

Fishing Creek Salem United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuaries Policy

INTRODUCTION

Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes [a] child ... welcomes me."¹ 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. God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children from abuse. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults grow safe and strong.

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Sexual abuse, exploitation and ritual abuse occur in churches, both large and small, urban and rural. Such incidents are devastating to all who are involved: the child, the family, the local church and its leaders.

In April 1996, the General Conference of the United Methodist Church adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of abuse of children, youth and vulnerable adults in the church.² The adopted resolution calls on each church to welcome children and youth and to make the church environment a safe place for children and youth to grow and learn. The adopted resolution also directs each church to implement a policy to protect children and youth.

It is a church's responsibility to (1) be proactive in recruiting and training individuals to care for children, youth and vulnerable adults and in protecting those individuals from false accusations of abuse and (2) oversee all programs involving children, youth and vulnerable adults to assure a safe environment and to implement a plan of response if an accusation of abuse arises.

¹ *Matthew* 18:5.

² Resolution No. 65 ("Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Churches"), *The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church - 1996*, p. 384.

Section 1. Scope of policy.

The sections set forth in this policy document constitute Fishing Creek Salem United Methodist Church's Safe Sanctuaries Policy.

1. Develop a Safe Sanctuaries Policies for their church
2. Develop and implement an ongoing education plan for the congregation and its leaders on the reality of child abuse, risk factors leading to child abuse, and strategies for prevention
3. Adopt screening procedures (use of application forms, interviews, reference checks, background clearances, and so forth) for staff, volunteers, employees, and helpers (paid and unpaid) directly or indirectly involved in the care of children, youth, and vulnerable adults
4. Develop and implement safety procedures for church activities such as having two or more non related adults present in classroom or activity; leaving doors open and installing half-doors or windows in doors or halls; providing hall monitors; instituting sign-in and sign-out procedures for children ages ten or younger; cyber safety for e-mail, internet, and cell phone use, and appropriate abuse allegation or Policies violation reporting procedures.
5. Become informed as to who are mandatory reporters
6. Advise children, youth, and vulnerable adults of ChildLine or a person outside as well as within the local church whom they can contact for advice and help if they have suffered abuse; become informed about any liability coverage carried by the Conference applicable to child safety
7. Assist the development of awareness and self-protection skills for children, youth, and vulnerable adults through special curriculum and activities
8. Be familiar with Annual Conference and other church policies regarding clergy and lay leader sexual misconduct
9. Designate the appropriate person/group within the local church to fulfill these (e.g. Safe Sanctuaries coordinator, task force, etc.).

Section 2. Definitions.

What is Safe Sanctuaries?

In 1996, the General Conference of the United Methodist Church adopted the resolution, Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church. This resolution, reaffirmed at every General Conference since then, became the impetus for annual conferences and congregations to develop and implement abuse risk reduction policies. The General Board of Discipleship has identified Safe Sanctuaries as reducing the risk of abuse in the church for children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

What is abuse?

"Child Abuse" is defined under Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law 23 PA.C.S.A §6303(b)(1) to mean any of the following:

- (i) any recent act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes nonaccidental serious physical injury to a child under 18 years of age.
- (ii) an act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes nonaccidental serious mental injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child under 18 years of age.
- (iii) any recent act, failure to act, or series of acts or failures to act by a perpetrator which creates an imminent risk of serious physical injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child under 18 years of age.
- (iv) serious physical neglect by a perpetrator constituting prolonged or repeated lack of supervision or the failure to provide essentials of life, including adequate medical care, which endangers a child's life or development or impairs the child's functioning.

Section 6303(b)(2) No child shall be deemed to be physically or mentally abused based on injuries that result solely from environmental factors that are beyond the control of the parent or person responsible for the child's welfare, such as inadequate housing, furnishings, income, clothing, and medical care.

Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law 23 Pa.C.S.A. §6303(b)(3) also provides that, "If, upon investigation, the county agency determines that a child has not been provided needed medical or surgical care because of seriously held religious beliefs of the child's parents, guardian, or person responsible for the child's welfare, which beliefs are consistent with those of a bona fide religion, the child shall not be deemed to be physically or mentally abused. The county agency shall closely monitor the child and shall seek court-ordered medical intervention when the lack of medical or surgical care threatens the child's life or long-term health."

In Safe Sanctuaries. Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church for Children and Youth, 2008, Discipleship Resources, Nashville, TN, Joy Thornburg Melton defines and describes five types of abuse:

1. Physical Abuse is “abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a child. Examples may include violent battery with a weapon (knife, belt, strap, etc), burning, shaking, kicking, choking, fracturing bones, and any of a wide variety of non-accidental injuries to a child’s body. (Melton 2008, pages 29-30)
2. Emotional Abuse is “abuse in which a person exposes a child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message to the child of worthlessness, badness, and being not only unloved but undeserving of love and care. Children exposed to emotional abuse may have experienced being locked in a closet, being deprived of any sign of parental affection, being constantly told they are bad or stupid, or being allowed or forced to abuse alcohol or drugs. Emotional abuse is often very difficult to prove and devastating to the victim.” (Melton, 2008, page 30)
3. Neglect is “abuse in which a person endangers a child’s health, safety, or welfare through negligence. Neglect may include withholding food, clothing, medical care, education, and even affection and affirmation of the child’s self-worth.” (Melton, 2008, page 30) If a parent cannot provide adequate care for a child due to poverty, infirmity, or other disability, their negligence is not legally categorized as abuse, although the neglected person still needs to be cared for.
4. Sexual Abuse is “abuse in which sexual contact between a child and an adult (or another older and more powerful youth) occurs. The child is never truly capable of consenting to or resisting such contact and/or such sexual acts. Often, the child is physically and psychologically dependent upon the perpetrator of the abuse. Examples of sexual abuse may include fondling, intercourse, incest, and the exploitation of and exposure to child pornography or prostitution.” (Melton, 2008, page 30)
5. Ritual Abuse is “abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violations of a child are inflicted regularly, intentionally, and in a stylized way by a person or persons responsible for the child’s welfare. The abuser may appeal to some higher authority or power to justify the abuse. The abuse may include cruel treatment of animals or repeated threats of harm to the child, other persons, and animals. Reports of ritual abuse are often extremely horrifying and may seem too grim to be true. Children making such reports must not be ignored.” (Melton, 2008, page 30)

Definitions

1. A child is anyone under the age of 18 years.
2. A youth is a child in the age range of 12 to 18 years, and is a colloquial term used in ministries to mean junior and senior high school age groups.
3. A vulnerable adult is any person, 18 years and older, who because of physical or mental infirmity or emotional disability or other physical, mental, or emotional dysfunction may be vulnerable to maltreatment.
4. A staff person is any person engaged in ministry to children, youth, or vulnerable adults through the Conference or Local Church who: has been screened and trained in Safe Sanctuaries Policies; performs tasks specified in a mutually agreed upon job description; and, is accountable to a supervisor for work habits and products.
5. A helper is any person engaged in ministry to children, youth, or vulnerable adults through the Conference or Local Church who has been screened and trained in Safe Sanctuaries Policies, but who works only in an assisting role under supervision of a staff person.
6. An employee is any person who works in ministry to children, youth, or vulnerable adults either as a staff person or a helper for compensation.
7. A volunteer is any person who works in ministry to children, youth, or vulnerable adults either as a supervisor or a helper without compensation.
8. A designated reporter is any person in charge of an activity or event or the Site Director at any of the camping sites the conference owns
9. A conference response team is a group of people trained in handling situations of abuse. They assist congregations, camps, and events in dealing with the recovery process.
10. A mandated reporter is any individual paid or unpaid, who, on the bases of the individual’s role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accepts responsibility for a child. A clergy person, priest, rabbi, minister, Christian Science practitioner, religious healer or spiritual leader of any regularly established church or other religious organization.
11. Ministries and/or activities are defined as any ministries to children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults that include any programming or activities in which children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults are under the supervision of the Conference through its staff persons or volunteers.

12. Cyber Space is a new form of communication via the Internet and wireless cell-phones and other hand-held devices. Constituting a new space for ministry and activities for children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Cyber Space includes: communications via email, instant messaging, and cell phone (speaking and texting), and other devices; communicating on social networking sites such as Facebook.; web-surfing and downloading of materials from the Internet; and gaming. Cyberspace is a fluid space which changes more and more as communications become more portable and websites change with increasing frequency.
13. Cyber Safety is the part of our Safe Sanctuaries policies that seeks to encourage those in ministry with children, youth, and vulnerable adults to update their knowledge of Cyberspace; provide ground rules for ministries and activities in Cyberspace; encourage critical thinking among those ministered to for posting, reading, and seeing; encourage good sense and safety in Cyberspace; and, model appropriate Cyberspace behaviors. The dangers of direct access to age-inappropriate content, risky social contacts, intimidation, threats, bullying, remade and/or inappropriate photos, information that could increase risks for abuse, and more in Cyberspace make Cyber Safety an important part of Safe Sanctuaries.

Section 3. Statement of covenant.

1. Covenant.--As a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation committed to ministry to and with children and vulnerable adults, the church pledges to:
 - a. Conduct all its activities and ministries in such a way to assure the safety and spiritual growth of all children and vulnerable adults entrusted to the church.
 - b. Follow reasonable safety measures in the recruitment and selection of certified volunteers, roaming adults, teen helpers and volunteer helpers.
 - c. Oversee programs, events and the training of staff persons, so that they are able and equipped to minister to children and vulnerable adults in Jesus' name.
 - d. Report and respond to all suspected incidents of abuse as required by state law and this policy document, and as directed by the moral conscience of those involved in reporting and responding to the suspected incidents of abuse.
 - e. Minister to the abused individual, the perpetrator of the abuse, and their families.

Section 4. Committee on Safe Sanctuaries.

1. Creation and purpose.--The church shall create a Committee on Safe Sanctuaries to oversee the church's Safe Sanctuaries policy.
2. Duties.--The duties of the committee shall include the following:
 - a. Periodically review this policy document and make any recommendation to amend this policy document to the Church Council.
 - b. Develop and implement Safe Sanctuaries training sessions.
 - c. Prepare a summary of each meeting of the committee and keep records of the deliberations of the committee.
 - d. Maintain a list of individuals who are currently certified as having fulfilled the requirements for service under this policy document.
 - e. Develop any necessary forms or other procedures to implement this policy document.
3. Membership.--The committee shall consist of the following individuals:
 - a. A member of the Church Council.
 - b. The Director of Children's Ministries of the church.
 - c. The Director of Youth Ministries of the church.
 - d. A representative of the Preschool staff of the church.
 - e. Two at-large members of the church.
 - f. One of the church's pastors.
4. Chair.--One of the two designated at-large members of the church shall serve as the chair of the committee.
5. Meetings.--The committee shall meet at least on a quarterly basis.
6. Quorum.--A majority of the members currently serving on the committee shall constitute a quorum at a meeting to officially conduct the business of the committee. Action by the quorum shall be authorized or ratified by a majority vote of the members. Voting results shall be shared with non-present members of the committee in a timely manner. Email may be used to communicate and decide issues that do not require a meeting.
7. Confidentiality.--
 - a. The deliberations of the committee shall be confidential. The committee may not disclose the identity of an

individual who failed to satisfy the certification requirements under this policy document or the reasons that an individual was not approved for service as a certified volunteer or roaming adult.

- b. The results of an individual's criminal history record information check, child abuse history clearance or sex offender background check shall be confidential.
- c. A representative of the committee may periodically report to the Church Council on individuals approved for service by the committee, recommendations regarding the amendment or interpretation of this policy document, or administrative matters such as Safe Sanctuaries training sessions or the implementation of the provisions of this policy document.
- d. When a perpetration occurs or when there is a violation of the Safe Sanctuaries policy, the committee must be informed and keep the information in confidentiality

Section 5. Initial certification for prospective employees and volunteers.

1. Before the committee may certify that an individual is Safe Sanctuaries-approved, the individual must satisfy the following requirements (this does not apply to teen helpers):
 - a. Employee
 - i. Complete a written application
 - ii. Have necessary experience and met minimum qualifications for the position to which he/she is applying
 - iii. Voluntary disclosure of past criminal history, allegations of criminal history, and driver history
 - iv. Produce three unrelated references with contact information
 - v. Complete a clear Pennsylvania State Police Criminal History Report, Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance, and an FBI Criminal History Report (Fingerprint-based background check). Valid for 60 months or produce valid clearances completed within the last 24 months.
 - vi. Complete an interview process
 - vii. A current driver's license, registration, insurance, and completed Pennsylvania or state of residency, driving record, when transporting children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults.
 - viii. Use of age and developmentally appropriate language in educating children, youth, and vulnerable adults regarding definitions of abuse and procedures for reporting.
 - ix. Attend a Safe Sanctuaries training or take the online Safe Sanctuaries training within the first six months of appointment.
 - b. Volunteer
 - i. Demonstrate at least 6-months previous participation within the congregation
 - ii. All of the above, except 5.1.vii
 - iii. Complete a clear Pennsylvania State Police Criminal History Report, Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance, and FBI Criminal History Report (fingerprint-based background check) NOTE: The FBI Criminal History Report is not required for incumbent or prospective volunteers: (i) who have resided in Pennsylvania continuously for a period of 10 years prior to becoming a volunteer or applying for volunteer status and who sign a Volunteer Affidavit affirming that they have not committed certain crimes that otherwise would prohibit them from being a volunteer responsible for the welfare of a child or having direct contact with children; or (ii) who have received such Report at any time since establishing residency in Pennsylvania and provide a copy of the Report to the person responsible for the selection of volunteers.

Section 6. Re-certification

1. All clearances are valid for 60 months (5 years). All volunteers and employees must produce valid clearances prior to the completion of this window of time.
2. Safe Sanctuaries training is valid for 3 years. All volunteers and employees must produce valid certification prior to the completion of this window of time.
3. Attendance or online participation at a Safe Sanctuaries training provided by the church is required for all volunteers and employees in between this three year window. Trainings may include, but are not limited to, procedures for supervision, Cyber Safety, mandated reporter training, reporting abuse, CPR/First Aid.

Section 7. Costs.

1. The church shall request that volunteer and prospective volunteer pay the costs associated with the individual's criminal history background check, child abuse history clearance, and FBI Fingerprinting.
2. The church should request that a staff person and prospective staff person shall pay the costs associated with his or her criminal history background check, child abuse history clearance, and FBI fingerprinting at the time that he

or she submits an application for employment at the church.

3. Payment by church.--In the case of financial hardship, an individual may request that the church pay the costs associated with the individual's criminal history record information check, child abuse history clearance and sex offender background check. The church shall evaluate each such request on a case-by-case basis.

Section 8. Change in information and status

1. Update of information. An individual who is certified under this policy document shall update contact information as necessary and any other information as determined by the committee.
2. De-certification. The committee may rescind the certification of an individual who is certified under this policy document if, in the discretion of the committee, circumstances arise that so require.

Section 9. Standards for church activity or ministry.

1. Two non-related adult rule-Church activity or ministry shall be supervised, at a minimum, according to the following "two-adult rule" regardless of the number of participants in the church activity or ministry. The Two non-related Adult Rule requires that adults be 18 years of age or older. No matter the size of the group, two non-related adults (defined as two adults not residing in the same household) shall be present with participants at all times. These adults shall have completed the ministry screening process. One of the two adults may be a "roamer" who moves in and out of the rooms.
2. Roamer-When one School teacher is present within a classroom, one roaming adult shall be present in order to monitor activities in the hallway, and to be available to assist Sunday School teachers.
3. 5 year older rule-An individual may not supervise a church activity or ministry involving children unless the individual is at least five years older than the oldest child participating in the church activity or ministry and at least 18 years of age.
4. Open view-All activities should occur in open view. Each room or space where activities involving children, youth or vulnerable adults occur shall have visibility from an interior hallway or a connecting room by means of a window, a door with an uncovered window, or an open door.
5. Unlocked doors-All doors are to remain unlocked during church activity or ministry.
6. Restrooms-Outer restroom doors are to remain open when Safe Sanctuaries certified volunteers, other than the child's parent, are assisting children in the restrooms. An additional Safe Sanctuaries certified volunteer must be present. A non-certified volunteer should never provide assistance with bathroom needs. It is encouraged that with youth there be a buddy system created to help insure safety.
7. Registration Records-Registration materials for any church activity or ministry in which a child or vulnerable adult is outside the direct supervision of the parent, guardian or other caregiver of the child or vulnerable adult shall require a signed written permission form by the parent, guardian or caregiver. The form shall require the completion of pertinent health information regarding the child or vulnerable adult before the child or vulnerable adult may participate in the church activity or ministry.
8. Covenant-Each staff person and certified volunteer shall sign a covenant of participation.
9. Event Records-Event Records shall include Activity Registration, Parental/Guardian Permission, and Signed Emergency Medical Release emergency contact information, pertinent info about the Participant (allergies, medications, special instructions, etc.), such as medical history and insurance information. These forms will be maintained and secured in a designated folder by the Staff person or Volunteer in charge of the ministry or activity. Accurate participation records shall be maintained for all Church activities or events involving children, youth or vulnerable adults by the Staff person or volunteer supervising the event. Persons coordinating off-site activities will assure every Participant has completed the appropriate forms, and will take copies of these forms along on the event in a folder. Master copies of all records will be kept in the office of the Director of Children's Ministry.
10. Media-Written permission must be obtained from a parent/guardian prior to posting photos of children or youth on a website or in other public locations, and names will not be included.
11. Ratios-The following minimum ratios will be maintained for on-site activities
 - a. Nursery through children two years old – 1:4 (one adult to every four children).
 - b. Children 3-4 years-old activities – 1:10 (one adult to every ten children).
 - c. Kindergarten through grade 5 – 1:10 (one adult to every ten children).
 - d. Youth 6-12 grade – 1: 10 (one adult to every ten youth).
 - e. Special Needs – 1:6 (one adult to every six persons).
 - f. Vulnerable adults – 1:6 (one adult to every six persons).
 - g. Note: Helpers are not included in computing the ratio.
12. Private Conversations-If a participant requests to speak privately with an adult, the adult will ensure that the adult

and the participant are visible to others while talking, even though they may not be heard.

13. Overnight Trips

- a. The following minimum ratios will be maintained for off-site events (in addition to the Two Non-related Adult Rule – see #1, above):
 - i. In co-ed groups, both male and female adults must be present.
 - ii. Nursery through 2 years old – 1:3 (one adult to every three children).
 - iii. Children 3-4 years-old – 1:3 (one adult to every three children).
 - iv. Kindergarten through grade 5 – 1:5 (one adult to every five children).
 - v. Youth 6 -12 grade – 1:10 (one adult to every ten youth).
 - vi. Special needs – 1:6 (one adult to every six persons).
 - vii. Vulnerable adults – 1:6 (one adult to every six persons).
 - viii. Note: Helpers are not included in computing the ratio.
- b. Advance notice will be given to parents/legal guardians prior to events, and will include: date, time, and location, the means of transportation, and a summary of activities and events. Specific parental/legal guardians approval for off-site / overnight events is required. Should details of an event's start/end time change (or other pertinent information change), the event's coordinator is to have a plan for notifying parents/legal guardians. Changes in transportation plans should be communicated with parents as well.
- c. All medications and medication instructions shall be given to a designated adult prior to the trip for disbursement as appropriate, and will be enclosed in its original container (including prescription medications). [Exception: Epipens and inhalers may be carried by child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s), with the understanding that they will be secured and out of sight unless needed. Due to the nature of these medications, adult leaders will be aware that the child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) is carrying medication, and will be familiar with how to use an Epipen and inhaler in case of emergency]
- d. Appropriate buddy systems, check-in times, and appropriate male and female adult supervision need to be established for each ministry or event.
- e. The staff person or volunteer in charge of the ministry or event will assure the setting (and any equipment used) is appropriate for the event, and by implementing the above-named measures, will minimize risk of incident or injury to all participants.
- f. Events where direct adult supervision of child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) is not feasible (e.g. Creation, amusement parks, youth rallies and other large-group public events) will, at the minimum, incorporate a 3-5-person buddy system and check-in for all participants as part of appropriate adult supervision.
- g. Drivers to and from events must have completed the appropriate forms (see "Screening Procedures" section for details). Drivers must be a minimum of 25 years of age or older. If the Two Non-related Adult Rule is not feasible to maintain, drivers will make reasonable effort to not transport less than two (2) participants at a time. Each vehicle should have a first aid kit, and one (1) seatbelt per occupant. Drivers will practice safe driving procedures such as assuring that all passengers remain properly secured throughout the trip, and by obeying all posted speed laws and regulations. The event's coordinator should provide as necessary any appropriate maps, directions, and emergency contact numbers to each driver, as well as a communication plan for contacting assistance should an emergency arise. NO texting or use of hand held devices while driving.
- h. It is recommended that event coordinators attempt to secure at least one (1) adult with current certification in First Aid and CPR for each trip or event, and that all adult leadership participating in the trip or event is aware of the identity of such person(s).
- i. There will be separate sleeping areas for males and females.
- j. At least two adults will be present in each sleeping area, and will be of the same gender as the children/youth/vulnerable adult in that area.
- k. Sleeping areas should be pre-arranged by staff person or event coordinator prior to event.
- l. Random and regular rounds will be conducted by two (2) adult leaders (of the opposite sex) throughout the nighttime sleeping hours of all sleeping areas.
- m. Separate shower and bathrooms facilities are highly encouraged. When separate facilities are not possible, procedures for use of the facility will be conveyed to all event participants by the staff person or event coordinator.
- n. If children/youth/vulnerable adults are found to be in violation of the Participation Covenant, the situation will be handled by the staff person or event coordinator as deemed appropriate. Said action may result in the parent/legal guardian(s) of the participant being notified regardless of the time of day/night, and the participant may be required to leave the event.
- o. Adults must respect the privacy of children/youth/vulnerable adult, during such situations as changing,

showering, etc., and should intrude only to the extent that health or safety may require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations as well.

Section 10. Cyber Safety

1. Receive parental/guardian permission in writing before
 - a. Posting photos of participants on any websites or sending them e-mail or cell phone messages or making videos for any use.
 - b. Electronically contacting a child or youth
 - c. Sharing of any full name or contact information.
2. Never post easily identifiable information online.
3. Limit individual communications with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
4. If abuse is divulged electronically, follow standard reporting procedures.
5. When posting photos, refrain from using names and never use last names or other identifiable information.
6. Do not collect online, or allow third parties to collect online, personal information from children under the age of 13. See Children's Online Privacy Protection Act ("COPPA") and Federal Trade Commission Rules implementing COPPA (the "Rule"). COPPA and the Rule require specific permissions and privacy policies if a website or online service collects, or allows third parties to collect, personal information if the service is directed to children under the age of 13. Restrictions also apply if the site is directed to a general audience and the organization has actual knowledge that it collects personal information from children under 13 years of age.

Section 11. Mandated reporters

A mandated reporter must make a report of suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse under any of the following circumstances.

1. The mandated reporter comes into contact with the child in the course of employment, occupation and practice of a profession or through a regularly scheduled program, activity or service.
2. The mandated reporter is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child, or is affiliated with an agency, institution, organization, school, regularly established church or religious organization or other entity that is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child.
3. A person makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse.
4. An individual 14 years of age or older makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that the individual has committed child abuse.

Section 12. Procedure for reporting and responding to allegations of abuse

1. **Report to Childline at 800-932-0313.** Report any alleged incident involving abuse against a child to the designated statewide toll-free telephone number (1-800-932-0313). **Emergency circumstances.**--If injury or immediate danger exists to a child or vulnerable adult as the result of abuse, contact emergency services and wait for the arrival of such authorities and follow any instructions that are warranted under the circumstances.
2. Report to pastor.--Except as otherwise provided in subsection (7), if a staff person, certified volunteer, roaming adult or other individual witnesses abuse or receives a verbal or written report of an incident of abuse, that individual shall report the incident to a pastor of the church.
3. Report and notification by the pastor:
 - a. The pastor shall report any alleged incident involving abuse against a vulnerable adult to the appropriate authorities.
 - b. The pastor shall notify the following, if and to the extent appropriate under the circumstances:
 - c. The parents, guardian, or caregiver of the alleged abuse victim.
 - d. The proper law enforcement agency.
 - e. The District Superintendent.
 - f. The church's insurance agent.
4. Removal of certain individuals. If abuse occurs or is alleged or suspected to have occurred by a staff person, certified volunteer or roaming adult, that staff person, certified volunteer or roaming adult shall immediately be removed from contact with children and vulnerable adults and from each church activity or ministry until the incident has been fully investigated and resolved.
5. Standards for reporting.
 - a. The report, investigation and resolution of alleged or suspected abuse shall be done in a professional and discreet manner.

- b. A staff person, certified volunteer, roaming adult or other individual who makes a report of abuse in good faith is protected by law from any form of liability
- 6. Alleged abuse by pastor. If a staff person, certified volunteer, roaming adult or other individual witnesses abuse or receives a verbal or written report of an incident of abuse involving a pastor of the church, that individual shall notify the other pastor of the church or, if the other pastor is unavailable, the District Superintendent. The other pastor shall notify the District Superintendent, unless otherwise notified, who shall thereafter represent the church in response to the accusation of abuse.
- 7. Committee review.--If warranted, the committee shall convene as soon as practicable after a claim of abuse is alleged, founded or unfounded, to review the claim and the policies or procedures in this policy document and make formal recommendations to the Church Council of the church regarding changes to or effectiveness of the policies or procedures.
- 8. Media statements.--Only The Conference Director of Communications, is authorized to make statements on behalf of the church to the representatives of the media. As such, all requests for statements shall be directed to the Conference Director of Communications at 800-874-8474 (office).
- 9. Pastoral support.--Pastoral support and counseling shall be available to any individual involved in an alleged or suspected incident of abuse.

Section 13 Parent responsibility

- 1. No child/youth will be left unsupervised while attending a Fishing Creek Salem United Methodist Church sponsored activity. In the event that childcare services are not provided by the church for a church-sponsored ministry or event (i.e. retreats, small groups, worship services, etc.), the parent or guardian shall be fully responsible for the supervision of the child/children during the event.
- 2. In the event that supervised programming for older youth is not provided by the church for any church-sponsored ministry or event (i.e. retreats, small groups, worship services, etc.), the parent or guardian shall be fully responsible for the supervision of the youth during the event.
- 3. Should the parent or guardian arrange for their own child care/supervision of youth for the church-sponsored ministry event to occur within the event facility, said child care/youth supervision shall be in compliance with the Safe Sanctuaries policies and procedures.
- 4. If parents/guardians refuse to comply with Safe Sanctuaries policies and procedures they and their children will be asked to leave.

Section 14 Amendment of policy document.

At any time, the committee may forward any recommended amendment to this policy document for approval by the Church Council.

Section 15 Interpretation of policy document.

- 1. Language of policy document.--In this policy document:
 - a. The singular shall include the plural, and the plural shall include the singular.
 - b. Words used in the past or present tense shall include the future.
- 2. Applicability of policy statement.--
 - a. This policy document shall apply to any action or circumstance that occurs on or after the effective date of this policy document.
 - b. If an individual was certified for service under the prior Safe Sanctuaries policy of the church, that certification shall continue until the individual's certification period has expired as set forth in the prior policy, but any renewal of the individual's certification that occurs on or after the effective date of this policy statement shall be governed by this policy statement.
- 3. Minimum standards.--This policy document reflects the minimum standards regarding a church activity or ministry and procedures for individuals who may implement, direct or supervise a church activity or ministry.

Section 16 Effective date.

This policy document shall take effect on upon approval by the Church Council on January 15, 2018.