

Foundry United Methodist Church
Safe Sanctuaries Policy
For the Protection of Children, Youth and Other
Vulnerable Persons



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Introduction

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church, in April 1996, adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child sexual abuse and misconduct in the church. The adopted resolution includes the following statement:

Jesus said, “Whoever welcomes a child...welcomes me” (Matthew 18:5). Children and youth are our present and our future, our hope, our teachers, our inspiration. They are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God.

Jesus also said, “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones..., it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.” (Matthew 18:6). Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, our children and youth.

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children and youth. Most annual conferences can cite specific incidents of sexual abuse and exploitation in their churches. In addition, virtually every congregation has among its members adult survivors of sexual trauma, domestic abuse, and other vulnerable persons.

God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children, youth, and other vulnerable persons from abuse. God calls us to create communities of faith where children, youth, and adults grow safe and strong. (From *The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church* – 1996, pp. 384-386).

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

Policy

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

All staff, adult Covered Servant Leaders, and Covered Youth Servant Leaders are asked to be observant for unusual behaviors and signs of actual or potential abuse or misconduct involving children, youth, and/or vulnerable persons and to immediately report them to a member of the Foundry staff. The policy applies to all members of the Foundry community regardless of age. Foundry staff are required to immediately contact the Director of Family Ministries and/or the Senior Pastor to confer regarding such reports.

Purpose

Foundry’s purpose for establishing this Policy and the accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to: (1) maximizing the safety and spiritual growth of all our children, youth, and vulnerable persons; (2) creating a community in which those who have suffered from sexual misconduct find safety and healing; (3) preventing sexual abuse and

lovingly; and (5) ensuring that staff, Covered Servant Leaders, and Covered Youth Servant Leaders have appropriate guidance. Foundry bears affirmative responsibility to create an environment of hospitality for all persons that encourages respect, equality, and kinship in Christ. Foundry will neither condone nor tolerate instances of sexual misconduct, harassment, or abuse.

Statement of Covenant

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

- We pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ in ways that strive to maximize the safety and spiritual growth of all of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults;
- We will follow reasonable safety measures in recruiting and selecting workers for ministry programs;
- We will use appropriate procedures in conducting programs and events for children, youth, and vulnerable adults in order to ensure their safety;
- We will provide training for staff, Covered Servant Leaders, and Covered Youth Servant Leaders that affords them appropriate guidance and assurance as they seek to promote the spiritual growth children, youth, and vulnerable adults in a safe and responsible manner; and
- We will have clearly defined procedures for reporting a suspected incident of sexual abuse or misconduct in accord with the requirements of applicable law and for responding to potential media inquiries if an incident occurs.

Definitions

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

Covered Servant Leader, as used in this Policy, is any person 18 years or older other than a member of the Foundry staff who, through their participation in the mission and ministries of Foundry United Methodist Church, has *regular* direct, unsupervised access or indirect and/or supervised contact with children and/or youth (i.e., any person under the age of 18) and/or vulnerable persons (as defined herein), including, for example but without limitation, persons who serve as Sunday School teachers, chaperones on youth trips and/or programs geared specifically towards vulnerable adults. The occasional adult chaperone to a youth bowling event, for example, is not considered a “Covered Servant Leader.” The term “Covered Servant Leader” also includes any person that any member Foundry’s staff, in his or her discretion, determines to be a Covered Servant Leader for purposes of this Policy. “Covered Servant Leaders” are required to fill out an application, provide three references, complete a sexual misconduct questionnaire, and complete an authorization for criminal records check prior to working with children, youth, or other vulnerable persons. (Foundry Personnel Handbook, Section 4.C.2)

Covered Youth Servant Leader, as used in this Policy, refers to any person under 18 years of age (1) who has been designated as a Covered Youth Servant Leader by the Director of Family Ministries; or (2) who regularly assists with a Foundry program or activity designed for children or youth younger than himself/herself or for vulnerable persons. Thus, for example, teenagers who volunteer to assist regularly with Children’s Church or with Sunday School classes for younger children are considered Covered Youth Servant Leaders. Youth who assume leadership roles in classes or activities designed for their own age group are not included unless the Director of Family Ministries designates them as Covered Youth Servant Leaders. Covered Youth Servant Leaders always act under the supervision of a member of the Foundry staff or an adult Covered Servant Leader, who must be present whenever a Covered Youth Servant Leader is assisting with a program or activity for children, youth, or vulnerable persons. Covered Youth Servant Leaders are required to submit an application that is also signed by a parent or guardian, to sign a behavioral covenant, and to complete a Safe Sanctuaries training. Training should be completed at the first opportunity. After Covered Youth Servant Leaders have been sent and read Foundry’s Safe Sanctuaries policy, they must return a receipt form to the Family Ministries Director within fourteen (14) days acknowledging that they have received and read the policy.

Sexual abuse [in ministry] is a form of sexual misconduct and occurs when a person within a ministerial role of leadership (lay or clergy, pastor, educator, counselor, youth leader, or other

position of leadership) engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employee, student, staff member, coworker, or servant leader.” (*Book of Resolutions 2012*, p. 136) Sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship involves a betrayal of sacred trust, a violation of the ministerial role, and exploitation of those who are vulnerable.

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

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

Vulnerable person is used in this Policy to mean: any person, 18 years and older, who because of physical or mental infirmity or emotional disability or other physical, mental or emotional dysfunction may be vulnerable to maltreatment. (Minnesota law 626.557).

Sections of this Policy

- I. Procedures for Clearing Staff and Covered Servant Leaders**
- II. Safety Procedures for Church-Sponsored Activities and Events**
- III. Cyber Safety Policy**
- IV. Community Building Use**
- V. Incident Reporting, Escalation, and Response Procedures**
- VI. Procedures for Responding to Personal/Media Inquiries**
- VII. Policy for Registered Sex Offenders**

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

I. **Procedures for Clearing Staff and Covered Servant Leaders**

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

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

Application, References, Interview: All paid staff will fill out an application, provide three references, complete an initial and annual sexual misconduct questionnaire, complete an authorization for criminal records check, and be interviewed by the appropriate committee before beginning to work in children, youth, or vulnerable persons ministries at the church. References should be checked before the interview. Volunteers who express an interest in working with children, youth, or vulnerable persons ministries will have a meeting with the leader of that ministry subsequent to the background check and prior to beginning ministry in order to discuss the appropriate position guidelines. Covered Servant Leaders must also fill out an application, provide three references, complete an initial and annual sexual misconduct questionnaire, and complete an authorization for criminal records check. (See Foundry Personnel Handbook, Section 4.C.2) All paid staff and Covered Servant Leaders will also receive a copy of the Safe Sanctuaries policy and be asked to return a form within fourteen (14) days of receipt acknowledging that they have received and read the policy.

Background Checks: Before beginning their ministry at the church, prospective staff will undergo a criminal history check and a child abuse history check for the state or jurisdiction in which they currently reside. Every three years thereafter, the Foundry staff member or Covered Servant Leader will undergo a new criminal history check and a new child abuse history check for each jurisdiction in which he or she has resided since their last clearance.

Record Maintenance: All background checks will be maintained in a confidential secure location with access limited to authorized members of the Foundry staff. A database of cleared adult Covered Servant Leaders will be maintained for easy reference. All policy receipt acknowledgement forms will also be kept on file with the background checks.

Restrictions: Any adult convicted of an offense involving the abuse of a child, youth, or vulnerable person (including, but not limited to sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse); or who is named as the perpetrator in a founded or indicated report of such abuse through a designated District of Columbia, state or county agency; or who is under investigation for, or who has charges pending for, such abuse will not be accepted as a Covered Servant Leader, a paid staff member, or for any ministry position (paid or volunteer) involving access to or work with children, youth, or vulnerable persons in any church-sponsored activity or setting.

Covered Servant Leaders:

- a. Covered Servant Leaders will be carefully screened.
- b. If needed, the cost background checks for Foundry's Covered Servant Leaders will be paid through the church budget. Background checks for

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

- Covered Servant Leaders for other organizations are the responsibility of that organization.
- c. All background checks will be kept confidential; only the Senior Pastor, the Church Business Administrator, the Director of Family Ministries, the Director of Connecting Ministries, the Director of Support Services, the President of the Management Board and/or the Chair of the Personnel Committee of the Management Board will see the results of Covered Servant Leader background checks. Other staff members will be informed of individuals who are not cleared to serve as Covered Servant Leaders.
 - d. Background checks must be renewed every three years for individuals that serve as Covered Servant Leaders in consecutive years.
 - e. Individuals who fail the background check will not be permitted to serve as Covered Servant Leaders.
 - f. Covered Servant Leaders will be required to sign and return the following documents (which are attached to this Policy):
 1. Volunteer Consent Form
 2. Sexual Misconduct Questionnaire (which includes a request for three different character references)
 3. Child and Youth Protection Policy Statement
 4. Disclosure and Authorization for Criminal Records Check

Covered Servant Leaders are supervised by the staff person assigned to the ministry involved. It is the responsibility of the staff person to collect and submit all forms in order to finalize the clearance under this Policy.

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

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

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

II. Safety Procedures for Church-Sponsored Activities and Events

Safety procedures for church-sponsored events and activities should include but not be limited to:

Adult/Youth Ratio: Enough adult Covered Servant Leaders and/or staff should be present at church-sponsored activities designed for children, youth, and vulnerable persons to ensure adequate supervision for safety. The suggested ratios are: 1:4 for children/youth with moderate or special needs and 1:8 for children/youth without special needs. Moderate or special needs include children of ages requiring more assistance in activities. Covered Servant Youth Leaders should not replace an adult as a supervisor at a church-sponsored activity.

Large Group Events: At large group events sponsored by Foundry, such as the Great Day of Service, an appropriate number of staff persons and/or Covered Servant Leaders shall be designated and assigned to monitor for any unusual behavior that suggests sexual abuse or misconduct. Covered Youth Servant Leaders should not replace an adult as a supervisor at a church-sponsored activity.

Incidents of Involving Possible Sexual Abuse or Misconduct: A Foundry staff member, Covered Servant Leader, or Covered Youth Servant Leader who observes or receives information about possible sexual abuse or misconduct in the course of a church-sponsored activity or event must immediately take any necessary action to ensure the safety of children, youth, or vulnerable persons and then follow the procedures set forth in Section V of this Policy.

Two Unrelated Adults Rule:² Adult staff and Covered Servant Leaders are asked to observe the “Minimum of Two Unrelated Adults Rule” whenever feasibly possible so that no adult is alone with children or youth at a church-sponsored event or activity. Both adults will have undergone the clearance as described Section I of this Policy. Unassigned adult “Roamers” who move in and out of rooms or areas may be used as a second adult if the assigned adult has undergone the Covered Servant Leader clearance process described in Section I of this Policy. Adult Covered Servant Leaders are those who are at least 18 years old and who are five years older than those children or youth whom they are leading, ministering to or supervising. Covered Youth Servant Leaders are invited to assist adult Covered Servant Leaders but are not to be considered an adult for the “two adult rule.”

Roamers: Roamers can provide protection for children and workers and will be provided as appropriate.

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

Attendance and Release of Children Ages 10 or Younger: Attendance will be documented at each church-sponsored activity so that a roster of children is immediately available in case of evacuation or other emergency. Children will only be released to parents, guardians, or assigned siblings over 15 years of age (prior parental notification required) at the end of each church-sponsored child and youth event.

Advance Parent/Guardian Notification and Permission: Registration forms from parents

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

or guardians are needed for church-sponsored events and trips. Parents/guardians should be provided with detailed written information regarding proposed church-sponsored events and activities involving children and youth. Parents/guardians must complete a Consent and Emergency Care Form for both one-day offsite and overnight trips. A copy of the Consent and Emergency Care Form should be filed at the church office.

Permission slips signed by a parent/guardian are required for all children and youth when traveling or attending events outside of the church campus. If circumstances arise in which one adult Covered Servant Leader will transport one child/youth, a permission slip signed by a parent/guardian stating the time and location of the transportation is required.

Parents/guardians will be informed regarding expected duration of each activity and the timeframe for supervision by staff and leaders. Parents/guardians must pick up their children and/or youth at the time specified for the end of each event. Staff, Covered Servant Leaders, or Covered Youth Servant Leaders shall accompany a child until the child's parent/guardian arrives.

Drivers and Transportation: No person under the age of 18 will be considered as a driver for a church-sponsored event or activity. No person under the age of 25 will be considered as a driver for children/youth. Any adult Covered Servant Leader responsible for transporting children and youth will show their current driver's license, proof of insurance policy, and registration to the activity leader prior to any event requiring driving. Covered Servant Leaders who drive on field trips and overnight events must complete the Volunteer Driver Checklist. Drivers and all passengers will wear seat belts at all times.

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

Unrelated Persons: No adult should ever sleep alone with an unrelated child (or children) or youth in a room. When traveling, adults serving as chaperones must reserve separate rooms from unrelated children or youth. Only children/youth of the same sex are allowed to sleep in the same room, unless related.

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

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

Random Checks: There will be a plan for periodic child/youth room checks during the night.

Large Group Sleeping Arrangements: If sleeping in an open space in a church, boys and girls will be separated and adult chaperones will be located near the doors or other divide separating the boys and the girls. Two approved adults must be present at all times in large group sleeping arrangements.

All-Girl/All-Boy Events: It is appropriate at an all-girls or all-boys event to have the same sex chaperones only. However, at any event where there will be boys and girls sleeping, there must be both male and female chaperones.

Proper Displays of Affection: Covered Servant Leaders and Covered Youth Servant Leaders need to be aware of, and sensitive to, the special and differing needs and preferences of each individual. Physical contact with children and youth should be age and developmentally appropriate.

Bathroom Procedures:

- Non-toilet-trained children with diapers should be changed by parents/guardians or those Covered Servant Leaders authorized by the parents/guardians to do so or designated staff. If a situation arises that a child must be changed by someone other than their parent/guardian, two adults will be present.
- Young children (up through Kindergarten) should be escorted by an adult to the restroom. Children are to remove and replace their own clothing. Adults may assist with clothing closures only. Children in 1st through 4th grade may use a buddy system to go to the restroom if no adult escort is available.
- Covered Youth Servant Leaders should not be asked to escort children to the bathroom if an adult is available. Adult escorts should wait outside the bathroom unless the child requires assistance.

Privacy: If circumstances arise in which there is a need to speak to a child/youth alone, Covered Servant Leaders and Covered Youth Servant Leaders should do so in as open an area as possible. For example, a Covered Servant Leader should meet the child/youth in a public setting such as the sanctuary, hallway, or fellowship hall or in any other open, public space. If the situation calls for immediate attention, a Covered Servant Leader should meet with the child/youth in a room where people walking by can see the interaction. Doors should always be left open and meetings should always be held in a location where there are other people nearby and in sight.

Discipline: Covered Servant Leaders or Covered Youth Servant Leaders will only use discipline techniques that show respect and care. Corporal punishment is never to be used.

III. **Cyber Safety Policy**

The internet and portable devices allow people to stay in contact with each other more easily than at any other time in the history of civilization. Incredible ministry can take place using modern technology, but as with all forms of ministry there are inherent risks involved with the use of electronic communications. Following basic Safe Sanctuaries procedures can help to minimize those risks. There is no such thing as privacy in cyberspace. Anything and everything available on the internet should be considered public information. Here are some guidelines:

Obtain Advance Permission: In addition to general permission to participate in a Foundry event or activity, it is advisable to receive advance parental/guardian permission for children and youth, and personal permission for vulnerable adults, in writing prior to:

- Posting photos of participants on any websites or sending them e-mail or cell phone messages or making videos for any use;
- E-mailing, Instant Messaging (IM'ing), calling, texting, or sending data to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult by computer, PDA, or cell phone; and
- Sharing any full name or contact information.

Easily Identifiable Information Should Not be Posted Online:

- "Broadcast" emails should be avoided in communications directed to children, youth, and vulnerable adults. For group emails, the "BCC" (blind carbon copy) feature should be used so that each recipient sees only his or her email address.
- Caution should be used when transmitting easily identifiable information like event dates, times, locations, or participants.
- Information communicated in electronic prayer requests should be limited. Electronic prayers listed should endeavor to use only first names.

Individual Communications with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults Should be Limited:

- Communications should always be made in a professional manner.
- Records should be retained of all confidential electronic communications with or regarding children, youth, and vulnerable adults (i.e., instant messages (IMs), chat room conversations, emails, etc.).
- Concerns about any topic addressed in an email or other electronic communication should be addressed by BCC to a parent/guardian (if appropriate) or another trusted adult. Privacy should be honored, but not secrecy.
- Abuse or misconduct that is divulged electronically should be reported following standard procedures set forth in this Policy.

Safety Measures for Electronic Photo Sharing:

- Permission to use photos should be obtained in advance.
- When posting photos, names and other identifiable information should not be shared.
- Only photos that uphold Foundry's mission and do not involve vulnerable/compromising situations should be posted.
- "Save photo as" options should be blocked on websites

Safety Measures for Social Networking Sites:

Popular social networking sites include but are not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Xanga, Friendster, Instagram, Tumblr, Twitch, Kik, WhatsApp and Snapchat.

- Privacy settings should be set to limit who can see Covered Servant Leader and staff profiles, otherwise the full profile will be viewable.

requests from youth.

- Covered Servant Leaders and staff should use higher level security features even with a restricted profile (such as requiring approval of all comments posted to the profile).
- Covered Servant Leaders and staff should not post anything to a social networking or other site online that they would not want attached to a resume or printed in the church bulletin or newsletter (the same goes for blogs).
- Covered Servant Leaders and staff should remove and not post inappropriate comments, photos, etc.
- Covered Servant Leaders and staff should encourage youth to follow these same guidelines.

IV. Community Building Use

All outside organizations, individuals and institutions that use the church building for events at which children and youth under the age of 18 will be present (including childcare) will receive a copy of this Policy, be required to adhere to it, and complete the Building Use Request Form.

At any time during the period of the building use agreement, failure to follow this Policy will result in termination of the building use agreement.

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

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

V. **Incident Reporting, Escalation, and Response Procedures**

Incidents Involving Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Persons: Abuse and other types of sexual misconduct involving children, youth, and vulnerable adults thrive when they go unnoticed and unreported. Often, an abusive or otherwise inappropriate situation continues because of someone's failure to report it. It is the responsibility of each staff member and Covered Servant Leader to caution each other regarding inappropriate behavior, to monitor suspicious behavior, and to report abusive behavior.

The safety of children, youth, and vulnerable persons is Foundry's paramount concern whenever there is a reasonable basis to suspect sexual misconduct. To protect these persons, the following procedures will be followed around incidents of suspected or actual sexual abuse and misconduct:

- A. Any Foundry staff member or Covered Servant Leader who observes unusual behaviors, comments, or physical signs indicating that a child, youth, or vulnerable person may have been the victim of sexual abuse or misconduct will immediately report the matter to a member of the Foundry staff. A staff member receiving such a report will immediately inform the Director of Family Ministries and/or the Senior Pastor, who will confer and, if warranted, report the concerns to appropriate authorities/agencies. In their discretion, the Director of Family Ministries and/or the Senior Pastor will inform the person making the report of the results of the intervention. If the Director of Family Ministries or the Senior Pastor is unavailable at the time the matter is reported to the staff, he or she will be informed as soon as possible.
- B. Any Foundry staff member or Covered Servant Leader who observes or receives information about possible sexual abuse or misconduct involving a child, youth, or vulnerable person in the course of any church-sponsored event or activity will immediately (i) take necessary action to protect children, youth, or vulnerable persons from immediate danger, and (ii) as quickly as possible report the matter to a Foundry staff member, in the case of Covered Servant Leaders, and to the Director of Family Ministries and/or the Senior Pastor in the case of Foundry staff members. A staff member receiving such a report will immediately take any necessary action to ensure that children, youth, and vulnerable persons are not currently in danger and then inform the Director of Family Ministries and/or the Senior Pastor. If it is not possible to ensure that children, youth, and vulnerable persons are safe from any immediate threat (e.g., the person who has allegedly engaged in sexual misconduct may still be at large somewhere on the premises, or responsible persons are not available to escort children, youth, or vulnerable persons when they leave the event or activity where the misconduct occurred), Foundry staff members will immediately notify the police.
- C. If Foundry staff members are able to determine that there is no imminent threat to the safety of children, youth, or vulnerable persons, the Director of Family Ministries and/or the Senior Pastor will collect information about the alleged misconduct. In particular, if the identity of the person responsible for the alleged misconduct is known, the staff will determine whether the person responsible for the alleged misconduct is a registered sex offender. If appropriate, the staff will notify the police.

Ministries, the matter should be reported instead to the Senior Pastor. Allegations involving the Senior Pastor should be reported directly to the Chair of the Personnel Committee of the Management Board. The recipient of the report will promptly ascertain the facts and take any appropriate action, including alerting authorities/agencies if appropriate.

- E. The Director of Family Ministries and/or the Senior Pastor will notify appropriate authorities/agencies in all instances where criminal conduct is reasonably suspected, alleged, or confirmed. The timing of such notification will be determined in the discretion of the Director of Family Ministries and/or the Senior Pastor based upon safety considerations of the alleged victim(s) of the conduct in question.

Incidents NOT Involving Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Persons:

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

All Incidents

- A. The best way to respond to people, including children, who allege they have been abused or mistreated is to assure them that their safety and well-being is a priority.
- B. If a victim is in the abuse or mistreatment setting, they should be taken to another open, safe spot in view of other people. Ideally someone safe and familiar should stay with the victim at all times, and they should not be left alone for even a moment.
- C. Because sexual abuse and misconduct takes away power and control from the victim, victims need to be informed of and have knowledge of what is and will be happening. They should be kept in the communication loop at all times in an age appropriate way.
- D. It is the responsibility of Foundry staff to handle incidents and allegations of sexual abuse and misconduct in a professional and caring manner and to notify the proper authorities and District Superintendent who will handle most inquiries about the alleged abuse or misconduct.
- E. Staff and Covered Servant Leaders should refrain from discussing allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct with others, except as necessary to satisfy their reporting obligations under the law or this Policy.

VI. Procedures for Responding to Personal/Media Inquiries

All questions and inquiries relating to allegations or incidents involving sexual abuse or misconduct must be referred to the Foundry staff member who is able to handle these situations. Foundry staff members who are not specifically authorized to respond to such inquiries should treat them as a confidential emergency.

If a member of the media – newspaper, TV station, radio station, magazine – asks about allegations and incidents of sexual abuse and misconduct, the recipient of the question should take the person’s name and contact information and respectfully tell him/her that someone from the Foundry staff will contact them.

Staff members who are not specifically authorized to talk to the media on behalf of Foundry and Covered Servant Leaders should not answer any questions from the media. They should be polite, but firm, and never tell a reporter, “No Comment”, as this response can easily be misconstrued. Nothing is “off the record.” All statements to the press should be treated as if they will be used publicly.

VII. Policy for Registered Sex Offenders

Registered sex offenders are required to inform Foundry of their status as such, as directed in the weekly church bulletin, at the Foundry website, or in new member orientation materials.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- A. **Maintenance of List:** The Senior Pastor and the Director of Family Ministries will establish and maintain a list of registered sex offenders who are members of the church, attend worship or are otherwise known to visit the church premises (buildings or grounds) on one or more occasions. Registered sex offenders attending or visiting Foundry are required to inform the church of their status as such. The Senior Pastor will ensure that the list of registered sex offenders is updated whenever it is brought to the attention of the Senior Pastor, the Director of Family Ministries or any other Foundry staff or member of the Management Board that another church member or visitor has become a registered sex offender. A current copy of the list will be delivered to the District Superintendent and appropriate Foundry staff, clergy and lay leadership, as appropriate, as soon as it is first prepared and whenever the list is updated.
- B. **Meeting and Covenant with the Registrant:** Upon learning that a member or visitor is a registered sex offender, the Senior Pastor, the Director of Family Ministries and an executive officer of the Management Board, or another member of the Management Board designated by the President, will have an in-person meeting with the registered person (Registrant) and another adult of the Registrant’s choosing to discuss the procedures the congregation will follow in order to allow the Registrant to continue to participate in the life of the congregation or visit the church premises for any purpose. During that the meeting, the Senior Pastor, the Director of Family Ministries and the representative of the Management Board will:
 - i. indicate that they have been made aware of the person’s name on

- the registry;
- ii. summarize the congregation's principles and guidelines in such situations, as outlined here and in the attached "Covenant Letter;"
- iii. explain and emphasize the importance of the "Designated Attendant" policy (as described below), both for the safety and well-being of the church community, and the well-being of the Registrant;
- iv. provide the Registrant with a Covenant Letter, signed by the pastor and the chair of the Management Board, substantially in the form attached hereto; and
- v. explain that the Covenant Letter must be counter-signed (in front of a witness), dated and returned to the Senior Pastor before the Registrant can be allowed to return to the church premises.

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

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

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

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

Safe Sanctuaries Policy Receipt Acknowledgement

_____, _____, acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Foundry UMC Safe Sanctuaries policy on this day, _____. I have read the policy and will comply with all policy requirements.

[Print Name]

[Signature]

[Date]

Signature of Parent/Guardian if under 18 years of age:

[Print Name]

[Signature]

[Date]

Covenant Letter for Registered Sex Offender

Dear _____:

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

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

The terms of the covenant are as follows:

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Pastor

President, Foun

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

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

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

Date: _____

Witness:

Name