

## **Salem United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuary Policy**

Adopted: October 2, 2011

### **Introduction:**

God calls us to make our ministries safe, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from child sexual abuse and exploitation. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults can be safe and grow strong.

We recognize that our children are all children and youth under the age of 18. Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to our children and, as well as to those who are committed to engaging in ministry with our children as volunteers and employees.

### **Purpose:**

Our congregation's purpose for establishing a Safe Sanctuary Policy is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of all of our children, youth and vulnerable adults.

### **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 our children, youth and vulnerable adults as well as all of the workers with children, youth and vulnerable adults.

### **Definition of Abuse:**

According to the Georgia Statutes child abuse is defined as physical injury or death inflicted upon a child by a parent or caregiver by other than accidental means. Child abuse includes neglect or exploitation by a parent or caregiver. Sexual abuse is defined as occurring when a person employs, uses, persuades, induces, entices, or coerces a minor who is not that person's spouse to engage in sexual acts. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, "child abuse" shall also include the meaning assigned to such term in O.C.G.A. § 19-15-1, as same may be amended from time to time.

Vulnerable adult as referenced is defined as any person with a physical or mental disability of incapacitation.

## Screening and Hiring of Workers and Volunteers

**Primary volunteer workers:** Includes all paid staff workers plus those volunteers in roles with greater responsibility or risk and should meet the following screening standards:

- Must be at least 21 years of age.
- Must be at least five years older than the oldest child/youth they will be supervising.
- Complete and sign an application and the related waivers giving permission to check references and background information to be viewed solely by the Senior Pastor and chair of the SPR Committee.
- Prefer that workers attend Salem UMC for a minimum of three months prior to being selected as a church worker.
- Read the Safe Sanctuary Policy and complete and sign attesting to compliance with policy.
- Read and sign a convictions statement attesting that the applicant has never been convicted of a child abuse charge.

**Secondary Volunteer workers:** Defined as persons who occasionally interact with children and/or do so in less risky circumstances, i.e.: Sunday School teachers and volunteers who see children only in a group setting, on church premises, or who interact with children in the presence of an approved primary worker.

- Must be at least five years older than the oldest child/youth they will be supervising.
- If under the age of 21 must be paired with a primary volunteer worker.
- Read the Safe Sanctuary Policy and complete and sign attesting to compliance with policy.
- Read and sign a convictions statement attesting that the volunteer has never been convicted of a child abuse charge.

Any exceptions to the above categories of workers/volunteers should be approved by the Senior Pastor for service.

### Training:

All employees and full-time volunteers who are in positions of trust with children and youth will go through annual training and orientation. Training will include a review of Salem UMC's policies and procedures, discipline procedures, as well as signs of sexual abuse and child abuse.

## **Regular Operations for Programs and Events:**

### Nursery Operations:

- Person responsible for nursery child will sign in their child and indicate the pre-authorized person(s) to whom the child may be signed out and released.
- Diaper changing occurs in an open area.
- Restroom door will be left open when supervising preschoolers.
- Nursery workers will abide by all policies established and labeled Salem UMC Nursery procedures.

### Children and youth program operations:

- Volunteers must have access to a telephone, cell phone or pager when groups are at or away from the church.
- Anyone has the right to visit and observe the children's/youth activity, classroom, or church-sponsored program at any time, unannounced.
- The number of workers required for each event will be determined by the number and age of the participants and the nature of the activities.
- Whenever possible an attempt will be made to have all children/youth registered for the program they are attending.
- A child/youth who is uncooperative and or disruptive should be asked to correct his/her behavior. If a child/youth continues inappropriate behavior the leader in charge should be notified. If the behavior continues the child/youth will be referred to the Senior Pastor.
- Children who are six years old or older are permitted to leave the area of the church activity at the conclusion of the scheduled activity without further supervision of the workers unless otherwise instructed by the parent or guardian.
- All pre-established policies of the Salem UMYF will be followed.

Drivers for all events will be bound by Salem UMC policies as established and go through the same screening process as all volunteer/paid staff.

Whenever Salem UMC hosts an activity involving children or youth from another church or community organization, the groups using the church facility shall follow the Salem UMC Safe Sanctuary policy and procedures.

### **Reporting Incidents:**

Suspected incidents of abuse should be reported immediately to the Senior Pastor. (Form for reporting is attached) If he or she is not available then the incident should be reported to the associate pastor. If both Senior Pastor and Associate are not available and the person reporting feels that the child is in immediate danger, 911 will be contacted.

- The Senior Pastor will immediately notify the proper authorities as he/she deems necessary.
- Steps will be taken to assure the safety of the child/youth.
- If the accused is a volunteer or paid staff of the church, that person shall be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is finished.
- When there is a known offender in the church, a written agreement must be in place outlining this person's eligibility or ineligibility for participation.
- The Pastor will serve as the church's sole access to the media.

**Conclusion:**

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

**Salem United Methodist Church**

**Participation Covenant Statement**

The congregation of Salem 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 Safe Sanctuary Policy reflects 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.



As a volunteer in this congregation, I have read the Safe Sanctuary Policy and attended the appropriate training. I agree to observe and abide by the Safe Sanctuary Policy of Salem United Methodist Church.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print full name

**Salem United Methodist Church****Volunteer Application**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Current job responsibilities and  
schedule: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Previous work experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous volunteer  
experience: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Special interests, hobbies &amp; skills: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of Salem UMC? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

If yes, what date did you join? \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours per week are you available to volunteer? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Days \_\_\_\_\_ Evenings \_\_\_\_\_ Weekends

Please provide Driver's License # and State issued \_\_\_\_\_

Can you make a one year commitment to this volunteer  
role? \_\_\_\_\_Why would you like to volunteer as a worker with children and/or  
youth? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What qualities do you have that would help you work with children and/or youth? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_NO \_\_\_\_\_YES

If yes, please

explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been exposed to an incident of child abuse or neglect?

\_\_\_\_\_NO \_\_\_\_\_YES

References: Please provide 3 personal references (people who are not related to you by blood or marriage) and provide a complete address and phone information for each.

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to reference \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to reference \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to reference \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of

Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Salem United Methodist Church

### Report of Suspected/Alleged Incident of Child Abuse

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Victim's name: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Victim's age/date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Date/place of initial conversation with report from victim: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Victim's statement (give detailed summary here): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Name of person accused of abuse: \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship of accused to victim (paid staff, volunteer, family member, other) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Reported to Senior Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Summary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Call to local children and family service agency: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_  
Approval to contact parents: \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO
9. Call to parent/guardian by either the local authority or Senior Pastor.  
Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_  
Call made by: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of  
Reporter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print full Name: \_\_\_\_\_



Copy of Nursery Policy to be here.

Copy of UMYF policies here.

Respectfully submitted by the following committee members:

Amy Dement

Carol Ann Kumm

Amy Standard

Anita Anderson

July 28, 2011