

Educating Members of the Congregation:

FUMC's Church Council will annually communicate with the congregation about the commitment of the church to FUMC's Safe Sanctuary policy. With guidance and leadership from the Education Committee, FUMC will provide trainings and extended learning opportunities addressing issues of care and safety for all of God's children. The trainings, for adults and children, will be age-appropriate and cover topics including first aid and physical safety, signs of physical and emotional abuse, and caring for one's self and others.

REPORTING INCIDENTS OF ABUSE

FUMC is committed to the protection of anyone who suffers from abuse or neglect and has procedures in place to help care for those individuals. The church reviews and updates those procedures annually according to best practices. FUMC adheres to the guidelines from Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey which states: In New Jersey, any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected has a legal responsibility to report it to the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS)". A concerned caller does not need proof to report an allegation of child abuse and can remain anonymous. Any person who knowingly fails to report suspected abuse or neglect according to the law or to comply with the provisions of the law is a disorderly person and subject to penalty.

If suspected abuse is observed by, or reported to, a staff member or volunteer, the following actions should take place:

- Immediately remove the child or vulnerable adult from the situation if applicable.
- Contact DYFS Hotline (1-800-792-8610)
- Report the incident immediately to the staff person responsible for the sponsoring the activity (the staff member shall contact the Senior Pastor who will contact the chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee and the district superintendent).
- Complete an incident report with detailed notes and provide these to the staff member in charge of the activity.

RESPONDING WITH CARE AND COMPASSION

A quick, compassionate, and unified response to an alleged incident of abuse is expected. All allegations will be taken seriously. In all cases of reported or observed abuse in an activity, all volunteers and staff involved in that activity shall be at the service of all official investigating agencies.

- The person(s) who are the subject of any report that will be removed from any activities with children or vulnerable adults until the incident is resolved.
- The Senior Pastor, or his/her designee, will make appropriate denominational contacts and follow the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference steps for reporting child, youth or vulnerable adult abuse. The Senior Pastor, or his/her designee, is the only person authorized to make statements to representatives of the media.
- If the allegation concerns activities or persons outside any relationship to a church related event or activity, it is the responsibility of the person in charge of that event or activity to make the initial contact with the Division of Youth and Family Services and to inform the Senior Pastor.
- The Senior Pastor, or his/her designee, will work with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the victim of the alleged abuse to determine the appropriate pastoral care. Confidentiality for the alleged victim, the accused, and all involved parties is to be maintained.



SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

**And let us watch out for one another to
provoke love and good works
(Hebrews 10:24, CSB version)**

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First United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuary Policy

The Church Council of First United Methodist Church Westfield (FUMC) approved this Safe Sanctuary Policy in December 2018 and this policy supersedes all previous policies.

FUMC has adopted and put into practice this Safe Sanctuary policy, which allows our community to live into our baptismal covenant by creating a social structure that is consistent with the gospel and honors those who God entrusts to our care. This policy allows us to establish guidelines and procedures that allow us to:

- protect our children, youth and vulnerable adults;
- protect those who minister to and work with children, youth and vulnerable adults;
- protect those in our care from physical, emotional, and spiritual harm.

To achieve this purpose, there are five components to this policy:

1: SCREENING & SELECTION

2: SUPERVISION GUIDELINES

3: TRAINING & EDUCATION

4: REPORTING INCIDENTS OF ABUSE

5: RESPONDING WITH CARE & COMPASSION

This policy covers all FUMC activities and programs, including Wesley Hall. Any tenants using FUMC's facilities will be required to have their own Safe Sanctuary Policy reviewed by the FUMC Board of Trustees or adopt FUMC's policy if they have children or vulnerable adults in the building.

DEFINITIONS

Children: For purposes of this policy, children are defined as anyone under the age of 18 as well as any child that has not completed the 12th grade.

Vulnerable Adults: For purposes of this policy, vulnerable adults are defined as someone with a permanent or temporary disability.

SCREENING AND SELECTION

All employees of FUMC and Wesley Hall must:

- complete an employment application form
- undergo a criminal background check every three years with satisfactory results
- complete a participant covenant form
- read the FUMC Safe Sanctuaries Handbook (which includes policy and related procedures)

All volunteers who work with children and/or vulnerable adults will be required to:

- complete a volunteer application form
- undergo a criminal background check every three years with satisfactory results
- complete a participant covenant form
- read the FUMC Safe Sanctuaries Handbook (which includes policy and related procedures)

SUPERVISION GUIDELINES

➤ **Two-Adult Rule.** Adults are persons 18 years of age and older. All church sponsored programs for children and/or vulnerable adults shall have TWO non-related, non-cohabitating supervising adults who have completed the required steps to be a safe-sanctuary certified volunteer. This will include, but is not limited to, nursery care, Christian Education classes, music programs, youth programs, and any other programs where children are present.

Exceptions to the two adult rule may be granted by the Senior Pastor to a program or activity in cases where the youth or vulnerable adult's parents or guardian(s) are present, when the parent or guardian signs a waiver or when transporting children during a church-sponsored event as outlined below:

- Driver must be between 21 and 80 years of age
- Driver must have proof of insurance, a valid state driver's license and complete the drivers background check.
- At no time may a driver be alone with an unrelated child unless the parent of the child has provided written permission for transportation.

➤ **Five-Years-Older Rule.** All supervising volunteer adults and staff for an event involving children must be at least five years older than the oldest children with whom they are working.

➤ **Childcare & Nursery Rule.** The nursery will only be open when staffed by two trained and approved adults,

who are either trained employees or laity volunteers. The church will strive to have childcare available for all worship services and educational programs. Childcare for committee meetings and retreats will be made available on an as needed basis.

➤ **Open-Door Counseling Rule.** During any counseling session with children, the door of the room used shall remain open for the entire session. In addition, the session shall occur when others are nearby (even if not in hearing distance).

During any counseling sessions with adults, it is suggested that the door of the room used shall remain open or partially open for the entire session. If possible, the session shall occur when others are nearby (even if not in hearing distance).

➤ **Parental Consent Rule.** Parental consent forms will be obtained for overnight activities at the church and all activities off church property.

TRAINING & EDUCATION

FUMC staff and volunteers will be trained in this policy and the related procedures. All members of the FUMC community will be educated about this policy and provided with opportunities to learn how to care for our neighbors, especially the vulnerable among us.

Training and education will be coordinated and performed by the ministry director(s) and/or Senior Pastor (or responsible person in charge). Education reviews will be performed on an annual basis and when a new staff member is hired or volunteer is invited to be in service.

Training and Educating Staff and Volunteers:

All Staff and Supervising Volunteers will complete Safe Sanctuary training and other trainings to ensure the care and safety of the people under their supervision.

FUMC will provide opportunities for staff and volunteers to keep up to date with best practices in areas of care and safety. The education is to include:

- FUMC Safe Sanctuary Policy and related procedures
- Definitions and signs of abuse
- Causes and consequences of abuse

All staff and volunteers will sign a form indicating that they have read and understand the Safe Sanctuary Policy and related procedures and that they will abide by the requirements of the policy.