



St. Luke's United Methodist Church
Indianapolis, Indiana

Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Procedures Concerning Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults



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SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY

Concerning Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

St. Luke's United Methodist Church

Indianapolis, Indiana

At St. Luke's United Methodist Church, Inc. ("St. Luke's" or the "church"), it is our belief that children, youth and vulnerable adults all have a significant place in our church. It is important that we not only make every effort to be inclusive and allow for these groups to fully participate and contribute to our church, but also that we should protect and advocate for these groups. According to Micah 6:6-8 (NRSV), God *requires* us "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." Further, our Methodist founding father, John Wesley, had three rules he lived by: Do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God. St. Luke's is intentional about doing no harm and providing justice for all – particularly for our most vulnerable. In fact, our Baptismal Covenant which we renew at each baptism states that each member is commended to our love and care, that we will faithfully participate in the ministries of the church and that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. In Christian love we must welcome and create a safe place for each of God's children within our church.

In the cause of justice for these groups, and to exhibit integrity within our congregation, we have developed the following list of policies and guidelines which are designed to prevent harm through accident or abuse. The nurture and care of children, youth, and vulnerable adults is a sacred trust bestowed upon us by God; therefore, we must make every reasonable effort to uphold that trust and protect those in our care.

Abuse is not only a violation of Christian hospitality and care for those Jesus says are nearest the kingdom of God—it is also illegal. The State of Indiana has definitions of and laws regarding child abuse, elder abuse, and abuse of vulnerable persons that are applicable in every venue of our church activity. This policy is applicable in all ministry settings where St. Luke's is involved, as well as for all outside groups' activities held at St. Luke's.

While this Safe Sanctuaries Policy is primarily established to prevent the abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable adults, this policy also serves to protect staff and volunteers from uncertainty and unfounded or malicious allegations of abuse. Our comprehensive policy includes procedures for applicant screening, training, supervision, reporting, and response, in addition to also outlining protection and integration of known sex offenders.

Jesus taught us to lead those new to the faith, including children, in ways that are true to the Gospel. Therefore, we are blessed with the responsibility to guide our children, youth, and vulnerable adults in ways of righteousness. St. Luke's recognizes that they are entrusted to us not just within our physical walls; our ministries extend out into the world, including the virtual world. By protecting our children and youth as best we can, the Safe Sanctuaries Policy helps us to fulfill our United Methodist commitment to nurture children, youth, and vulnerable adults in the Christian faith, to witness to them and, ultimately, to equip them to witness to others the teachings of Jesus Christ.

DEFINITIONS

The following are terms and their definitions for the purpose of this Safe Sanctuaries Policy:

Accountability Partner: a Screened Adult designated by the church to be present and in visual contact with a person who has been identified as a Known Sex Offender.

Active Participant: a congregant who has participated in church activities (which may include worship, serving, groups, or classes) on average at least twice per month for the last 6 months.

Activity: any scheduled event or program in which Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults are under the supervision of church Staff persons or Volunteers.

Adult: a person 18 years old or older (who is not in high school).

Applicant: an applicant to become Personnel.

Child or Children: any person from infancy to 4th grade.

Child Abuse: as defined under includes any of the following that occurs before a child's 18th birthday:

- The child's physical or mental health condition is seriously impaired or seriously endangered as a result of the inability, refusal, or neglect of the child's Parent/guardian/custodian to supply the child with necessary food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, or supervision
- The child's physical or mental health is seriously endangered due to injury by the act or omission of the child's parent/guardian/custodian. An omission is an occurrence in which the parent/guardian/custodian allowed that person's child to receive an injury the parent/guardian/custodian had a reasonable opportunity to prevent or mitigate
- The child is the victim of a sex offense under the criminal citations incorporated with the Indiana Department of Child Services.
- The child's parent/guardian/custodian allows the child to participate in an obscene performance
- The child's parent/guardian/custodian allows the child to commit a sex offense

Roamer: a Screened Adult who will roam the area and make frequent, unannounced visits with a room/location in which there is only one Screened Adult present with Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults.

Helper: a person assisting with a church activity involving Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults. Helpers do not count toward the 2 Adult Rule. Adult helpers must still have a current background check on file. Background checks will not be required to be performed for youth helpers, but youth helpers will be required to have Safe Sanctuaries training.

Intern: a screened adult who may lead a church ministry program or activity under the supervision of St. Luke's staff.

Kids Ministry: St. Luke's ministry to children aged birth through fourth grade.

Known Sex Offender: a person who has identified as a Sex Offender as defined by Indiana Code sections 11-8-8-4.5 or 11-8-8-5 which includes persons convicted of one or more of an extensive list of offenses including possession of child pornography, sexual misconduct with a minor, solicitation of a minor, sexual battery, rape, and incest.

Parent: a mother, father, or foster parent (or other legal custodian) of the child.

Personnel: any adult, paid or unpaid, who manages or supervises a scheduled activity or program for the church.

Responsible Adult: the adult given responsibility or permission (parental or legal) to make decisions regarding a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult's participation and communication with St. Luke's.

Safe Sanctuaries Team: a team that includes clergy, staff, lay leaders, and other volunteers which oversees policy development and review, the development and implementation of annual training, and the procedures for the inclusion of Known Sex Offenders.

Screened Adult/Volunteer: an Adult who has completed a screening process including application, reference, and background checks and who has subsequently been cleared to work directly with Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults.

Small Group Leader: a Screened Adult (when working with Children or Youth) who leads a church small group, creates connections and builds relationships with and between those in their group.

Special Needs and Disabilities: any number of factors that when exhibited by an individual may require special accommodations within a typical ministry setting. These factors could include physical, mental, or emotional disabilities; developmental delays; chronic or terminal illnesses; mental health concerns; behavioral disorders; learning disabilities and educational delays; or behaviors or signs that indicate a suspected disability. Children, Youth, or Adults with Special Needs may benefit from assistance or modified environment, activities, or expectations. An adult who has special needs may or may not be a Vulnerable Adult, depending on degree of ability and need. The word choice of "individual with a disability" is more inclusive than "individual with special needs." Therefore, it is recommended this be the language used when referring to any individual impacted by a disability, whether physical or developmental.

Special Needs Buddy/Mosaic Buddy: a Screened Adult or Youth who has been trained to assist and accompany a Child or Youth with a disability and assigned by Mosaic Ministry.

Staff: any person (or people) employed or paid by St. Luke's and is responsible for activities for Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults.

Student: a minor who is not an established personal friend or relative. Students may be Children or Youth within or outside the church congregation.

Student Ministry / Youth Ministry: St. Luke's ministry to middle and high school youth, as well as college-aged young adults.

Volunteer: a person who conducts or assists with activities within the church but is not paid by the church.

Vulnerable Adult: includes any person 18 years of age or older with diminished physical, mental, or emotional capacities who is at risk for neglect, abuse, or exploitation of resources.

Young Adult: a Screened Adult who is at least 18 years of age (and out of school) and not yet 25 years of age.

Youth: denotes any person or group of Children from 5th-12th grades.

1. SCREENING AND POLICIES FOR ASSIGNING PERSONNEL

Careful screening of those who have direct contact with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults can help prevent incidents of abuse and provides some assurance that only those with high integrity, competence and merit are permitted to work with or near those entrusted to us. St. Luke's reserves the right to turn down any applicant for any position, paid or unpaid, at any time and for any reason. It is our policy to never knowingly hire as Staff or appoint as Volunteers a Sex Offender in any capacity that would put that person near or in direct contact with Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults. Likewise, no person convicted of a felony, with a history of assaultive behavior of any sort or history of a crime involving minors or Vulnerable Adults will be approved to work with or near Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults. The following policies and procedures relate to Applicants and the process of approving Applicants to become Personnel:

1. *Prerequisites to Apply*

a. 3 Month Rule

- i. All Volunteer Personnel who lead or supervise a program or activity involving Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults must have been an Active Participant of St. Luke's for at least three months prior to being appointed a leader or supervisor.
- ii. If Applicant does not meet the 3 months rule, they may serve as a Helper.
- iii. Care Ministry may have volunteers wait six months before volunteering in visitation, hospital visitation, and Stephen Ministry.

b. 5 Years Older Rule It is best practice that all Staff and Volunteers be at least five years older than the age of the oldest Child or Youth for which they are responsible.

- i. At the discretion of the Director of Student Ministries, St. Luke's may choose to use a Staff, Adult, or Youth volunteer who is not five years older than the oldest youth to lead a program or activity.
- ii. However, all other best practices within the Safe Sanctuaries Policy, including the 2 Adult Rule, Rule of 3, and Clear View Rule are non-negotiable and cannot be waived.

c. Young Adults In appropriate circumstances, determined on a case-by-case basis, St. Luke's may approve a Young Adult for a role within ministries that serve Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults. However, Young Adults may not be solely responsible for the safety of Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults and are expected to follow all best practices within the Safe Sanctuaries Policy with supervision from the Director of that ministry area.

d. Helpers

- i. If a ministry involving Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults chooses to assign within their ministry an Adult who has not been an Active Participant during the preceding three months (3 months rule), the Adult must be considered a Helper; thus, they must assist in the presence of two other Screened Adults until they have become an Active Participant for three months. They must still undergo a background check before working with Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults.
- ii. Children or Youth serving as Helpers must never be put in a position in which they could be left alone or unsupervised with Children or Youth. Children or Youth Helpers do not count toward the required Adult:Child ratios, must not be solely responsible for the safety of other Children or Youth, and must not escort a Child to or assist a Child in the restroom.

2. *Application Process*

- a. All Applicants who would work regularly with or near Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults will provide an application with at least two references.
- b. This application is only needed the first time an Applicant applies to work with Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults.
- c. References may not be relatives or anyone cohabitating with applicant.
- d. The application will be turned in with their Safe Sanctuaries Covenant. The supervising staff member will call their references.

3. **Approval Process**

a. **References.**

- i. Must have at least two positive responses and zero negative responses before approving an Applicant for work with Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults.
- ii. Approval or rejection will be noted in the applicant's profile on the Church Database Management Software, The Rock.

b. **Background check.** All Applicants for Staff or Volunteer positions must submit to a nationwide background check before working with or near Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults.

- i. Applicants must voluntarily disclose any arrests and convictions of criminal behavior before an applicant is approved, or instances in which they were under investigation or named a perpetrator in a confirmed or indicated child abuse report.
- ii. The Authorization to Perform a Background Check and any results will be securely kept in the church office with restricted access.
- iii. The background check results may also be stored digitally online with the background check vendor.
- iv. Applicants may request access to their own information and shall be provided copies upon request.
- v. St. Luke's must receive an acceptable background check results on Applicants before approving Applicants to a position working with or near Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults. Only the Executive Pastor may approve any exceptions;
 1. The director or clergy must be confident in the Applicant's decision-making abilities if an exception is made.
 2. Exceptions must not be made if the report includes any crime involving a Minor or Vulnerable Adult or any crime involving violent or sexual acts.

c. **Interview.** Applicants will be interviewed by the director of the church ministry or program being served (or their designee) and must be deemed competent by the interviewer to serve effectively in the position to be assigned. Applicants will receive an up-to-date position description.

4. **Documentation**

- a. Background check will stay on file with Human Resources. Personnel will receive a "badge" on St. Luke's Church Data Management Software, The Rock, that indicates passing background check.
- b. Application with References will go on file with completed Safe Sanctuaries Covenant. Personnel will receive a "badge" on The Rock that indicates passing Safe Sanctuaries.
- c. Personnel will be added to a group on The Rock that indicates where they are serving.

5. **Training**

- a. Those working with Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults will be provided training and expectations, including those related to boundaries and ethics, that are specific to their role before beginning in that role and as frequently as each ministry determines is necessary for that position.
- b. Safe Sanctuaries training will be completed prior to working with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults.
- c. First Aid/CPR training will be required of and provided for at least one Personnel per age level, activity, or area who regularly directs or works directly with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults.
- d. It is recommended that someone in each age-level ministry within Children and Youth ministries be trained in de-escalation/restraint training.

6. ***Oversight of Personnel***

a. **Background Checks**

- i. St. Luke's will reconduct Volunteer background checks every two years for those working with or near Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults.
- ii. Staff background checks will be conducted annually.
- iii. Personnel must immediately notify St. Luke's if they are the focus of an investigation, are arrested, named the perpetrator or otherwise have charges pending for any criminal offense.

b. **Annual Safe Sanctuaries Training**

- i. An annual Safe Sanctuaries Policy training will be required of and provided for all Personnel in direct contact or working near Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults.
- ii. This training must be provided before anyone is placed in a supervisory position and will be offered at least annually.
- iii. Training will include guidelines for proper supervision and our policies and procedures as well as how to identify and report suspected abuse.
- iv. This training is also recommended for all of St Luke's Staff, ministerial volunteers, and the congregation at large.

2. **RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR ACTIVITIES AND MINISTRY PROGRAMS**

All Staff and Volunteers who have access to Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults will be trained with the following procedures. These provide protection not only to those who are served by the church's ministries, but also for those serving within the church's ministries.

1. **2 Adult Rule:** No Personnel shall ever be alone with a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult. There will be at least two Screened Adults present whenever Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults are present except in the case of emergencies. The two Adults should not be related or cohabitating. The 2 Adult Rule must always be considered a best practice; as such, every reasonable effort must be made to comply with this rule.
 - a. **Roamer:** If all reasonable efforts have been made to adhere to the 2 Adult Rule, and yet only one Screened Adult is available to supervise Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults, the activity will be conducted with the door open (excepting safety issues) and will require an unrelated and non-cohabitating Adult Roamer who will roam the area and give frequent, unannounced visits.

- b. Alternatively, this activity lacking two Screened Adults could be moved to a public setting where others are likely to walk by.
 - c. If a Roamer is needed and utilized, notify your ministry leader.
2. **Rule of 3:** There may be exceptional cases or emergencies when the 2 Adult Rule cannot be supported even with the assistance of a Roamer. In these rare circumstances, Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults must be in the presence of two other individuals, one being a Screened Adult. This ensures that no one finds themselves alone with another individual. Absolutely every effort must be exhausted to ensure that there are two other individuals in the presence of a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult to maximize safety and minimize liability for all.
 - a. It is acceptable for Staff or Small Group Leaders to meet individual students off-campus, but only in a public place with high visibility and with written or verbal permission from parent or guardian.
 - b. Staff and Small Group Leaders must not host Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults from their ministry in their home in one-on-one situations.
3. **Clear View Rule:** Any one-on-one session or interaction between two people or an activity or program involving Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults in which there are not two Screened Adults present must take place in a public or open setting or in a room with an open door (with a Roamer present or accessible). Alternatively, it could be acceptable to meet behind a closed door with uncovered transparent glass or transparent mirror glass (interior side is reflective, but someone on the other side can see through window). If possible, these meetings will be scheduled and known about by supervisors, Parents or another individual responsible for the care of a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult.
 - a. Any ministry activities held at a Staff or Small Group Leader's home must include proper ratios and supervision by other unrelated, non-cohabitating Screened Adults, and the Clear View rule followed.
 - b. If Staff or a leader is invited to a Student's house, the Parent must be home and the Clear View rule followed.
4. **Restrooms:**
 - a. Children in 1st grade or younger will be escorted to the restroom if one is not available in their room. Adults will stand outside the restroom or stall unless the child needs assistance.
 - b. Children 2nd through 4th grades may go to the restroom independently if there is a Screened Adult monitoring the hallway; otherwise, they should go in pairs. Ideally, restrooms should also be checked before and after programs for safety.
 - c. When it is appropriate for an Adult to assist a Child in using the restroom, the door will remain open.
 - d. Youth may go to the restroom at any time with Adult permission.
5. **Physical Affection & Gifts**
 - a. Physical affection must be appropriate to the age of the Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult. For example, it is generally appropriate for a three-year-old to sit on a leader's lap, but it is not appropriate for a teenager and their Youth leader to behave this way.
 - b. Touching and affection should be a response to the Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult's need for comfort, encouragement, or affection. It should not be initiated or requested by a leader of any age. It is strongly recommended that side hugs, with only one arm be used. It is also

recommended that Children sit on one side or another of a leader's lap rather than in the middle.

- c. Touching and affection will only be given in the presence of other Adults or Helpers. Personnel must promptly discuss any questionable behavior by other people with their supervisor, ministry leader, or pastor. Known or suspected inappropriate touching must be reported to the authorities as outlined in the Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedures and Response Plan found in Section 11 of this manual.
- d. No Personnel are to give gifts to individual Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult without the prior knowledge of the Parent(s) or responsible Staff. Because gift-giving can be a form of buying loyalty or silence, gift-giving will be done on a group basis, or for special occasions only. Gifts should not be elaborate but instead modest and appropriate to the occasion.

6. *Personnel and Helpers must be attentive to:*

- a. Appropriate and modest dress and personal cleanliness. Each ministry may determine a specific dress code for their area as necessary. Staff must also follow the Employee Handbook.
- b. Appropriate use of language and topics of conversation.
- c. Appropriate demonstration of affection and encouragement with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults.
- d. When supervising Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults, Personnel will not engage in activities that cause distraction from their primary role of supervising and engaging those in their care. Unless directly used to augment an activity or program, items that cause distractions, particularly technological devices such as cell phones and tablets, should not be used while supervising Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults. This also serves as modeling appropriate behavior in a group setting for the Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults.
 - i. If observed, it will be addressed by the ministry leader.
- e. Leaders of Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult ministries and programs may sign an additional Volunteer or employee behavior covenant which outlines the standards and expectations of behavior.

7. *Permission Slips & Medical Release Forms*

- a. For on-site events in which Children or Students are dropped off, at a minimum emergency contact information for the Parent or Responsible Adult and participant allergies will be collected.
- b. Parents or Responsible Adults will also provide specific written permission for each ministry event in which their Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult participates. Paper sign-in, digital sign-in, or online registration indicates parental permission.

8. *Sign-in Procedures & Supervision*

- a. All on-site activities and programs will have a sign-in sheet.
 - i. Anyone considered a Child (by definition) must be signed in and out by their Parent or their Responsible Adult and may not be released to anyone who did not sign them in (unless written permission is provided and satisfactory identification is displayed).
 - ii. Within the Children's Ministry, security stickers may be used as a form of sign-in, provided the Adult walks the Child to the room; a matching Parent security sticker may be used upon pick-up as signing out.
 - iii. The nursery may implement procedures that offer extra protections.

- b. Within the Children’s Ministry, young Children should be counted frequently. Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults must be counted before and after movement from one place to another. If transporting Students, a count must be done before departure and upon arrival.
- c. Parents are to supervise their Children who are not actively participating in a program or activity while on church property and follow these guidelines:
 - i. Children must be picked up from all activities by an Adult and must be signed in and out as described above.
 - ii. Youth may sign themselves in and out and may meet their Parent or Responsible Adult in a place that their Parent or Responsible Adult has designated.
 - iii. Youth 5th through 8th grades are encouraged to cross the parking lot in groups with trusted adults or follow their family’s desired pick up plan.
 - iv. Youth and Children must always be in a scheduled program during services or under the direct supervision of their Parent. Youth and Children are not permitted to roam the church building or property.
 - v. Parents or Responsible Adults should notify supervisory Personnel when entrusting a Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult who has a physical, emotional, or psychological condition to their care so that church Personnel can better serve and anticipate needs.
- d. Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults will have access to their phone or a leader’s phone upon request during church-sponsored events on or off the facility premises.

9. **Discipline:** Ministries serving Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults will develop a discipline plan for their area.

- a. Discipline plans will include addressing behavior issues without shaming or making another person feel unworthy or unloved.
- b. Redirection is encouraged as the first behavior management technique. Positive reinforcement is also encouraged.
- c. If a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult is removed, a Parent or Responsible Adult will be notified and invited to discuss behavior management.
- d. NO physical discipline is allowed except for restraint purposes by a leader trained in CPI as a last resort if a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult is in danger of harming self or others. It is recommended that key Personnel in these areas, including paid program Staff, receive restraint training.

10. **Ratios**

- a. Minimum of two adults per room is always in effect
- b. The church’s minimum adult to Child/Youth ratio guidelines will be:

Ages Birth-11 months	1 adult to 3 Children
Ages 12-23 months	1 adult to 5 Children
Ages 24-35 months	1 adult to 6 Children
Ages 3-5 years	1 adult to 10 Children
Kindergarten - 6 th grades	1 adult to 12 Children
6 th - 12 th grades	1 adult to 15 Children

Any age overnight	1 adult to 8 Children
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- i. If groups consist of Children of mixed ages, the Adult to Child ratio for the youngest Child in the group must be maintained; an Adult’s own Children will be counted toward ratios.
- c. The following ratios should be considered as a guide for Children & Youth with Special Needs and Vulnerable Adults:

Participant needs constant individual assistance/supervision	1 Special Needs Buddy to 1 Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult
Participant needs close, but not constant, assistance or supervision	1 Special Needs Buddy to 2 Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults
Participant needs occasional assistance	1 Special Needs Buddy to 4 Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults
Participant needs minimal assistance	1 Special Needs Buddy to 5 Children/Youth/Vulnerable Adults

- i. The specific needs of individual Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults may require a change to these guidelines and shall be determined by the Director of Mosaic.

- 11. **Facilities:** Church facilities will meet reasonable safety standards to reduce risk of harm or injury.
 - a. Every classroom door will have a window providing a view of the interior.
 - b. Facilities will be regularly checked for safety hazards by Trustees and the Facilities & Grounds Director.
 - c. Playground and play areas will be checked regularly for dangers.

3. COMMITMENTS TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

St. Luke’s is intentional about providing a safe and welcoming environment for individuals impacted by disabilities and their families. The following best practices and procedures allow for increased security and any necessary accommodations for Children, Youth, and Adults with disabilities and the Adults committed to their care and unique needs.

- 1. Children or Youth with disabilities may require individual attention for such issues as sensory overload, bathroom breaks, diaper changes, or tube feedings. When removing a Child or Youth from a group environment or activity, special care is required to meet or exceed supervision policies.
 - a. A Child must never be isolated with only one other Adult or Youth Volunteer when out of clear view of others.
 - b. The Child or Youth needing attention or assistance will be moved to a space with clear visibility by others.

- c. It is the best practice for two Screened Adults (unrelated, non-cohabitating) to accompany a Child or Youth when individual attention is required, especially if outside of clear view from others.
 - d. If the Child or Youth must be attended to in a location where it is unlikely that others will be in view (such as the playground, Lodge, or Modge) two Adults should be present. If this is not possible, it is acceptable for one Adult and one Youth Volunteer to be present.
2. Practicing Safe Restroom Assistance and Diaper Care for individuals with disabilities.
- a. Always assist the individual with diapering in an area with an open door and clear visibility by others. Restroom assistance must be done with an open door.
 - b. For Children over the age of three, the use of diaper changing stations designed for younger children is not permitted for safety concerns. As they are able, allow older Children to stand up for diaper changes.
 - c. For older Children and Youth requiring a horizontal position for diaper care, this may be done with the use of a mat or blanket provided by the church or individual's family.
 - d. It is permissible for a Volunteer to opt out of restroom and diaper care as long as a trained staff person from Mosaic Ministry is immediately notified of the need so the Child or Youth is attended to quickly.
3. Consider best practices with disability etiquette. *It should be noted that each individual may have specific preferences and best word choice is ever-evolving. Efforts should be made to understand preferences so individuals can best be respected by our words and actions.*
- a. Ask before assisting. Respect an individual's desire to be as independent as possible in tasks. An individual may not need or want help but may simply need more time.
 - b. Be unassuming. Disabilities present themselves differently in each individual. There are varying levels of symptoms and behaviors for any given condition. There are both visible and invisible disabilities.
 - c. Don't look the other way. Take the time to make eye contact, greet with love, and offer help as appropriate. Individuals with disabilities want to be seen and known.
 - d. Mosaic Ministry connects with families on any significant medical or behavioral notes of an individual to create a plan for their time at church. This plan can be found with ministry leaders and also in Rock under "Extended Attributes" titled "Special Considerations."

4. OVERNIGHTS, OUTINGS, and TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES

Overnights and outings are important for bonding with others and experiencing God in different ways. Care must be taken when planning an event in order to be as prepared as possible for unforeseen circumstances and to ensure the safety of all participants. It is the event coordinator's responsibility to understand the situation, accommodations, and available resources in planning a trip in order to adhere to the following procedures.

1. OUTINGS PROCEDURES

- a. An annually signed Medical Emergency Information Form will be required for participants of all off-site events and stored in Rock.

- b. Parents or Responsible Adults will also provide specific written permission for each ministry event in which their Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult participates. Paper sign-in, digital sign-in, or online registration indicates parental permission.
- c. Parents or Responsible Adults will receive at least 48 hours notice and full information (including a predetermined start and finish time) about all events and activities in which their Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults will participate.
- d. Emergency contact information for Personnel leading an off-site activity (or their designee) must also be provided to Parents or Responsible Adults if a Parent or Responsible Adult needs to get in touch with the leaders or their child. This is also true of onsite events in which Parents are off-site and may need to get in touch with leaders. Parents are able to call the church office to be connected to ministry leader's cell phone.
- e. When Youth are allowed to participate in activities out of sight of Adult supervision, whether on-site or off-site, Youth will be in groups of at least three; Adults must give Youth a meet-up plan and instruct them to check in with Screened Adults at given time increments.

2. OVERNIGHT PROCEDURES

- a. Signed permission slips with emergency contacts must be obtained from a Parent of each Child or Youth and turned in to the Staff member. Handwritten notes are not acceptable.
- b. For overnights that include sleeping:
 - i. Students will have the option to sleep in a boys, girls, or non-gendered/coed sleeping space with at least two leaders in each room. Parents will designate which area students will sleep in on the event registration forms.
 - ii. When it is not possible to have a non-gendered sleeping room, students who identify as non-binary, gender-fluid, or transgender will have the option to choose what sleeping space they feel most comfortable sleeping in.
 - iii. Sleeping rooms will be supervised with a ratio of 1 Adult per 8 Children/Youth with at least two leaders of the same gender as Youth.
 - iv. If two Adults of the same gender as Students cannot be assigned to a room housing Youth, the Youth will be roomed separately from Adults. However, Children and Youth in 6th grade and below must have two Adults in their room. If adjoining rooms are available with doors that can be left open, a single Adult in each of the adjoining rooms is acceptable.
 - v. An Adult must never share a bed with a Child or Youth.
 - vi. If room checks are needed, they will be executed by two Adults.
 - vii. When sleeping in a hotel, hotel rooms must be selected that have rooms opening to the interior of the building and rooms will be on the same hallway when possible.
 - viii. When tent camping, Adults must sleep separately from Children and Youth, but in close proximity; doors to Children or Youth tents will face the doors of adult tents. Married Adults may share a tent when accommodations allow.
 - ix. Appropriately modest sleeping attire must be worn by Adults and Children or Youth, especially outside of the sleeping quarters (ex. men wear shirts).
- c. For overnights without sleeping (lock-ins), normal activity ratios apply.
- d. Showers:
 - i. For private showers, bathers will dress and undress behind closed curtains or doors. Under no circumstances will two persons share the same enclosed shower.

- ii. If open showers are the only option, showers must be scheduled separately for unclothed Children, Youth, and Adults. Bathing suits may be worn to help comply with Safe Sanctuaries practices.
- iii. When Children or Youth are showering, Adults will monitor activities from outside of the bathroom or shower facility.
- e. Leaders will use good judgment regarding PG or PG-13 movies (parental permission may be obtained). No R-rated movies will be presented at any time.
- f. Every place of accommodation is different, and it is the responsibility of that program's director to ensure that arrangements comply with church policy.
- g. Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults will have access to their cell phone or cell phone of a ministry leader upon request during church-sponsored events on or off the church premises.

3. TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

- a. In addition to being screened in the same manner as other leadership for an event involving Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults, all drivers must also submit to a review of their motor vehicle record prior to any trip.
- b. All drivers must provide proof of insurance and a driver's license for St. Luke's to keep on file with the ministry. Drivers must provide copies to the office whenever these documents are updated. Insurance must include the minimum insurance coverage for property damage and public liability as required by law; however, it is recommended to have more than the minimum required.
- c. All drivers for any church event must be an Adult as defined by this policy. St. Luke's will never ask a Youth driver to transport other Students. The Director of Student Ministries will approve the list of drivers who transport Students.
- d. Whenever possible, Staff will contract vehicles and drivers for events.
- e. Vehicles must be in good working order and will contain a First Aid kit (or be provided one for a group trip).
- f. For transporting groups, copies of the entire group's emergency forms will be in each vehicle or will be available digitally; there will also be a copy of the group's emergency forms at church or in the hands of a designated Adult who will be available via phone for emergencies.
- g. Where possible, it is best practice that two non-related, non-cohabitating Screened Adults be placed in each vehicle or the vehicle's occupants be grouped using the Rule of 3. If neither the 2 Adult Rule or Rule of 3 is possible, it is advised that the Screened Adult driver maintain an open communication line with the Child's, Youth's or Vulnerable Adult's Parent or another Screened Adult. Note that Indiana Law prohibits a driver of any age to text while driving.
- h. Drivers must not divert their attention from driving by using cell phones, eating meals, setting map or GPS systems, selecting music, texting, etc. It is the driver's responsibility to understand and follow all traffic laws, including the use of cell phone while operating a vehicle.
- i. Each occupant of a vehicle must be in their own designated seat and must wear a seatbelt while inside the vehicle. This is in accordance with Indiana law which states: all passengers in vehicles that have seatbelts must use them while in forward motion. Additionally, if transporting Children, all safety belt and booster seat laws will be followed. Insisting that all passengers engage their seatbelt will ensure that other states' laws are met or exceeded should the trip venture out-of-state.
- j. Drivers will not drive for more than 10 hours per day. Breaks from driving must be taken at least every three hours.
- k. No Youth will drive to an out-of-town event under any circumstances.

5. COMMITMENTS TO INCLUSIVITY

St. Luke's is committed to creating a safe, open, and welcoming environment for all who enter our doors.

As part of our Open Statement, we renounce the way religion has been used throughout history to support racism, war, discrimination, genocide, violence, and poverty, and we pledge to rid ourselves of the conscious and unconscious biases when sacred stories are used to uphold injustice. We are particularly sensitive to the issues facing our siblings of color and LGBTQIA+ individuals, both within the United Methodist Church and in the general society.

We cultivate allyship and advocacy to support communities that are diverse in many ways including racially, ethnically, sexual orientation and differently abled. All staff and volunteers will have a base understanding of DEI and belonging and can model behaviors that create an environment where everyone feels psychologically safe, included, and valued.

We craft our policies around our fundamental principles. There will be no tolerance for language or actions from a Child, Youth, or Personnel that are racist, homophobic, bullying, judgmental, or dismissive.

Therefore, our communication policy states that verbal aggression of any kind (yelling, name-calling, swearing, or language that could be deemed as harassing or threatening or degrading and demeaning) and physical aggression, especially in front of children, will not be tolerated. For everyone's safety and to create a sense of belonging for all, anyone who is verbally and/or physically aggressive will be asked to leave the St. Luke's premises. If you witness any symbols, signage, literature at St. Luke's, or affiliate that is racist or homophobic in nature, please report it to your ministry leader.

1. *Policies & Procedures*

- a. The following are best practices and procedures to allow accommodations to ensure that each person is included in our community:
 - i. Creating safe spaces:
 1. Make no assumptions about a person's sexual orientation or identity. Identity can be fluid, especially with Children and Youth, so approach each conversation open and unassuming.
 2. Do not enforce or reinforce gender stereotypes. Avoid using language that emphasizes a gender binary.
 3. An individual's preferred name and pronouns will always be acknowledged and celebrated.
 4. Respect an individual's privacy. If an individual shares their sexual orientation or gender identity with you in confidence, honor that confidence by sharing this information only with those who need to know this information to care for or minister to them. Information may be shared with the appropriate Staff member

- to provide care for a Child or Youth, but information is not to be shared with other leaders, students, or parents.
5. If a Child or Youth shares their sexual orientation or gender identity privately with you, do not assume others know, including their parents. Encourage them to share with their parents, but keep their confidence unless they are at risk, as described under “Signs of Abuse and Neglect.”
 6. Be intentional about creating a safe environment and culture by practicing awareness and include training leaders around homophobic language and bullying. There will be no tolerance for exclusivity or language that is racist, homophobic, bullying, judgmental, or dismissive by a Child, Youth, or Personnel.
- ii. When assigning LGBTQIA+ persons to Groups for Programming, Activities, and Overnights:
 1. The 2 Adult, 3 Person, and Open Doors rules already provide the first barrier of protection for both Children and Youth and for Personnel for groups, activities, and overnights.
 2. Youth Ministry will strive to provide at least one co-ed group for each age group, and at the beginning of the year each Youth will have the option of a female group, male group, or coed group.
 3. Persons who identify as transgender may use the restroom of their preferred gender. Persons who identify as non-binary, gender-fluid, or non-gender conforming may use the restroom of their choice if a non-gendered restroom is not available.
 4. As outlined under Overnight Procedures in section 4, all students will be given the option for male, female, or non-gendered sleeping arrangement during overnights. LGBTQIA+ students may choose which sleeping arrangement best fits them.
 - iii. Please speak to Staff should changes or decisions need to be made regarding overnight accommodations or restroom use or signage. Always err on the side of compassion when making decisions regarding LGBTQIA+ persons.

6. VISITATION GUIDELINES

At St. Luke’s we strive to extend our church to those who may be ill or homebound by offering visitation. The following guidelines are provided to protect those requesting visitation, as well as those conducting visitation.

1. The coordination of visitation will be conducted in a way that provides transparency. There will be systems in place for scheduling visits and reporting after the visit.
2. Those providing visitation will be Screened Adults who have received Safe Sanctuaries Policy training, as well as training in ethical boundaries specific to visitation.
3. Care Ministry may have volunteers wait six months before volunteering in visitation, hospital visitation, and Stephen Ministry.

4. Accepting monetary offerings to the church from individuals during visitation must be done with caution. It is appropriate to accept checks made out to St. Luke's; however, handling cash is discouraged.
5. While the 2 Adult Rule, 3 Person Rule and Clear View rules are ideal, St. Luke's recognizes that it is not always feasible or appropriate for Care Ministry Personnel to visit adults in pairs.
 - a. Meeting in a public space, in a care facility with the door open, or at an individual's home while a caregiver, family or friend is present are all preferred over a one-on-one visit in a private home.
 - b. However, as multiple protections are built into Care Ministry visitation procedures, if both the visitor and the individual are comfortable with the arrangement, scheduled one-on-one visits approved by our Care Ministry are acceptable.

7. ONLINE, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

The virtual world is a vital part of people's lives -- this is particularly true of young people. As such, St. Luke's recognizes that social media and electronic communications can be powerful ministry tools that extend our ministries, not just to our own church members and participants, but also to those outside of our congregational sphere who may need to hear about God's love and our welcoming community of Christians. However, care and intention must be used to balance effective and vibrant ministry with safety and transparency. We will strive to honor and protect the privacy of those in our care. The following guidelines provide clear boundaries and accountability for those interactions that occur outside our physical walls.

1. Personnel must ensure that posts and comments reflect the spirit of the church's ministry on church sites or personal pages used for ministry. Any comments or photos will not be posted that could be deemed as bullying, inappropriate, or harmful and anything that could be categorized as such will be immediately removed. Any such comments added to posts on ministry sites or pages will be removed as soon as they are discovered.
2. In order to provide proper supervision during church activities and programs, cell phones should not be a distraction for the leaders.
3. ***Posting Pictures of Children, Youth, or Vulnerable adults***
 - a. Staff leadership may post pictures or comments regarding activities involving Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults in the church's newsletter, website, or social media pages only after obtaining photo release permission for those in the picture. Permission can be found on the Annual Medical Release Form or otherwise designated by Director of Ministry.
 - b. Comments and photos must not include full names or other identifying information.
 - c. Students will not be tagged or otherwise identified in social media posts unless they expressly request to be tagged or identified.
4. ***Utilizing Social Media and Other Communications with Youth***
 - a. All individual communication done via electronic means must be done on traceable platforms; messages, photos, and data should be savable to the device's cloud. Screenshot or screencap any individual communication that may have been sent via non-traceable means, particularly if the content is potentially questionable.

- b. All direct communication with Youth will be done to further ministry with Students and must be professional and within the spirit of the church's ministry. All communication will occur in appropriate timeframes for the applicable ministry. For example, late-night communications with Students would be inappropriate.

c. **Social Media**

- i. For the church's youth group social networking pages, passwords to accounts will not be divulged. Adults or Youth allowed permission to manage such social media will be screened and trained by church Staff.
- ii. If a Staff or Screened Volunteer uses personal social media pages to follow students on social media, these must be as open and public as possible. This ensures that Parents, Staff, or Volunteers can also view communications on personal pages. Personal social media accounts will include easily identifiable information such as a real photo and real name.
- iii. Screened Volunteers may follow students in their small group on social media. Volunteers are discouraged from initiating requests to follow students on social media who are not in their small group, or without their Parents' permission.
- iv. Staff are required to follow all other rules within the social media policy if they follow Students on social media.

d. **Texting Youth**

- i. It is best practice to follow the 2 Adult Rule even in communications (including electronic forms); group format communication is highly encouraged whenever feasible. This communication should include the Youth's small group, the Parent or Responsible Adult, or the Staff.
- ii. It is best that Small Group Leaders text Youth one-on-one with written permission from parents. If the Parent is in agreement through text or email before the first contact with a Student occurs, the leader may communicate openly with the Student using Staff-approved, traceable means of communication.
- iii. It is best that phone calls or other direct communication with Students are only done with Parent permission. Where reasonable and appropriate, Parents will receive the same information as the Student.
- iv. If a Staff or Leader is uneasy about the content of one-on-one communication with a Child, the Parent or another Staff must be informed. Honor privacy, but not secrecy.

5. *Privacy of Information:*

- a. Personnel will not share contact information, medical information, other personal information for a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult with anyone other than a Small Group Leader without specific consent from the Parent or Responsible Adult (for Vulnerable Adults).
- b. When addressing a group via email, the best practice in respecting and maintaining privacy is to use the BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) feature.
- c. Bulk emails that go out to the church congregation will have an easy opt out procedure. The church approved email tool complies with all state and federal regulations pertaining to bulk email including Opt Out. In the instance where the removal is manually done, removal must be completed within three business days of receipt of removal request.

6. Video Conferencing with Children, Youth, & Vulnerable Adults:

- a. Video conferencing with Children, Youth, & Vulnerable Adults should be from church accounts rather than personal accounts.
- b. All volunteers must be trained on how to use video conferencing as part of their volunteer training if they plan to use video conferencing with their small groups.
- c. The Parent shall be notified of the conference and give permission for their Child or Youth to participate.
- d. Passwords should always be used when meeting with Children and Youth.
- e. Meeting Participants should change their display name to reflect their real name, and no nicknames should be used.
- f. Parents are always welcome to attend conference videos.
- g. Peer-to-peer chat is turned off so that chatting occurs only with the host and/or all participants.
- h. Limit screen-sharing to hosts only.
- i. 2-Adult Rule
 - i. In accordance with the 2-Adult Rule, there shall always be two screened adults present on any video conference.
 1. When breakout rooms are employed, the host of the meeting shall function as a floater when it is possible to “float” between rooms. This can count towards the 2-Adult Rule.
 2. When a parent or guardian is available in the house of a participating student, their presence in the room with the student can count toward the 2 Adult Rule.
 3. If two adults are not possible, the meeting should be recorded and saved to the ministry’s Zoom account. The meeting should not be saved on a personal device.
 - ii. When possible, a waiting room shall be employed for participants to ensure that two Adults are present before Students enter the video conference.
- j. One on One Video Calls.
 - i. In accordance with the 3-Person rule, one-on-one video calls shall not take place between an adult and a child or youth.
 - ii. When a Child, Youth, or at-risk or Vulnerable Adult initiates a video call, the authority figure is to deny the call and move the conversation to a group video platform, text, or audio call.
 - iii. A parent present with the Child, Youth, or Vulnerable adult when the call is initiated may serve as the second adult in the case of a video call.

8. OUTSIDE GROUPS

St. Luke’s believes in partnering with outside organizations and allows approved outside groups to use its church facilities as a service to the community. As the safety of Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults remains a priority at all times, these groups will be required to, at a minimum, adhere to our protection policies and procedures while on St. Luke’s property. Groups will sign a covenant committing to abide by our policies while on site.

1. Agreement to abide by policies.

- a. St Luke’s will provide to the outside organization copies of all applicable policies and procedures governing Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults when such persons will be present.

- b. Groups will sign a covenant committing to abide by our policies while on site.
2. **Failure to Comply with Policies**
- a. Any allegation of non-compliance will be documented and reported for investigation to the staff member who coordinates outside events.
 - b. Findings will be reviewed by the Safe Sanctuaries Team, who shall decide on appropriate action.
 - c. If at any time an outside organization, individual, or institution fails to follow the Safe Sanctuaries Policies and Procedures, St. Luke's reserves the right to terminate future use of its facilities to that group or individual.
3. **Allegation of abuse:** Anyone alleging abuse during an activity hosted by an outside group or individual on St. Luke's property will follow the protocols outlined within the Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedures and Response Plan in Section 11 of this document.

9. SIGNS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults need everyone to stand up for their safety and best interests when they are in harm's way. Families in crisis or turmoil need support from those close to them.

1. The following are a few indicators that a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult may be experiencing abuse:
 - a. Nervousness or aggression toward/around adults or other children
 - b. Frequent or unexplained bruises and injuries
 - c. Poor hygiene
 - d. Acting out sexually at an inappropriate age
 - e. Dramatic change in personality
 - f. Significant changes in behavior or grades
 - g. Inability to stay awake or concentrate
 - h. Low self-esteem
 - i. Bedwetting
 - j. Decreased school performance
 - k. Withdrawal from peers
 - l. Disordered eating

2. For a comprehensive resource on recognizing signs of abuse in Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults, refer to <https://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/files/ChildAbuseNeglect.pdf>

10. SIGNS OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN VULNERABLE ADULTS

The following are some signs that an individual may be an Endangered Adult according to the National Center on Elder Abuse.

1. The following are some potential signs that an Endangered Adult is suffering from psychological abuse
 - a. Unusual changes in behavior or sleep
 - b. Fear or anxiety
 - c. Isolated or not responsive
 - d. Sadness
 - e. Is not allowed visitors or to speak with others
 - f. Caregiver is verbally aggressive or demeaning, controlling, overly concerned about spending money, or uncaring

2. The following are some potential signs that an Endangered Adult is either suffering from financial abuse, or that they are unable to handle their financial responsibilities:
 - a. Unusual changes in bank account or money management
 - b. Unusual or quick changes in a will or other financial documents
 - c. Fake signatures on financial documents
 - d. Unpaid bills

3. The following are some potential signs that an Endangered Adult is either suffering from physical abuse, or that they are unable to direct their own self-care:
 - a. Broken bones, bruises, and welts
 - b. Cuts, sores, or burns
 - c. Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
 - d. Sexually transmitted diseases without clear explanation
 - e. Dirtiness, poor nutrition, or dehydration
 - f. Poor living conditions
 - g. Missing daily living aids (glasses, walker, and medications)

11. ABUSE REPORTING PROCEDURES AND RESPONSE PLAN

St. Luke's will take any suspected or alleged abuse or neglect seriously, and it will be immediately reported to the proper authorities. The safety and overall well-being of Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults will be the highest priority. St Luke's, where permissibly by law, will remain involved with a reported case to see it through to resolution.

1. **Take it Seriously.** A Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult's report of abuse must always be taken seriously. Never promise an individual that a private conversation will remain private. Reassure the individual that while the conversation is confidential, to protect them and the individual, outside assistance may be sought.
 - a. If a Volunteer is unsure or uncomfortable reporting the incident themselves, they may talk to the Staff they report to for assistance in reporting an incident to the authorities.

2. **Mandatory Reporter Law.** In the state of Indiana, everyone is considered a mandatory reporter. This means if an individual knows of or suspects abuse of any sort, it is the individual's legal duty to report that to the police or Indiana Department of Child Services.
 - a. Indiana Law requires that reports of suspected abuse must be made within 24 hours of becoming aware of such a concern.
 - b. By law, all reports are kept anonymous (reporter's name will not be released).

3. **Reporting Procedure**
 - a. **Incident information collection**
 - i. When making a report, specific information about the Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult will be asked. Collect as much of this information as possible before calling, but do not worry if the information is incomplete:
 1. Name, address, age, and sex of the Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult
 2. Name and address of Parents or other person responsible for care

3. Nature and extent of the abuse or neglect of the Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult
4. Evidence of any previously known or suspected abuse
5. The name, address, and relationship, if known, of the person suspected of the abuse

b. Report to Legal Authorities

- i. Report suspected or known abuse to any one of the agencies listed below:
 1. **Emergency (the person may be in immediate danger)**
 - a. Local Police: 911
 2. **Non-Emergency (Child)**
 - a. Indiana Child Protective Services Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 1-800-800-5556
 - b. Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department: 317-327-3811
 3. **Non-Emergency (Adult)**
 - a. Adult Protective Services Indiana Elder Abuse Hotline: 1-800-992-6978
 - b. Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department: 317-327-3811

c. Report to St. Luke's leadership

- i. Any Staff or Volunteer who is reporting abuse to the authorities regarding a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult under the church's care must also immediately notify the supervising ministry leader (Director or Clergy), excepting those individuals who are suspect in the abuse.
 1. By law, the ministry leader must also make a separate report.
- ii. Once the ministry leader (Director or Clergy) has been notified (excepting those individuals who are suspect in the abuse) and makes their report to the authorities, they will immediately notify the Executive Pastor or designee (excepting those individuals who are suspect in the abuse.)
- iii. The Executive Pastor or designee will then immediately notify the Responsible Adults (if the Responsible Adults are not suspect) and will respond compassionately with questions and concerns.
- iv. If a Staff member, including a pastor, is a suspect in the abuse, the Chairperson of the Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) must be notified, who will in turn notify the District Superintendent for an internal investigation. Please note that this is in addition to making an official report to the proper legal authorities.
- v. After the proper authorities and Executive Pastor or designee (or SPRC Chair) have been contacted, St. Luke's will notify the church attorney, the church's insurance company, and the District Superintendent.

4. ***Investigation by Qualified Legal Authorities.*** It is not a church Volunteer or Staff person's duty to determine if allegations or suspicions are accurate or true; only the authorities are qualified to investigate. The safety of a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult should always take precedence over the unease or doubt of the Personnel who knows of, or suspects the abuse.

5. If abuse has occurred or is suspected to have occurred on St. Luke's property or during a St. Luke's sponsored program, in addition to adhering to the above external and internal reporting procedures, the following procedures will be followed:
 - a. The immediate safety of any Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults will be ensured.

- b. The person in charge of the event or activity will discreetly but immediately suspend and remove the accused or suspected individual from duties involving Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults pending external and internal investigation. The accused may not be banned from other church activities.
 - c. The person in charge of the event or activity will complete an Incident Report.
 - d. All persons, including Volunteers and Staff, must cooperate fully with any internal and external investigations.
 - e. All such matters will be dealt with in the strictest confidence. Any person reporting alleged abuse will refrain from any discussion about the alleged incident with anyone other than the authorities, the leader of the ministry, or the Executive Pastor or designee.
 - f. Only the Senior Pastor or designee or the District Superintendent will make public comment regarding alleged abuse. If any Personnel receives an inquiry from the media, the inquiry must be referred to St. Luke's Director of Marketing & Communication.
6. **Ministerial Care.** St. Luke's will endeavor to provide all appropriate and available ministerial care and counseling to all persons involved in any allegations of abuse. The care of the victim will be a top priority once a report has been made.

12. CHURCH PARTICIPATION BY THOSE WHO HAVE COMMITTED SEXUAL OFFENSES

St. Luke's recognizes that abuse in all of its forms is detrimental. The church will endeavor to provide a safe environment and support for the abused. While we deplore the actions of the abuser, we affirm that all persons are in need of God's redeeming love. As we provide appropriate opportunity for known offenders to participate at St. Luke's, under no circumstances will we sacrifice the safety of our vulnerable participants. We will always default to the protection of survivors/victims and maintain our priority of respect for everyone.

- 1. The Safe Sanctuaries Team will provide pastoral oversight for participation of those persons who have committed sexual offenses, ensuring that a system is in place should a Known Sex Offender share their past behavior with St. Luke's.
- 2. Where a person is known to have committed a sexual offense they will not be permitted to work in direct contact with Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults.
- 3. The following precautions, in addition to any others deemed necessary by the church, will be confidentially maintained for as long as the individual is associated with this congregation:
 - a. A pastor(s) will meet with the individual and will openly discuss the conditions that will be placed on the individual. These conditions will be included in the Accountability & Conditional Participation Covenant. This document will include a court-instructed safety plan for participation in the community and be signed by participant, Executive Pastor, Leader of Safe Sanctuaries, and Director of Safety and Security. (In the absence of a court-instructed safety plan, the conditional participation agreement can suffice after review and revision by the Executive Pastor, Leader of Safe Sanctuaries, and Director of Safety & Security.) A sample agreement is included in Appendix C. The Executive Pastor may notify the Director of Student Ministries and Director of Kids Ministry or other staff as needed.

- b. The person who has committed the sexual offense(s) will be accompanied by an accountability partner while the person is present on church property or is attending any church-sponsored event. The sponsor must agree to follow the plan with the participant at all times.
- c. St. Luke's has a zero tolerance policy for violation of the Accountability and Conditional Participation Covenant. All such violations will result in the revocation of privileges to attend St. Luke's or participate in any of its ministries.

13. ANNUAL SAFE SANCTUARIES TRAINING

St. Luke's will provide Safe Sanctuaries Policy training for Staff and Volunteers working with or near Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults. This regular training is instrumental in providing Personnel with the knowledge and tools to help reduce the risk of incidents or false allegations.

1. **Annual Training Requirement.** All Personnel having direct contact with Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults must have their annual training completed and documented.
 - a. A refresher training will be provided for those who have been Safe Sanctuaries trained in the last 12 months.
 - b. Training will cover all aspects of St. Luke's Safe Sanctuaries Policy and will specifically include boundaries with and supervision of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults as well as training in the identification and reporting of abuse.
 - c. There will be multiple training opportunities for those needing it throughout the year.
2. **Documentation of Training.** Staff will use the Rock Management program to alert staff when volunteers are a month away from needing a re-certification. It is that staff's responsibility to get them trained within a month so that they can continue serving.

14. ANNUAL REVIEW OF SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY BY COMMITTEE

The Safe Sanctuaries Team will have oversight of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy and will determine the frequency with which it should convene.

1. **Composition of Safe Sanctuaries Team.** The Safe Sanctuaries Team will include one representative from the following areas of the church:
 - a. Appointed Clergy (assigned by Senior Pastor)
 - b. Appointed Safe Sanctuaries Lead (assigned by Appointed Clergy and/or Senior Pastor)
 - c. Staff-Parish Relations Committee
 - d. Trustees of Property
 - e. Safety Team
 - f. Finance Committee
 - g. Care Ministry (Clergy/Director, one lay leader)
 - h. Children's Ministries (Director, one lay leader)
 - i. Student Ministry (Director, one lay leader)
 - j. Early Childhood Program (Director, one lay leader)
 - k. Adult Discipleship Ministries (Clergy/Director)
 - l. Special Needs Director
 - m. Outreach Director

2. Responsibilities of Safe Sanctuary Team.

- a. Annual review of the Safe Sanctuaries Policy will ensure that the policy provides reasonable protections, followable guidelines, and due diligence.
- b. St. Luke's Safe Sanctuaries Policy must include the minimum guidelines directed by the Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church.
- c. When necessary, revisions will be approved and forwarded to the church's general counsel and the church's Governing Board for final approval.
- d. The Safe Sanctuaries Team will verify annually that St. Luke's has liability insurance coverage for sexual molestation or misconduct.
- e. The Safe Sanctuaries Team will ensure that an up-to-date Safe Sanctuaries Policy is made available to the congregation and will be filed with the Central District of the Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church.
- f. An executive committee comprised of the Appointed Clergy, Director of Students, Director of Kids, and Director/Pastor of Care will meet quarterly.

APPROVED

1. This policy was initially approved by the Safe Sanctuaries Team, Trustees, Staff-Parish Relations, and Governing Board on November 21, 2019
2. This policy was last reviewed and approved by the Safe Sanctuaries Team & Governing Board in November of 2022.

Safe Sanctuaries First-Time Application with References

All volunteers who work regularly with Children, Youth, & Vulnerable Adults must provide an application with at least two references complete with contact information (references may not be relatives or anyone cohabitating with applicant) the first time they are certified in Safe Sanctuaries. We recommend that at least one be a member or staff member of St. Luke's.

NAME: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

POSITION APPLYING FOR: _____

REFERENCE ONE:

NAME: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

REFERENCE TWO:

NAME: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

OPTIONAL -- REFERENCE THREE: This is optional, in case we can't get in touch with another reference.

NAME: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

Turn in to the staff member who supervises the position you are applying for, along with the Safe Sanctuaries Covenant.

OFFICE USE ONLY:

- I called the above references for the applicant and received at least two positive references with no negative reference. They are approved for the position.
- I called the above references for the applicant, and they received at least one negative reference and will not be approved for this position. Notes: _____

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Safe Sanctuaries Participant Covenant

St. Luke's United Methodist Church is an open community of Christians helping people find and give hope through Jesus Christ. We are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and vulnerable adults (including volunteers and staff) who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the 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 would enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others. Please initial next to each item and sign the bottom acknowledging that you understand and agree to follow these rules that help St. Luke's do no harm:

1. No adult who has been convicted of abuse to a minor or an adult will be allowed to serve in ministry areas involving Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults. _____
2. All Volunteers and Staff who will work with or near Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults will complete an application with references and background check. _____
3. All Volunteers and Staff who will work with or near Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults will undergo Safe Sanctuaries training before serving in these areas. At least annually, training will include safety, supervisory, and boundaries training. _____
4. All Volunteers and Staff will abide by the St. Luke's Safe Sanctuaries policy. _____
5. All Volunteers and Staff will abide by the 2 Adult Rule, Rule of 3, and Clear View Rules so that no one is ever alone or unobserved with a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult. _____
6. Those working with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults should be Active Participants for at least six months before serving in these ministry areas. _____
7. Volunteers and Staff who suspect or know of abuse or neglect of a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult attending church activities will report it to the authorities and the church as outlined in the St. Luke's Safe Sanctuaries Policy. The matter will remain strictly confidential and no public comment can be made unless by the church spokesperson. _____
8. Volunteers and Staff who will be responsible for driving Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults must provide additional documents and will undergo a driver history check. _____
9. We value communication (including social media) that optimizes our programming, however, communication methods and practices involving Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults must have approval from the director or clergy of the ministry area involved. _____
10. Volunteers and Staff who are in a position to counsel, transport, or visit Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults must take extra care to understand and follow our boundaries, ethics, and our protection policies for the benefit of all involved. _____
11. If a volunteer fails to adhere to any policy, they will face immediate removal from their position. The organization maintains a zero-tolerance approach to policy violations to protect the safety and well-being of all individuals involved and to uphold its reputation. This policy serves as a deterrent against negligence or willful disregard of rules, while also protecting the interest of those who volunteer. _____

I have read this Safe Sanctuaries Participation Covenant and I agree to observe and abide by all of the policies set forth above. Failure to initial all of the above policies disqualifies me from serving with kids, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name: _____ Ministry Area(s) Served: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY:

TRAINER NAME: _____ TRAINING DATE: _____

Participants Who Have Committed Sexual Offenses Accountability And Conditional Participation Covenant

St. Luke's United Methodist Church (St. Luke's) affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being an open community of Christians, helping people find and give hope through Jesus Christ. Each of us is in need of the mercy and grace God offers freely, and St. Luke's welcomes all who wish to worship and grow closer to God.

While as a church family we affirm every person's need to be part of a faith community, we hold in balance our responsibility to keep our community safe in body and spirit. The following guidelines are designed to reduce risk in our community. As a participant in our community and as one who has committed a sexual offense, we treat each participant on a case-by-case basis. These include but are not limited to in a pastoral oversight relationship:

- _____ Professional Counseling or therapeutic on-going relationship
- _____ Court-appointed safety plan provided for engagement
- _____ Regular oversight meetings with the pastor
- _____ Designated location to sit in church with approved sponsor

Before God and St. Luke's United Methodist Church, I commit to adhering to this Accountability and Conditional Participation Covenant. If at any time this covenant is suspected of being broken, I will meet with the Pastors who serve on the Safe Sanctuary Team. I agree that if the Safe Sanctuary team finds that any item of this covenant at any time was broken, I will immediately discontinue attendance at all church functions. I understand and agree that all those directly impacted will be made aware of the violation. Any violation that occurs that is illegal in nature will be reported immediately to the appropriate authorities.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Sponsor

Date

Signature of Executive Pastor

Date

Signature of Care Pastor

Date

Signature of Director of Safety and Security

Date