



Safe Sanctuary Policy

Amended and Restated November 15, 2022

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Introduction

God has called us to make our church and ministries safe, protecting our children, youth and vulnerable adults from abuse and exploitation. God has also called us to create communities of faith where children, youth and vulnerable adults can be safe and grow strong. Jesus taught that “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.” (Mark 9:37 NRSV)

The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church states that "...children must be protected from economic, physical, and sexual exploitation and abuse." (Book of Discipline, 2012) At each child's baptism, we affirm our responsibility to their safety by our congregational response, pledging: "With God's help, we will so order our lives after the example of Christ, that this child, surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal." (From The Book of Worship, Baptismal Covenant, Congregational Pledge II) Building on these foundations, we recognize that our faith calls us to offer hospitality and protection to all children, youth and vulnerable adults, as well as those who are committed to ministering to them as volunteers and employees.

Church of the Saviour has seen fit to outline policy and procedures that can 1) prevent abuse from happening in our church; 2) be a place where children, youth and vulnerable adults can feel safe in disclosing abuse; and 3) protect the loyal volunteers, workers, leaders and employees that minister to our children, youth and vulnerable adults. This policy sets forth the requirements in the areas of:

- Activities covered by this policy
- Screening
- Supervision
- Reporting
- Responding

Statement of Covenant

As a Christian community of faith and a United Methodist congregation, we pledge to engage in the ministry of the Gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of our children and youth as well as the workers of children and youth. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers; and we will implement prudent operational procedures in our programs and events; we will educate our workers with children and youth regarding the use of policies; we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirement of state law.

Accountability

1. **The Safe Sanctuary Policy will be reviewed** – annually for potential changes and approved by the Servant Leadership Board or current governing body.
2. **Property and Liability Insurance** - Church of the Saviour will carry property and liability insurance coverage that is adequate for the scope of its ministry. Church of the Saviour's trustees will be responsible for securing and maintaining adequate and appropriate insurance.

Definitions of Terms in This Policy

- **Adult Leader/worker/volunteer** – One approved under this policy to work with children. An adult leader/worker is older than 18 years of age and a graduate of high school who has completed one semester of college or is 6 months post High School graduation. An Adult leader/worker/volunteer can be paid or unpaid.
 - **Primary Adult** - adult leader/worker/volunteer in charge of a group at a specific time
 - **Secondary Adult** – adult leader/worker/volunteer who is under the leadership, implied or otherwise, of the primary adult.
 - **Youth Helper** – youth that help in our children’s ministry team. They are not seen as primary or secondary.
- **Abuse** - harm or a threat of physical or emotional harm to a child or vulnerable adult by a parent, guardian, or other person. Abuse includes: (a) the infliction of physical or emotional injury by other than accidental means; (b) the creation of a risk, or allowing the creation of risk, to a child by other than accidental means.
- **Child or children** - any person under age 18.
- **Church Member** – A person who holds a covenant with Church of the Saviour; they have been baptized and have professed their faith publicly.
- **Drop-Off Event** - A Ministry Event where students are in the care of designated adults which do not require parents to remain on site (main church building).
- **Employee/Staff** – Any adult hired and receiving payment from Church of the Saviour.
- **Emergency Procedures** – The plan of action to be conducted in response to a report of an incident of abuse or exploitation as relates to Church of the Savior United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuary Policy.
- **Exploitation** - obtaining or using another person’s resources, including but not limited to funds, assets or property, by deception, intimidation, or similar means, with the intent to deprive the person of those resources.
- **Monitor** – an adult leader/worker/volunteer assigned the specific task of monitoring the halls/activities as the secondary/additional adult when needed during ministry activities. (Also known as the “Roamer”; which provides additional and/or supplemental supervision depending on the circumstances.)
- **Sexual abuse** - includes, but is not necessarily limited to, any contacts or interactions in which the parent, guardian or other person commits or allows, permits, or encourages

the use of the child or vulnerable adult for the purposes of the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person. Committing or allowing to be committed an act of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, sexual molestation or prostitution upon a child or vulnerable adult.

- **Safe Sanctuary Policy** - The Church of the Savior United Methodist Church adopted policy for the protection of children, youth & vulnerable adults involved in its ministries and for the protection of workers against unfounded and/or untruthful accusations.
- **Sexual exploitation** - includes, but is not limited to, a situation in which a parent, guardian, or other person allows, permits, or encourages a child or vulnerable adult to engage in an act which constitutes prostitution under Ohio law. This could also include a parent, guardian, or other person having custodial control or supervision of a child or vulnerable, or who is responsible for his/her welfare, allows, permits, or encourages the child or vulnerable adult to engage in an act of obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child or vulnerable adult as provided for under Ohio law.
- **Supervision- Supervisory** – adult who oversees or directs a ministry or activity.
- **Vulnerable Adult** - a person eighteen (18) years of age or older who, because of a mental or physical dysfunction, is unable to manage his/her own resources, carry out the activity of daily living, or protect himself/herself from neglect, exploitation, or a hazardous or abusive situation without assistance from others.
- **Youth/youth helper**- child in grade(s) 7th – 12th, under the age of 18. Someone who is still in high school but older than 17 years of age may also be consider a youth.

Activities Covered by This Policy

This policy is applicable to all church activities and functions organized by Church of the Saviour teams, groups, or staff members in which the supervision of children, youth and vulnerable adults is an inherent part of the function.

Other “Safe Sanctuary” Policies which govern other group’s responsibilities and procedures regarding vulnerable individuals will be subject to the current Church of the Savior Safe Sanctuary Policy should the policies differ.

A. Covered Activities and Functions:

These are examples of church activities and functions, but not limited to, that the Safe Sanctuary Policy covers:

- Sunday school and Sunday morning childcare
- Weekday and Weeknight children’s program
- Childcare Support for events, functions and scheduled meetings
- Montgomery Nursery School
- Children and youth ministry events both on and off church property sponsored by Church of the Saviour United Methodist. (When participating in off site where a “Safe Sanctuary” policies is already in place at the Host Site, policies will be compared, and differences discussed for determining responsibilities and procedures to be applied to the activity or function to ensure appropriate supervision of participants and volunteers.)

B. Uncovered Activities and Functions:

These are examples of church activities and functions the Safe Sanctuary Policy does not cover:

- Church-wide family events in which parents are typically present at the entire event and maintain full responsibility for their children, such as, but not limited to, Drive-Through Nativity, fund-raiser meals, etc.
- Non-church groups using Church of the Saviour’s facilities, such as, but not limited to, community groups who rent or use our space.

Recruitment & Screening of Adult Leader/Worker/Volunteer

All persons who intend to work with children, youth or vulnerable adult must be properly screened.

- 1. Active in Church Congregation** - Adult leader/worker/volunteer must be active with the congregation of Church of the Saviour as indicated by the Children or Youth Director.
- 2. Screening** - All staff and adult leader/worker/volunteer must complete a Ministry Volunteer Application Form (Appendix A) for a specific position and understand and agree to abide by the Safe Sanctuary Policy. All staff and adult leader/worker/volunteer who have regular and direct contact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults will complete an electronic Background Screening form through Realm.
- 3. Background Screening** – All staff and other volunteer positions deemed important must complete a Background screening.
- 4. Confidentiality of Information and Retention** –Membership & Contributions will retain in a file in a secure location the Ministry Volunteer Application Form (Appendix A)and data, and reference contact forms. These forms will be retained for a period of twenty years after service ends for all approved staff and adult leader/worker/volunteer.

Supervision

This supervision section of the policy is designed to reduce the possibility of abuse or exploitation of children, youth or vulnerable adults, and to protect staff persons and workers from unfounded accusations. The following “definitions” are presented in order of optimal implementation with flexibility for administering the policy when unforeseen circumstances occur while still providing appropriate supervision of participants and volunteers during ministry activities or functions.)

- 1. Training** - Training is a requirement for all staff and volunteers working with children, youth and vulnerable adults. The training includes but is not limited to the review of the Safe Sanctuary policy, emergency procedures, and current information on how to identify and report child or vulnerable adult abuse. Annually all are required to review the policy and sign that the policy has been reviewed
- 2. Two Adult Rule** - A minimum of two Adult Leader/worker/volunteers, preferably unrelated, is recommended to be present at all times at all activities covered by this policy. If the two adult Leader/worker/volunteers are related, then a third unrelated adult Leader/worker/volunteers is recommended to be present on site. For any mixed-sex overnight activity, there must be unrelated male and female adult Leader/worker/volunteer present. This may include the presence of an adult ‘monitor’ who moves in and out of rooms/ ministry activities known as the roamer. (See Items #6 and #10 in this section for additional clarification.)
- 3. Four Year Older Rule**- Adult leader/worker/volunteer must be at least 18 years of age and a graduate of high school who has complete one semester of college or is 6 months post high school graduation. No person shall supervise an age group unless he/she is an Adult Leader/worker/volunteers and is AT LEAST four (4) years older than the children/youth being supervised.
- 4. No child, youth or vulnerable adult left alone** - No child, youth or vulnerable adult will be left unsupervised during the scheduled time of a ministry activity/event.
- 5. Open View/Clear Sight Lines** - All ministry activities should occur in open view. Each room or space where ministry activities/events occur must be open to public view. For example, enclosed spaces such as classrooms shall have a viewing window, a glass panel in the door, a ½ door configuration or an open door. (See Item # 10 under Supervision and definition of Monitor/Roamer for additional clarification.)

6. **Leader/Worker/Volunteer to Child ratio for all activities: See written explanation below chart for additional clarification.)**

Guideline for Volunteer to Student Ratios		
Age Level Ratio	Children	Leader/Worker/Volunteer
Infants through kindergarten*	Up to 12	2 minimum, 2 Adult rule
* Must have 1:6 adult: child ratio	13-18	3
1st through 12th grade**	Up to 20	2 minimum, 2 Adult rule
** Must have 1:10 adult: child ratio over 10 children	21-30	3
	31-40	4

a. Required (minimum number) Adult Leader/worker/volunteer Ratios. (See Item #2 for explanation of 2 adult rule.)

b. Additional adult leader/worker/volunteer (other adults who are approved Adult/Volunteers) are required to maintain the following ratios of adults to children:

Infants through kindergarten: 2 adult Leader/worker/volunteer for up to 12 children; 3 adult Leader/worker/volunteer for 13-18 children (must maintain a 1:6 adult to child ratio).

First through twelfth grades: 1 adult Leader/worker/volunteer per 10 children (but still with at least 2 adult Leader/worker/volunteer always). For example, 30 children would be chaperoned by at least 3 Adult Leader/worker/volunteer, or 10 children would be chaperoned by 2 adult Leader/worker/volunteer.

7. **Attendance** - Adult leader/worker/volunteer must keep an attendance list for all church events covered under this policy. Registration materials or attendance list will be collected for all activities. Attendance record should include

- a. Names of participants of all ages including Adult Volunteers/leadership.
- b. the date of the function,
- c. the location of the parent during the event (sanctuary, choir room, classroom, etc.)
- d. the name of person picking up the child if it is someone other than the parent.
- e. For Drop-Off Ministry Events (See Definitions) - a contact number for parents of participants

8. **Activities Away from the church or Overnight** - The adult leader must have a completed activity release form and a medical release form for each participant when the activity or event involves any church provided transportation or an overnight stay. Copies of the forms must be taken on any off-campus event and the originals must stay at the church.

9. **Drivers of Vehicles** – All drivers must be at least 25 years of age, exceptions are 1) when a sibling under 25 may transport younger siblings only with written parental permission for a specific event or 2) requested and approved by the Servant Leadership Board or governing body. All drivers must complete the driver’s application for authorization and be approved to be a qualified driver. Required worker ratios apply to transporting youth and children to another location.

# of vehicles	Leader/Worker/Volunteer in each vehicle	Youth in each vehicle
1	2 non-related, with 1 being a qualified driver	2 or more
2 at least, in caravan	1 qualified driver	2 or more

- One qualified driver may transport two or more children/youth as long as more than one vehicle is involved in the trip.
 - Two non-related adult Leader/worker/volunteer are required in a single car (not in caravan) with 2 or more children/youth. At no time is a driver permitted to transport only one child/youth.
 - ❖ Mission Trip exemptions when circumstances (with parental permission) will not allow for 2 or more per vehicle. For example, a teen needs to be driven to airport/leaving mission early or becomes ill and driven to receive treatment.
10. **Approval of Substitute Adult leader/worker/volunteer** - Sometimes an Adult leader/worker/volunteer is unable to work at scheduled ministry/activity and a substitute is needed. An adult or age appropriate volunteer who meets the basic eligibility requirements of a worker and is also largely familiar to the church may temporarily serve as a substitute. When possible, a pool of approved substitute workers should be formed. (See Definition of Monitor/Roamer and item # 6 under Supervision for additional clarification.)
11. **Spiritual Care or Confidential Discussion** – Spiritual Care (with pastors or directors) must be limited to two or three sessions and conducted in a room that has a viewing window, a glass panel in the door or an open door. The two adult rule may be waived. Whenever a child or youth seeks spiritual care, the person in charge of the ministry/activity must determine in the initial meeting if he/she is qualified to address the need effectively. If the problem has not been resolved after three sessions, the child or youth must be recommended to seek professional counselor.

12. **Timely Arrival Prior to Activity.** Adult Leader/worker/volunteer **should plan to** arrive at least 15 minutes before a scheduled activity. Must keep watch over those in their care until all have been released to an authorized person. (Refer to Guidelines for Activity Planning and Supervision for additional clarification.)
13. **Substance Abuse.** Adult Leader/worker/volunteer will not use tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while participating in church-sponsored events covered under the Safe Sanctuary policy.

Guidelines Incident/Injury/Illness and Suspected Abuse

Any reporting related to suspected allegations of abuse is done by Adult leader/worker/volunteer using the appropriate form from Appendix A with the assistance of and to the appropriate Ministry Staff. (Refer to following sections for appropriate response process.)

1. **Report Injury or Suspected Abuse** – (Forms in Appendix A)
 - a. When abuse is suspected, complete the *confidential* Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse Form.
 - b. When an injury is witnessed, complete the Injury Report.

If more than one volunteer/leader observes or receives information on an abuse or injury incident, each Adult leader/worker/volunteer will complete the appropriate form separately. The reports will be forwarded to their direct staff leader who would also inform Senior Pastor promptly upon completion and will be kept permanently.

2. **Reporting will be Immediate** - Safe Sanctuary reporting is required by any staff or Adult leader/worker/volunteer that personally witnesses an incident of abuse or exploitation or when an allegation of such an incident is made by a child, youth or vulnerable adult. It is crucial that reporting be immediate, and the allegations dealt with as close as possible to the incident or disclosure.
3. **All clergy are included in mandatory reporting** as required by The Book of Discipline and Ohio state law.

¶341.5 All clergy of The United Methodist Church are charged to maintain all confidences inviolate, including confessional confidences, except in the cases of suspected child abuse or neglect or in cases where mandatory reporting is required by civil law.

Response to Incident/Injury/Illness

This response section of the policy is designed to care for the victim/injury first. The primary rule here is to address the immediate needs of the victim before considering any reporting responsibilities.

1. **Medical attention** – *If the victim is in immediate need of medical attention, the appropriate medical assistance will be obtained including ambulance care*
2. **Contact local police authorities, if danger is perceived.**
3. **Complete Incident/Injury/Illness Report Form** immediately. (Appendix A)
 - a. File the report with the appropriate Ministry Director as soon as possible.
 - b. Copies of the report will be kept on file in a secure location and made available upon request.
4. **Treat the alleged victim and the accused with respect and dignity.**

Response to Allegations of Abuse

This response section of the policy is designed to care for the victim/injury first. The primary rule here is to address the immediate needs of the victim before considering any reporting responsibilities. (See Response to Incident/Injury/Illness Section for steps to provide appropriate medical attention and required injury reporting.)

1. **Complete Report of Allegations of Suspect Abuse Form** immediately. (Appendix A)
 - **Treat the alleged victim and the accused with respect and dignity.**
 - **All communications with staff, congregation, community, or media will be by the Senior Pastor.**
 - **The church will provide a supportive atmosphere to all those who are affected, offering both objectivity and empathy as it seeks to create a climate in which healing can take place**
2. **File the report with the appropriate Ministry Director as soon as possible.**
3. **Copies of the report will be kept on file in a secure location and made available upon request.**
4. **Volunteer and Ministry Director will contact appropriate agency/authorities to file an office report.**

Safe Sanctuary Procedures & Guidelines

(for Church of the Saviour Safe Sanctuary Policy)

Screening Procedures

1. The adult leader/worker/volunteer completes an application for a specific position, and they understand and agree to abide by the Safe Sanctuary Policy.
2. All staff and Adult Leader/worker/volunteer who have regular and direct contact with children, youth and vulnerable adults shall be required to fill out a Background Screening Form that shall include but is not limited to:
 - a. Standard contact information, which includes all known names.
 - b. Experience/qualifications for the position
 - c. Voluntary disclosure of past criminal history, including any criminal charges and/or convictions
 - d. Waiver of confidentiality allowing the church to secure the background checks and references necessary.
 - e. Listing of 2 non-relative references. This list shall have complete contact information for all references. This portion of the application process is considered incomplete if full contact information for the references is not provided.
3. All staff and other volunteer positions deemed important, must complete a Background screening:
 - a. Minimum – Ohio state background check.
 - b. Recommended – National background check.
 - c. National background check is *required* if the person has lived outside the state and/or lives near the border of another state.
 - d. A fingerprint background check will be conducted in the state of Ohio and all states in which the applicant has lived in the previous five years.

Note: Clergy serving in the West Ohio Annual Conference will undergo a background screening upon entrance into the conference and once during each quadrennial when they participate in a mandatory boundaries/Safe Sanctuaries[®] training sponsored by the conference. This documentation will be kept in the personnel files of the conference.

4. Any person who has been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony/crime involving a minor should not be permitted to volunteer or work directly with children, youth or vulnerable adults in any church sponsored activity.

5. Persons who have a break in volunteer or paid service of 18 months or more shall resubmit the Background Screening Form.
6. Background checks should be repeated at least every three years for all staff and adult Leader/worker/volunteer. All records will be kept in a secured location. The church keeps the records for 20 years.
7. After the completion of the **Ministry Volunteer Application Form** (Appendix A) and background checks, the applicant will then be notified of his or her approval and will be asked to attend a Safe Sanctuary Policy training session. Safe Sanctuary Policy training is valid for one year. Each year workers are required to review the policy and sign to that the policy has been reviewed.

Eligibility and Approval of Workers

A. Eligibility Requirements for Church Adult Leaders/workers/volunteers

- Adult leader/worker/volunteer must be active with the congregation of Church of the Saviour.
- No Adult leader/worker/volunteer will have sole responsibility nor be alone with any children except in an emergency.
- Volunteers assisting with childcare or elementary group activities must be at least four years older than the children with whom they work and must be in the 7th grade or older.

B. Paid Workers regarding minors

- Paying youth/minors as workers within the ministries of the church, Church of the Saviour will follow all State and Federal labor laws that apply to nonprofits/churches.
- No one under the age of 14 is eligible to be paid for working within the ministries of the church.
- Youth ages 14-17 (18 if they are still in high school) must receive a work permit from their high school, per the requirements from the State of Ohio in order to be paid through Church of the Saviour. Youth/minors also have hour restrictions.
- Summer Camps - Youth can be paid if hour restrictions are followed. Youth ages 16-17 do not need a work permit during the summer months. Youth ages 14-15 need to receive a work permit.

C. Approval of Substitute Adult leader/worker/volunteer

- Church of the Saviour recognizes that sometimes an Adult leader/worker/volunteer is unable to work at scheduled ministry/activity and a substitute is needed. An adult who meets the basic eligibility requirements of a worker and is also largely familiar to the church may temporarily serve as a substitute. When possible, a pool of approved substitute workers should be formed.

D. Application Records Retention

- A designated staff member will retain in a locked cabinet the worker application forms, consent forms and reference contact forms.
- The forms will be retained permanently in a secure location on church premises for a period of twenty years after service ends for all approved workers.

Guidelines for Activity Planning and Supervising

- 1) Potentially High-Risk Activity. For a potentially high-risk activity, such as bounce houses, white water rafting or rock climbing, adult Leader/worker/volunteer must receive approval by the Trustee chairperson knowledgeable about the church insurance policy to insure proper liability coverage.
- 2) Activity Release Forms. Leaders must prepare, distribute and obtain from each participant an Activity Release Form (available from the church office) when an activity or event involves:
 - Any church-provided transportation
 - An overnight stay
- 3) Medical Release Form. For these same activities requiring a Permission Form, a leader must have each participant complete a Medical Release Form, unless there is a current health form already on file. (Medical Release forms are current if updated within one year of the event.) A leader must make copies of the forms to take on any off-campus event, and the originals must stay at the church.

4) Driving and Transportation.

- Required worker ratios apply to transporting youth and children to another location. (*See Item #9 under Supervision Section.*)
- To be a qualified driver, the adult Leader/worker/volunteer must operate his or her vehicle in accordance with all state and local laws. This includes obeying the posted speed limits. Drivers for any off-site program must:
 - 1) Complete the Drivers application for authorization
 - 2) Be at least 25 years of age; exception: a sibling under age 25 may transport younger brothers or sisters only, with written parental permission for a specific event,
 - 3) Possess a valid driver's license appropriate to the vehicle being driven
 - 4) Possess proof of insurance on personal vehicle
 - 5) Possess reliable transportation with all seat belts in working order
 - 6) Check to see that all passengers are properly belted in their seats before starting the vehicle.

14. Activity Drop-off & Pickup Planning. Student should be dropped off and pick up within 10-15 minutes of activity start and end times. Ministry representatives must keep watch over those in their care until all have been released to an authorized person.

- a. **Fourth grade and Younger Students** must be sign-in by a parent/guardian at the start of an activity. Students must be dropped off and picked up by their parent or parent-designee (by prior arrangement) at a pre-determined location for the activity they are participating in, such as the classroom or Fellowship Hall/Sanctuary.
Fifth & Sixth Grade Students must be sign-in by a parent/guardian at the start of an activity. *REGARDING PICK-UP:* Students may be, with a parent(s) prior permission, released from the event to meet their parent or parent-designee (by prior arrangement) at a pre-determined time & location on the church property (or for an outside event, on the property being visited).
- b. **Seventh Grade and Older Students** may be, with a parent(s) prior permission, released from the event to meet their parent or parent-designee (by prior arrangement) at a pre-determined time & location on the church property (or for an outside event, on the property being visited).

Guidelines for Attendance, Injury and Abuse Record Keeping

1. Attendance - Workers must keep an attendance list for all church events covered under this policy. Attendance record will be kept for 20 years.
2. Injury or Abuse – The reports will be kept permanently.
3. All clergy are included in mandatory reporting as required by The Book of Discipline and Ohio state law.
¶1341.5 All clergy of The United Methodist Church are charged to maintain all confidences inviolate, including confessional confidences, except in the cases of suspected child abuse or neglect or in cases where mandatory reporting is required by civil law.

Procedures for Alleged Incident Reported – Medical Attention, Reporting, Media

The following steps will be taken if an incident is reported: (Reference Steps to Report Abuse guidelines in Appendix A)

1. If the victim is in immediate need of medical attention, the appropriate medical assistance will be obtained.
2. If the alleged perpetrator is onsite and danger is perceived, local police authorities will be called.
3. Upon securing medical attention for the victim and ensuring the safety of the environment, the staff person or volunteer must report the incident immediately to the person in charge of the ministry/activity using the appropriate Form (Appendix A)
 - a) **Report of Incident/Injury/Illness Report Form:** Use this form if incident/injury/illness occurs during a schedule event; in general, if medical attention is provided or first aid box is accessed, then this form must be submitted.
 - b) **Report of Allegations of Suspect Abuse Form:** Use this form if a student or vulnerable adult indicates/alleges abuse or if you observe signs of suspected abuse.
4. Contact the Senior Pastor. If the senior Pastor is the accused, contact the Servant Leadership Board chair.

5. Notify the parents of the victim and take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of the child or youth until the parent(s) arrive.

NOTE: If one or both parents is the alleged perpetrator, follow the advice of the authorities concerning notification.

6. The appropriate Ministry Director, Senior Pastor or Servant Leadership Board Chairperson depending on the alleged perpetrator will contact Child Protective Services for Ohio Health and Family Services. When making the report by telephone, it is advisable that it be conducted in the presence of an objective witness who can verify the report has been made (and by whom) in case this is needed later for possible legalities.
7. Immediately, yet with dignity and respect for the sacred worth of the accused, remove the accused from further involvement with children or vulnerable adults and advise the accused there has been an allegation of abuse.

Details of the allegations of the abuse should not be discussed with the accused at the time of removal. In any removal of a staff member or volunteer from any activity/ministry, care should be taken to handle the removal in a discreet manner, recognizing that there will be an investigation by either state or church authorities, or both.

8. When it has been alleged that a member of the church staff or a volunteer, has committed an act of abuse or exploitation, the staff member or volunteer shall be required to refrain from all ministry activities/events with children, youth and vulnerable adults until the incident has been fully resolved by the appropriate state authorities and/or in accordance with Book of Discipline.
9. Take all allegations seriously and reach out to the victim and the victim's family. Provide support to help prevent further hurt and extend whatever pastoral resources are needed. The care and safety of the victim is our priority. Respond in a positive and supportive manner to the victim and the victim's family.
10. The Senior Pastor (or Servant Leadership Board Chairman) shall immediately call the superintendent of the district in which the church resides and report the allegations.
11. Further communication or steps taken with the staff, congregation, community or media shall only be taken after consultation with the district superintendent and the conference office.
12. The person in charge will provide a written report to the designated staff person in charge of record retention. The report should be brief and contain only factual information relevant to the situation. It should be written in ink or typed to prevent it from being changed.

- 13.** All media requests for statements will be directed to Senior Pastor. The pastor shall update the district superintendent of any media inquiries. The West Ohio Communication Office is available at any time for consultation and can provide tips for handling media or other community inquiries.
- 14.** The church will provide a supportive atmosphere to all those who are affected, offering both objectivity and empathy as it seeks to create a climate in which healing can take place.