

# **Safe Sanctuary Guidelines**

For

**Asbury United Methodist Church  
Salisbury, Maryland**

**In order to ensure that all  
children/youth/vulnerable adults and the  
adults who care for them and work with  
them are safe.**

**As Reviewed by:**

**Staff-Parish Relations Committee  
and  
The Leadership Team**

**Adopted October 14, 2009**  
Reviewed and revised 11-29-2010  
Reviewed and revised 8-29-2011

Reviewed and revised 6-7-2018

**Asbury United Methodist Church  
1401 Camden Avenue  
Salisbury, MD 21801  
410-749-2131**

August 29, 2011

Re: Safe Sanctuaries

Dear Volunteer,

The 2016 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, paragraph 122 in regard to creating a safe sanctuary for children/youth/vulnerable adults, asks that local congregations ensure guidelines are in place to help keep children/youth/vulnerable adults and the adults who care for and work with them safe. In response 'The SAFE Team' was formed to oversee the church's Safe Sanctuary Guidelines. The Safe Team is responsible for ensuring that the guidelines are followed, which includes completing the enclosed application and covenant agreement. A background screening will be done as soon as the application is completed. The church will bear the cost of this screening. Please turn in these documents to the Director of Finance and Business, Janice Wilkinson, designated representative of the SAFE team to do the screenings. Without the completion of these forms, you will not be eligible to work with Asbury's children, youth or vulnerable adults.

A brochure is available to further describe the Safe Sanctuary Policy, including the screening procedures. This brochure will be placed on the church's Welcome Center brochure rack. It will also be given to parents/guardians as they bring children, youth and vulnerable adults to participate in the church's ministries.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Rev. Benita Harris or any member of the Safe Team. Thank you for your willingness to be a part of this effort.

On behalf of the SAFE Team,

Rev. Benita Harris

## Safe Sanctuary Background Information

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

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 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, the children. The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church state that "children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional and sexual exploitation and abuse" (§162C).

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, exploitation, and ritual abuse ["ritual abuse" refers to abusive acts committed as part of ceremonies or rites; ritual abusers are often related to cults, or pretend to be] occur in churches, both large and small, urban and rural. The problem cuts across all economic, cultural, and racial lines. It is real, and it appears to be increasing. Most annual conferences can cite specific incidents of child sexual abuse and exploitation with churches. Virtually every congregation has among its members adult survivors of early sexual trauma.

Such incidents are devastating to all who are involved: the child, the family, the local church and its leaders. Increasingly, churches are torn apart by the legal, emotional, and monetary consequences of litigation following allegations of 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* – 2016). Copyright ©2016 by The United Methodist Publishing House. Used by permission.)

Thus, in covenant with all United Methodist congregations, we have implemented Safe Sanctuary Guidelines at Asbury United Methodist Church.

**ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
1401 CAMDEN AVENUE  
SALISBURY, MARYLAND 21801  
410-749-2131**

Safe Sanctuary Guidelines

Safe Sanctuary is a movement within the United Methodist Church to ensure that all children/youth/vulnerable adults and the adults who care for and work with them are safe. At the October 14, 2009 Leadership Team meeting, members voted to implement a Safe Sanctuary Guidelines at Asbury United Methodist Church, effective December 31, 2009. The guidelines follow the suggestions found in the resource "Safe Sanctuaries for Youth: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in Youth Ministries" by attorney Joy Thornburg Melton. This resource is used by The United Methodist Church in its Safe Sanctuaries training.

Volunteers and workers with children/youth/vulnerable adults at Asbury United Methodist Church will:

- ❖ Be in attendance and/or church members for at least 6 months prior to working with children/youth/vulnerable adults
- ❖ Complete a written application
- ❖ Submit personal references
- ❖ Complete a screening process that includes a national criminal search, a sex offender registries search and a social trace, which includes verification of name, birth date, SSN and previous addresses
- ❖ Sign a participation covenant

Guidelines in place include:

- ❖ The "Two-Adult Rule" means that no fewer than two adults (unrelated by blood or marriage) will be present at all times during any church sponsored program or event.
- ❖ All teachers and leaders of children/youth/vulnerable adult ministries will be over 18 years of age and will have completed the above-referenced screening/hiring procedures.
- ❖ The "Five-Years-Older Rule" means that youth workers will be at least 5 years older than the oldest youth served in the ministries.
- ❖ Rooms where ministries for children/youth/vulnerable adults take place will include windows on the doors, or doors will be left open when activities are taking place.
- ❖ Children/youth/vulnerable adults will never be left unattended.

The SAFE Team will encourage members and those working with church's children, youth and vulnerable adults to attend district wide safe sanctuary training events when they are available and in house trainings at least every

quadrennium. The personnel staff person on the team will be responsible for administering the screening procedures. All information received by this person will be treated as confidential and will be kept in a locked file drawer in the church office. This team will also disseminate information to the congregation about the steps to be taken if a suspected incident of children, youth or vulnerable adult abuse should occur.

Members of the SAFE Team will include but are not limited to:

- ❖ The Chair or designated representative of the Trustees
- ❖ The Chair or designated representative of the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC)
- ❖ The Chair or designated representative of the Leadership Team
- ❖ The Lay Partner for Children's Ministry
- ❖ The Lay Partner for Youth Ministry
- ❖ The Lay Partner for Education Ministry
- ❖ Director of Children and Youth
- ❖ Director of Asbury Child Development Center
- ❖ Pastors
- ❖ Others chosen by the Leadership Team

**\*\*\*\*\*ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
1401 CAMDEN AVENUE  
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410-749-2131**

Date: December 31, 2009  
To: Church Insurance File  
From: Chairman of the Trustees  
Re: Safe Sanctuaries for Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults Guidelines

The 2008 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, paragraph 256.2 in regard to creating a safe sanctuary for children/youth/vulnerable adults relates that the local congregation is to ensure that guidelines are in place to help keep children/youth/vulnerable adults and the adults who care for and work with them safe. These guidelines include such things as background checks, having at least two unrelated adults per group, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first-aid training."

Asbury United Methodist Church is committed to the safety and well being of children/youth/vulnerable adults served by ministries of this congregation. Therefore, we have become compliant with the Discipline mandate to become a Safe Sanctuary.

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Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

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Date

**Asbury United Methodist Church  
1401 Camden Avenue  
Salisbury, MD 21801  
410-749-4163**

CONFIDENTIAL VOLUNTEER APPLICATION  
CHILDREN/YOUTH/VULNERABLE ADULT MINISTRIES

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

Current Address along with length of residence:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please list two previous addresses if you have been at your current residence less than 10 years.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

SSN# \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Current employer: \_\_\_\_\_

How long? \_\_\_\_\_

Current job responsibilities and schedule:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Previous volunteer experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Special interests, hobbies, skills: \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours per week are you available to volunteer? \_\_\_\_\_

Days: \_\_\_\_\_ Evenings: \_\_\_\_\_

Weekends: \_\_\_\_\_

Can you make a one-year commitment to this volunteer role? \_\_\_\_\_

Why would you like to volunteer as a worker with children/youth/ vulnerable adults?

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What qualities do you have that would help you work with children/youth/ vulnerable adults?

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Would you be available for periodic training sessions? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have your own transportation? \_\_\_\_\_

Valid driver's license? \_\_\_\_\_

Current driver's license number and state \_\_\_\_\_

If you will be transporting children, do you have liability insurance?

List name of carrier and policy limits \_\_\_\_\_

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Have you ever been exposed to an incident of child abuse or neglect? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, how did you feel about the incident? \_\_\_\_\_

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Have you ever been charged and convicted of or pled guilty to any criminal offense?                    Yes\_\_\_\_\_                    No\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been charged and convicted of child abuse or neglect?                    Yes\_\_\_\_\_                    No\_\_\_\_\_

Have any complaints or allegations of misconduct involving children ever been made against you?    Yes\_\_\_\_\_                    No\_\_\_\_\_

Have you been convicted of the possession, use or sale of drugs?                    Yes\_\_\_\_\_                    No\_\_\_\_\_

Within the past year have you abused alcohol, legal or illegal drugs?                    Yes\_\_\_\_\_                    No\_\_\_\_\_

Have you been convicted or plead guilty to a traffic offense within the last 5 years?                    Yes\_\_\_\_\_                    No\_\_\_\_\_

On a separate sheet of paper fully explain any YES answers to the above 6 questions. In addition, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of children/youth/vulnerable adults?

Please provide the names and contact information for 3 references, not related to you:

1. Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Day \_\_\_\_\_

Evening\_\_\_\_\_

2. Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Day \_\_\_\_\_

Evening\_\_\_\_\_

3. Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Day \_\_\_\_\_

Evening\_\_\_\_\_

This information that I have provided may be verified by contacting persons or organizations that may have information concerning me. I hereby release and agree to hold harmless from liability any person or organization that provides information and this release may be sent to any reference. I also agree to hold harmless Asbury United Methodist Church, and the officers, employees, and volunteers thereof from use of this application for the purpose intended. I certify that the information is true and correct; if it is found that the answers given are untrue, I understand that it may be cause of dismissal.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

**Asbury United Methodist Church**  
**1401 Camden Avenue**  
**Salisbury, MD 21801**  
**410-749-4163**

Participation Covenant Statement

The congregation of Asbury United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, vulnerable adults and adults who care for and work with them in the ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following statements reflect our congregation's commitment to preserving our church as a holy place where all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

1. No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse or emotional abuse), will be permitted to volunteer to work with children/youth/vulnerable adults in any church-sponsored activity.
2. Adult survivors of child abuse need the love and support of our congregation. Any adult survivor who desires to volunteer in some capacity to work with children/youth/vulnerable adults is encouraged to discuss his/her willingness with one of our church's ministers before accepting the assignment.
3. All adult volunteers and workers involved with children/youth/vulnerable adults of our church must have been members (or regularly attending) for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment.
4. The "Two-Adult Rule" means no fewer than two adults (unrelated by blood or marriage) will be present at all times during any church sponsored program or event.
5. Adult volunteers and workers involved with children/youth/vulnerable adults shall observe the "Two-Adult Rule" at all times so that no adult is ever alone with children/ youth/vulnerable adults.
6. All adult volunteers and workers shall be over the age of 18 and observe the "Five- Years-Older" Rule.
7. The "Five-Years-Older" Rule means that youth volunteers and workers will be at least five years older than the children/youth served in the ministries.
8. Adult volunteers and workers with children/youth/vulnerable adults shall attend regular training and educational events provided by the church to keep volunteers informed of church guidelines and state laws regarding abuse.
9. Adult volunteers and workers shall immediately report to their supervisor any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate.

Please answer each of the following questions:

1. As a volunteer in this church, do you agree to observe and abide by all church guidelines regarding working in ministries with children/youth/vulnerable adults? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. As a volunteer in this church, do you agree to observe the "Two-Adult Rule" to the best of your ability?  
Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. As a volunteer in this church, do you agree to abide by the "Six-Month Rule" before beginning a volunteer assignment?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. As a volunteer in this church, do you agree to participate in training and education events provided by the church related to your volunteer assignment?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. As a volunteer in this church, do you agree to promptly report abusive or inappropriate behavior to your supervisor?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. As a volunteer in this church, do you agree to inform a minister of this church if you have ever been convicted of child abuse?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

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

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

