

SAFE CHURCH POLICY
EVANGELICAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
TELL CITY, INDIANA

POLICY STATEMENT

We believe that Scripture and our faith in Jesus Christ calls us to standards of responsible conduct in all of life, including sexual behavior.

God's covenant calls for both mercy and justice, grace and accountability. We believe in justice for all persons. Because it is an abuse of power and trust, sexual, mental and physical misconduct is unjust. Scripture asserts that religious leadership involves a covenant relationship that presumes the trustworthy exercise of power on behalf of those in our care. A betrayal of trust is more than just a personal tragedy for the victim. It reflects a tragic breakdown in the character of the abuser that seriously threatens both those immediately affected and the well being of the church itself. We have responsibilities for one another in the church. Evangelical United Church of Christ proclaims that the "good of the church" can never be served by overlooking an abuse of power and trust. Sexual, mental and physical misconduct is wrong and charges of misconduct must be dealt with swiftly, fairly and with compassion for both the accused and the accuser.

We assume the best of all people. However, where sexual, mental and physical misconduct or allegations of such misconduct occur, the following policy will guide Evangelical United Church of Christ in a course of action.

REQUIREMENTS

EUCC is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which all people can learn about and experience God's Love. In order to promote this goal the following requirements apply:

- A. All paid staff and volunteers who work with minors will complete the forms included in this document. Completed forms will be kept in a locked file. Access to this file is restricted to the ministers and the person's supervisor (s), except as required by law.
- B. Paid staff will complete the following forms:
 - 1. Criminal Background Check to be completed at time of employment.
 - 2. Criminal Records Check Consent Form - If the first check merits further consideration.
 - 3. Information and Disclosure Form.

4. Reference Form.
5. The Minister will submit a copy of current driver's license and copy of vehicle insurance. (copies will be kept in locked file and destroyed when no longer needed)

*Special Note: If for any reason a background check comes back showing that the applicant has a sex offense on his/her record that person will have to show their court paperwork to the team.

NOTE: The Executive Team of the Church Council will be responsible for the screening of these applicants. Executive Team consists of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

C. Volunteers who work with minors will complete the following forms:

1. Criminal Background Check
2. Criminal Records Check Consent Form - if the first check merits further consideration.
3. Disclosure Form
4. Any adult who provides transportation to minors for the church will submit a copy of his/her current driver's license and vehicle insurance. (copies will be kept in locked file and destroyed when no longer needed)

*Special Note: If for any reason a background check comes back showing that the applicant has a sex offense on his/her record that person will have to show court paperwork to the Covenant Team.

NOTE: The Covenant Team will be responsible for the screening of these applicants. The Covenant Team consists of the Christian Education Chairperson, Church and Ministry Chairperson, Church Council Vice President and the Pastor.

TRAINING OF PAID STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Training of paid staff and volunteers will cover the following:

- A. Explanation of the Safe Church Policy and required reporting procedures.
- B. How to respond to reports of abuse.
- C. Fire and tornado safety.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), AED, and First Aid training is required of all paid staff working with youth and children. The cost of the training will be provided by EUCC. Volunteers are highly encouraged (but not required) to take these classes.

The Safe Church Policy will be made available to all members and prospective members of EUCC. The Church will provide at least one training session per year and will offer more training if needed.

All Covenant Team members are required to attend the training.

All paid staff and volunteers who work with minors need to complete the training every (3) three years. (Office Staff Administrator will keep records of training dates)

Ministry for Children and Youth: Expectations

SUPERVISION

- A. It is required that a minimum of two adults shall be on the premises with the youth.
- B. When more than twenty youth are present, an additional adult for every ten youth will be required.
- C. Junior High Youth may assist an adult with elementary age youth or younger.
- D. Senior High Youth may assist an adult with junior high or younger.
- E. All leaders of the senior high youth must be at least five years older than the oldest youth in the group.
- F. Parental Forms:
 - 1. Written consent of a parent or legal guardian of a minor will be required for all activities off the church property and any overnight activities.
 - 2. A separate permission form must be filled out for each trip away from the church grounds.
 - 3. A medical form for each child must be on file and is required to be updated once a year.
 - 4. Permission slips, medical forms and a copy of the church's insurance policy must be taken while on activities involving the youth while away from the church.

NOTE: All permission slips and medical forms filled out by parents will be kept in both the church office and up in the Small World Room.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

- A. Drivers should be 21 or at least five years older than the oldest youth to transport any passengers unrelated to the driver.
- B. Drivers are responsible to make sure all occupants wear seat belts and proper child restraints.
- C. It is suggested that there be two adults in each car when traveling to a church related event, when possible.

- D. Youth who have a license to drive may drive to and from the meeting place but may not leave the event until it is over. If the youth is to arrive late or needs to leave early, the parent of the youth must notify the sponsor ahead of the event. Parents will be contacted if youth leave early without prior notification.
- E. "Driving My Child Permission Slip" will be on file for each child.
- F. Any adult organizing a youth trip traveling more than 50 miles from the church will file an itinerary with the Office Administrator.

PICTURE POLICY

A parent or guardian will sign a form giving permission to publish pictures or videos taken at any time during a church related event before publishing it in newsletters, websites, or any other form of publication, such as newspapers or history books.

HOUSING

- A. Adult chaperones are required for overnight program/events.
- B. Gathering is to be in public spaces.
- C. Sleeping spaces are considered sanctuaries. Visitors must match gender and age.
- D. Camp Housing
 - 1. Allows for multiple youth with a minimum of one adult sharing a room.
 - 2. An adult must be housed in every building housed by youth.
- E. Hotels or college dormitories where only two beds per room are provided.
 - 1. Youth and adults are to be roomed separately in the same area.
 - 2. If rooms have internal doors adjoining rooms, both rooms must match gender and age (youth/adult).

FIRE, TORNADO, WEATHER, FIRE ARMS

- A. Leaders of church school classes, youth groups, and Evangelical United Church of Christ employees will conduct annual weather related drills during the month of September.
- B. The church will be closed during inclement weather only after the Church Council President and Pastor have made the decision to close it.
- C. Fire Arms are prohibited on church property unless the carrier is a law enforcement individual.

- D. All paid staff and Church Council members are required to attend Active Shooter Training every 5 years. All church members are welcomed to participate if they desire to.

**Procedures for Handling Complaints of Sexual Exploitation, Harassment,
Physical or Verbal Abuse**

All persons associated with Evangelical United of Christ should be aware that the church is strongly opposed to sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, verbal and/or physical abuse and that such behavior is prohibited by church policy. It is the intention of the church in an attempt to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to policy to discipline those persons who violate this policy. A violation of this policy may be cause for immediate termination of employment or volunteer leadership or participation with Evangelical United Church of Christ and will result in the filing of a report with law enforcement.

A subcommittee of the Church will be established each year in preparation for the possibility of hearing complaints under this policy. The subcommittee will be comprised of the Pastor, Christian Education Chairperson, Church and Ministry Chairperson and Vice President of the Church Council. The subcommittee, hereinafter, referred to as "The Covenant Team" will be familiar with the terms of this policy, as well as the established procedures of the church for dealing with a complaint.

Several approaches may be taken in addressing incidents of alleged sexual, physical, or verbal harassment:

- A. The complainant can attempt to resolve the matter directly with the respondent, the individual accused of the harassment.
- B. The complainant can report the incident to the program/event leader or the council president or the pastor in an effort to resolve the matter informally.
- C. If an informal resolution of the complaint does not seem wise, appropriate, possible, or is unsuccessful, the complainant may request that the Covenant Team institute formal proceedings which shall include the following steps:
 1. The Covenant Team shall advise the Authorized Minister and the Council President of the receipt of all complaints and shall keep them appraised of ongoing steps and actions taken. If either the Authorized Minister or Council President is the subject of the complaint, this notice requirement shall not apply.
 2. The Covenant Team shall gather statements or other information from the individuals involved in the alleged exploitation or harassment and from others who may have pertinent information such as qualified professional consultants, and present such information to the Authorized Minister and the Council President.

3. The Covenant Team shall make the determinations and take actions appropriate to resolve the matter. Finding that sexual exploitation or harassment has occurred, such action shall include the filing of a report with the appropriate law enforcement officials and, further, may include one or more of the following:
 - A. A formal reprimand, with defined expectations for changed behavior.
 - B. Probationary standing, with the terms of the probation clearly defined.
 - C. Dismissal from employment or authorized volunteer position.
 - D. Dismissal of membership in the church.

Note: If it is found that sexual harassment, exploitation, harassment, physical or verbal abuse did not occur, then actions will be taken for the respondent's return to participation.

4. If the complainant or respondent is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter by the Covenant Team, he/she has the right to appeal to the Council President or to the Council Vice President if the president is the subject of the complaint. The President shall refer the matter to the Executive Committee of the Church Council. The subject of any such appeal shall be limited solely to whether the procedures of this policy were followed. If the Executive Committee determines that the procedures of this policy were not followed, it will refer the matter back to the Covenant Team to complete the processing of the complaint in accordance with these procedures.

The Covenant Team may seek the advice of legal counsel or others to advise it in performing its functions.

All written records of the investigation, actions taken, and any resolution of the matter taken by the Covenant Team will be maintained by the Evangelical United Church of Christ church office.

The person(s) toward whom the inappropriate behavior is directed need not be the complainant. Moreover, neither consent nor willing participation will excuse or exonerate inappropriate behavior. Evangelical United Church of Christ may initiate or proceed with the formal complaint process at any time.

In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment, exploitation, physical or verbal abuse, consideration shall be given to the record of alleged incident (s) as a whole and to the totality of the circumstances, including the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred.

Any person bringing a sexual harassment, exploitation, physical or verbal abuse complaint or assisting in investigating such a complaint will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment or church membership or affiliation, or otherwise discriminated against or discharged.

**ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS INCLUDING ELECTRONIC SOCIAL NETWORK
WITH MINORS POLICY**

Those who work with youth at EUCC may find electronic communications, including Facebook, e-mail, and texting, to be important in scheduling and communicating with our church's youth. Pastors and youth leaders will reserve substantive conversations to in person meetings. EUCC will set up an e-mail account that pastors and youth leaders can include as a blind carbon copy on all e-mails and as an additional recipient on texts, whenever possible. Pastoral staff, youth leaders, chairman of the Christian Education Team and moderator will know the password to this account, and may check it at any time to monitor staff and volunteer exchanges with EUCC minors.

Staff and volunteers may be permitted to be friends with minors on Facebook so long as the staff or volunteers are also friends with at least two other adults who work with minors at EUCC (associate pastor, chair of Christian Ed, Sunday School Teachers, adults who work regularly with the youth group, senior pastor). Staff and volunteers may join "closed" Facebook groups with minors (EUCC youth group-closed Facebook group) so long as two or more adults are part of the closed Facebook group. Private Facebook messaging between EUCC staff and volunteers and minors is discouraged. When possible staff and volunteers are encouraged to have such interactions openly on Facebook walls, in Facebook groups, or via e-mail (with EUCC e-mail BCC-ed in the conversation) or, ideally, in person.

When young people join the youth group, they and their parents will be given a sheet of information including this Electronic Communications policy. If parents do not wish to have staff and volunteers at EUCC to communicate electronically with their children, they should inform the Pastor and the EUCC staff will respect the parents' wishes.

CHILD ABUSE

Apart from any legal requirements, Evangelical United Church of Christ will make a report to the appropriate authorities, including but not limited to the Indiana Department of Family and Children's Services. If at any time the church has reasonable cause to believe that a minor may be an abused or neglected child a report will be made.

Any volunteer or employee of Evangelical United Church of Christ who becomes aware of facts or circumstances that child abuse or neglect may occur in the reasonably foreseeable future they immediately report the matter to the Indiana Department of Family and Children's Services. To report child abuse or neglect you may call 1-800-800-5556. The phone call will be documented with the pastor and/or the Council President.

MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

Consistent with our understanding of the priesthood of all believers, all Authorized Ministers, Employees, Elected and Appointed Lay Leaders, and Authorized Volunteers are Ministers to the congregation. Moreover, it is the policy of Evangelical United Church of Christ to encourage its Ministers to nurture safety within ministerial relationships and ministry activities by being attentive to self-care, education, maintenance of appropriate boundaries, and referral of those in need to supportive and helpful resources.

In addition, all Authorized Ministers doing ministry at Evangelical United Church of Christ will attend boundary workshops required by the United Church of Christ, attending at least one approved workshop on this topic every three (3) years.

All allegations of behavior that call into question the fitness for ministry of any Authorized Minister will promptly be forwarded to the Lincolnland Association of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference.

DEFINITIONS

Covenant Team: Consists of the Pastor, Chairperson Christian Education, Chairperson of Church and Ministry and Vice President of the Church Council.

Minister: A person authorized by the church to carry out its ministry. Ministers include elected or appointed leaders of the church, employees, and volunteers, as well as Authorized Ministers.

Authorized Minister: A person who holds ordained ministerial standing or has been commissioned or licensed by an Association of the United Church of Christ.

Ministerial Relationship: the relationship between one who carries out the ministry of the church and the one being served by that ministry.

Teacher: An adult over the age of 18 who has responsibility for a church school classroom.

Classroom Helper: An adult or responsible youth who assists a teacher.

Minor: Any individual under the age of eighteen (18).

Physical and Verbal Abuse: to injure another, mentally or physically, either by words, actions or physical contact.

Inappropriate Behavior: the use of suggestive language, suggestive behavior or profanity to or around youth.

Confidentiality: When investigating an allegation, those involved shall maintain complete confidentiality with respect to names and events. The guiding rule of confidentiality is to tell only who needs to know and only what they need to know. This shall be followed by all involved.

Sexual Exploitation: Sexual activity or conduct (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which a person engaged in a ministerial relationship with another takes advantage of the vulnerability of the person being served by causing that person to engage in sexual behavior.

Child Sexual Abuse: Any sexual activity with a child in which a minor is used for sexual gratification of another to include, but not limited to, fondling, penetration, inappropriate touching, verbal comments, pornographic materials, obscene phone calls, texting, exhibitionism or any behavior that violates related state statues.

Sexual Misconduct: Includes sexual harassment, verbal and/or physical, sexual advances and/or sexual contact between ordained, licensed, commissioned minister, or any person, ordained or lay, who has an assigned role with children and/or youth in the church and the employees, members, youth, children, and counselees of his/her church.

Sexual Harassment: Repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to his or her wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person with the intent of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing the other person or subjecting the person to public discrimination. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition or circumstance of instruction, employment, or participation in any church activity; or
2. Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel or church related decision affecting an individual; or
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonable interfering with an individual's performance or participation in church activities or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work or church environment.

Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcomed contact that has sexual overtones, particularly:

1. Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, e-mails, texts, or invitations; or
2. Verbal contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender specific traits, sexual propositions; or
3. Physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual intercourse; and
4. Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, posters, or magazines.

Sexual harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome and using sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, salary, work, learning or worship environment of another. It is impermissible to suggest, threaten, or imply that failure to accept a request for a date or sexual intimacy will affect a person's job prospects, leadership opportunities, or comfortable participation in the life of the church. It is forbidden either to employ or actually withhold support for an appointment, promotion, or change of assignment, to suggest that a poor performance report will be given because a person has decline a personal proposition; or to hint that benefits, such as promotions, reclassifications, will be forthcoming in exchange for sexual favors.

Safe Church Policy Adopted on:

DATE: 9/19/2016

Safe Church Policy Implemented on:

DATE: 1/1/2017

STAFF/VOLUNTEER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Safe Church Policy of Evangelical United Church of Christ, Tell City, IN. I have read and I understand the policy and I agree to be bound by its terms. I understand this acknowledgement will be kept on record in the church office.

I further understand that the Safe Church Policy requires that anyone who will have contact with minors under eighteen (18) years old as part of their job and/or volunteer description are subject to pre-employment or pre-involvement screening and reference checks to determine whether there has been any reported sexual misconduct or inappropriate behavior. **I also acknowledge that if such screening shows a sex offense that I will hand over any court ordered paperwork pertaining to this charge.**

I hereby authorize Evangelical United Church of Christ and their authorized employees or agents to conduct such screening and reference checks with any prior employee and law enforcement agency.

I authorize any prior employee or law enforcement agency to release any such information contained in my personnel or law enforcement file respectively.

I understand that I will be informed immediately of any negative comments regarding sexual misconduct or inappropriate sexual behavior and I will be given an opportunity to submit additional references or to give other evidence to correct or respond to harmful information from a reference.

Printed Name

Written Signature

Address

Phone Number

Date