" option (blind carbon copy) so that each recipient sees only his or her address when a message is received.
2. Be cautious when transmitting easily identifiable information like event dates, times, locations, or participants.
3. Limit what is communicated in electronic prayer requests. When placing a child, youth, or vulnerable adult on an electronic prayer list, consider using only first names. If someone must know the last name or the mailing address of the individual, have her or him call the conference office or a designated contact person.

Limit individual communications with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

1. Conduct any communications in a professional manner. (Even though you may be a sounding board for a person having a bad day, the reverse is not true.)
2. Save all communications you have with children, youth, and vulnerable adults (i.e. instant messages (IMs), chat room conversations, e-mails, etc.). An electronic "paper trail" can be important.

Cyber Safety Links

<http://www.pewinternet.org> Information on pornography and articles helpful to conference and church ministry

<http://www.toptenreview.com> Information on pornography and articles helpful to conference and church ministry

<http://www.coppa.org/> Information on Children's Online Privacy Protection Act
<http://www.safefamilies.org/> Safe Families website
<http://www.safefamilies.org/safetychecklist.php> Checklist for Implementing an Online Safety Program in Your Computer Center offered by Safe Families
<http://www.safefamilies.org/aup.php> Sample Acceptable Use Policy for Computer Centers offered by Safe Families
<http://www.microsoft.com/protect/yourself/password/checker.msp> A Microsoft website that allows you to test the strength of passwords
<http://www.wiredsafety.org/> Touted as "The World's Largest Internet Safety and Help Group" site
<http://www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=197004779> Series of articles on how to secure wireless networks

Participation Covenant Statement

The congregation of St. Peter's United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth and volunteers who participate in 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. Adults who have been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) shall not be accepted to work with children or youth in any church sponsored activity.
2. Adult survivors of child abuse need the love and support of our congregation. Any adult survivor who desires to volunteer in some capacity to work with children or youth is encouraged to discuss his/her willingness with one of our church's ministers before accepting an assignment.
3. All adult volunteers involved with children or youth of our church must have been members of the congregation for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.
4. Adult volunteers with children and youth shall take care that no adult is ever unmonitored with children or youth.
5. Adult volunteers with children and youth shall attend regular training and education events provided by the church to keep volunteers informed of church policies and state laws regarding child abuse.
6. Adult volunteers shall immediately report to their supervisors or the Pastor any behavior that seem abusive or inappropriate.

Please answer each of the following questions:

1. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children and youth? //Yes //No
 2. As a volunteer in this congregation do you agree to be monitored by another not-related adult as you work with children and youth? //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 the church 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 your supervisor or the Pastor. //Yes //No
 6. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to discuss with a minister of this congregation your experience, if any, as a survivor of child abuse? //Yes //No
- (Answering yes to this question does not automatically disqualify you from volunteering with children and youth.)*
7. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to inform the minister of this congregation if you have ever been convicted of 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

Steps in Responding To A Reported Incident

I. The volunteer or Worker will

1. Insure the privacy and safety of the alleged victim.
2. Treat the accused individual with dignity and honor.
3. Immediately remove the accused individual from further involvement with children and youth.
4. Notify the Pastor as soon as possible
 - a. If the Pastor is not available notification should be made to the Staff-Parish Comm. Chair, Administrative Council Chair and the Lay Leader, unless they are directly involved.
5. Complete a report form for each incident, accident or abusive, situation reported.

II. Upon notification, the Pastor will

1. Notify the parents of the alleged victim
2. Notify each of the following:
 - a. The proper law enforcement agency
 - b. The District Superintendent
 - c. The Local Church's Insurance Agent
 - d. The Local Church's Attorney
3. Serve as the news media liaison for the local church.
4. Keep a written record of each step taken including times and dates.
5. Prepare a brief, carefully worded statement to the congregation, telling the truth, but withholding the names of the alleged victim and the accused.
6. Cooperate fully with the investigation conducted by law enforcement personnel.

III. When the Pastor is accused

1. Insure the privacy and safety of the alleged victim.
2. Treat the accused individual with dignity and honor.
3. Immediately remove the accused individual from further involvement with children and youth.
4. Notify the Staff-Parish Comm. Chairperson, the Administrative Council Chairperson and the Lay Leader, who will immediately notify the District

this

5. Superintendent.
The District Superintendent will represent the Local Church in response to
accusation.

PERMISSION SLIP

I, _____ give permission to my
(name or parent or guardian)

son, daughter _____ to participate in
(participant's name)

“EVENT”

sponsored by St. Peter's United Methodist Church Youth Group to be held

“DATES”

Should emergency medical treatment be necessary, I authorize

to act on my behalf and approve appropriate treatment.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Parent Name _____

INFORMATION

(Print)

HEALTH INSURANCE

Company: _____

Home Address _____

Policy# _____

Policyholder's

Name: _____

RELEASE OF LIABILITY

We the parents or legal guardian
of _____
(participant's name)

do hereby release St. Peter's United Methodist Church, the Church staff, all sponsors and volunteers involved with the following event "EVENT" on "DATES" from any and all liability resulting from any physical injury, property damage, or other injury or damage which occurs in connection with the above event. We further express our appreciation for the church organization of the event and the adults who are giving their time for the event to happen.

Date: _____
Signature: _____
(Parent or guardian)

St. Peter's United Methodist Church Incident Report

Any incident involving a member, employee or guest that occurs on church property, or under the jurisdiction of the church must be reported on this form, on the day the incident occurs.

Date of incident _____ Time _____ Place _____

Individuals involve (Name, Age)

Parent/Guardian (Name, Address, Phone Number) of injured

Person in charge where accident occurred _____

What happened ? _____

Brief description of injury and care given _____

Did the injured see a healthcare provider? _____
Who or where? _____

Were parents notified? _____ When? _____

Could this incident have been prevented? _____ If so, how? _____

Signature of person making the report: _____

A copy of this incident report should be given to the Pastor, the Church Office, and the Church's insurance agent.

SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY

**ST. PETER'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
240 SUNBURY ROAD
P.O. BOX 428
RIVERSIDE, PA 17821
570-275-1341**

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY St. Peter's United Methodist Church

Introduction

The General Conference on The United Methodist Church, in April 1996, 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 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, both 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. 384-3861])

Purpose

Our congregation's purpose for establishing this Child Abuse Prevention Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth.

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 of our children and youth as well as all of the workers with children and youth. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events; we will educate all of our workers with children and youth regarding the use of all appropriate policies and methods (including first aid and methods of discipline); we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law; and 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)

Safe Sanctuaries Procedures

The following procedures are to be followed to aid in protecting our children, youth and adult leaders in children and youth ministries.

A. Providing A Safe Environment

1. During Sunday School Class times, the Sunday School Superintendent or someone they designate will monitor the class room activity by roaming the hallways. Where possible the classroom doors can be left open.
2. St. Peter's United Methodist Church will offer annually
 - a. Orientation and training for all workers in children and youth ministries
 - b. First Aid/CPR Training as needed
3. A signed parental permission slip is required for all events which are held off site.
4. At least one parent is required to attend all youth group meetings and activities.
5. The primary or lead worker in all areas of children's and youth ministries will be at least eighteen years of age.
6. St. Peter's United Methodist Church will provide and maintain safe and appropriate equipment and supervision during church sponsored activities on church property.
7. St. Peter's United Methodist Church will offer on a regular basis opportunities for the entire congregation to be informed regarding children's issues, especially child safety and abuse of children and youth.
8. All volunteers and workers in children and youth ministries are requested to sign a written Covenant of Participation.

B. Hiring and Recruiting Workers

1. A completed application form will be required from all workers, paid and volunteer.
2. All volunteer workers with children and youth will have been a member of this congregation for a least six months before assuming the volunteer assignment in children and youth ministries.
3. All volunteers and workers with children and youth ministries will have passed a criminal records check before assuming an assignment in children and youth ministries.

Participation Covenant Statement

The congregation of St. Peter's United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth and volunteers who participate in 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. Adults who have been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse) shall not be accepted to work with children or youth in any church sponsored activity.
2. Adult survivors of child abuse need the love and support of our congregation. Any adult survivor who desires to volunteer in some capacity to work with children or youth is encouraged to discuss his/her willingness with one of our church's ministers before accepting an assignment.
3. All adult volunteers involved with children or youth of our church must have been members of the congregation for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.
4. Adult volunteers with children and youth shall take care that no adult is ever unmonitored with children or youth.
5. Adult volunteers with children and youth shall attend regular training and education events provided by the church to keep volunteers informed of church policies and state laws regarding child abuse.
6. Adult volunteers shall immediately report to their supervisors of the Pastor any behavior that seem abusive or inappropriate.

Please answer each of the following questions:

1. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children and youth? //Yes //No
2. As a volunteer in this congregation do you agree to be monitored by another not-related adult as you work with children and youth? //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 the church 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 your supervisor or the Pastor. //Yes //No
6. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to discuss with a minister of this congregation your experience, if any, as a survivor of child abuse? //Yes //No
(Answering yes to this question does not automatically disqualify you from volunteering with children and youth.)
7. As a volunteer in this congregation, do you agree to inform the minister of this congregation if you have ever been convicted of 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

Steps in Responding To A Reported Incident

- I. **The volunteer or Worker will**
 1. Insure the privacy and safety of the alleged victim.
 2. Treat the accused individual with dignity and honor.
 3. Immediately remove the accused individual from further involvement with children and youth.

4. Notify the Pastor as soon as possible
 - a. If the Pastor is not available notification should be made to the Staff-Parish Comm. Chair, Administrative Council Chair and the Lay Leader, unless they are directly involved.
5. Complete a report form for each incident, accident or abusive, situation reported.

II. Upon notification, the Pastor will

1. Notify the parents of the alleged victim
2. Notify each of the following:
 - a. The proper law enforcement agency
 - b. The District Superintendent
 - c. The Local Church's Insurance Agent
 - d. The Local Church's Attorney
3. Serve as the news media liaison for the local church.
4. Keep a written record of each step taken including times and dates.
5. Prepare a brief, carefully worded statement to the congregation, telling the truth, but withholding the names of the alleged victim and the accused.
6. Cooperate fully with the investigation conducted by law enforcement personnel.

III. When the Pastor is accused

1. Insure the privacy and safety of the alleged victim.
2. Treat the accused individual with dignity and honor.
3. Immediately remove the accused individual from further involvement with children and youth.
4. Notify the Staff-Parish Comm. Chairperson, the Administrative Council Chairperson and the Lay Leader, who will immediately notify the District Superintendent.
5. The District Superintendent will represent the Local Church in response to this accusation.

PERMISSION SLIP

I, _____ give permission to my
(name or parent or guardian)

son, daughter _____ to participate in
(participant's name)

“EVENT”

sponsored by St. Peter's United Methodist Church Youth Group to be held

“DATES”

Should emergency medical treatment be necessary, I authorize

to act on my behalf and approve appropriate treatment.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Parent Name _____

HEALTH INSURANCE INFORMATION

(Print)

Company: _____

Home Address _____

Policy# _____

Policy holder's Name: _____

RELEASE OF LIABILITY

We the parents or legal guardian of _____

(participant's name)

do hereby release St. Peter's United Methodist Church, the Church staff, all sponsors and volunteers involved with the following event "**EVENT**" on "**DATES**" from any and all liability resulting from any physical injury, property damage, or other injury or damage which occurs in connection with the above event. We further express our appreciation for the church organization of the event and the adults who are giving their time for the event to happen.

Date: _____

Signature: _____
(Parent or guardian)

St. Peter's United Methodist Church Incident Report

Any incident involving a member, employee or guest that occurs on church property, or under the jurisdiction of the church must be reported on this form, on the day the incident occurs.

Date of incident _____ Time _____ Place _____

Individuals involve (Name, Age)

Parent/Guardian (Name, Address, Phone Number) of injured

Person in charge where accident occurred _____

What happened? _____

Brief description of injury and care given _____

Did the injured see a healthcare provider? _____
Who or where? _____

Were parents notified? _____ When? _____

Could this incident have been prevented? _____

If so, how? _____

Signature of person making the report: _____

A copy of this incident report should be given to the Pastor, the Church Office, and the Church's insurance agent.