

Sun Prairie United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuaries Policies, Procedures & Guidelines Manual

Revised September 2021

Sun Prairie United Methodist Church's mission is to invite and welcome people to be committed and compassionate followers of Jesus Christ through worship, through spiritual growth, through fellowship and through service to others.

Our welcome knows no boundaries.

The people of the Sun Prairie United Methodist Church open our doors and our hearts to all God's children. We celebrate the diversity of God's creation. We answer Jesus' call to 'love your neighbor' by embracing every person as a full participant in our church family, including people of all ages, nations, races, abilities, sexual orientations, and gender identities.

We proclaim this statement of welcome especially to anyone who has known the pain of exclusion or discrimination through religion or in society. The people of the Sun Prairie United Methodist Church strive to love as God loves and welcome all to grow in their relationship with God.

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Introduction

Some people brought their children to Jesus so that he could bless them by placing his hands on them. But his disciples told the people to stop bothering him. When Jesus saw this, he became angry and said, "Let the children come to me! Don't try to stop them. People who are like these little children belong to the kingdom of God. I promise you that you cannot get into God's kingdom, unless you accept it the way a child does." Then Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them by placing his hands on them. (Mark 10:13-16, CEV)

This scripture reference speaks of the value our Lord placed on children and the example of faith that they provide for the rest of us. As followers of Jesus, we understand that children/youth are inherently valuable members of Christ's community.

An individual's vulnerability places us closer to God but also can put us at risk. Jesus was teaching that, within the community of believers, there must be protection for each of us in our dependence upon God and each other. As followers of Christ, we resolve to protect all individuals in their vulnerability and also learn from each other as we all grow in faith.

Our culture appears to be experiencing an increase in the incidence of abuse and neglect. As much as we do not like to think about abusive and hurtful things happening in the church, it is clear that it is our duty as the church to guard and protect the children and other vulnerable individuals, including church staff and volunteers who participate in our ministries.

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:

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, "...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 occur in churches, 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-2016, pg.181-182.)

Since the time of the Resolution, then Wisconsin Bishop Sharon Rader strongly encouraged all United Methodist Churches to develop and implement a Safe Sanctuary program. The following guidelines, procedures and documents have been developed in response to this resolution and the Bishop's recommendations.

Vision Statement

Our vision is to join together as a family of Christians at the Sun Prairie United Methodist Church ("SPUMC" or "Church") for the purpose of providing a nurturing environment that promotes the physical safety and the emotional and spiritual well-being of all of God's people.

The Safe Sanctuaries Manual

The congregation of the SPUMC is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, vulnerable people, staff and volunteers ("God's people") who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the Church. The following manual reflects our Congregation's commitment to preserving this Church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others. This manual covers all Church directed and Church sponsored activities, regardless of the location of the activities. Locations covered under this manual include but are not limited to the Church building and the Wesley House.

Safe Sanctuaries Policies

Policies are procedures that will always be followed for every individual who wishes to work with and/or volunteer with children, youth and vulnerable individuals at SPUMC as well as at Church directed activities and Church sponsored activities. Policies have been put into place by the Safe Sanctuaries Committee in order to best assure the safety and well-being of participants, volunteers and staff. Exceptions to the policies will be reviewed by the Safe Sanctuaries Committee as situations arise.

Volunteer Training Policy

All volunteers will be required to attend Safe Sanctuaries training in person or online and sign a form stating they have done the required Safe Sanctuaries training every three years.

Volunteer Application and Background Check Policy

Each volunteer working with God's people must have completed and signed a Volunteer Application Form and agree to have a completed background check at least every three years. No one may

work as a volunteer with children, youth or a vulnerable person until a background check has been completed and the results are in compliance with the Safe Sanctuaries policies.

Any individual whose background check returns with a criminal history which is not in compliance with Safe Sanctuary policies will be referred to a Pastor to determine when and how each person can be utilized as a volunteer. An individual convicted of certain crimes under Wisconsin State Statutes including, but not limited to, Chapter 46 (Social Services); Chapter 48 (Children's Code); Chapter 940 (Crimes against Life and Bodily Security); Chapter 944 (Crimes against Sexual Morality) and Chapter 948 (Crimes against Children) will not be permitted to work with children, youth and/or at risk individuals because those people are not in compliance with the Safe Sanctuaries policies. If a potential volunteer has been convicted of any similar crimes in other states, the individual will be referred to a Pastor to determine when and how the individual can be utilized as a volunteer.

Information regarding the implementation plan and process of background checks can be found in a later part of this manual.

Background Check Policy Process

Implementation Plan

The Safe Sanctuaries Committee has established an account with the First Advantage/ Employment Advantage and has designated two staff members to run background checks. The staff members will use the account appropriately or be removed from the position. The account is password protected.

Background checks on all clergy will be conducted through the Wisconsin Annual Conference.

It is the recommendation of the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) that all program staff, all non-program staff, such as the organist, the accompanist, the custodians, and other such staff and all clergy staff have a background check performed every three (3) years. A statement to this effect should be included in the Employee Guidebook. Each volunteer working with God's people must have completed and signed a Volunteer Application Form and agree to have a completed background check at least every three years. Staff information will be reviewed during staff evaluations each year to see if staff members are due for training and background checks. The Pastor and/or SPRC will be responsible for asking for staff to be identified by background check staff that need to have a new background check completed.

Every three (3) years, the pastor will conduct a background check on the Church Staff Members serving in the background check role. If these background checks are returned with any criminal history, one of the pastors will immediately notify the Church Staff and SPRC and remove Church Staff from this position and find a replacement.

The responsibilities of the Church Staff are to perform the background check in a timely manner and forward information on any background check with a criminal history that is contrary to the Safe Sanctuaries policies to the pastor; to approve an applicant whose background check is returned as "No Record;" and to notify the staff person in charge of the activity of the acceptance or non-acceptance of an applicant. The Church Staff does not evaluate the background check information on any record with a criminal history. They are only to conduct the background check and relay the results to the pastor.

A written recommendation from an attorney should be obtained regarding the length of retention of background check information and the proper disposal of background check information. At this time, the records should be maintained for seven (7) years and then confidentially shredded and destroyed.

Obtaining Background Check Information

After an individual completes and returns the Volunteer Application Form to the church office, the Church Staff conducts the background check. The Church Staff then notifies one of the pastors of the results of the check. If the applicant's criminal history is negative, meaning in full compliance with Safe Sanctuaries policies, the individual can begin working with children, youth and at risk individuals. If a criminal history is found that is contrary to Safe Sanctuaries policies, further review and consultation the pastor and staff person in charge of the activity will occur. They will determine if and where the individual can volunteer in the church.

On an annual basis, the program staff will notify the volunteers when it is time for them to attend Safe Sanctuaries Training and/or have their background checks run again. Letters will be sent to the volunteers with the appropriate form(s). The volunteers must complete and return the form(s) to Church within a week of receiving the request. If the form is not returned within one week and if the background check is not conducted, the individual will not be able to volunteer. If staff has notified the volunteer in writing twice and the volunteer does not return the form to Church, the pastor will inform the volunteer that the individual is not able to work with children, youth or at risk individuals until the background check has been conducted and the volunteer is in compliance with Safe Sanctuaries policies. All reasonable efforts will be made by the staff; however, the responsibility is on the volunteer to be in full compliance with Safe Sanctuaries policies. If volunteer or staff member has an arrest or a conviction that is relevant to our safe sanctuaries policies and guidelines between the times of a three year check, it must be reported to the Pastor within a week of the incident.

All information will be held in a secure file at the Sun Prairie United Methodist Church. Maintaining confidentiality and privacy of the volunteer's information is of the utmost concern to the Church. The signed Volunteer Application Form will be in a locked filing cabinet with the background check information. The locked filing cabinet will be kept in the work room under the alarm system. In the case of a clergy background check, the chair(s) of the SPRC will have access rather than the pastor. The pastor will review the plan for the filing system, and consult persons deemed appropriate for implementation. It is recommended that background checks be performed at the Sun Prairie United Methodist Church. However, with prior approval of the pastor, they may be performed at another location that has internet security access.

Registered Sex Offenders

1. Staff or assistant may become aware that a registered sex offender is attending the church through a background check, through reliable public information such as the National Sex Offender Registry, or through communication with the individual.

2. Registered sex offenders will be asked by the Pastor and the chair of the Staff Parish Relations Committee to enter into a covenant relationship with the church by signing the Safety Covenant Agreement in the back of this manual.
3. Any registered sex offender refusing to sign the Safety Covenant will be prohibited from attending worship or any other church programming where children and youth will be present.
4. A registered sex offender who does sign the agreement may, at the careful and appropriate discretion of the pastor and the chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, be allowed to serve as an assistant or volunteer working with children and youth only under the following conditions:
 - a. The registered sex offender will not be placed in leadership of church programming.
 - b. The registered sex offender will never be left alone with children or youth. There will always be a second adult present.
 - c. The registered sex offender will not work in the nursery.
 - d. The registered sex offender will not transport children and youth.
 - e. The registered sex offender will not participate in overnight activities or programming.
 - f. The leader of the church programming at which the registered sex offender is assisting or volunteering will be made aware of the registered sex offender's Safety Covenant Agreement and will provide extra supervision.

Safe Sanctuaries Guidelines

This manual also provides guidelines to the congregation, volunteers and staff when working with children, youth and vulnerable individuals.

These Guidelines are defined as preferred practices that we always strive to follow in the best interest of the safety for participants in Church activities.

However, we recognize that not all situations and circumstances will allow for these practices to be observed. Exceptions can and will occur which we cannot possibly address in totality within this manual. We expect all involved parties to strive to follow the guidelines described in this manual and to make a good faith effort to follow God's laws. Common sense and discretion should be used at all times. No one shall be put in a situation where they are uncomfortable.

Free Will Assistance versus Church Directed Volunteering Guideline

SPUMC cannot be held liable for any actions taken by a member of the Church if the activity involved was done under the free will of that member rather than having been individually solicited and actively agreed to volunteer by the Church or any member of the staff. In other words, if a Church member offers to assist, of their own free will, to meet a need of someone in the Church or community at large, then that Church member is solely liable for anything that the Church member may do that might harm or injure themselves, another person or any property. This Manual refers to the acts of volunteerism and not to free will assistance or generosity of our congregation and God's people.

SPUMC has an insurance policy from Church Mutual Insurance Company. For more information about this policy and its coverage, please contact the Pastor.

Christian Education Guidelines

At the SPUMC, we are blessed with the ability to provide many opportunities for our children and youth to grow with God. Below is a brief description of some of the Christian education programs we offer and the corresponding Safe Sanctuaries guidelines.

Nursery Practices

The nursery is available during most of the church sponsored activities and training sessions. Please contact the Church office at least forty eight (48) hours in advance of a church sponsored activity that is not during worship services when the need for nursery care arises. The rules and policies of the nursery vary depending on the church activity being sponsored. Regardless of which activity the parent/guardian/caregiver is participating, children who have



been sick, vomiting or had a fever or diarrhea in the past 24 hours may not be brought to the nursery. This is necessary in order to support the health and safety of the other children. We ask that parent/guardian/caregiver consult with nursery staff if the child(ren) over the age of 13 require care. The nursery is not equipped for children of that age or older. Please see the appropriate section below for the specific nursery policies. For additional nursery questions, please contact the nursery staff directly.

Nursery Practices during Worship Services

- Only children three (3) years and under are permitted in the nursery during worship services.
- Each child brought into the nursery will have a registration form on file, with the exception of guests and visitors who are attending services for special events.
- The child (ren) may not be dropped off in the nursery more than 15 minutes prior to the worship service that the parent/guardian/caregiver is attending.
- No food or drink is permitted in the nursery during worship services.
- Bottles may be brought for children who are not mobile and who must be held by the volunteer or staff member in the nursery to feed them. The bottles must be clearly labeled with the child's name, be pre-made by the parent/guardian/caregiver and must not need refrigeration or reheating.
- Parents will be contacted via cell phone to change the diapers of their child.
- Parents/guardians/caregivers must remain in the building at all times while the child (ren) are in the nursery.
- Only parent/guardian/caregiver or authorized individuals may remove the child from the nursery.

Nursery Practices during LOGOS

- Each child in the nursery must have a LOGOS nursery registration form on file.
- Dinner will be served in the nursery during LOGOS.
- Children ages birth through 4K are permitted in the nursery during LOGOS.
- The child (ren) may not be dropped off in the nursery more than 15 minutes prior to the part of LOGOS in which the parent/guardian/caregiver is participating.

- Parents/guardians/caregivers must remain in the building and volunteering for LOGOS during the times their children are in the nursery.
- Only parent/guardian/caregiver or authorized individuals may remove the child from the nursery during LOGOS.
- If a parent or adult family member is serving on a cook team and it is communicated with Nursery Staff and/or LOGOS Director ahead of time, drop off for this area can begin at 3:45pm.

Nursery Practices during Other Church Sponsored Activities Not Listed Above

- Each child in the nursery must have a child care registration form on file.
- Children of all ages are permitted in the nursery during other church sponsored activities not listed above.
- Parents/guardians/caregivers must remain in the building while the child (ren) are in the nursery.
- Only the parent/guardian/caregiver or authorized individuals may remove the child from the nursery.
- Food and Drink may be permitted in our nursery during longer sessions of care. This will be discerned by the schedule caregiver. Our nursery will be a peanut free zone. Snacks and drinks must be clearly labeled with child's first and last name. Refrigeration is not available for snacks. Nursery caregivers will not prepare snack.
- Bottles may be brought for children who are not mobile and who must be held by the volunteer or staff member in the nursery to feed them. Bottles must be clearly labeled with the child's name, be pre-made by the parent/guardian/caregiver and must not need refrigeration or reheating.
- The parent/guardian/caregiver will be texted via cell phone to change the diapers of their child.



Children's Church Guideline

Depending on the time of year, Children's Church is offered at different times. Children's Church is offered during all worship services in the summer from Memorial Day to Labor Day. It is offered during 8:30am Sunday services during the school year.

After children's time during worship, children ages three (3) through first grade may leave the sanctuary and participate in Children's Church. During Children's Church, a volunteer will read a Bible story and the children will do a project based on the story. If the children finish the project prior to the conclusion of worship, the children may watch a video, play games or have free choice time.

Church School Guideline

Beginning the Saturday after Labor Day, after children's time during worship service, children ages three (3) to 5th grade are excused from the worship services to participate in church school. The church school curriculum is based on the Bible and is taught through stories and activities. It is preferable that every child and youth participating in church school be registered.

Beginning the Sunday after Labor Day at 9:45am, children ages three (3) to adults may participate in church school. Church school is offered between the services. The curriculum is based on the Bible and is taught through stories and activities. It is preferable that everyone participating in church school be registered.

LOGOS Guideline

LOGOS begins the first Wednesday in October and ends in March or April depending on calendar year. LOGOS is open to children in kindergarten through twelve grade. LOGOS is a Wednesday evening youth ministry of Christian nurture for children and youth. It is an international program offered in and by churches around the world.



The LOGOS program at the Sun Prairie United Methodist Church is a fun-filled program where children meet with others for fellowship and learn about the Christian faith. Dozens of volunteer and staff adult leaders from our church gather each week to play, teach, nurture, and care for the children who come to LOGOS. LOGOS celebrates nurturing relationships through the model of Jesus Christ. Each week the youth participate in four parts of the LOGOS program: Bible study, worship skills, recreation and family time. Every child participating in LOGOS must be registered for the program. Guests at LOGOS may be allowed at the discretion and approval of the LOGOS Program Director; contact the Director for information.

Stephen Ministry Guideline

Stephen Ministry is a complete system for training and organizing lay people to provide one-to-one Christian care to hurting people in and around our congregation.

Our congregation has many needs for care: the hospitalized, those who are grieving, people suffering loneliness or discouragement, divorced or separated, those who are dying and the individual's families and friends, unemployed persons – the list goes on!

Caring for people in need or crisis is at the heart of a congregation's ministry. Pastors and church staff don't have enough hours in a week to care for all the members who are hurting. The pastor provides immediate care at the onset of a crisis but Stephen Ministers will provide on-going follow-up care.



Persons who feel God is calling them to Stephen Ministry will apply for consideration for this volunteer position, be interviewed and if accepted will participate in 50 hours of intensive, biblically based, psychologically sound, but highly enjoyable training in care giving.

After training and consecration, Stephen Ministers are assigned to a care-receiver. Stephen Minister and care-receiver will meet for an hour each week until both decide the relationship can end. The Stephen Minister will participate in a twice monthly peer accountability and supervisory group. Everything in the relationship between care giver and care receiver is held in strictest confidence. Even the supervisory group will not know the name of the care receiver. In fact only the pastor and supervision leader will know that. In assigning a care giver to a care receiver, men will be paired with men and women with women.

People who receive care receive quality, Christ-centered, confidential care for their hurts and needs. Individuals find hope, healing, and a new sense of self-worth through the support of a Stephen Minister. Individuals know they are remembered and supported by their congregation in times of personal difficulty. Individuals receive ongoing care for continuing needs long after the onset of a crisis, when many others have forgotten about them. And individuals grow in a deeper relationship with God as each person experiences God's unconditional love for them through their Stephen Minister.

Stephen ministers are expected to permit to a criminal background check every three years. Stephen Ministers undergo extensive training exceeding the requirements of Safe Sanctuaries; therefore Safe Sanctuaries-specific training is not needed.

Supervision of God's People Guideline

The following procedures will be observed by Safe Sanctuaries trained staff and volunteers when in ministries with children, youth and vulnerable individuals:

Children and youth of all ages must be supervised during ministry programming, worship services, and/or other opportunities where they are under the supervision of staff and volunteers. Vulnerable persons shall be supervised if the need is apparent to the staff person and volunteer supervising the activity.

Staff will not be present to supervise children and youth more than ten minutes prior to the commencement of the church activity. Therefore, it is ESSENTIAL that parent/guardian/caregivers not bring or permit their child(ren) to be present in the building without direct parent/guardian/caregiver supervision more than ten (10) minutes prior to the beginning of the program.

If a parent/guardian/caregiver brings their child(ren) to church or permits their child(ren) to be unsupervised more than ten (10) minutes before the start of the program, a pastor will contact the parent/guardian/caregiver and request that they return to the church immediately to supervise their child(ren).

Treat all supervisors, co-workers, parent/guardian/caregivers, members of the congregation, children, youth and vulnerable people with respect and consideration.

Treat all children, youth and vulnerable people fairly regardless of race, color, religious beliefs, gender, disability, creed, national origin, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Never engage in the following conduct in your ministry as an employee or volunteer for the church:

- Strike, spank, shake, slap, or otherwise physically discipline anyone
- Humiliate, degrade, or threaten others
- Touch anyone inappropriately
- Shame, withhold love, or speak or act with cruelty
- Withhold food, water, or other basic cares as punishment
- Use profanity, tell inappropriate jokes, share intimate details of your own life

In an effort to assure a safe environment, all church sponsored activities involving children, youth and at risk people will be supervised. Whenever possible, SPUMC will strive to have at least two adults or an adult and a helper will be present for all activities involving children, youth and at risk people. If this is not possible, volunteers and/or program staff may serve as rovers during programming. Rovers walk through areas where ministry is happening peeking in on each classroom and providing assistance if needed. We will attempt a ratio of two caregivers to ten children, with the ratio of 1:5 for any more than ten children whenever possible.

When groups travel offsite the two adults in the above mentioned ratio MAY NOT be co-habitants.

As volunteers supervise children, youth, and at risk individuals, they should attempt to make the space they are using as visible as possible to other staff and volunteers. Whenever possible, leave doors open when working with children, youth or at risk individuals. Never cover the windows of an area or the door to block the view. When working with groups of children, youths or vulnerable individuals, it is best to have at least two adults or one adult and one helper working together. If two adults or a helper and an adult are working together, and if either the helper or the adult leaves the environment or classroom, the door shall be left open. If only one adult is with a child, youth or vulnerable person, never leave the room without another staff or adult coming to replace you. If a private conference with a child, youth or at risk person is needed, ask another adult to be present or in an adjacent area with any and all doors open throughout the meeting with the individual. Appropriate confidentiality as well as appropriate safety procedures must be maintained to protect the child, youth or vulnerable person and the adult that is doing the supervising.

Image Use, Online Connections and Internet Privacy Guidelines

In a world where these areas are constantly shifting, growing, and changing we will continue to strive to keep everyone in the life of our church safe when it comes to technology. Social media has become a normal and integral part of our lives as a society. It covers an ever-evolving collection of programs and devices like Twitter, email, texting and Facebook. It might be tempting to dismiss

these new technologies. It is important that we continue to learn and grow as these tools and others like them are used more in more in the ministries of the church.

Not all individuals choose to have their image or name or their child's image or name posted in a public manner. The Church is sensitive to these issues and has developed the following guideline to help ensure that privacy is respected as best we can. Following this guideline does not guarantee that a picture will not be taken and published to the internet or in church materials; however we as a Church will continue to strive to protect privacy whenever possible and to the best of our ability.

No staff member or volunteer will post a picture, image or name to the internet, social media, church publications or internal church materials of a child, youth or vulnerable person without prior consent of the parent/guardian/caregiver.

Each Program Director for child, youth & vulnerable person activities will include a statement in the applicable registration form allowing the parent/guardian/caregiver to opt out of their child, youth, vulnerable person's image or name being used on the internet, social media, church publications or internal church materials.

Volunteers will be trained to not take pictures or post to personal social media accounts while volunteering at Church activities unless 1) the person is designated by the Program Manager(s) to take pictures for the activity; 2) the person is the parent/guardian/caregiver of individuals in the picture.

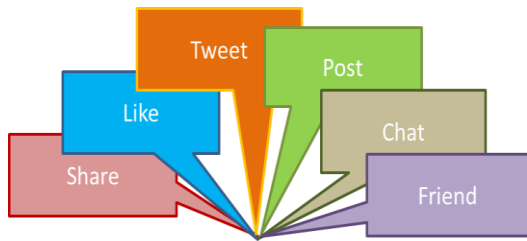
Program Managers may include wording on the registration forms allowing parent/guardian/caregivers to select some forms of image use and not others (specific wording on registration forms may vary as long as parent/guardian/caregiver is allowed to make a clear choice and may fully opt out of the use of their child's image).

Program Managers are responsible for ensuring that requests submitted on registration forms for use of images and names are honored to the best of their ability. Program Managers may designate volunteers to take pictures during activities and to assist with screening pictures to honor requests prior to use of pictures. Program Managers will discuss with participants (children, youth, vulnerable persons) the need to respect others' privacy when taking personal pictures or posting to social media during Church activities. Program Managers have the ability to ask any individual volunteer or participant to refrain from taking pictures during that particular program event.

We understand the need for adults to text youth at different times and for different reasons. Program staff will ask the adult family member or guardian responsible for each youth during the registration process if they may have permission to text youth. There should be at least three people on a text

message. It is preferable that texts include at least two adults. We highly encourage as much group texting as possible.

All transcripts from online communications and all text messages should be saved whenever possible. All youth and adults should be informed that any communication that is sent via digital means (email, social networking sites or post, etc.) is not confidential and may be reported or shared with others.



Employees who have social media accounts may want to consider having personal pages and “ministry professional” pages. If staff or volunteers have social media accounts, they should refrain from posting degrading or disparaging comments about the church, its staff, or its volunteers. The staff parish relations committee and/or clergy staff may monitor employee social media accounts. SPRC will discern if postings from staff are violating the above mentioned guideline. SPRC and Clergy staff will be responsible for following up with staff members regarding these postings.

Adults (staff and/or volunteers) should NEVER initiate friend requests with youth on social media. However, if a youth reaches out first this contact may occur.

We strongly recommend private groups be used when possible for all online ministry. Online ministry groups should have at least two safe sanctuaries trained adults in attendance. If possible, they should co-host these gathering times.

Different ministry areas within the church may provide social media covenants to youth who are participating at different times. Youth should be educated about appropriate postings for the ministry they are involved in before an outing or event. It will be at the discretion of the program staff what other guidelines need to be in place for each ministry.

Any inappropriate material that is not covered by “Mandatory Reporting” laws should be deleted from the site. Any material that is covered should immediately be shared with the pastor, documented for church records and then deleted from the site.

Any content that details inappropriate behavior (outside of the bounds of the established covenants) during a church sponsored event/activity should be addressed by authorized staff and/or volunteers, youth, and adult family members.

Limitations on Assisting Children, Youth and Vulnerable Persons Guideline

No staff member or volunteer will assist a child, youth or vulnerable person with the regular activities of daily living. The activities of daily living include, but are not limited to, dressing and undressing, bathing, self-grooming (brushing teeth, hair combing, etc.), and getting in and out of a bed or chair. Additionally, no staff member or volunteer will dispense any prescription or over the counter medication to another person without written permission from a parent or guardian.

Restroom Protocol Guideline

If younger children need assistance in the restroom at the church, it is preferable to have at least two (2) adults or an adult and a helper accompany the child, youth or vulnerable person into the restroom. The adult and/or helper can verbally assist the younger children with going to the restroom. They can provide verbal directions and tell the child, youth or vulnerable person what to do. The adult and/or helper should use their discretion and common sense when in the restroom with a child or vulnerable person. If another adult is not readily available, prop the main door of the restroom open.

If child (ren) are on a field trip away from the church, have an adult check out a single restroom before a child enters and have an adult present in a multiple-booth restroom. Never allow a child (ren) to enter a public bathroom alone unless it is a single stall restroom. Two children may enter a restroom alone if there is an adult at the door. No volunteer or staff member will assist anyone, including a vulnerable or at risk person, in using the restroom. The individuals must be able to use the facilities themselves. The vulnerable or at risk person must be either independent in their toileting abilities or have a personal attendant present. The comfort level of the adult and the child, youth or vulnerable person must be considered. No one is required to do something or be in a situation where they are uncomfortable.

When offsite, youth must let an adult know before they head to a bathroom. When we are at a public space offsite (ie a rest stop, amusement park, concerts, NOT when we are in another church building serving at the food pantry or some other fairly controlled space), groups of two or more youth should go to the bathroom together and should wait to return until all are ready.

Release of All Children, Aged Birth through Grade 3 Guideline

Children ages birth through grade 3 will be signed in and out by a parent/guardian/caregiver or an authorized person. Authorized individuals will be listed on the program registration form. These individuals will be authorized by the parent/guardian/caregiver. All participants of a program must be picked up by a parent/guardian/caregiver or an authorized person before a volunteer or staff permits the child to leave the program. The authorized person may be required to show a photo identification if a staff member or volunteer does not know the authorized person personally.

Travel off the Church Premises Guideline

As ministries call God's people to locations not at the Church, the staff and volunteers will try, with all reasonable effort, to have at least two (2) adult staff/group leaders or volunteers with the children, youth and at risk individuals at all times. Although there may be circumstances when this is not possible, the staff and volunteers will do their best to have at least two (2) adults with the children at all times. However, the children, youth and at risk individuals will never be left alone in an unsafe or unfamiliar environment. At least one (1) other person will be with the children, youth and/or at risk persons at all times. Staff/group leaders will always assign designated meeting locations and times to check in and perform a head count. Any time the group enters or exits a vehicle, the staff/group leaders will make sure everyone is present. The entire group will not leave the area until everyone is there.

Any person who will be transported by a church staff member or volunteer must be ambulatory. The staff member or volunteer must not have to assist the individual in entering or exiting the vehicle; nor will the staff member or volunteer be required to lift heavy objects, e.g. wheelchairs, into the vehicle.

When multiple vehicles are used for an event, a single volunteer, per car, may drive if all the vehicles travel together. Each driver/vehicle should be equipped with the destination address(es) for the trip and an emergency contact number for a church leader not traveling with the group. Vehicles should attempt to leave at the same time and should not make extra stops without having a non-driver communicate any emergency/extra stops to other vehicles. Occupants of vehicles shall wear seatbelts. Buses not equipped with seatbelts are exempt. Children ages twelve (12) years and younger shall not sit in the front seat of vehicles with air bags.

As the situation requires, the SPUMC will obtain a rider to its insurance policy to protect the participants.

Overnight and Trip Rules Guideline

In overnight programming, particular attention will be given to historically excluded or unrecognized people, such as LGBTQ+ and differently-abled individuals. In a situation of unequal power and safety, preferences of these individuals merit additional consideration, accommodation, and action to ensure:

- Participant privacy;
- Maximization of social integration of all participants;
- Minimization of stigmatization of any participants;
- Equal opportunity to participate; and
- Safety of all participants.

On overnight trips, there will always be at least two (2) adults. The total number of adults on each trip will be adjusted according to the number of children and youth participating in the planned activities. The ratio of adults to children and youth shall be approximately one (1) adult to every six (6) children.

Completed permission slips must be on file prior to departing for the trips.

If prescription medication is, or may be needed, while on the trip, the medication must be in the original packaging from the pharmacy and be given to the staff member or volunteer in charge of the trip prior to departing for the trip. The staff or volunteer must be aware of the medical condition and how and when to administer the medication ahead of time. If over the counter medication is necessary or needed during the trip, the parent/guardian/caregiver should consult with the staff member in charge of the activity prior to leaving the Church.

Other guidelines for overnight programs:

- The safe use of restrooms and showers by all participants requires congregations and other organizations to consider numerous factors, including, but not limited to: age, sex, gender identity and expression, and privacy. Adults should have separate showers or separate times for showers.
- Overnight programs shall provide safe, supervised sleeping arrangements.

- No bed, cot, air mattress, or sleeping bag shall have more than one person sleeping in it.
- Supervision by two unrelated adults is required in any space where one or more youth are sleeping.
- It is acceptable for all participants to sleep in the same open area when dressing rooms and bathrooms provide appropriate privacy.

Best practice guidelines for hotel stays:

- One child or youth per bed, including cots, pullouts or hideabeds, and rollaway beds;
- At least 2 children or 2 youth in each room. No adults share rooms with children or youth.
- Adult supervisors or chaperones have rooms on the same floor, scattered among the rooms with children or youth, and at least one adult room is by the stairs or elevators;
- Adult leader assigns rooms and room occupants.

Visitation and Observation Guideline

Parent/guardian/caregiver, volunteers, and staff of the church may visit and observe the program at any time so long as they have an affiliation or connection to the activity and participants.

Visitation and Observation of Unknown Persons on Premises Guideline

If, during a regularly scheduled program, an unknown person enters the program area (including, but not limited to, the entire building/property) certain responses should be followed.

Either the staff member in charge of the program or program area or an adult volunteer should:

Approach the unknown individual with care and concern inquiring about their needs.

- First, contact the police (call 911) if you are concerned. Then get a description of the person.
- If unknown individual states their concern or need, the staff member or volunteer shall escort the unknown individual to the staff member in charge of the church activity or a pastor and allow them to help the individual meet his needs or concerns.
- If the unknown individual does not have a valid concern or need, the staff member or volunteer will ask the unknown individual to leave the church and its property immediately and notify the staff member in charge of the church activity or pastor immediately. The staff member in charge of the activity or pastor will make sure the individual has left the premises.
- If the unknown individual states that they are just waiting for someone, escort that person to the staff member in charge of the church activity or pastor who will then have the individual wait in an “identified area.” The identified areas change depending on the activity at that time. The pastors and/or staff member will identify the areas as needed.

- The unknown person cannot wander around the church when children, youth or at risk persons are present. The unknown person should be supervised at all times until the person leaves the premises. Any adult who is not participating in the program, including parents, should have a defined area to meet their children/youth during or after the program.

Inappropriate Behavior Guideline

If children, youth or vulnerable persons are behaving inappropriately, staff members and volunteers will use techniques of guidance, redirection, positive reinforcement and encouragement to change their behavior. They will not foster competition, comparison, or criticism among youth or children, instead the volunteers and staff will work with the children and youth to set up guidelines and create an environment that minimizes the need to discipline children, youth or vulnerable persons. If the behavior is repeated, if the behavior is harmful to the individual, others or property, or rises to the level of disrupting the safe environment we are attempting to create, the volunteer and/or staff member should complete a Behavioral Report form. Forms are located on clipboards in each room near or on the doors. The completed form should be given to the Program Coordinator. A copy of the completed report should be given the parent/guardian.

Physical Restraint Guideline

If physical restraint must be used on an individual because that person is in imminent danger to the health and safety of himself or another person, the volunteer or staff member will take the minimum steps necessary to carry out the restraint. If possible, at least two (2) volunteers or staff members or a combination of staff and volunteers will move the individual to another environment. If moving the individual is not possible, the staff member or volunteer will take reasonable precautions to move the rest of the participants, or take whatever measures are safe, reasonable, and appropriate for the circumstances. The volunteer or staff member will report any such action to the staff person in charge of the church activity or to the pastor as soon as possible. If physical restraint has occurred, a behavioral report must be completed by the staff member in charge of the program or the volunteer who restrained the individual.

Conceal and Carry Law Guideline

To avoid a situation that potentially could place at risk the safety of our employees, congregation, visitors and others who come into the church building, the Church's policy is to prohibit weapons of any type from the workplace or working areas where employees are located. A valid concealed carry permit does not authorize our employees, visitors and others to carry a weapon of any kind into the Church's buildings. Employees, congregation, visitors and others who possess a valid concealed carry weapons license may keep a firearm inside their privately owned locked and secured motor vehicle when their vehicle is parked on Church property in the designated parking areas.

Disaster Response Guideline

In case of fire, staff and/or volunteers should take their class and quickly leave the building through the nearest exit. Please see the map placed around our building for best exit routes during a fire. The fire alarm should be pulled as the groups exits the building if it is not already activated. Once outside the building, call 911 using a cell phone or the phone of a neighboring home. Once outside,

go to the grassy area between the church and the parsonage near the Sun Prairie Nursery School playground area. Staff and volunteers should stay with their class. Teachers need to have a count of all children in their care at all times and must recount them when they are situated outside.

When the local disaster siren sounds, all building occupants should go to the “Tornado Spot” assigned to the appropriate room in a quick and orderly fashion. Maps of best routes and “tornado spot” locations are placed in each room for you to follow. These routes are indicated in blue. Once inside the designated area, the individuals will kneel along the walls and stay there until notified that it is safe to return to the other areas of the building. If there is not enough room in the designated area, the pastor and/or staff will instruct certain classes to go to other areas of the building, depending on what time of the day it is and who is in the building.

Before fall programming and ministries begin each year, a church staff member and/or a member of the safe sanctuaries team will walk the building making sure up to date disaster maps and still posted in each of the rooms. If they are not, new maps will be posted before fall programming and ministries begin.

Accidents and Emergencies Guideline

First and foremost, call 911. Telephones are located in the hallway outside the kitchen, the nursery and in the office suites. An automated external defibrillator (AED) is located in the narthex near the fellowship hall door. Directions for how to use the AED are located inside the unit.

First Aid kits are stocked at minimum with the following items: scissors, gauze, tape, bandages antiseptic wipes, first aid cream/ointment, gloves

First Aid kits are found in the following locations:

- Program staff work area
- Kitchen
- Nursery
- Room E3
- Room E8
- Multipurpose Room
- Field Trip Backpack (in closet off fellowship hall)
- Audio Visual Cave in the Sanctuary
- Narthex

Please complete an Accident Report if an injury occurs. Forms are located on clipboards in each room near or on the doors. The completed form should be given to the Program Coordinator. A copy of the completed report should be given the parent/guardian/caregiver.

For all church activities, if there is an emergency, contact the police first by calling 911. It is best to get out of the building in an emergency but always discuss where to meet outside the building ahead of time.

Volunteers are encouraged to carry their cell phones with them in the building. Program staff will share their cell phone numbers with leaders so they can be reached in case of an emergency throughout the building.

Volunteers in different ministry areas will also be encouraged to set up group text for emergency purposes.

Once a year, the church Administrative Assistant will be responsible for checking the batteries in the AED. This church staff member will order a new battery for the machine approximately two months before the expiration date of the current one. In addition, this person will check the expiration dates on all pads inside the machine on a yearly basis and order new pads two months prior to expiration as well. Each month, the machine will be checked by this church staff person to make sure the green light is still glowing.

Active Assailant Plans

Volunteers will follow the Active Assailant Plan that is set forth by this committee. For everyone's safety only hard copies of the plan are available in the church office. If you would like a copy or to be trained please speak with church staff.

Public Health Safety Expectations

Covid 19 or other safety requirements as adopted/expected in our church to ensure a safe sanctuary for our children/vulnerable adults. A separate document with guidance around COVID 19 is available on our church website or if requested in print form from our church office.

Definitions:

“Abuse” Any mistreatment of a person that results in harm or injury and that has no "reasonable" explanation. Abuse is generally divided into several categories including physical, sexual, emotional, and neglect.

Physical Abuse

- Physical Abuse Includes:
 - Physical beatings
 - Slapping
 - Hitting
 - Burns
 - Strangulation
 - Human bites

Sexual Abuse

- Non-touching sexual offenses include:
 - Frank discussions about sexual acts intended to arouse a child's interest
 - Obscene telephone calls
 - Exhibitionism
 - Voyeurism
 - Pornography
 - Allowing children to witness or hear sexual acts
- Touching sexual offenses include:
 - Rape
 - Incest
 - Touching of breasts
 - Attempted intercourse
 - Fondling of the genitals

Emotional Abuse

- A pattern of behavior that attacks the person's emotional development, their spirit and self-concept and makes them feel unloved, un-loveable and worthless.
- Constant criticizing, belittling, insulting rejecting, withholding love, support or guidance
- May be the most common form of abuse, as it usually accompanies other forms of abuse and has the longest lasting effects.

Neglect

- Neglect is failing to provide for a person's well-being and not meeting their needs for:
 - proper food
 - medical care
 - hygiene shelter
 - clothing
 - education
 - love and attention
 - supervision and setting limits

“Adult” means a person over 18 years of age or older. However, if the person is 18 and is participating in a youth church activity, then the person is not an adult for the purposes of this Manual.

“Ambulatory” means able to walk about and not be bedridden.

“At Risk Individual” means any person who has experienced, is currently experiencing or is at a higher likelihood of experiencing abuse, neglect, self-neglect or financial exploitation than the average person. Also see “vulnerable person.”

“Child” means any person under the age of 18 or an individual who is 18 and is participating in a church program as a youth.

“Children’s activities” means any activity or program in which children are under supervision of staff persons or volunteers.

“Helper” means anyone who aids in ministry. The helper must be at least three years older than the individuals with whom s/he is working.

“Persons required to report child abuse” means persons, who, in the course of their employment, occupation, or practice of their profession, come into contact with children. Such persons include, but are not limited to, medical professionals, school administrators, teachers and nurses, social services workers, day-care center workers, mental health professionals, peace and law enforcement officers.

“Staff person” means any person employed by Sun Prairie United Methodist Church.

“Staff person in charge of a church activity” means the church employee responsible for the activity. In the case of non-church programs operating on church property, the duties of the “staff person in charge of the children’s activity” shall be carried out by the non-local church lead staff or volunteer.

“Volunteer” means any adult who assists in conducting church activities under the supervision of a staff person.

“Vulnerable person” means anyone whose mental or physical condition makes them susceptible to abuse. The person may temporarily or permanently be considered a vulnerable or at risk individual. The individual may be particularly vulnerable to persuasion, coercion, undue influence, or physical control from those who have power, authority and leadership over them.

“We” means the congregation of the Sun Prairie United Methodist Church.

“Youth” means any person 18 years or younger and is participating in a church activity.

Due to the nature of every evolving and changing definitions around those in the LGBTQ Community, our Reconciling Ministries has provided a list of online definitions and terms that is updated. To learn more about these terms and their meanings please visit:

<http://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms>

SPUMC Safe Sanctuaries Volunteer Code of Conduct Agreement:

Volunteers in our church must uphold Christian values and conduct. The public and private conduct of volunteers can inspire and motivate people. Responsibility for adherence to this code of conduct rests with the individual.

As a volunteer, I agree to:

- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Keep focused only on my particular area of expertise.

- Be supervised by and bring any problems, questions, or concerns to the supervisor or pastor.
- Not engage in physical, psychological, written or verbal harassment or discrimination towards any involved in church activities nor tolerate such behavior by others.
- Respect and maintain confidentiality which pertains to anyone involved with the church; including not taking and/or posting pictures of participants to social media or internet unless designated to do so by the program director
- Be diligent and responsible towards my spiritual health.
- Be competent and proactive in seeking out education and training commensurate with my role and responsibilities.
- Exercise responsible stewardship of resources.
- Complete Safe Sanctuary training and follow the Safe Sanctuary Manual as I have been trained to do.
- Submit the required information to the criminal background check volunteer for a background check when asked.
- Report any changes to my status that may affect my ability to meet Safe Sanctuaries expectations within one week to the Pastor.

When working with children or other vulnerable people, I shall:

- Make every attempt to avoid situations where I am alone in the building with children, youth and/or vulnerable people at church sponsored activities.
- Support the rights and roles of parents/guardians.
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition or comparison.
- Report to the appropriate church authorities any suspected abuse of children, youth or other vulnerable populations and cooperate fully in any investigation.
- Not smoke or use tobacco products, use illegal drugs or alcohol, in the presence of vulnerable populations and will not procure any of these products for them.
- Not pose any health risk to the vulnerable populations (i.e. fevers or other contagious situations.)
- Not use profanity in the presence of children, youth or vulnerable populations.
- On overnight trips, I will ensure that children and/or youth will never be left alone in an unsafe or unfamiliar environment.

I understand that while volunteering, I am representing the SPUMC and agree to act in accordance with its teachings. _____ *Print name*

Signature

Date

A copy of this signed Code of Conduct Agreement will be placed in the volunteer file for each volunteer.

Forms Information:

All forms for program registrations and volunteer application are available on our website or in the Church Office

Website: <http://sunprairieumc.org/AboutUs/SafeSanctuaries>

Sun Prairie United Methodist Church
702 North St
Sun Prairie, WI
608-837-5554

SPUMC Building Map:



Map Key

- ↑ Fire Exit Route
- ↑ Tornado Exit Route
- AED
- Tornado Safe Place

Sun Prairie United Methodist Church Safety Covenant Agreement

Sun Prairie United Methodist Church affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being a religious community, open to those who wish to worship with us, especially in times of personal trouble. We recognize that people make mistakes, and that repentance and new life are possible in Jesus Christ.

However, based on your background and personal history, we have concerns about your contact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults in our congregation. Your participation in church programming will be limited to ensure the safety of these persons and reduce risks to you. You agree to act within the following guidelines:

1. You will comply fully with all restrictions and requirements placed upon you as a result of any legal actions - past, present, and future.
2. You will not be alone at any time with any child, youth, or vulnerable adult.
3. You will participate in a personal accountability group all the time you are involved with the church.
 - a. Your accountability group will consist of yourself, the pastor, a member of Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC), and at least one member of the congregation. At least one of these people will be the same gender as you.
 - b. Your accountability group will meet with you regularly to offer support, discuss issues you may be experiencing, and pray with you. Monthly meetings are suggested, at least initially.
 - c. The schedule for your participation in church programming, and your assigned partner(s), will be determined at your accountability group meeting and kept in the church office.
4. When you are on church property, or participating in church programming, you must have a partner from your accountability group with you at all times. This requirement may be waived as noted below.
 - a. When you arrive at church, go directly to the office and wait for your accountability partner. You must sign in, and your partner must initial, on your participation schedule before leaving the office. If the church programming is off-site, you must prearrange a public meeting point.
 - b. Your accountability partner will remain in close proximity with you at all times.
 - c. If you need to use the restroom, you must use the unisex bathroom by the staff offices. Your accountability partner will wait in the hallway.
 - d. When you are done participating in your scheduled church programming, you must sign out on your schedule in the office and your accountability partner must initial. You must then leave church property or the church-sponsored event immediately.

- e. If your accountability partner is unable to meet you or has to leave early, you must leave church property or the church-sponsored event immediately.
 - f. You are not allowed in the nursery at any time, even with your accountability partner.
5. Prior to your involvement with the church, terms of this covenant will be reviewed with your probation/parole officer, counselor, and any other person involved in your aftercare or treatment.
 6. Prior to your involvement with the church, this covenant must be signed by the pastor, the Staff-Parish Relations Committee member of your accountability group, and anyone listed under item (5).
 7. This covenant will remain on file in the church office and will be available to members of the church. It will be shared with all staff and assistants working directly with children, youth, or vulnerable adults at the church.
 8. This covenant will be reviewed annually by your accountability group and updated as appropriate. Church Leadership Board is responsible for making sure this happens on an annual basis.

Sun Prairie United Methodist Church Safety Covenant Agreement

Name (print): _____

ACCOUNTABILITY GROUP MEMBERS:

ACTIVITY APPROVAL: Upon review of your accountability group, you are approved to participate in the following activities. The SPRC representative on your accountability group should initial all that apply.

___ Only specific church programming which has been individually reviewed and approved with your accountability group.

-OR

___ Worship services.

___ Church programming with adults only (ie, bible study, small groups, fellowship activities).

___ Church programming where children, youth or vulnerable adults may be present along with adults.

Church programming intended primarily for children, youth, or vulnerable adults **ONLY UPON THE CAREFUL AND APPROPRIATE REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE PASTOR AND CHAIR OF THE STAFF PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE.** See the Safe Sanctuaries Policy section (H4) for details.

ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERS: Upon review of the pastor and chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, requirement (4) to always have an accountability partner with you ...

_____ IS IN EFFECT

_____ HAS BEEN WAIVED UPON APPROVAL OF PASTOR and SPRC CHAIR

Reason for waiver:

SIGNATURES

Covenant Participant: _____

Date: _____

By signing this covenant, I agree that if any item of this covenant is suspected of being broken, / will meet with my Safe Sanctuaries accountability group. I agree that all decisions of the accountability group are final. I agree that if the accountability group finds that any item of this covenant was broken, I will immediately discontinue attendance at church programming. I understand and agree that all church members may be aware of this covenant and any violations thereof. I agree that all violations of this covenant will be shared with my accountability group, probation/parole officer, counselor, and any other person involved in my after-care or treatment. Any violation that is illegal in nature will be reported immediately to the appropriate authorities. I agree that I am aware that this covenant must be reviewed and renewed annually with my accountability group.

Pastor: _____

Date: _____

SPRC Representative: _____

Date: _____

Parole/Probation (5): _____

Date: _____

Counselor (5): _____

Date: _____

Other (5):

Date: _____