

**SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY**  
**Calvary United Methodist Church**  
**4700 Locust Lane**  
**Harrisburg, PA 17109**

**Approval**

This updated policy was approved by the Commission on Education on February 7, 2017 and was presented to Church Council on April 27, 2017.

**Introduction**

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church, in April 1996 (reaffirmed in 2004, 2008 & 2012), adopted the resolution, Reducing the Risk of Child 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 one of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones..., it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18:6). Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the children. The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church state that "...children must be protected from economic, physical and sexual exploitation, and abuse."*

*Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, exploitation and ritual abuse (ritual abuse refers to abusive acts committed as part of ceremonies or rites; ritual abusers are often related to cults, or pretend to be) occur in churches, 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 – 2012. Copyright 2012 by the United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission. [pp. 384-386].*

Thus, in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, we adopt this policy for the prevention of child abuse in our church.

**Purpose**

Our congregation's purpose for establishing this Safe Sanctuary Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the overall safety

and spiritual growth of all of our children, youth and vulnerable adults. As a congregation we want to protect all the children, youth and vulnerable adults that come to us, to protect both our paid and volunteer staff from false allegations of abuse and to limit the extent of legal liability of Calvary United Methodist Church (UMC).

### **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 ensure the safety and spiritual growth of all our children, youth and vulnerable adults as well as all those who work with children, youth and vulnerable adults. 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 those who work with children, youth and vulnerable adults regarding 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 through the Susquehanna Conference Office if an incident occurs.

### **Definitions**

#### **Adult**

A person 18 years of age or older.

#### **Age level coordinator**

An adult age 21 years or older who is responsible for recruiting teachers, helpers and substitutes for Sunday School classes.

#### **Child**

Any person under the age of 18.

#### **Child abuse**

As defined under Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law (Pa. Law 23 C.S.A. §6303):

1. Any recent act or failure to act by a perpetrator which causes non-accidental serious physical injury to a child under 18 years of age.
2. An act or failure to act by a perpetrator, which causes non-accidental serious mental injury to or sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child under 18 years of age.
3. 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.
4. 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. 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.

**Children's activities**

Any activity or program in which children are under supervision of staff persons or volunteers.

**Cyber space & cyber safety**

While ministries and activities take place in a variety of venues, new forms of communication via the internet and wireless cell-phones and other handheld devices constitute a new space for ministry and activities for children, youth, and vulnerable adults, herein called cyber space. Cyber space includes communications via email, instant messaging and cell phone (speaking and texting) and other devices; communicating on social networking sites; web surfing and downloading of materials from the internet; and gaming. Cyber space is a fluid space which changes more and more as communications become more portable and websites change with increasing frequency.

Cyber safety is the part of our *Safe Sanctuary* policy that seeks to encourage those in ministry with children, youth, and vulnerable adults to update their knowledge of cyber space; provide ground rules for ministries and activities in cyber space; encourage critical thinking among those ministered to for posting, reading and seeing; encourage good sense and safety in cyber space; and, model appropriate cyber space behaviors.

**Helper**

Anyone ages 14 – 17 who aids in ministry. Helpers are not counted in the 2-adult rule.

**Persons required to report child abuse**

Persons, who, in the course of their employment, occupation or practice of their profession, come into contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults. Such persons include, but are not limited to, medical professionals, school administrators, teachers and nurses, social service workers, day care center workers, mental health professionals, peace and law enforcement officers and church workers.

**Staff person**

Any person employed by Calvary United Methodist Church. This person may have regular and direct contact with children, youth and vulnerable adults and must be 21 years of age or older.

**Volunteer**

Any adult who assists in conducting children's activities under the supervision of a staff person and/or age level coordinator, has regular and direct contact with children, youth and vulnerable adults. The volunteer is counted in the 2-adult rule.

### **Vulnerable Adults**

Any person, 18 years and older, who because of mental or physical infirmity or emotional disability or other physical, mental or emotional dysfunction, may be vulnerable to maltreatment. We also mean vulnerable adults to be adults who have been abused either as a child or an adult.

### **Youth**

A child in the age range of 12 to 18 years. A colloquial term used in ministries to junior and senior high school age groups.

Note: The following procedures are the necessary precautions for protecting children, youth and vulnerable adults according to our covenant together to do no harm by word or action. Calvary UMC will endeavor to monitor updates and recommendations by the United Methodist Church and may modify these procedures.

### **Procedures**

1. Recruiting, screening, hiring workers
  - a. Six month rule – any volunteer, coordinator, roamer or helper who is recruited to work with programs or activities involving children, youth or vulnerable adults must demonstrate an active relationship with Calvary UMC for at least six months.
  - b. All employees (paid) need to complete the following background clearance:
    - o Pennsylvania State Police Criminal History Report.
    - o Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance.
    - o FBI Criminal History Report (Fingerprint-based background check).
  - c. All volunteers need to complete the following background clearances:
    - o Pennsylvania State Police Criminal History Report
    - o Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance
    - o FBI Criminal History Report (fingerprint-based background check)
    - o 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
      - j. 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.
  - d. Background clearances are valid for 60 months and must be obtained again after every 60 month period.
  - e. A current driver's license, registration, insurance, and completed Pennsylvania or state of residency, driving record, when transporting children, youth, and/or vulnerable adults.

- f. Use of age and developmentally appropriate language in educating children, youth, and vulnerable adults regarding definitions of abuse and procedures for reporting.
  - g. All forms and reference reports shall be kept as a part of an applicant's confidential personnel file which the Calvary UMC Director of Congregational Engagement will maintain in a locked file in the church office. Access will be authorized by the Director of Congregational Engagement or Education. The Director will review and follow-up on all forms prior to service.
  - h. Non-Calvary UMC programs shall maintain their own personnel files. Calvary UMC reserves the right to obtain an explanation of the non-Calvary UMC's record-keeping process and, upon written request by the Senior Pastor, to be given copies of documents applicable to programs conducted at Calvary UMC.
  - i. The staff person in charge of the children's activity(ies) is responsible for reviewing the Safe Sanctuary policy with each applicant prior to service.
  - j. All workers must agree to a Covenant Agreement where they disclose any involvement in Social Media accounts to ensure appropriate use of cyber space.
2. Supervision
- a. Two adult rule – requires that no matter the size of the group, there will always be at least two unrelated adults present. This may include the presence of an adult “roamer” who moves in and out of rooms.
  - b. Teenagers in the classroom – no person shall supervise an age group unless he/she is at least 18 years of age or older and is at least 5 years older than the oldest children, youth or vulnerable adult being supervised. Teenagers age 14 or older can be a helper.
  - c. Roamers – to ensure that classes have adequate supervision, a roamer will visit each pre-school, elementary and youth classroom on a Sunday morning throughout the entire year. Using a checklist, all classrooms will be visited. If substitutes are needed, the roamer will become a substitute or he/she will secure substitutes from the authorized list of volunteers from the adult Sunday School Department for the classroom(s). The checklists will be kept on file.
  - d. Doors – each room or space where children, youth or vulnerable adults are being cared for shall have a window in the door or the door shall be left open.
  - e. Training is a requirement for all staff persons, coordinators and volunteers working with children, youth or vulnerable adults in church activities. The annual Christian Education Staff meeting will include training regarding this policy, procedures for supervision, as well as how to identify and report child abuse.
  - f. Equipment and environment – any adult volunteer will inspect the equipment and activity space before an event to ensure safety for children, youth and/or adults that will be participating in that activity.
  - g. Adult volunteers will ensure that no child will be left unsupervised while attending a Calvary UMC children's activity. Parents are responsible for supervising their other children who are not participating in that activity. When

children are in the church or on church grounds but are not involved in a children's activity, they must be under the direct supervision of their parent/guardian.

- a. Children whose parents/guardians drop them off for activities such as Sunday School, choir or Youth Group must time their drop-off and return so that children are not unsupervised at any time while at the church.
  - b. Youth who drive themselves to church activities shall arrive just in time for an activity and shall leave immediately following the activity's conclusion
  - c. Children in the Nursery up through Fourth Grade will not be released from a class or program until a parent (guardian) has come to retrieve them. If someone other than a parent will be picking up the Child, it is necessary to make prior arrangements with the Volunteer in charge of the event or class.
  - d. Children in Fifth through Twelfth Grades will be released from a class or program at the designated ending time. A Volunteer or Staff person will be present as long as there are Youth remaining for the class or program.
  - e. If parents/legal guardians refuse to comply with Safe Sanctuaries policies they and their child(ren)/youth(s)/vulnerable adult(s) will be asked to leave the event.
- h. Accurate participation records shall be maintained for all activities or events involving children, youth or vulnerable adults by the staff person or volunteer supervising the event. At a minimum, these records will list the date and hours of the activity, its location, the names of the participants as they sign in and out of an event (including whether any were dismissed early and the times of the dismissals), and the names of all adults involved directly in the ministry or activity, as well as any other helpers on site that day.
- i. Off-Site and Overnight Events/Activities
1. The following minimum ratios will be maintained for off-site activities.
    - Nursery – 4 years old – 1:3 (one adult to every 3 children)
    - Kindergarten – 6<sup>th</sup> grade – 1:5 (one adult to every 5 children)
    - Youth (grades 7-12) - 1:8 (one adult to every eight youth)
    - Special needs – 1:2 (one adult to every two persons)

Note: Helpers are not included in computing the ratio.
  2. Advance notice will be given to parents prior to events and will include date, time, location, the means of transportation, and a summary of activities and events. Specific written parental/guardian approval for off-site/overnight events is required. Should details of an event's start/end times change (or

other pertinent information), the event's coordinator will contact the designated adult back home to notify parents.

3. Events attended by youth of both genders must be adequately chaperoned by adults of both genders.
4. 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 such person(s). All medications and medication instructions shall be given to a selected adult prior to the trip for disbursement as appropriate and will be enclosed in its original container (including prescription meds). [Exception: Epi-pens and inhalers may be carried by youth, 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 youth is carrying medication, and will be familiar with how to use an Epi-pen in case of emergency]
5. Activity Registration, Parental/Guardian Permission, and Signed Emergency Medical Release – including participant's name, address, birthdate, parent/guardian information, telephone number, emergency contact information and pertinent information about the participant such as medical history (allergies, medications, special instructions, etc.) and insurance information. These forms will be maintained, secured and carried in a designated folder by the staff person or volunteer in charge of the ministry or activity.
6. All participants who can understand a covenant shall enter into a signed participation covenant. Rules shall be explained to the participants and their parents at the outset of the program.
7. Off-Site Activities – persons coordinating off-site activities will ensure every participant has completed the appropriate forms, and will take copies of these forms along on the event in a folder marked "Emergency Forms" and give copies to the designated adult back home.
8. For outdoor programs that occur in non-traditional settings which make supervision challenging, the staff person or volunteer in charge of the activity shall take extra appropriate measures to make sure that the setting is free of obvious safety hazards and suits the activity and that the children, youth, or vulnerable persons are properly supervised.
9. Appropriate buddy systems, check-in times, and appropriate male and female supervision need to be established for each ministry or activity. The staff person or volunteer in charge of the ministry or event will ensure the setting (and any equipment used) is appropriate for activities, and by implementing the above

measures, will minimize risk of incident or injury to all participants. Events where direct adult supervision of youth is not feasible (amusement parks, youth rallies and other large-group public events) will, at the minimum, incorporate a 3-5 person buddy system and check-ins for all participants as part of appropriate adult supervision.

10. Drivers to and from events must have completed the appropriate forms (see “Screening” section for details). Drivers must be a minimum of 25 years of age or older. If the two-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 ensuring all passengers remain properly secured throughout the trip and obeying all posted speed laws and regulations. The event’s coordinator should provide any appropriate maps, directions, and emergency contact numbers to each driver, as well as a communication plan for contacting assistance should an emergency arise.

11. For overnight youth events:

- There will be separate sleeping areas for males and females.
- At least one adult will be present in each sleeping area and will be of the same gender as the youth in that area.
- Sleeping areas should be prearranged by the staff person or event coordinator prior to the trip.
- Random and regular rounds may be conducted by two (2) adult leaders (one male and one female) throughout the nighttime sleeping hours of all sleeping areas.
- Separate shower and bathroom 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 leader.
- If youth 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. Such action may result in the parent(s) of the participant being notified regardless of the time of day/night, and the participant may be required to leave the event.

12. Adults must respect the privacy of youth (during such situations as changing, showering, etc.), and should intrude only to the extent that health or safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations as well.

- a. Bathroom needs: When possible, children will be encouraged to take care of their own bathroom needs, but should a child require assistance, the outer bathroom door will remain open while a *Safe Sanctuary certified volunteer* assists the child with an additional volunteer being present. For younger children assistance will be provided. For elementary age assistance should be limited to unfastening and fastening clothing. If more assistance is needed, parental permission should be received in advance. When accompanying a child to take care of his/her own bathroom needs, the *Safe Sanctuary certified volunteer* will check the bathroom and stalls prior to the child entering the bathroom. Again, the outer bathroom door should be left open. A non-certified volunteer should never provide assistance with bathroom needs. Youth should take a buddy to the restroom.
- b. Staffing/Leader Supervision – the following minimum ratios will be maintained for on-site activities (in addition to the two-adult rule):
  - Nursery through 2 year olds – 1:4 (1 adult to every 4 children)
  - 3-4 year olds – 1:6 (1 adult to every 6 children)
  - Kindergarten-6<sup>th</sup> grade – 1:8 (1 adult to every 8 children)
  - 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade – 1:10 (1 adult to every 10 youth)
  - Special needs – 1:2 (1 adult to every 2 persons)
- c. If a participant requests to speak privately with an adult, the adult will ensure that he/she and the individual are visible to others while talking, even though they may not be heard.

### 3. State reporting requirements

A quick, compassionate and unified response to an alleged or actual incident of abuse is necessary and expected to ensure the safety of the victim and any additional potential victims. In all cases of alleged or actual abuse, professional support is obtained by informing the police, ChildLine and Abuse Registry, or other appropriate authorities. The legal parent/guardian of the victim will be notified unless they have been named as the alleged perpetrator of the abuse (see “Reporting Checklist”).

- a. The staff person, coordinator, volunteer or helper who observes alleged abuse, or to whom such alleged abuse is reported, is required to report the incident immediately to the staff person in charge of the children’s or youth’s activity who should immediately contact the Senior Pastor who shall immediately report the matter to the police, ChildLine or other appropriate authorities.
- b. How to respond to allegations of abuse while at an event – once a person or child has disclosed alleged abuse, the one to whom the disclosure had been made should reassure the alleged victim of a concern for his or her safety and well-being. The alleged victim (and any other potential victims of the abuse that has allegedly taken place onsite) should be calmly moved to another safe place onsite in view of at least two other non-related adults. Someone safe and

familiar should stay with the victim at all times. Appropriate action should be taken to minimize risk for all potential victims. Persons who are the objects of the report, if on-site, will be immediately removed from the ministry setting (both the alleged abuser and the victim to separate locations) until the incident is resolved. This is to protect all persons involved, including the accused. The person to whom the disclosure was made should inform the victim that the alleged abuse will be reported to the appropriate authorities. If the victim is able to assist in making the report, the person to whom the victim disclosed and another unrelated adult should go with the victim to the person onsite who is designated as responsible for making reports, or in absence of that person, proceed to a quiet place where the report can be made by telephone. (In any removal of a person from any children's activities, care should be taken to handle this in a discreet manner, recognizing that an investigation is still being conducted.)

- c. The staff person in charge of the children's or youth's activity or the Senior Pastor in which the alleged abuse was observed or disclosed shall immediately attempt to obtain information necessary such as the name of the alleged victim and his or her address and family information.
- d. Upon receiving such information, the Senior Pastor or his/her designee will call the Pennsylvania ChildLine and Abuse Registry to make a report. The Senior Pastor or his/her designee shall then send the completed PA CY47 form to the local Children and Youth Services agency. This line of reporting shall be followed in all such incidents.
- e. Should the victim be in need of immediate medical attention, a call should be made for medical transport by ambulance. If it is appropriate, the parents of any victim under the age of 18 should be notified. It may not be appropriate to contact parents if they are the alleged perpetrators. The Senior Pastor or his/her designee should handle contacting the parents when appropriate.
- f. Any person who is the object of the report will be required to refrain from all children's activities until the incident report is resolved.
- g. If the allegation or incident concerns activities or persons outside any relationship to a church related event or activity, it is the responsibility of the staff person who hears the allegation to make the initial contact with the ChildLine and Abuse Registry.  
Example: Youth or child telling a Sunday School teacher about abuse by a relative during the prior year.
- h. The Senior Pastor or his/her designee will notify the Harrisburg District Superintendent, the church's insurance agency and attorney. If the allegation is against or involves a staff person or volunteer or if it occurred in the course of a ministry activity, the Harrisburg District Superintendent or his/her designee shall be contacted immediately.
- i. The Director of Communications of the Susquehanna Conference or his/her designee is the only person/s authorized to make statements to representatives of the media. All requests for statements shall be directed to the Director of

Communications. Staff persons and volunteers are to be trained in how to handle media requests by referring them to the Director of Communications. If a member of the media – newspaper, TV stations, Radio station, magazine – calls or approaches a staff person in person and asks about the situation, that staff member should get their name and phone number and respectfully tell them that the Director of Communications will get back to them with the answer as soon as possible. The following “hold response” can be used:

“I want to make sure we give you the most accurate and up-to-date information. Our Director of Communications can best help you. If you give me your contact information, deadline and topic you are calling about, I will have him return your call as soon as possible.” Or, “Here is the phone number/email of our Director of Communications...”

No staff person should answer any questions. The staff person should be polite, but firm. A staff person should never tell a reporter, “No Comment,” as this response raises concern that the incident (alleged or known) is not being dealt with or taken seriously by the church. Nothing is assured to be “off the record” when talking to the media. A staff person should realize that any statement made to the media can be used publicly, even if the reporter says it is “off the record”.

- j. If the incident involves a victim 18 years or older, the Senior Pastor or his/her designee will contact the police and then assist the victim with contact information or supporting services.
- k. If the incident involves an alleged perpetrator 18 years of older, the Senior Pastor will assist with contacting local police.
- l. Allegations are to be discussed only on a need-to-know basis. The person or persons to whom the allegations were disclosed should immediately contact the Senior Pastor or his/her designee and should give the details to that person only. Other adults on-site should be alerted to stay with the alleged victim and other potential victims, but they do not need to know the allegations. Once the allegations have been reported to the Senior Pastor or his/her designee, the person to whom the allegations were made should not discuss the matter with other persons except law enforcement or designated state investigators. Allegations should never be discussed outside the investigation. This can cause irreparable harm to victims, their families and the community. All inquiries or questions shall be referred to the Conference Director of Communications. A quick, compassionate and unified response to an alleged incident of child abuse will be initiated and documented. The Senior Pastor or his/her designee will prepare a brief and honest statement that can be made to the congregation. Do not give unnecessary details, blame, interfere with victim’s privacy or violate any confidentiality. There is a difference between confidentiality and secrecy. Make sure the statement is cleared with the Conference Director of Communications and the Harrisburg District Superintendent. When the investigation is completed, send another letter to the congregation explaining the results of the investigation and steps taken.

*Note: Church-sponsored groups such as Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts & Girl Scouts are responsible to report any abuse situations to their own organizations. Cub Scouts & Boy Scouts should report to the Executive Director of the New Birth of Freedom Council (766-1591) and Girl Scouts should report to the Executive Director of the Girl Scouts in the Heart of PA Council (233-1656). The Senior Pastor or his/her designee should be informed that an event has been reported as occurring on church property.*

#### 4. Cyber Safety

- a. Have parental permission information for children, youth, and vulnerable adults in writing for
  1. Photos or videos posted on any websites or included in an e-mail or text message
  2. It is recommended that children under 24 months of age not be included in photos or videos.
  3. E-mailing, Instant Messaging (IM'ing), calling, texting or sending data to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult by computer, PDA, or cell phone
  4. The sharing of any full name or contact information.
- b. Never transmit easily identifying information online.
  1. Use "Bcc" options in sending mass e-mails
  2. Limit what is communicated in electronic prayer requests.
- c. Limit individual communication with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
  1. Conduct any communications in a professional manner
  2. Save all communications you have with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. (An electronic "paper trail" can be important)
  3. If you are uneasy about any topic addressed in an e-mail or an e-mail in general, contact the parent/guardian (if appropriate) or another trusted adult. Honor privacy, not secrecy
  4. If abuse is divulged electronically, follow standard reporting procedures.
- d. Use safety measures for sharing photos electronically
  1. Consider obtaining copyrights for any photo posted directly on a conference ministry website or shared electronically. Keep in mind that copyright laws are not necessarily universal and can get rather complicated
  2. When posting photos, refrain from using names and never use last names or identifying information
  3. Check photos for vulnerable/compromising situations and to make sure they uphold your mission. Check to make sure nametags are not distinguishable.
  4. Use low-resolution photos whenever possible and slightly blur/pixilate photos.
  5. Block "save photo as" options on websites.
  6. Limit access to photos by employing the use of a password

7. Obtain additional permission to use photos elsewhere (i.e. a journal or website, local paper, etc.).
- e. Social Media sites (Facebook, Blogs etc.) Do not use your personal Social Media presence for ministry. Use a group Social Media site that is monitored by senior leadership, for example a Facebook site for the specific group.
1. Include a code of conduct/terms and conditions for the site that expressly states expectations for posts and a clear expression of how violations, offensive and objectionable material will be addressed.
  2. Monitor the site and remove inappropriate comments, photos, links, etc.
  3. Restrict who can be a friend.
  4. Do not post anything that you would not want printed in the newspaper, church newsletter or bulletin.
  5. Be familiar with, and comply with, Social Media provider policies, restrictions and terms and conditions. For example, according to Facebook's own terms, children under 13 years of age may not sign up for a Facebook account.
  6. Encourage children, youths, and vulnerable adults to follow these same guidelines as appropriate. Refrain from sharing passwords to your accounts.

### **Conclusion**

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

Policy written, updated and revised by the Commission on Education.  
 This policy was adopted as written on June 11, 2013.  
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