

Foundry United Methodist Church

**Safe Sanctuaries Policy
For the Protection of Children, Youth and Other
Vulnerable Persons**



FOUNDRY

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Introduction

The General Conference of 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.

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. 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.

God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from 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, pp. 384-386).

Further, we the people of Foundry United Methodist Church believe that every person is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), that all Christians are equal in Christ (Galatians 3:26-28), and that we are called to love our neighbors as well as enemies (Matthew 5:42). Thus, in our covenant with all United Methodist congregations, we the people of Foundry United Methodist Church adopt this Safe Sanctuaries Policy (the "Policy") with procedures for the prevention of abuse and sexual misconduct of any kind in our church.

Purpose

Foundry's purpose for establishing this Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to: (1) the physical safety and spiritual growth of all our children, youth, and vulnerable persons; and (2) preventing sexual abuse and misconduct in all forms and to addressing allegations of sexual abuse and misconduct justly. Foundry bears affirmative responsibility to create an environment of hospitality for all persons that encourages respect, equality and kinship in Christ. Foundry will neither condone nor tolerate instances of sexual misconduct, harassment or abuse.

Statement of Covenant

Therefore, as a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation:

- We pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ in ways that strive to maximize the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults;
- We will follow reasonable safety measures in recruiting and selecting workers for ministry programs;
- We will provide training for staff and servant leaders and use appropriate procedures in conducting programs and events for children, youth, and vulnerable adults; and
- We will have clearly defined procedures for reporting a suspected incident of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct that conforms to the requirements of state law and for responding to potential media inquiries if an incident occurs.

Definitions

Management Board refers to the Management Board of Foundry United Methodist Church.

Servant leader, as used in this Policy, is any person who, through their participation in the mission and ministries of Foundry United Methodist Church, has regular contact with children and youth (i.e., any person under the age of 18) and/or vulnerable persons (as defined herein), including, for example but without limitation, persons who serve as Sunday School teachers, chaperones on youth trips and/or programs geared specifically towards vulnerable adults. The terms servant leader also includes any person that any member Foundry's staff, in his or her discretion, determines to be a servant leader for purposes of this Policy.

Sexual abuse [in ministry] is a form of sexual misconduct and occurs when a person within a ministerial role of leadership (lay or clergy, pastor, educator, counselor, youth leader, or other position of leadership) engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employee, student, staff member, coworker, or servant leader." (*Book of Resolutions 2012*, p. 136) Sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship involves a betrayal of sacred trust, a violation of the ministerial role and exploitation of those who are vulnerable.

Sexual harassment [is] any unwanted sexual comment, advance, or demand, either verbal or physical, that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating, or coercive. ... Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination on the basis of gender." (*Book of Discipline 2012*, ¶161.I). "[I]t is unwanted sexual or gender-directed behavior within a pastoral, employment, ministerial (including servant leaders), mentor, or colleague relationship that is so severe or pervasive that it alters the conditions of employment or servant leader work or unreasonably interferes with the employee or servant leader's performance by creating a hostile environment that can include unwanted sexual jokes, repeated advances, touching, displays, or comments that insult, degrade, or sexually exploit women, men, elders, children, or youth." (*Book of Resolutions 2012*, p. 136)

Sexual misconduct is a continuum of sexual or gender-directed behaviors by either a lay or clergy person. "It can include child abuse, adult sexual abuse, harassment, rape or sexual assault, sexualized verbal comments or visuals, unwelcome touching and advances, use of sexualized materials including pornography, stalking, sexual or sexual abuse of youth or those without capacity to consent, or misuse of the pastoral or ministerial position using sexualized conduct to take advantage of the vulnerability of another." (*Book of Resolutions 2012*, 2044, p. 136).

"Sexual misconduct in any form is unacceptable in church and ministry settings whether it be clergy-to-lay, lay-to-clergy, clergy-to-clergy, lay-to-lay, staff-to-staff, staff-to-servant leader, servant leader-to-servant leader, or servant leader-to-staff. Anyone who works or volunteers under the authority or auspices of the Church must be held to the highest standards of behavior, free of sexual misconduct in any form." (*Book of Resolutions 2012*, 2044, p. 137).

Vulnerable person has been defined as: 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. (Minnesota law 626.557). We also mean vulnerable persons to be: those adults who work with children and youth and can be in a position where accusations of abuse could mistakenly arise; or, adults who have been abused either as a child or an adult.

I. **Reasonable Safety Measures in Recruiting and Selecting Workers**

Pastors, all paid staff and servant leaders in the church who have either direct, unsupervised access¹ or indirect and/or supervised access to children, youth, and vulnerable adults in any ministry setting are required to be recruited and selected using the following procedures:

Written Position Guidelines: Be provided written position guidelines for positions in children, youth and vulnerable adult ministries, including identification of essential functions of the job. This Policy will be attached to each position guideline.

Application, References, Interview: All paid staff will fill out an application, provide three references, complete a sexual misconduct annual questionnaire, complete an authorization for criminal records check, and be interviewed by the appropriate committee before beginning to work in children, youth, or vulnerable persons ministries at the church. References should be checked before the interview. Servant leaders who express an interest in working with children, youth, or vulnerable persons ministries will have a meeting with the leader of that ministry subsequent to background check and prior to beginning ministry in order to discuss the appropriate position guidelines. Servant leaders must also fill out an application, provide three references, complete a sexual misconduct annual questionnaire, and complete an authorization for criminal records check. (See Foundry Personnel Handbook, Section 4.C.2)

Background Checks: All Foundry staff and any servant leaders will initially undergo a criminal history check and a child abuse history check for the state in which they currently reside. This is required prior to the staff and/or servant leaders beginning their ministry at the church. Every three years thereafter, all Foundry staff and any servant leaders will subsequently undergo a criminal history check and a child abuse history check for each state in which they have resided since his/her last clearance.

Record Maintenance: All background checks will be maintained in a confidential secure location with limited access. A database of cleared adults will be maintained for easy reference.

Restrictions: Adults convicted of child abuse (sexual abuse, physical abuse or emotional abuse), or named as the perpetrator in a founded or indicated child abuse report through a designated state or county agency, or who are under investigation for, or who have charges pending for child abuse, will not be accepted for ministry positions (paid or volunteer) working with children, youth, or vulnerable persons in any church sponsored activity or setting.

Drivers: Adult drivers of children, youth, and vulnerable persons will show their current driver's license, proof of insurance policy, and registration to the activity leader prior to any event requiring driving. No person under the age of 18 will be considered as a driver.

Servant Leaders:

- a. Servant leaders will be carefully screened.
- b. If needed, background checks for Foundry's servant leaders will be paid through the church budget. Background checks for servant leaders for other organizations are the responsibility of that organization.
- c. Only the Senior Pastor, the Executive Pastor, Director of Family Ministries, Director of Support Services, President of the Management Board and/or the Chair of the Personnel Committee of the Management Board will see the results of the background checks. Other staff members will be informed of individuals who are not cleared. All background checks will be kept confidential.
- d. Background checks must be renewed every 3 years if the individual serves consecutive years.
- e. Persons who fail the background check will not be permitted to serve as teachers,

¹ Such workers shall include but not be limited to: Sunday school and Christian Education staff, helpers, youth group leaders and helpers, trip leaders and helpers, child care providers and assistants, nursery staff and helpers.

- leaders or helpers with children and youth.
- f. Servant leaders who work with children and youth will be required to sign and return the following documents (which are attached to this Policy):
1. Volunteer Consent Form
 2. Sexual Misconduct Questionnaire (which includes a request for three different character references)
 3. Child and Youth Protection Policy Statement
 4. Disclosure and Authorization for Criminal Records Check

Servant leaders are supervised by the staff person of that area. It is the responsibility of the staff person to collect and submit all forms in order to finalize the clearance.

Two Unrelated Adults Rule:² Adult staff and servant leaders are asked to observe the “Minimum of Two Unrelated Adults Rule” whenever feasibly possible so that no adult is alone with children or youth at a church-sponsored event or activity. Both adults will have undergone the above clearances as described in Section I. Unassigned adult “Roamers” who move in and out of rooms or areas may be used as a second adult if the assigned adult has undergone clearances as described in Section I above.

Age Requirements: Adult servant leaders are those who are at least 18 years old and who are five years older than those children or youth whom they are leading, ministering to or supervising. Youth are invited to assist adult servant leaders but are not to be considered an adult for the “two adult rule”.

Observing Behavior: All staff and adult servant leaders are asked to be observant for unusual behaviors and signs of child, youth, and vulnerable person abuse and immediately report them to a member of the Foundry staff. The Foundry staff will immediately contact the Director of Family Ministries and/or the Executive Pastor to confer regarding said report. The Director of Family Ministries and/or the Executive Pastor will follow through on this report by reporting the concerns to the appropriate authorities/agencies and if appropriate, will inform the person(s) making the report of the results of this intervention. The staff will be updated as soon as possible if he/she was not available during the initial reporting phase. **The timeliness of the report will be determined based upon safety considerations of the alleged victim.**

Training: All staff at Foundry are required to participate in a *Safe Sanctuaries* training for abuse awareness, prevention and response procedures upon initial hire and every two years thereafter. All servant leaders who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults are required to participate in a *Safe Sanctuaries* training for abuse awareness, prevention and response procedures during the first year in which they begin acting a servant leader and every two years thereafter. Foundry will offer *Safe Sanctuaries* training to servant leaders on at least an annual basis.

This training will include but not be limited to the following topics:

- Biblical background for abuse prevention
- Imperatives for abuse prevention
- Nuts and bolts of providing a safe sanctuary
- Recognizing suspected abuse and reporting it
- Covenanting to prevent abuse

² **Two Unrelated Adults Rule:** No fewer than two (2) adults unrelated by birth, adoption, marriage or other union, over the age of 18 and 5 years older than the children or youth in the group, will be present at all times during a church-sponsored event, program or ministry.

II. Procedures for Conducting Programs and Events for Children, Youth and Vulnerable Persons

Safety Procedures: Safety procedures for church activities should include but not be limited to:

Installing half-doors or windows in doors: Doors with windows prevent isolation and secrecy. Half doors prevent children from wandering outside the classroom while at the same time allowing full visual access. In rooms where half-doors or doors with windows are not installed, doors must be left open at all times.

Providing Roamers as needed: Roamers can provide protection for children and workers.

Instituting attendance and release procedures for parents/guardians of children ages ten or younger: Attendance will be documented at each church sponsored activity so that a roster of children is immediately available in case the building needs to be evacuated. Children will only be released to parents, guardians, or assigned sibling over 15 years of age (prior parental notification required) at the end of each church sponsored event.

Overnight accommodations: No adult should ever sleep alone with an unrelated child (or children) or youth in a room. When traveling, adult chaperones must reserve separate rooms from unrelated children or youth. Only children/youth of the same sex are allowed to sleep in the same room, unless related. If sleeping in an open space in a church, divide the boys from the girls and be sure the chaperones are located near doors and between the boys and the girls. It is appropriate at an all girls or all boys event to have the same sex chaperones only. However, at any event where there will be boys and girls sleeping, there must be both male and female chaperones.

Transportation: Any adult responsible for transporting children and youth will show their current driver's license, proof of insurance policy, and registration to the activity leader prior to any event requiring driving. No person under the age of 18 will be considered as a driver. Whenever traveling extended distances, be sure all children/youth in the vehicle have turned in a permission slip signed by their parent/guardian. If circumstances arise in which one adult is transporting one child/youth, have a parent/guardian sign a permission slip stating the time and location of the transportation. Drivers and all passengers will wear seat belts.

Adult/Youth Ratio: Enough adults should be present at church sponsored activities to ensure adequate safety supervision of children, youth and vulnerable adults. The suggested ratios are: 1:4 for children/youth with moderate or special needs and 1:8 for children/youth without special needs. Moderate or special needs include children of ages requiring more assistance in activities.

Proper Display of Affection: Adults need to be aware of, and sensitive to, the special and differing needs and preferences of each individual child. Physical contact should be age and developmentally appropriate.

Bathroom Procedures:

- Non toilet-trained children with diapers should be changed by parents or those servant leaders authorized by the parents to do so. If a situation arises that a child must be changed by someone other than their parent, two adults will be present.
- Young children (up through Kindergarten) should be escorted by an adult to the restroom. Children are to remove and replace their own clothing. Adults may assist with closures only. Children in 1st through 4th grade may use a buddy system to go to the restroom if no adult escort is available.

Privacy: If circumstances arise in which there is a need to speak to a child/youth alone, do so in as open an area as possible. For example, meet the child/youth in a public setting such as the sanctuary, hallway or fellowship hall (in an open space where there are people). If the situation calls for immediate attention, meet in a room where people walking by can see the two of you talking. Always leave the door open and be sure you are meeting in a location where there are other people nearby and in sight.

Discipline: Use discipline techniques that show respect and care. Corporal punishment is never to be used.

Parental Permission: Registration forms from parents or guardians are needed for church sponsored events and trips. Permission slips that include health insurance and emergency contact information must be filled out and signed by parents or guardians for all off-site church-sponsored events.

III. **Group Travel Policy**

Advance Parent Notification

Parents should be provided with detailed written information regarding proposed activities involving children and youth. Parents must complete a **Consent and Emergency Care Form** for both one-day offsite and overnight trips. A copy of the Consent and Emergency Care Form should be filed at the church office. Parents will be informed regarding expected duration of each activity and the timeframe for supervision by staff and leaders. Parents must pick up their children and/or youth at the time specified for the end of each event.

Overnight Trips/Events

To minimize the possibility of danger at hotels, dormitories or other accommodations, guidelines for ongoing group supervision, room assignment, and behavior expectations must be clear. Consequences of misbehavior shall be explained and upheld.

Interior Rooms

When possible, hotels will be chosen where the rooms open to the interior of the building, rather than the outside.

Adult-Between

If possible, room assignments will be arranged so that an adult room is between two children and/or youth rooms.

Random Checks

There will be a plan for periodic room checks during the night.

Large Group Sleeping Arrangements

Two approved adults must be present at all times.

Car Safety and Insurance

Servant leaders who drive on field trips and overnight events must complete the **Volunteer Driver Checklist**. All adults who volunteer to serve as drivers for children and/or youth activities must possess a valid driver's license and must be at least 25 years of age.

IV. Cyber Safety Policy

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 guidelines:

Receive parent/guardian permission: In addition to general permission to participate in a Foundry 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; and
3. The sharing of any full name or contact information.

Never post easily identifiable information online:

1. If you communicate by email, try not to use "broadcast" emails. Use the "BCC" (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 anyone on an electronic prayer list, consider using only first names.

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 confidential cyber-communications you have with children, youth, and vulnerable adults (i.e., instant messages (IM's) chat room conversations, emails, etc.). An electronic paper trail can be important.
3. If you are uneasy about any topic addressed in an email or in an email in general, send a BCC to a parent/guardian (if appropriate) or another trusted adult. Honor privacy, but not secrecy.
4. If abuse is divulged electronically, follow standard reporting procedures.

Safety measures for sharing photos electronically:

1. Obtain permission to use photos.
2. When posting photos, refrain from using names and never use last names or identifiable information.
3. Check photos for vulnerable/compromising situations and make sure they uphold your mission.
4. Block "save photo as" options on websites

Safety measures for using social networking sites:

Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Xanga, Friendster, Instagram, Snapcaht and others are popular with many people:

1. Set privacy settings to limit who can see your profile, otherwise people may still be

- able to view your full profile.
2. Restrict who can be your friend. It is prudent to use judgment in accepting requests from youth.
 3. Use higher level security features even if you have a restricted profile (such as requiring your approval of all comments posted to your site.)
 4. Do not post anything to your social networking site that you would not want attached to your resume or printed in the church bulletin or newsletter (the same goes for blogs).
 5. Remove or do not post inappropriate comments, photos, etc.
 6. Encourage youth to follow these same guidelines.

V. **Community Building Use**

All outside organizations, individuals and institutions that use the church building for events at which children and youth under the age of 18 will be present (including childcare) will do the following:

1. Receive a copy of *Foundry United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuaries Policy*
2. Adhere to the Policy
3. Complete the Building Use Request Form

At any time during the period of the building use agreement, failure to follow the agreed-upon child protection policy shall result in termination of the building use agreement.

Any allegation of noncompliance shall be reported to the Executive Pastor for discussion with the Management Board.

Any allegations of abuse shall immediately be brought to the attention of the Executive Pastor for investigation. The Executive Pastor shall follow protocol for reporting allegations of abuse as listed in this Policy.

VI. Reporting Procedures for Suspected Sexual Abuse and Misconduct

Rationale

All reasonable suspicions of sexual misconduct or abuse must be reported to the church leadership following the procedures described below. Child abuse and other types of sexual misconduct thrive when they go unnoticed and unreported. Often, an abusive situation continues because of someone's failure to report it. It is each staff member's responsibility to caution each other regarding inappropriate behavior, to monitor suspicious behavior, and to report abusive behavior.

D.C. law may provide certain immunities for a person or institution participating in good faith in making a report of abused or neglected children.

Reporting Procedures for Sexual Abuse of Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Persons

Allegations or suspicions of child abuse should be reported first to the Director of Family Ministries, as shown below. If, however, the allegations or suspicions involve the Director of Family Ministries, the report should be made to the Executive Pastor. Allegations of child abuse involving the Executive Pastor should be made directly to the Senior Pastor and/or the Chair of the Personnel Committee of the Management Board. Otherwise, reporting generally should be escalated as follows:

Staff, Servant Leader or Parent → Director of Family Ministries → Executive Pastor

Protocol for Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct

1. The complainant can attempt to resolve the matter directly with the individual accused of sexual misconduct.
2. The complainant can report the incident to the Executive Pastor in an effort to resolve the matter, unless the Executive Pastor is the complainant or the accused, in which case the report should be made to the Senior Pastor.
3. If an initial resolution of the complaint does not seem wise, appropriate, possible, or does not succeed, the complainant may request that the Management Board institute formal proceedings which shall include the following steps:
 - A. The Management Board shall gather statements or other information from the individuals involved in the alleged misconduct and from others who may have pertinent information, such as qualified professional consultants.
 - B. The Management Board or an appropriate committee thereof (typically the Personnel Committee), shall make determinations and take actions appropriate to resolve the matter. These may include, and shall take into consideration any relevant and appropriate provisions of the Foundry Personnel Handbook:
 - i. finding that sexual misconduct has occurred, and that the appropriate body of the church is called upon to take action accordingly; such action may include one or more of the following:
 - a. a written reprimand with defined expectations for changed behavior;
 - b. recommending or requiring psychological or psychiatric assessment, counseling and/or treatment;
 - c. probationary standing, with the terms of the probation clearly defined;
 - d. dismissal from employment or authorized leadership position or servant leader position within the church;
 - e. church trial proceedings in accordance with the Book of Discipline 2012, ¶2707;
 - f. alerting authorities if criminal actions have been suspected, alleged or

confirmed.

ii. finding that sexual misconduct did not occur.

4. Any complainant would be encouraged to seek professional support in the form of psychological care/therapy.

VII. How to Respond to Allegations of Sexual Abuse and Misconduct

Caring for the Alleged Victim: The best way to respond to people, including children, who allege they have been abused or mistreated is to assure them of your concern for their safety and well-being.

If potential victims are in the abuse setting, take them to another open, safe spot in view of people. Have someone safe and familiar stay with the victim at all times. Do not leave them alone for even a moment.

Because abuse takes away power and control from the victim, victims need to be informed of and have knowledge of what is and will be happening. Keep them in the communication loop at all times in an age appropriate way.

Emergency Contacts and Confidentiality: Immediately contact a member of the Foundry staff. Never discuss allegations with other people except law enforcement or designated state/county investigators. It is the job of the staff to handle these matters in a professional and caring manner and to notify the proper authorities and district superintendent who will handle most inquiries about the alleged abuse.

VIII. How to Answer Inquiries (Personal & Media) about Alleged or Known Incidents of Sexual Abuse or Misconduct

Appropriate emergency contacts: All questions and inquiries must be referred to the Foundry staff member who is able to handle these situations. Let the office administrator or person answering the phone know that this is a confidential emergency.

Handling Calls and Questions from the Media: If a member of the media – newspaper, TV station, radio station, magazine – calls or approaches you in person and asks about the situation, get their name and phone number and respectfully tell them that someone from the Foundry staff will contact them. The following “hold responses” or some variation can be used:

- “I want to make sure we give you the most accurate and up-to-date information. Our staff 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 Executive Pastor...*
- “We’re looking into the situation. I understand you have a job to do and I understand that you have to get the facts. I don’t believe I know enough information at this time to tell you. Someone from the Foundry staff will return your call. What is your deadline?”
- “We appreciate your call. Someone from the Foundry staff will be in touch with you as soon as we have anything we can share with you about this situation.”

Do not answer any questions. Be polite, but firm. 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 “off the record.” Treat any statement made as if it will be used publicly, even if the reporter says it is “off the record”.

IX. Policy for Registered Sex Offenders

The District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia all maintain registries of sex offenders, which attempt to list all persons residing anywhere in those jurisdictions who have been convicted by a court of law of any of a very wide variety of sexual offenses. The registry in all three jurisdictions is available for public review and may be searched online at:

District of Columbia: <http://sexoffender.dc.gov>

Maryland: <http://www.dpscs.state.md.us/sorSearch>

Virginia: <https://sex-offender.vsp.virginia.gov/sor/>

West Virginia: <https://apps.wv.gov/StatePolice/SexOffender/Disclaimer>

Contrary to popular belief, these Sex Offender Registries are *not* limited to listing convicted “pedophiles,” which, strictly speaking, describes persons with a primary sexual interest in prepubescent children aged 13 or younger. Rather, the Registries include sex offenders whose victims, depending on the crime, may include minors as old as 17 years of age or even adults.

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

1. **Maintenance of List:** The Executive Pastor and the Director of Family Ministries will establish and maintain a list of registered sex offenders who are members of the church, attend worship or are otherwise known to visit the church premises (buildings or grounds) on one or more occasions. Registered sex offenders attending or visiting Foundry are required to inform the church of their status as such.

The Executive Pastor will ensure that the list of registered sex offenders is updated whenever it is brought to the attention of the Executive Pastor, the Director of Family Ministries or any other Foundry staff or member of the Management Board that another church member or visitor has become a registered sex offender. A current copy of the list will be delivered to the District Superintendent and appropriate Foundry staff, clergy and lay leadership, as appropriate, as soon as it is first prepared and whenever the list is updated.

2. **Meeting and Covenant with the Registrant:** Upon learning that a member or visitor is a registered sex offender, the Executive Pastor, the Director of Family Ministries and an executive officer of the Management Board, or another member of the Management Board designated by the President, will have an in-person meeting with the registered person (Registrant) and another adult of the Registrant’s choosing to discuss the procedures the congregation will follow in order to allow the Registration to continue to participate in the life of the congregation or visit the church premises for any purpose. During that the meeting, the Executive Pastor, the Director of Family Ministries and the representative of the Management Board will:
 - a. indicate that they have been made aware of the person’s name on the registry;
 - b. summarize the congregation’s principles and guidelines in such situations, as outlined here and in the attached “Covenant Letter;”
 - c. explain and emphasize the importance of the “Designated Attendant” policy (as described below), both for the safety and well-being of the church community, and the well-being of the Registrant;
 - d. provide the Registrant with a Covenant Letter, signed by the pastor and the chair of the Management Board, substantially in the form attached hereto; and

- e. explain that the Covenant Letter must be counter-signed (in front of a witness), dated and returned to the Executive Pastor before the Registrant can be allowed to return to the church premises.

3. “Designated Attendants:” Registrants should not be allowed in any church building or anywhere on church grounds, unless they are accompanied by an adult member of the congregation that has been approved by the Executive Pastor and the Director of Family Ministries to serve as a Designated Attendant for registered sex offenders.

- a. A list of Designated Attendants for registered sex offenders shall be maintained by the Executive Pastor and the Director of Family Ministries.
- b. Each Registrant shall be given the names and telephone numbers of two or more Designated Attendants they can contact to accompany them when they visit the church.
- c. A Designated Attendant must be present to meet the Registrant in the church parking lot, or at another safe and well-lighted outdoor location, when the Registrant arrives at the church’s property. The Designated Attendant must physically accompany the Registrant at all times while the Registrant is within any church buildings or anywhere on church grounds.
- d. It is the Registrant’s responsibility to arrange to have a Designated Attendant present when they arrive at the church property. If a Designated Attendant does not appear for any reason, the Registrant may not enter any church building and may not stay on the church grounds.
- e. No person that is related to the Registrant by birth, adoption or marriage may serve as their Designated Attendant.
- f. The Executive Pastor and the Director of Family Ministries will have the responsibility of securing designated attendants for others. In the event that a time arises and no Designated Attendant is available, the person may not stay on the grounds of the church buildings.
- g. The Designated Attendant requirement must remain in place for as long as the Registrant remains on the Sex Offenders Registry.

4. Exceptions: There should be no exceptions to these policies and procedures except on a case-by-case basis, and then only if (1) written approval is obtained from the Executive Pastor, the Director of Family Ministries and the Executive Committee of the Management Board, and (2) advance written notice of the exception, and an explanation of the reasons therefor, is provided to the District Superintendent fourteen (14) days before the proposed exception is to go into effect and the District Superintendent thereafter indicates in writing that there is no objection to allowing the exception. District Superintendents must:

- a. Maintain copies of each congregation’s list of registered sex offenders.
- b. Provide all congregations with clear instructions and guidance on preparing their lists of registered sex offenders, updating them biannually, and providing a current list to the District Superintendent every January.
- c. In years subsequent to 2012 ask congregations to review the regional training DVD every year.



Conclusion

In all of our ministries with children, youth, and vulnerable adults Foundry United Methodist Church is committed to showing the love of Jesus Christ so that each child of God will be "...surrounded by steadfast love,...established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal" (Congregational pledge in the Baptismal Covenant, *UMH* page 44).

Covenant Letter for Registered Sex Offender

Dear _____:

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

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

The terms of the covenant are as follows:

1. Any time you are on the campus of the church, you must be accompanied by a "Designated Attendant." There will be at least two people who will be available to act as a Designated Attendant for you. The names and telephone numbers of those who have agreed to act as a Designated Attendant are listed at the bottom of this letter. You should make contact with one of them prior to coming to the campus on each occasion. One of these Designated Attendants must be present to meet you **[at your car in the church parking lot] [insert other safe, well- lighted location well outside any church building]** and be in your company at all times while you are on the campus of the church. This includes accompanying you to the restroom. The Designated Attendant will accompany you to your car at the time you leave the campus.
2. You cannot serve in any positions of leadership or teaching until further notice.
3. You agree to allow the pastor or **her/his** designee to contact any law enforcement, probation officer or other governmental official – but not your attorney or any health care provider – in order to request or obtain information that the pastor believes may be of assistance in ministering to you or to the congregation or others in the church community. By signing this letter you agree that the law enforcement, probation officer or other governmental official may share any information with the pastor or **her/his** designee, and you release that person and their organization or employer from any liability as a result of releasing this information. This authorization and release specifically includes, without limitation, any information, written or verbal, the law enforcement, probation officer or other governmental official has obtained concerning medical, psychological and psychiatric conditions or treatment.
4. You agree to meet and consult with the pastor upon **her/his** request for the purpose of providing assistance to you or for the protection and security of the congregation or others in the church community.
5. You understand and agree that the pastor and the Foundry Management Board must keep other church staff and members apprised of your status and the

guidelines agreed upon.

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

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

Sincerely,

Pastor

President, Foundry Management Board

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

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

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

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Name