

Peachtree City  
United Methodist Church

**Safe Sanctuaries Policy**



Maltreatment of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults  
Ethical Decisions and Virtual Safety Guidelines

Updated 2022

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# GETTING STARTED

## Foreword

### Introduction

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church, in April 1996, adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child abuse in the church. In 2012, amendments were added to include vulnerable adults. The adopted resolution includes the following statement:

God calls us to make our ministries safe, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from abuse and exploitation. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults can be safe and grow strong. We recognize that our children are all children and youth under the age of 18. Vulnerable adults are those 65 and older, and those over 18 years of age with cognitive disabilities. Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to those in our care, as well as to those who are committed to engaging in ministry as volunteers and employees.

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

We affirm our responsibility for the safety of children at each child's baptism 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 2)

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 children. The social principles of the United Methodist Church states: "...children must be protected from economic, physical, and sexual exploitation, and abuse."

God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from sexual and ritual abuse. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults grow safe and strong (From *The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church* – 1996 Copyright © 1996 by the United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission. [pp.384-386])

Thus, in our covenant with all Methodist congregations, we the people of Peachtree City United Methodist Church adopt this policy with procedures for the prevention of abuse in our church.

## Purpose

Peachtree City United Methodist Church believes that the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults is imperative. We believe we must do all that we can to nurture and protect our children, youth, and vulnerable adults. This policy is intended to provide a guide for that protection, as well as the protection of our adult workers and the church. This policy is enacted to ensure that the parents, members, volunteers, and paid staff of Peachtree City UMC have a clear understanding of what the policies and procedures are regarding the safety of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

In addition to reducing the risks of abuse, this policy details the rules pertaining to Risk Management including the use of church vehicles, use of personal cars for trips, safety planning/emergency evacuation procedures, and proper trip and medical forms for special events. The goal is to ensure safety in all aspects of ministry for the children, youth, and vulnerable adults of Peachtree City UMC and the people who work with them. The leadership of Peachtree City UMC requests the cooperation of all persons in the church to be aware of and abide by the guidelines of this policy.

# Statement of Covenant

AS A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF FAITH AND A UNITED METHODIST CONGREGATION, we pledge to conduct God's ministry in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all our children, youth, and vulnerable adults as well as workers with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

We will:

- 1) follow established safety measures in the selection and recruitment of paid and volunteer workers.
- 2) implement operational procedures in all programs and events.
- 3) train our workers working with or around children, youth and vulnerable adults regarding policies and methods (including first aid and discipline).
- 4) implement a clearly defined procedure for reporting suspected incidents of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law, responding appropriately to victim and accused and for responding to media inquiries if an incident occurs.
- 5) designate 1 representative that speaks to the media in the event an incident occurs.

These policies and procedures were unanimously adopted by the 1998 session of the North Georgia Annual Conference. Implementations of the training procedures began by the 1999 session of the Annual Conference and continue in Conference and District events. This policy was reviewed and updated for the 2014 session of Annual Conference.

This congregation is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each child will be "...surrounded by steadfast love ...established in the faith and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal" ("Baptismal Covenant II," *United Methodist Hymnal*, p.44).

# Definitions

## Frequently Used Terminology

(As it relates to this document only)

1. Employed Staff Member: Program, ministry, and administrative employees, other than theministerial staff, who work under the guidance, supervision and evaluation of the Senior Pastor, an assigned Associate Pastor, and/or an assigned supervisor with support being provided by and through the Staff Parish Relations ministry team, as appropriate. Lay staffserve in specific positions with designated responsibilities for Peachtree City United Methodist Church. These individuals are expected to assume primary responsibilities and accountabilities in their appointed operational areas.
2. Volunteer: An individual seeking to work with children, youth or vulnerable adults.
3. Supervisory Volunteer: An individual seeking a supervisory role with children/youth/adults that has 1) been a member of this congregation for at least 6 months or 2) adults who havebeen involved with the church for a period of at least 6 months. All individuals desiring to be supervisory volunteers will be checked and approved by a director of the specific ministry area that the volunteer will be working for before serving.
4. Non- Supervisory Volunteer: An individual seeking a non-supervisory capacity forchildren/youth/vulnerable adults.
5. The Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS): Falls under the Georgia Department of Human Resources and is responsible for welfare and employment support,protecting children, foster care and other services to strengthen families.
6. Child /Youth: Anyone who is under 18 years of age or has the mental capacity of such ageis considered a child or youth.
7. Vulnerable Adult: Anyone 18 years of age or older who is mentally, physically, or psychologically challenged and unable to make sound decisions. This includes Elders, persons over the age of 65 with the diminished ability for self-care.

# **Selection of Staff/Volunteers**

## **Employed Staff**

All persons employed by Peachtree City UMC will:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. If in a supervisory position for children, youth, or vulnerable adults, be at least 21 years of age. In certain circumstances, such as Camp and Retreat leadership, 18 years shall be the acceptable minimum age when combined with adequate training in the Conference policies and procedures and competent oversight by a qualified adult.
3. Complete an application form.
4. Provide three character references.
5. Will be interviewed by the representative of the specific ministry that the employee will be working for
6. Complete National Background check and receive a satisfactory report every three years.
7. Complete a driver's license records check for anyone operating church or personal vehicles involved in transporting children, youth, or vulnerable adults and receive a satisfactory report. (This process can sometimes take up to 2 weeks; therefore; care should be taken to recruit workers and collect necessary information for submission to proper authorities with enough lead time to fully meet the policy requirements).
8. Allow PTCUMC to reserve the right to do fingerprinting as part of a background check.
9. Be informed that as a paid employee, they are mandatory reporters.

If a background check returns with concerns, the Director is to contact the Pastor and together, work through a plan moving forward. This is at the discretion of the Pastor and Director.

## **Supervisory Volunteer**

All persons in a supervisory role with children/youth/vulnerable adults will:

1. Be at least 18 years of age and at least 5 years older than the age of the oldest person in the group with which the person is working.
2. All supervisory volunteers involved with children/ youth/ vulnerable adult of our church must have been members of the congregation for at least 6 months or be involved with the church for a period of at least 6 months.
3. Complete a volunteer application (Appendix 4) and provide three character references.
4. Be selected by Staff, Ministry Director, etc.
5. Complete Appendix 5 National Background check and receive a satisfactory report every three years.
6. Be informed that as a volunteer they are mandatory reporters.

## **Non-Supervisory Volunteer**

All volunteer staff serving in any capacity for children/youth/vulnerable adult will:

1. Be an adult or youth of at least 12 years old and/or in the 6th grade and at least 5 yearsolder than the oldest person in the group.
2. Be members of the congregation for at least 6 months or be involved with the church for aperiod of at least 6 months.
3. Be supervised by a staff person or a supervisory volunteer.
4. Not be left alone with children/youth/vulnerable adult with which the person is working.
5. Complete a volunteer application (Appendix 4) and provide three character references.
6. A representative of the specific ministry will approve volunteers.
7. Complete Appendix 5 National Background check.
8. Be informed that as a volunteer they are mandatory reporters.

# Training

## **Training of Staff/Volunteers**

1. There shall be an annual Safe Sanctuaries training session, which is required for all employed staff members. Failure to comply will result in unpaid duty time.
2. There shall be an annual Safe Sanctuaries training session, which is required for all supervisory volunteers and volunteers working with children, youth and vulnerable adults. This includes Congregational Care persons who may visit the home of a vulnerable adult. Failure to comply will result in removal from volunteer assignment.
3. All employed staff, supervisory volunteers and volunteers shall attend a Safe Sanctuaries training session within 30 days of their first day of service. If there is not a training session scheduled within this time frame, a training video/one-on-one training will be provided in the interim.
4. Youth (anyone under the age of 18) who serve with Children's Ministry are required to attend the training as well. They will not have background check, etc. but sign the agreement/covenant.
5. Each employed staff member and volunteer will receive a copy of this policy and are required to sign a statement certifying receipt and understanding. The official record of abuse training and signed statement will be kept on file in the administrative offices. This will include dates of training, who attended training and who provided the training.
6. Safe Sanctuaries training will be provided for volunteers of short-term programs or special events programs that involve extensive contact with children/youth/adults prior to the program or activity.
7. All staff and volunteers will know the location of emergency aid kits and have telephone access for emergency medical assistance.
8. Current first aid and CPR certificates are required of 100% of paid staff who work with children, youth and vulnerable adults.

# Overview of Training Sessions

Annual Safe Sanctuaries training sessions shall include an explanation, discussion and understanding of the following topics:

1. Peachtree City United Methodist Church General policies and procedures
2. Identifying and Addressing Abuse
3. Prevention and Care of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults
4. Ending Notes
5. Basic Procedures
6. Q&A
7. North Georgia Conference (current edition) Educating on Safe Sanctuaries  
\*\*Must bring in a trainee for this specific portion- read below

## North Georgia Conference Educating on Safe Sanctuaries

The North Georgia Conference for the United Methodist Church requires a yearly training for all children, youth and vulnerable adults in addition to the specific church's Safe Sanctuaries policy. There are specific trainers that are required to come in and teach your congregation/volunteers/leaders.

# IDENTIFYING & ADDRESSING ABUSE

## Recognizing

### Knowing the Facts

It is important to be familiar with a few statistics concerning the incidence of child abuse:

The Department of Health and Human Services reports that most states recognize four major types of maltreatment: neglect, physical abuse, psychological maltreatment, and sexual abuse. Although any of the forms of child maltreatment may be found separately, they can occur in combination. (2013 Child Maltreatment report, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau)

1. 2013 Child Maltreatment reports 3.5 million referrals to Child Protection Services involving 6.4 million children. 3.2 million of those children resulted in an investigativeresponse through CPS.
2. The greatest percentages of children suffered from neglect (79.5%), physical abuse(18.0%), and sexual abuse (9%) accounting for 1,520 fatalities.
3. Youngest children were most vulnerable to maltreatment. 27% under the age of 3 and19% between the ages of 3-5. Of these, 48% were boys and 50.9% were girls.
4. 73.9% of fatalities were children under the age of 3. Of these, 78.9% of fatalities wererecaused by one or both parents.
5. For 2013, professionals made 61.6% of all reports of maltreatment – law enforcement, education personnel, lawyers, and social services staff. Non-professionals, including friends, neighbors, and relatives, account for 18.6% of reports. Nationally, parents wereresponsible for 91% of all abuse but were the least liable to report.
6. The Georgia Center for Child Advocacy reports 1 in 10 children experience sexual abuse before the age of 18 but only 10-12% of cases are reported (Georgia Center forChild Advocacy.org).
7. In 90% of all cases of sexual abuse the perpetrator is someone who is known to thevictim.
8. Sexual abuse offenders intentionally seek out institutions that provide programs forchildren and adolescents.
9. 40% of children sexually abused will disclose to teachers, coaches, and faith centerleaders.
10. The Abel and Harlow Child Molestation Prevention Study found that 93% of all admittedchild molesters considered themselves religious.

11. The National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect reports that there are more than two million incidents of physical abuse and/or neglect per year in the U.S. affecting 30 out of every 1000 children.
12. Studies have estimated that one out of three girls is sexually abused before the age of 18. Similarly, studies indicate one out of seven boys have been sexually abused before the age of 18. Even more frightening is that these numbers may be underestimated since many children are reluctant to report abuse.
13. The National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse in the U.S. reports that 2000 deaths attribute to child abuse and/or neglect occurs each year. In light of the statistics, it seems that any organization involved with children is a place where abuse could occur.

## What is Abuse?

The depth and breadth of the problem of child abuse is far greater than can be effectively addressed within this resource. For our purposes, we must limit our focus to the prevention of child abuse in the church and its ministries.

### Types of Child Abuse

Generally, child abuse is categorized in five primary forms:

1. Physical abuse
  2. Emotional abuse
  3. Neglect/Abandonment
  4. Sexual abuse
  5. Ritual abuse
  6. Vulnerable Adult and/or elder abuse—exploitation/financial abuse
- 
1. Physical abuse: Abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a child. Examples may include violent battery with a weapon (knife, belt, strap, etc.), burning, shaking, kicking, choking, fracturing bones, and any of a wide variety of non-accidental injuries to a child's body. Children may be allowed or forced to take drugs or consume alcohol.

2. Emotional abuse: Abuse in which a person exposes a child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message to the child of worthlessness, badness, and being not only unloved, but undeserving of love and care. Children exposed to emotional abuse may have experienced being locked in a closet, being deprived of any sign of parental affection. Children may be told repeatedly that they are bad or stupid. Emotional abuse is often very difficult to prove and is devastating to the victim.
3. Neglect: Abuse in which a person endangers a child's health, safety, or welfare through negligence. Neglect may include withholding food, clothing, medical care, education, and even affection and affirmation of the child's self-worth. This form of child maltreatment comprises about 2/3 of all reported cases of abuse.
4. Sexual abuse: Abuse in which sexual contact between a child and an adult (or another older and more powerful youth) occurs. The law states that children (even those of age 14-15) are incapable of consenting to or resisting such contact and/or such sexual acts. Often, perpetrators physically and psychologically "groom" their victims making the children dependent; or the perpetrator may use threats of violence to the child or the loved ones of the child, as a means to "keep the secret." Examples of sexual abuse may include fondling, intercourse, incest and the exploitation of and exposure to child pornography or prostitution.
5. Ritual abuse: Abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violations of a child are inflicted regularly, intentionally, and in a stylized way by a person or persons responsible for the child's welfare. The abuser may appeal to some higher authority or power to justify the abuse. The abuse may include cruel treatment of animals or repeated threats of harm to the child, other persons, and animals. Reports of ritual abuse are often extremely horrifying and may seem too grim to be true. Children making such reports must not be ignored.
6. Vulnerable Adult/Elder Abuse : **Physical** – hitting, kicking, pushing; **Sexual**- forcing an elder or vulnerable adult to take part in a sexual act who does not or cannot consent; **Emotional**- behaviors that harm the victim's self-worth or emotional well-being such as name calling, isolating, or destroying property; **Neglect**- failure to meet the basic needs of an elder or vulnerable adult including food, clothing, and medical care; **Abandonment** – when a caregiver leaves the person alone for extended periods of time without providing care; **Financial**- illegally misusing money, property, or assets belonging to an elder or vulnerable adult (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence, Understanding Elder Abuse 2013, CDC)

# Indicators of Maltreatment

Children suffering from abuse often will not tell anyone about it. Therefore, it is important to be able to recognize other signs of abuse. The following characteristics may be indicators of abuse, although they are not necessarily proof. Individually, any one of the indicators may be a sign of a number of other more or less serious problems. When these indicators are observed in a child, they can be considered as warnings and lead you to look into the situation further.

Church Congregational Care home visitors can be instrumental in recognizing possible signs of elder or vulnerable adult abuse and make appropriate reports to Adult Protective Services where necessary.

## **Possible Signs of Physical Abuse in Children**

1. Hostile and aggressive behavior toward others
2. Fearfulness of parents and/or other adults
3. Destructive behavior toward self, others, and/or property
4. Inexplicable fractures or bruises inappropriate for child's developmental stage
5. Burns, facial injuries, pattern of repetitious bruises
6. Unexplained ducking or flinching when sudden movements are made by adults.

## **Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse in Children**

1. Exhibits severe depression and/or withdrawal
2. Exhibits severe lack of self-esteem
3. Failure to thrive
4. Threatens or attempts suicide
5. Speech and/or eating disorders
6. Goes to extremes to seek adult approval
7. Extreme passive/aggressive behavior patterns

## **Possible Signs of Neglect in Children**

1. Failure to thrive
2. Pattern of inappropriate dress for climate
3. Begs for or steals food; chronic hunger
4. Depression
5. Untreated medical conditions
6. Poor hygiene

## **Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse in Children**

1. Unusually advanced sexual knowledge and/or behavior for child's age and developmental stage
2. Depression – cries often for no apparent reason
3. Promiscuous behavior
4. Runs away from home and refuses to return
5. Difficulty walking or sitting
6. Bruised/bleeding in vaginal or anal areas
7. Exhibits frequent headaches, stomachaches, extreme fatigue
8. Sexually transmitted diseases

*In addition to these indicators, children who have been sexually abused at church may exhibit some of the following:*

1. Unusual nervousness or anxiety about being left in the nursery or Sunday School class
2. Reluctance to participate in church activities that were previously enthusiastically approached
3. Comments such as "I don't want to be alone with \_\_\_" in reference to a childcare worker or teacher
4. Nightmares including a childcare worker or teacher as a frightening character
5. Unexplained hostility toward a childcare worker or teacher
6. Nervousness or anxiety about having persons "looking over their shoulders" or when someone places a hand on their shoulder

## **Possible Signs of Ritual Abuse in Children**

1. Disruptions of memory and consciousness
2. Unexplained mistrust and mood swings
3. Flashbacks
4. Eating disorders
5. Fear of the dark, especially at sundown or a full moon
6. Agitation or despair that seems to occur in cycles
7. Nightmares or sleep disorders
8. Any of the symptoms of sexual abuse

## **Possible Signs of Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse**

1. Home furnishings or other items disappear
2. Frequent physical injuries
3. Person is unclean, hungry
4. Person is not receiving medical care/medications
5. Person is fearful and anxious and expresses concern being around their caregiver
6. Refrigerator is empty or is full of spoiled food
7. Sudden changes in the person's bank account or banking habits
8. Forgery of the person's signature

Church visitors often know who is most directly responsible for an elder or vulnerable adult: who pays the bills, who visits them, who pays for household chores, who advocates for the person or who is a trusted representative. Knowing the signs of maltreatment and the steps to reporting is vital to church ministries.

## **Guidelines for Registered Sex Offenders**

Each state maintains registries for sex offenders, which attempt to list all persons residing anywhere in the jurisdictions who have been convicted by the court of law of any of a wide variety of sexual offenses.

PTCUMC welcomes all people into its doors. Those who have a history of child abuse of any kind are welcome to participate in adult worship, adult Christian Education and adult social events. However, they are not to initiate direct contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults on church property and/or church sponsored events. No person convicted of a felony or misdemeanor involving physical or sexual abuse or neglect will be allowed to work with or be in the same area with children/youth/vulnerable adults.

Even while affirming every person's need to be a part of a faith community and receive redemption, we hold in balance the imperative to do all we can to maintain an environment of love and safety for all. We believe the congregation's process for responding to such information should include the following components:

1. **Maintenance of List:** The Staff Parish Relations Committee should establish and maintain a list of registered sex offenders who are members/active guests of the church, attend worship, or are otherwise known to visit the church premises (building or grounds) on one or more occasions. The pastor and the chair of SPRC will ensure that this list is updated in the following manner:

- a. At least twice a year, making a reasonably delineated geographical and name search of the online version of the registry maintained for the jurisdiction in which the church is located.
  - b. Whenever it is brought to the attention of the pastor or the SPRC that another church member or active guest has become a registered sex offender, a current copy of the list will be relooked at and corrected.
2. **Meeting and Covenant with the Registrant:** Upon learning that a member or guest is a registered sex offender, the pastor and the Chair of SPRC, or another member of SPRC, will have an in-person meeting with the registered person 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 the meeting, the pastor and SPRC representative will:
- a. Indicate that they have been made aware of the person's name on the registry.
  - b. Summarize the congregation's principles and guidelines in such situations.
  - c. 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 registrants.
  - d. Provide the registrant with a covenant letter, signed by the pastor and the SPRC chair.
  - e. Explain that the covenant letter must be counter-signed (in front of a witness), dated and returned to the pastor before the registrants can be allowed to return to the church premises.
3. **"Designated Attendants":** Registrants should not be allowed in any church building or anywhere on the church grounds, unless they are accompanied by an adult member of the congregation that has been approved by the SPRC to serve as a Designated Attendant for registered Sex Offenders.
- a. A list of Designated Attendants shall be maintained by the chair of SPRC.
  - b. Each registrant shall be given the names and telephone numbers of two or more Attendants they can contact to accompany them when they visit the church.
  - c. 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 he is within any part of church property/building.
  - d. 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.

- e. No person that is related to the registrant by birth, adoption or marriage may serve as their Designated Attendant.
  - f. The SPRC will have the responsibility of securing designated attendants for others. In the event that a time arises and no attendant is available, the person may not stay on the church grounds.
  - g. The Designated Attendant requirement must remain in place for as long as the registrant remains on the Sex Offenders Registry.
4. **Exceptions:** There should be no exceptions to these policies and procedures except on a case-by-case basis, and then only if (a) written approval is obtained from both the pastor and the SPRC.

# **Reporting**

## **Reporting Alleged Abuse**

Should an employee, supervisory volunteer, or non-supervisory volunteer staff member suspect abuse or neglect of a child or youth at a church-sponsored meeting or activity, it must be reported.

Failure to report is not an option.

Investigations are conducted by appropriate outside agencies and are not the responsibility of the employed, supervisory volunteer, or non-supervisory volunteer staff member. The following procedures shall apply for reporting suspected abuse or neglect:

1. Ensure the protection of and tend to the immediate needs of the child/youth, as the situation requires. (This may require removing the child/youth from the event or calling 911.) Then the adult in charge (employed staff or supervisory volunteer) shall document the incident in writing. Documentation shall be signed and dated. The document will be locked and secured in the Executive Pastor's office. Access will be given to the Senior Pastor, on-call Pastor, or the SPRC chair on a need-to-know basis, unless they are the accused party.
2. The Senior Pastor or the on-call Pastor shall be notified as soon as possible. If a pastor is the accused party, first notify the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) chair who will then notify the District Superintendent as needed.
3. Once an allegation of abuse or neglect has been made, the Senior Pastor, on-call Pastor, or the SPRC chair shall notify the following:
  - a. In emergency situations staff should call 911 for assistance
  - b. Law enforcement personnel
  - c. Parents
  - d. Georgia Department of Family and Children's Services
  - e. District Superintendent
  - f. Chairperson of Trustees
  - g. Pastoral care consultant

# Reporting Incidents

All reporting of alleged incidents or actual incidents of abuse must strictly follow Georgia law. A worker who has reasonable cause to suspect that abuse has occurred should secure the safety of the child, if possible, and then immediately report the incident to the Director/Supervisor of the ministry event. It is never the responsibility of a worker with children or youth to investigate allegations of child abuse. The Director/Supervisor will then follow all appropriate procedures for reporting to the child's parents or guardian, authorities of the Annual Conference and/or District, and local law enforcement or child protective service agencies. In the event that the Director/Supervisor is the alleged perpetrator, reports should be given to the Senior Pastor. If the alleged perpetrator is a Pastor, contact the District Supervisor for the LaGrange District.

The phone numbers and names of all reporting agencies as well as the North Georgia District supervisor and the Senior Pastor's information shall be posted in visible areas where children and youth activities take place. All workers, paid and volunteer, shall be made aware of the location of the information.

## Suspected Abuse Perpetrated Away from Church Property and Non-Church Related Events

Should an employed, supervisory volunteer, or non-supervisory volunteer staff member suspect abuse or neglect of a child/youth/vulnerable adult away from church sponsored functions, it must be reported.

Failure to report is not an option.

Investigations are conducted by trained individuals and are not the responsibility of the employed, supervisory volunteer, or non-supervisory volunteer staff member. The following procedures shall apply for reporting suspected abuse or neglect:

1. The adult in charge shall document the incident. The documentation shall be signed and dated. The document will be locked and secured in the Executive Assistants office. Access will be given to the Senior Pastor, on call Pastor, or the SPRC chair on a need to know basis, unless they are the accused party.
2. Notify the Senior Pastor, on call Pastor, or the SPRC chair. Then the parents will be notified as well as the ministry area director (as needed.) If any of these reporting people is the accused, that individual will not be notified at this time.
3. If reasonable cause is established, the Senior Pastor, on call Pastor, or the SPRC chair shall notify the Georgia Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) and/or law enforcement.

# PREVENTION & CARE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

## Prevention

### Prevention Guidelines

In order to provide adequate supervision to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children/youth/vulnerable adults participating in activities in the programs of the church, the following ratios are recommended:

#### On-Campus

##### **Nursery**

Infants	1:6 for infants to 18 months old if not walking
Toddlers	1:8 for 12 months to 18 months if walking 1:10 for 2 year olds
Preschool	1:15 for 3 year olds and 4 year olds

##### **Elementary Age**

Kindergarten - 2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	1:8
3-4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	1:10
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	1:15

##### **Middle School Age**

6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	1:15
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##### **High School Age**

9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	1:15
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#### Field Trips and Overnights

Children K-5 <sup>th</sup> grade	1:6
Youth 6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> grade	1:7
Youth 9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> grade	1:8

### **Weekday Preschool**

Infants	1:3
One year old	1:5
Two year old	1:6-8
Young Threes	1:10
Three Year Old class	1:6
Four Year Old class	1:7
Kindergarten class	1:7

Yearly evaluations of supervisor/child ratios will be reviewed by a Pastor and Ministry Directors and recorded. Ratios which are regularly 30% higher than recommended should be reported immediately to the SPRC for review.

## **Regular Operations for Conducting Programs and Events for Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults**

In addition to the ratios, the following guidelines shall be used when planning supervision for all church gatherings where children will be in attendance:

1. There must be two adults in each classroom for all gatherings, which take place within the church building with the exception of Sunday mornings and high attendance events such as Sunday evening activities and VBS during which time there are additional Chairpersons, Chaperones, etc, attending to the needs of children and youth programs/activities. If one adult needs to leave the room, the classroom door should remain open.
2. Rooms where children/youth/vulnerable adults are gathered should have a window in the door or half-door open when children/youth/vulnerable adults are present. If there is no window or half door, the door should remain open.
3. If both boys and girls are participants, then the adult leaders should also include both men and women.
4. Providing roamers as needed to circulate and provide protection for children and their workers/volunteers. Directors can play this role.

5. Parents/legal guardians shall always be permitted to observe in a classroom. A visitor's pass will be required to be worn to indicate the individual has approval to be in the room along with the trained and background-checked staff/lead volunteer.
6. Attendance will be documented at each church sponsored activity so that a roster of children is immediately available in case the building needs to be evacuated. Children will only be released to parents, guardians, or assigned siblings over 16 years of age (prior parental notification required) at the end of each church sponsored event.
7. Parents shall provide the Director with any special information regarding a possible child custody dispute where workers/volunteers shall pay particular attention to who picks up the child.
8. An adult is considered to be anyone over 18 years of age and five years older than the group for whom they are providing supervision. Volunteers or workers under 18 years of age must be paired with two adults.
9. Married couples count as one unit thus requiring another adult to be present to meet recommended ratios.
10. Prolonged visits by unauthorized visitors are not allowed. They are to be escorted out of the area.
11. When children/youth are outside of parent care, their specific reserved designated areas cannot be inhabited by anyone other than the ministry leaders/volunteers. Other ministries and outside groups that will meet at the same time as the events with children/youth will have to use alternative entrances coordinated and communicated ahead of time. This is the responsibility of the ministry director/leader and/or outside group leader to make sure this is communicated effectively and planned accordingly.
12. Children (Infants-5<sup>th</sup> Grade) should not be allowed to leave the designated meeting area without permission and supervision.
13. The number of workers required for each event (above the minimum of two) will be determined by the number and age of the participants and the nature of the activities.
14. Parents/ legal guardians shall be advised that they must pick up their child(ren) no later than 10 minutes after the ministry is over unless special arrangements have been made with the Director/workers.
15. Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children or youth who are not in an "event" or program at that specific time. This includes hallways, special events, parking lot, etc. Children must be supervised at all times while on church property.
16. Children/Youth should be in a designated program area/childcare or be with a parent.
17. Security stickers for all children in the childcare/Sunday school setting are required and provided by the ministry area. The security sticker must be presented in order to sign a child in or out of the childcare/Sunday school setting.

18. All authorized PTCUMC sanctioned trips for children and youth through grade 12 will require written parental permission to leave the church property.
19. Attendees at PTCUMC sponsored off-site events will be supervised by adult chaperones upon arrival, departure and as needed during the sponsored event.
20. All workers (no exceptions) will be designated, by clothing (shirts, smocks or aprons) and/or nametags while working with children.
21. All children in the Nursery and Preschool age group should be registered and/or signed in at the room where parents drop them. Parents pick up child in the same room.
22. When a last-minute substitute is needed, the ministry area director or their representative will select one from a list of volunteers who have been cleared through Reference and Criminal Background Checks. If no volunteer can be located with a background check, the director will pair the substitute with a Supervisory Volunteer.
23. Every effort will be made to have access to a telephone for emergency purposes at all times.
24. As a means of good record keeping and communication between parents, staff and volunteers, the enclosed Incident Report Form will be utilized for Injuries and Discipline concerns/problems. The triplicate form will be given to the parent, filed with the Director of the corresponding ministry area, and filed at a central location on the church property.
25. Members of congregational care, etc. will not visit elders or vulnerable adults alone. At least one person visiting will have a background check.

## **Special Overnight Activities and Trips**

1. Children and youth events away from the church and/or an overnight event held at the church require adherence to the policy ratios for supervision.
2. There shall always be two adult chaperones, or more depending on ratios, responsible for supervising children and youth. There should never be a time when any adult is alone with a child or teen.
3. Gender ratio of leaders shall be in line with gender ratio of children and/or youth.
4. Trip information, including location, phone numbers, adults attending, departure and return times, must be provided to the parents before departing.
5. When possible, hotels will be chosen where the rooms open to the interior of the building, rather than the outside.
6. If possible, room assignments will be so that an adult room is between two children and/or youth rooms.

7. There will be periodic room checks throughout the night.
8. For large group sleeping arrangements, two approved adults will be present at all times.
9. Headcounts should be taken each time there is movement from point A to point B, and should be annotated on paper.

All volunteers who drive must possess a valid driver's license and must be at least 25 years of age.

## **International Travel**

The US State Department recommends that trip leaders have a notarized letter of permission from the parents or legal guardians allowing an identified group leader to travel with their children/youth. The letter should include the adult leader's name, child's name, and the dates of travel and countries to be visited.

Two copies of each trip participant's passport should be made; one to keep with the trip leader, separate from the original passport, and one kept on file with the trip participant's parent/guardian.

Youth travelers should never fly alone on an international or cross-country flight. Adult chaperone should not travel with participant alone. Each participant should contact their parent or guardian at each leg of the flight when possible.

# **Classroom Guidelines**

## **Children and Age-Appropriate Levels**

Children will attend the appropriate grade/age level equivalent to the grade/age level they attend in school or preschool.

1. Any child in Pre-K or above should attend the same grade/age level of Christian education as they attend in school. Any exceptions to this policy on placement will be discussed with Directors over specific areas and the parent/guardian.
2. Promotion occurs in August. Children move to the next level at that time.

## **Diapering and Restroom Activity**

1. Procedures for all workers with children in diapers
  - (a) Diapering is to be done by a paid staff worker or the parent of the child.
  - (b) Make sure another adult is in the room when a diaper is being changed.
  - (c) Diapering should occur in an open visible area.
2. Procedures for all workers with preschool children using restrooms
  - (a) If a toilet adjoins the room in use, teachers must supervise and the door must remain open.
  - (b) If there has been a potty "accident" and a worker needs to assist a child (changing clothes, clean up etc.), two adults must be present and a parent may be notified if further cleaning is necessary.
3. Procedures for all workers with elementary age children
  - (a) Tell another adult you will be taking children to the restroom.
  - (b) Take more than one at a time, allowing children to be as independent as possible.
  - (c) Children are to remove and replace their own clothing.
  - (d) Adults may assist in closures only and only if an additional person is around.
  - (e) Inform another adult when you have returned.
  - (f) Children 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade may use a buddy system to go to the restroom if no adult escort is available.

# Discipline

Under no circumstances should paid or volunteer staff administer corporal punishment. Training will be provided and will include, but not be limited to these topics:

- a) Using positive words
- b) Establishing rules and behavior expectations
- c) The discipline policy and procedures of PTCUMC
- d) Determining when to involve church staff with regard to discipline issues
- e) What to do when child threatens safety of self or others
- f) Filling out the Incident Form
- g) Informing parents of positive and negative behaviors

No child/youth/vulnerable adult should ever be spanked, hit, grabbed, shook or otherwise physically disciplined.

# Safety

## Fire and Building Safety Guidelines

**Prevention Measures:** Be alert to any potential causes for accidents, injuries, or fire in your area and during the event. If repairs are needed in the area, notify the Director. The buildings, grounds and equipment must be maintained in order to protect the safety of all.

**First-Aid:** First-Aid care shall be administered as soon as possible. First-Aid kits and a guide to emergency care should be available. If necessary, 911 shall be called for local emergency services to respond. Advance emergency release forms from the parent/guardian shall be obtained granting permission for a child's emergency medical care for events such as VBS, Retreats, etc.

If a child arrives or becomes ill (fever, vomiting, etc.) during a ministry event, the parent/guardian shall be contacted and asked to pick up their child. These steps shall be followed when providing first-aid that involves cleaning an open wound, bleeding cut, or examining the mouth:

1. Wear disposable gloves
2. Wash hands before and after administering aid
3. Use care in disposing trash.
4. Clean the areas with a disinfectant spray.

**Fire and Evacuation Response:** Fire evacuation plans shall be posted in each room. Volunteers shall be trained to understand evacuation procedures and locations of fire alarms, extinguishers, and flashlights in the event of electrical failure. In the event of a fire, the first priority is to ensure the safety of all persons in your care. Secondly, pull the fire alarm or dial 911. Only if it is safe to do so, then attempt to contain the fire by shutting door or using fire extinguisher. Evacuation plans shall be reviewed with children periodically and always reviewed with volunteers/leaders.

**Sever Weather Response:** Severe weather plans shall be posted in each room. Volunteers shall be trained to understand the safety procedures including evacuation plans and locations of flashlights in the event of a power outage. Evacuation plans shall be reviewed with children periodically and always reviewed with volunteers/leaders.

**Vandalism and Suspicious Behavior:** Any suspicious behavior or activity shall immediately be reported to the Director. If necessary, 911 shall be called for local police to respond. All precautions shall be taken to maintain safety and security. This may include moving children to a safe location, locking door, etc. In cases deemed to pose an imminent danger to person or property, no one shall attempt to intervene but shall wait for the police to assist and act. After assuring the situation is secure, the volunteer shall complete a PTCUMC Accident/Incident Report and notify the Director.

**Automobile Incident Response:** In the event of an automobile accident during a ministry event, the driver shall first ensure the safety of all passengers; administer first-aid and/or call 911 for emergency services if necessary. After assuring that the situation is safe, the driver shall notify the person in charge of the ministry event and complete a PTCUMC Accident/Incident Report. The person shall contact the Director and/or Pastor. The Director or Pastor shall notify the parents/guardians promptly.

## Cyber Safety

The internet and portable devices allow people to stay in contact with each other more easily than any other time in this history of civilization. Some incredible ministry can take place using modern technology, but as with all forms of ministry, there are some inherent risks involved with the use of electronic communications. However, following the basic Safe Sanctuaries procedures can help to minimize the risks. There is no such thing as privacy in cyber space.

As a reminder, these guidelines are for all staff and volunteers at PTCUMC.

### Receive Parental/Guardian Permission

In addition to general permission to participate in a PTCUMC ministry event, you must receive advance parental permission for children and youth, and personal permission for vulnerable adults in writing for:

1. Posting photos of participants on any website or publication.
2. Sending them e-mail, text message or making videos for any use.
3. Emailing, calling, texting and sending data to a child, youth or vulnerable adult using any computer, tablet, phone along with sharing their information or full name.

### Posting Easily Identifiable Information Online

1. If you communicate by email, use "BCC" (blind carbon copy) so that each recipient sees only his or her address when a message is received.
2. Limit what is communicated in electronic prayer requests. When placing anyone on an electronic prayer list, consider using only their first name and make sure you have their permission.

### **Individual Communications with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults**

1. Conduct any communications in a professional manner.
2. Save all confidential cyber communications you have with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. An electronic paper trail can be important.
3. If you are uneasy about any topic addressed in an email, consult with a supervisor, or pastor and take next action steps accordingly.
4. If abuse is divulged electronically, follow standard reporting procedures.

### **Safety for Sharing Photos Electronically**

1. Obtain permission to use photos.
2. When posting photos, refrain from using last names or identifiable information.
3. Check photos for vulnerable/compromising situations and make sure they uphold your mission.
4. Block "save photo as" options on website.

### **Safety for Using Social Networking Sites**

Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Xanga, Friendster, and others are popular with today's world.

1. Set privacy settings to limit who can see your profile.
2. Restrict who can be your friend. It is prudent to use judgement in accepting requests from children/youth/vulnerable adults.
3. Use higher level security measures even if you have a restricted profile (such as requiring your approval of all comments, etc.).
4. Do not post anything to your social media that you would not want attached to your resume or printed in the church bulletin. Same goes for blogs.
5. Do not use inappropriate comments, photos, etc. If one happens to be on your page from someone else, remove immediately.

## **Outside Groups**

PTCUMC supports outside groups. All leaders must meet and adhere to the requirements of the Safe Sanctuaries policy and procedures. The church is often used by outside groups and there may be, at any time, outside people/groups consisting of non-church members, using the building. Every leader who deals with children/youth/vulnerable adults on our premises must complete a yearly Safe Sanctuaries training. No exceptions.

When children/youth are outside of parent care, their specific reserved designated areas cannot be inhabited by anyone other than the ministry leaders/volunteers. *Other ministries and outside groups that will meet at the same time as the events with children/youth will have to use alternative entrances coordinated and communicated ahead of time. This is the responsibility of the ministry director/leader and/or outside group leader to make sure this is communicated effectively and planned accordingly.*

# Ending Notes

## Educating the Congregation

A variety of educational opportunities and programs will be offered each year. Information will be included in a flyer and the church website. Other forms of direct communication with the church members will be offered as needed

## References

Georgia Center for Child Advocacy.org

Hammar, Richard R., Klipowicz, Steven W., Cobble, Jr., James F. *Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Your Church* 1993 by Church Law & Tax Report.

Melton, Joy Thornburg *Safe Sanctuaries* 1998 by Discipleship Resources

Melton, Joy Thornburg *Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church for Children and Youth* 2008. Discipleship Resources

Melton, Joy Thornburg *Safe Sanctuaries: The Church Response to Abuse, Neglect and Exploitations of Older Adults* 2012 by Discipleship Resources

Melton, Joy Thornburg *Safe Sanctuaries for Children* 2003 by Discipleship Resources

Melton, Joy Thornburg *Safe Sanctuaries for Youth* 2003 by Discipleship Resources

Melton, Joy Thornburg *Safe Sanctuaries in a Virtual World* 2014 by Discipleship

Resources National Center for Injury Prevention and Care, CDC 2013 Fact sheet

Selleck, Michael, UMY United Methodist YOUTH Handbook, 1999; Discipleship Resources.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, Child Maltreatment report 2013

Bethel UMC, Dunwoody UMC, Roswell UMC, Griffin UMC

2015 Safe Sanctuaries training by Rev. Debby Fox, North Georgia Conference

# APPENDIX

All leaders and volunteers who serve with children, youth and vulnerable adults are to complete the following:

1. Read and review entire Safe Sanctuaries packet and get any questions answered
2. Read and review Appendix 1 and 2
  - a. Report of Suspected/Alleged Incident of Child Abuse
  - b. Incident Report
3. Complete and Return Appendix 3, 4 and 5
  - a. Record of Receipt
  - b. Volunteer Application and Applicant Covenant Statement
  - c. Background Check

It is required that all leaders and volunteers complete and turn in all info each year. No one is to be in a leading/volunteer role until turned in and completed. For questions, please contact the Safe Sanctuaries Coordinator, 770-487-6499

Appendix 1	Report of Suspected/Alleged Incident of Child Abuse
Appendix 2	Incident Report
Appendix 3	Record of Receipt
Appendix 4	Volunteer Application and Applicant Covenant Statement
Appendix 5	Background Check
Appendix 6	Employee and Volunteer Leader Reference Check Form
Appendix 7	Covenant Letter to Registered Sex Offender
Appendix 8	Outside Organization Form
Appendix 9	Active Threat Plan

# Appendix 1

## Peachtree City United Methodist Church

### Report of Suspected/Alleged Incident of Child Abuse

1. Name of worker (paid or volunteer) observing or receiving disclosure of child abuse:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Victim's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Victim's Age/Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Date/Place of initial conversation with/report from the victim:

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Victim's Statement (give your detailed summary here):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Name of person accused of abuse:

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Reported to Senior Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Call to victim's parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Call to local children and family service agency:

**Fayette County Family and Children's Services (DFCS):**

**770-460-2555 (ask for intake)**

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Call to local law enforcement agency:

**Fayette County Family and Children's Services (DFCS):**

**770-460-2555 (ask for intake)**

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. Call to our liability insurance company/agent (within 48 hours):

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Date follow-up letter sent: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PTCUMC will notify our liability insurance company/agent (or other liability insurance company related contact person) within 48 hours of receiving communication of any alleged act of church related abuse/neglect/injury. PTCUMC will notify the insurance company/agent/contact person via telephone and immediately follow-up with written communication to the liability insurance confirming the conversation.**

12. Other contacts: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Spoke with: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

Signature

Date

# Appendix 2

## Peachtree City United Methodist Church

# INCIDENT REPORT

Date of incident: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Time of incident: \_\_\_\_\_am/pm  
Event: \_\_\_\_\_  
Person's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leader/Volunteer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Procedure:**

- 1. Volunteer/Leader completes form.**
- 2. Director reviews form.**
- 3. Leader advises parent/guardian, parent signs and receives copy of form.**
- 4. Return a signed copy to Director.**

1. Location of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Describe the incident:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Name of Person(s) who witnessed the incident:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Resolution/Follow Up:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Director's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Leader/Volunteer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# **Appendix 3**

## **Peachtree City United Methodist Church**

### **Record of Receipt**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ an employed staff member, volunteer and/or leader at Peachtree City United Methodist Church, have received a copy of, been trained on, and understand the PTCUMC Safe Sanctuary Policy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# Appendix 4

## Peachtree City United Methodist Church

### Volunteer Application and Applicant Covenant Statement

Office Use Only:

Dates: Rcvd \_\_\_\_\_ Bkgd Check \_\_\_\_\_ References called \_\_\_\_\_ Screening completed \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: All information on this completed form will be kept strictly confidential and access will be restricted to those few persons with a legitimate interest in the information.*

#### Personal Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

How long at this address? \_\_\_\_\_ Day phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening phone:

\_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Drivers License Number and State of

Issue: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you 18 years of age or older? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you at least 5 years older than the age level with which you wish to work? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Church History and Prior Work Experience with Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults

Are you a PTCUMC member? \_\_\_\_\_ How long? \_\_\_\_\_ List previous church names and locations during last 7 years:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List previous church volunteer positions with children and or youth:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List contact person/Pastor that you served under? \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

List previous non-church work involving children and/or youth:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Age with which you wish to work: \_\_\_0-2 yrs \_\_\_3-5 yrs \_\_\_Kdg-5<sup>th</sup> grade

\_\_\_6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade \_\_\_9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade

Reasons for volunteering for this position:

---

---

List qualities, gifts, training or experience that prepared you for working with children and/or youth:

---

### **Criminal History**

Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a crime, either misdemeanor or felony (including but not limited to drug or alcohol charges, child abuse, other crimes of violence or theft)? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please explain fully: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

### **References**

Please list 3 references (who are unrelated to you by blood or marriage) and provide contact information for each. As stated above, all responses are kept confidential.

1. Name and Address:

---

---

Day and Evening Phones: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name and Address:

---

---

Day and Evening Phones: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name and Address:

---

---

Day and Evening Phones: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name and Address:

---

---

Day and Evening Phones: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Applicant's Covenant Statement**

The Peachtree City United Methodist congregation is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, vulnerable adults and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by this church. The following policy statements reflect our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

I agree to live by the understanding that, as a person in authority, it is my responsibility to avoid sexual contact with children, youth and vulnerable adults in my care. Additionally, I will follow all conference and PTCUMC guidelines regarding appropriate ways to serve children, youth and vulnerable adults in my care.

I certify that the information I have provided on the application form is true and correct. The information that I have furnished on my application, authorization for release of information form, and/or any other background information, is subject to verification. This includes a criminal history and abuse check, or other criminal background sources, if necessary. If it is found that the answers given are untrue, I understand that I will be asked to terminate my role as one who gives care, supervision and leadership in their program.

I have read this Covenant, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

The responses I have made on this form are complete, true and accurate.

---

Signature of Applicant

Date

# Appendix 5

## Peachtree City United Methodist Church

### Background Check

Your service to Peachtree City United Methodist Church is truly welcomed. We are proud of our ministries and recognize it is the result of the quality and caliber of the people in our church. In pursuit of that excellence we require that all employees and volunteers with children and youth consent to and authorize our requesting of a criminal background history.

#### Authorization and Consent for Release and Disclosure

I authorize Peachtree City UMC and any of its agents/designated representatives to perform a criminal background check and to disclose orally, electronically, and/or in writing the results of this verification process and/or interview to the designated authorized representatives.

Please clearly print all information.

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security #: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_ Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
Current Drivers License Number: \_\_\_\_\_ State of Issue: \_\_\_\_\_  
Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Yrs. \_\_\_\_ Mos. \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any Residences in states other than GA during past 7 years:

City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Yrs/Mos. \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Yrs/Mos. \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Yrs/Mos. \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Yrs/Mos. \_\_\_\_\_

This information is provided voluntarily and is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. It will be used for identification purposes in verifying information for background verification.

---

Signature

Date

# Appendix 6

## Peachtree City United Methodist Church

### Employee and Volunteer Leader Reference Check Form

Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Reference: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the relationship of the applicant?
2. How long have you known the applicant?
3. How well do you know the applicant?
4. How would you describe the applicant?
5. How would you describe the applicant ability to relate to children/youth and vulnerable adults?
6. How would you describe the applicant's leadership skills?
7. How would you feel about having the applicant as a volunteer/staff with your child/youth/vulnerable adult?
8. Do you know of any characteristics that would negatively affect the applicant's ability to work with children/youth/vulnerable adults?
9. Do you have any knowledge that the applicant has ever been convicted of a crime? If so, please describe.

Additional Comments:

Reference inquiry completed by (print name): \_\_\_\_\_

---

Signature

Date

# Appendix 7

## Peachtree City United Methodist Church

### Covenant Letter to Registered Sex Offender

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

It has come to our attention that you are listed on the Sex Offender Registry for the State of Georgia. 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 our parishioners safe in body and spirit.

Under these circumstances, your participation in the life of Peachtree City United Methodist Church, or your presence on church premises, require 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, staff, and the congregation can be of assistance to you, and the church will, in turn, benefit from your presence and participation in the church's ministries. 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 available 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) and be in your company at all times while you are on the campus of the church. This includes accompanying to the restroom, etc. The Designated Attendants will accompany you to your care at the time you leave the campus.
2. You cannot serve in any position of leadership or teaching until further notice.
3. You agree to allow the pastor or his designee to contact any law enforcement; probation officer or governmental official—but not your attorney or any healthcare provider—in order to request or obtain any 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 government official may share any information with the pastor or his

designee, as 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 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 SPRC must keep other church staff and members apprised of your status and the guidelines agreed upon.

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 the church premises again for any reason.

Please know that we are praying for you as we locate and follow an appropriate path for moving forward with having you with us at Peachtree City United Methodist Church. 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.

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Pastor Signature

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Chair SPRC Signature

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

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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Signature

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Date

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Witness Signature

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Printed Name of Witness

# Appendix 8

## Peachtree City United Methodist Church

### Outside Organization Form

PTCUMC supports outside groups. All leaders must meet and adhere to the requirements of the Safe Sanctuaries policy and procedures. The church is often used by outside groups and there may be, at any time, outside people/groups consisting of non-church members, using the building. Every leader who deals with children/youth/vulnerable adults on our premises must complete a yearly Safe Sanctuaries training. No exceptions.

**Please choose one:**

1. We have a children/youth/vulnerable adult's protection policy in place for our church/organization. (Please attach full copy of policy)

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Signature of authorized representative \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

2. We will provide a Certificate of Liability form our insurance company naming Peachtree City United Methodist Church as an additional insured.

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Signature of authorized representative \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of authorized PTCUMC Representative \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date the Certificate of Liability/Policy received \_\_\_\_\_

Date of completion of Safe Sanctuaries Policies & returned forms \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix 9

## Peachtree City United Methodist Church

### Active Threat Plan

#### **Emergency: Civil Disturbance**

Civil disturbances include riots, property damage, threatening individuals, or assemblies that have become significantly disruptive.

Demonstrations are visible actions designed to advocate a position on a particular issue. Most are peaceful and only occasionally cause an inconvenience. They become problematic when they obstruct PTCUMC business. The Fayette County Sheriff's Office or Peachtree City Police Department will be called to monitor demonstrations that have a potential for violence, property damage, or disruption.

#### **In case of civil disturbance or demonstration**

1. Avoid provoking or obstructing demonstrators.
2. Secure your area (locks doors and ask for individuals to remain inside).
3. Avoid area of disturbance.
4. Continue with normal routines as much as possible.
5. If the disturbance is outside, stay away from doors or windows. Stay inside.
6. If police officers are not already present, call 770-487-8866 for police dispatch.
7. When the media calls, direct them to the Lay Leader

#### **Emergency: Threatening/disruptive**

##### **1. Disruptive individuals in worship**

- Whoever is preaching should stop preaching and allow ushers to step in.
- Ushers in that building quietly and quickly ask the person to step outside and speak to them. Ushers should position themselves between the disruptive person and stage.
- If they have a genuine concern attempt to talk to them and minister to them. (Remember that is our first job anyway).

##### **2. Threatening Person.**

If the person attempts to approach the stage.

- An usher will remove the worship leaders (Pastors, musicians etc) from the stage and into the back room (or outside if appropriate).
- Additional ushers will remove the individual from the area.
- Force is met with force in order to restrain, verbal is met with calm directed commands (Stop, Move, Leave).

If they approach a pastor outside or anywhere off stage.

- a. An usher will move closer and make eye contact with the aggressor ensuring that they know that you are watching them.
- b. If the threatening person uses force it will be met with force in order to restrain.
- c. If the threatening person is launching a verbal attack only they will be asked to leave the area.

### **Weapon Observed, but Not Involved in a Confrontation**

If a weapon is observed, but is not involved in a confrontation, do not approach the person with the weapon. Contact the head usher and tell them what you saw and where. Police should be alerted.

### **Confrontation with a Weapon Involved**

If a weapon is displayed in a confrontational situation immediately call 911 and report the incident. Inform all ministry teams (especially Children's Ministry) of the situation.

*"We have an emergency (give location) please go into lock-down."*

### **Emergency: Bomb Threat**

#### **Threat by telephone**

1. **Do not hang up.** Remain calm.
2. Take the caller seriously. Assume the threat is real.
3. If you have a digital phone, look for and notate originating number.
4. Ask questions about location, timing, appearance of the bomb as well as information about the caller (name, gender, age etc)
5. Listen carefully. Be polite, non-threatening and show interest. Try to keep caller talking so that you can gather more information about the device, the validity of the threat, or the identity of the caller. Listen carefully for background noises.
6. Gather as much information as possible.
7. After gathering the information call 911. Then call pastor(s).

#### **If you find a suspicious object**

1. **Do not touch the object.**
2. Move people away from the object.
3. **Do not use a cell phone, two-way radio, or any wireless communication device** as it can trigger a bomb.
4. Have someone call 911 on a wired phone to advise of the situation.
5. Follow Police Department instructions precisely.

6. Do not attempt to evacuate the building without the authorization and assistance of the ushers. Current emergency management guidelines caution against automatic evacuation. In most cases, people are likely to be more secure in their offices than in hallways that have not been searched or outdoors where an actual threat may be even more likely to exist.
7. Evacuation location is the parking lot closest to the nearest door.
8. If a search of the building is conducted, an employee may be asked to accompany police personnel since you are more likely to notice something out of the ordinary in your own area.

Note: Facilities Manager, should conduct building sweeps before and between services.

### **Emergency: Explosion**

In the event of an explosion in the building, Safety Team Members should take the following actions:

- After the immediate effects of the explosion have subsided, call 911.
- If possible or necessary, activate the building fire alarm system.
- Evacuate the immediate area of the explosion
- Seek out and assist injured and disabled persons in evacuating the building.
- Once outside, move people away at least 500 feet away from the building and proceed to the designated evacuation location.
- Keep roadways and walkways clear for emergency vehicles and personnel.
- Wait for instructions from emergency personnel. Do not re-enter the building.

### **Emergency: Active Shooter**

In the event of an active shooter the top priority will be stopping the threat and calling 911 immediately. Proceed to RUN, HIDE, or FIGHT in that order according to opportunity.

1. If you are in the building that the threat presents him/herself take immediate action to eliminate that threat.
  - a. Call 911 and give a full description of the offender and yourself. When officers approach you make sure you are unarmed and your empty hands are clearly seen.
  - b. Render aid to anyone that needs it.
  - c. Continue to scan the area for other threats.

2. If you are in the children's ministry area and the threat is elsewhere.
  - a. Lock down and hold position. Do NOT let anyone leave. This is for their safety.
  - b. Contact 911 and inform dispatch that your area is locked down
  - c. Do NOT leave your post unless an immediate threat presents itself. This will only add to the confusion if people are running around

### **Emergency: Suspicious Person**

1. Persons continual driving around the parking lot
  - *If during services there should be no need for this as services are under way.*
  - Observe behavior and if they approach vehicles get tag number and contact 911. Call for additional assistance. Ushers notify the rest of the hospitality team in the building.
  
2. If you see an "out of place person" (ie improper clothes for season or won't talk to anyone even when approached):
  - Observe behavior looking for empty hands, which means he is usually safe.
  - If behavior continues to be of concern, quietly and quickly (with another person) ask the person to step outside and speak to you.
  - Call for additional assistance if needed.