

# SAFE SANCTUARIES GUIDELINES

Adopted October 9, 2015

## METHODISTS UNITED IN FAITH

For the purposes of these guidelines, children are defined as ages birth through twelve, youth are defined as ages thirteen through seventeen, and adults as 18 years and over.

### SCREENING

#### Rationale:

1. Methodists United in Faith seeks to protect our children from immoral or criminal conduct within the church by exercising care in accepting people who will be in contact with them. The need for adequate help in children and youth programs cannot outweigh our responsibility to screen workers.
2. We also seek to reduce our legal liability by being selective in our acceptance of Children/Youth Workers\*. Most lawsuits have alleged that the church was accountable on the basis of either NEGLIGENT HIRING (applying to both volunteer and compensated positions) or of NEGLIGENT SUPERVISION.

*\*Volunteers that work with our children and youth hereby referred to as "Children and Youth Workers.*

#### Guidelines:

1. Completion of an Application Form and Clearances will be required:
  - a. ALL paid employees of MUF: 3 clearances required are State Police criminal background check (Act 34), Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance (Childline, Act 33), and FBI Clearance.
  - b. ALL Volunteers, anyone age 18 years and older, dealing with children, youth, and vulnerable adults: 2 clearances required are State Police criminal background check (Act 34) and Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance (Childline, Act 33).
  - c. All clearances must be updated every three (3) years.
2. Children and Youth Workers must attend Methodists United in Faith regularly at least 1 out of 4 weeks per month for at least six (6) months prior to being considered for a position involving children or youth, and must maintain such attendance as stated. As to lead by example, the youth need to see their leaders in worship.
3. References listed on the application will be checked. A written record will be made of each contact and placed in the church office in a CONFIDENTIAL LOCKING FILE (to which only the pastor and screener have access) along with the original application.

4. The Safe Sanctuaries Committee will have the right to reject an applicant for any position by a majority vote if they have concerns about the person's history or suitability for work with children or youth. The pastor and screener will jointly discuss the matter with applicant.
5. Methodists United in Faith will suspend from duty any person in any position who is under investigation for suspicion of sexual/physical abuse.
6. Methodists United in Faith will not allow anyone who is known to have been found guilty of sexual/physical abuse in the past to serve in a position which involves access to children and youth.
7. All leaders of outside groups working with children and youth using the church are required to have clearances, as defined by the State, on file with the church.

## **SUPERVISION**

### **Rationale:**

Even though reasonable care was used in selecting Children/Youth Workers, churches may still be liable for injuries sustained due to NEGLIGENT SUPERVISION. The church must reduce the chances of sexual/physical abuse or false accusations by monitoring the activities of our workers and providing guidelines for behavior.

### **Guidelines:**

1. Each room, office used for children or youth activities should have a window with unobstructed viewing. In rooms without windows, the door must be left open far enough that activities can be seen.
2. During any "outside of classroom" activities, on or off church property, that involves children and youth, TWO-ADULTS need be present at all times and whenever possible unrelated.
3. a. The MUF Event Plan must be completed and submitted to the Pastor prior to event. \*Refer to "MUF Event Plan" document.  
b. The MUF Parent Permission Forms for events must be submitted prior to the event. \*\*\*\*\*It is impossible to anticipate every situation involving the interaction of adult workers and children and youth. If an unforeseen incident leads to an adult being alone with children or youth AND if parental permission cannot be obtained, the workers will report that occurrence to the Pastor and/or committee member as soon as possible. \*\*\*\*\*
4. For "off of church property events" a ratio of 1 adult for every 8 - 10 children/youth will be maintained.
5. Transportation of Youth
  - a) Drivers must be licensed, insured and over the age of 21
  - b) Drivers must follow all laws
  - c) All passengers must wear appropriate safety restraints
6. Supervision of children and youth will be maintained before and after activities until all are in the custody of their parents or a designated parent or guardian. Permission slips

will be kept on file until the information is changed by the parent or legal guardian.

7. Interested Youth Helpers, ages 14 - 17, must be approved by the Safe Sanctuaries Committee and will be required to complete an Application Form. Such helpers must be under the CONSTANT supervision of an approved adult. They will not be left alone with the children.
8. Any Youth Group Leader or Helper must be at least 21 years of age.
9. Photo release must be signed by parents for any MUF publications involving children and youth.
10. Children and Youth will not be left unattended and will only be released to an authorized person responsible for their care.

## **TRAINING**

### **Rationale:**

Our church must understand the potential danger of child sexual/physical abuse. We will educate our workers about the issue and about our prevention guidelines. Each worker will be informed of what is expected and required of them by the church, and of what is required of them by law. Effective education provides the foundation for an effective prevention program.

### **Guidelines:**

1. Administrative Council must insure adherence to these guidelines.
2. Present and Prospective Workers of Children and Youth will be **REQUIRED TO ATTEND** a training session covering all Safe Sanctuary guidelines.
3. The MUF PPR will develop and provide access to training materials for those who are required, as well as any other interested party.
4. **Mandatory Retraining and Clearances required every 3 years.**
  - a. All Children and Youth workers who fail to complete the Retraining will have their privileges suspended until training is completed.
  - b. Failure to comply with the Retraining and clearance Requirements will result in removal from the Approved Children and Youth Workers list.
  - c. A list of approved Children and Youth Workers is available upon request or will be posted in the office of the pastor and the church office.

## **REPORTING**

### **Rationale:**

Child physical/sexual abuse thrives when it goes unnoticed or unreported. A reporting procedure enhances our efforts to protect our children. Ordinarily, child molesters will not remain in a church where workers can identify abuse symptoms and are encouraged to report suspicious behavior.

Pennsylvania Law: #1292, No. 151, Sec 6311 specifically includes a ‘member of the clergy’ in the list of persons required to report child abuse. Sec. 6312 also states that ‘in addition to those persons and officials required to report suspected child abuse, any person may make such a report if that person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is an abused child.’ Sec. 6346 states that ‘a person or official required to report a case of suspected child abuse who willfully fails to do so commits a summary offense for the first violation and a misdemeanor of the third degree for a second or subsequent violation.’ This law became effective July 1, 1995.

### **Guidelines:**

1. If a paid or volunteer worker has reason to suspect a child has been abused in a church activity, he/she must report suspicions to a member of the Safe Sanctuaries Committee AND to the pastor. A doctor or nurse may be consulted for assistance. It is the right of that worker also to report directly to the PA Childline and Abuse Registry at: \*\*1-800-932-0313. They will report to the Butler State Police.\*\*
- 2a. Once a report is made to the pastor, it is ultimately the responsibility of THE PASTOR to take action. The pastor will call the local office of Children and Youth Services where the incident occurred.
- 2b. In the event that the accused is the Pastor the responsibility of taking action becomes that of the members of the Safe Sanctuaries Committee.

ONE NOTE OF CAUTION: IF THE CALLER IS IN NEED OF ADVICE ONLY, HE/SHE MAY IDENTIFY HIMSELF/HERSELF, BUT SHOULD NOT IDENTIFY THE CHILD OR SUSPECT AT THAT TIME. ONCE A CHILD’S NAME OR SUSPECT’S NAME IS GIVEN, THE WORKER IS REQUIRED TO INVESTIGATE.

3. Documentation of ALL ACTIONS taken by volunteers and paid staff is required and will be kept indefinitely in a confidential locking file with limited access. Documentation must include the CY47 Form from Childline.

## **HANDLING ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING CHURCH WORKERS**

### **Rationale:**

An accusation of abuse may occur in any church. Wrong reactions can multiply the pain and liability inherent in an abuse case. Our congregation and community will know that Methodists United in Faith will take all allegations seriously and will handle them forthrightly with due respect for people’s privacy and confidentiality.

### **Guidelines:**

In addition to the REPORTING STEPS 1 through 3 listed above, additional steps MUST be taken (not necessarily in this order) if the alleged is a Children/Youth Worker.

1. The Pastor and a member of the PPR Committee will notify the parents if

they are not already aware of the allegation and take any necessary steps to assure the child's safety until the parents arrive. THE SAFETY OF THE VICTIM MUST BE THE CHURCH'S PRIMARY CONCERN.

2. Do not confront the accused abuser with anger and hostility. Treat him/her with dignity, but immediately remove him/her from further involvement with children or youth until an investigation is completed.
3. The Pastor will notify the proper law enforcement or child protective services agency.
4. The incident will be reported by the Pastor to the following:  
Church Insurance Carrier                      Conference Counsel  
Franklin District Superintendent              Safe Sanctuaries Committee  
Pastor-Parish Relations Chair
5. Pastoral resources and support for the victim and the family will be extended.
6. On the advice of the State Police, we are advised to not give responses to media questions. "NO COMMENT" is the only appropriate response.
7. The Safe Sanctuaries Committee will prepare a brief and honest statement that can be made to the congregation without giving unnecessary details, placing blame, interfering with the victim's privacy, or violating any confidentiality concerns.
8. Media response(s) on behalf of the Methodists United in Faith can only be made by the Pastor.

*\*In the event the Pastor is unable to fulfill the above requirements then the Safe Sanctuaries Committee would assume the above requirements.*

## IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

### **Rationale:**

Establishing who is responsible for carrying out certain parts of the guidelines will help to ensure its effectiveness. Also, an annual review of the guidelines will identify any areas in need of revision.

### **Guidelines:**

1. Responsibility for the Safe Sanctuaries Guidelines will be assigned to the Pastor. General supervisory responsibility belongs to the PPRC.
2. It will be the responsibility of the Pastor of PPRC to screen applicants and verify references.
3. Only the Pastor and PPR Chairperson will have access to the locking files where information is kept. Files will be kept indefinitely. Allegations of abuse often surface years after the incident, so it is imperative that we maintain our records.
4. The PPR will be responsible for the training and monitoring of church leaders and children and youth workers.
5. Guideline evaluations will be held, as necessary.

\*\*\*\*\*

The main consultant in developing these guidelines was Rev. John Hall, Director of Camping in the Western PA Annual Conference of the UMC and the book **Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in your Church**, Hammar, Klipowicz, and Cobble, Church Law and Tax Report, 1993. Other persons/resources include: Christ UMC, Erie, PA guidelines model; PA State Police - Butler Barracks; Butler County Office of Children and Youth Services; United Methodist Church (W. PA Conference) Chancellor; and PA House of Representatives - Howard L. Fargo, "Domestic Relations Code." The 2015 PA State law.

**Date of Implementation:** October 9, 2015

I have received, read, understand, and will abide by the Methodists United in Faith's Safe Sanctuaries Guidelines.

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Print Name

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Signature

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Date

# MUF EVENT CONSENT FORM AND APPROVAL BY PARENTS OR LEGAL GUARDIAN

(adopted 10/09/2015 - In accordance with MUF Safe Sanctuary Policy)

## CHILD'S INFORMATION:

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_  
First Name Last Name

Birthdate (month/day/year) \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Age during activity \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address City State Zip

\_\_\_\_\_ has approval to participate in "Parents' Day Out"  
(Child's name)

on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 from 10:00am-6:00pm.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Food Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Considerations or Restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## MEDICAL INSURANCE INFORMATION:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Insurance Plan Policy Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Plan Holder Plan Holder's DOB

(over)

## HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT

In case of emergency involving my child, I understand every effort will be made to contact



me. In the event I cannot be reached, I hereby give my permission to the medical provider selected by the adult leader in charge to secure proper treatment, including hospitalization, anesthesia, surgery, or injections of medication for my child. Medical providers are authorized to disclose to the adult in charge examination findings, test results, and treatment provided for purposes of medical evaluation of the participant, follow-up and communication with the participant's parent's or guardian, and/or determination of the participant's ability to continue in the program activities.

Parents or guardians will hold harmless Methodists United in Faith, its staff and volunteers from any and all claims, actions and judgements, including all costs of defense and attorney's fees incurred in defending against MUF arising from the involvement of their child in the above activity.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/guardian printed name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/guardian signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

***Other information you may choose to provide (E-mail may be used to offer more information about this & future events):***

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_



**Leadership and Safe Sanctuary Training:** MUF policy requires that all adults attending off church property activities be Safe Sanctuary Trained and have clearances. Co-ed activities must have both male and female unmarried leaders 21 years of age or older for activities. A ratio of 1 adult per every 10 children/youth, with a minimum of 2 unmarried adults must be maintained. Safe Sanctuary training is valid for two years from the date of completion.

**Adult leader responsible for this group** (must be at least 21 years old):

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact (person must not be involved in the event)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Insurance Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Insurance Carrier Policy Number

**Assistant Adult Leader** (must be at least 21 years old):

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact (person must not be involved in the event)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Insurance Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Insurance Carrier Policy Number

**Attach a list with additional names and information of adults attending activity.**

Initial the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ Travel equipment will include a first aid kit and a roadside emergency kit (provided by church).

\_\_\_\_\_ The group will have in possession a **Parent Permission Slip** for every participant, including emergency contacts and insurance information, for the duration of the trip

\_\_\_\_\_ The group will have in possession the MUF Event Plan for the duration of the trip.

\_\_\_\_\_ The church office will have a copy of all **Parent Permission Slips** before the group departs on activity or trip.

\_\_\_\_\_ Any changes to this Event Plan **must** be communicated to the Pastor as soon as possible.

We certify that appropriate planning has been conducted, qualified and Safe Sanctuary Trained adults are supervising, and youth permission slips are secured. Any items needing attention will be resolved before the event date.

Signature of All Adult Leaders attending this Event/ Date of Signature

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Pastor/Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
PPRC Chairperson/Date

The Event Plan must be submitted to the Pastor, PPRC Chairperson  
Prior to trip for approval. Failure to do so may result in cancellation of trip or activity.

**VEHICLE INSURANCE INFORMATION**

All vehicles MUST be covered by a liability and property damage insurance policy. The amount of this coverage must meet or exceed the insurance requirement of the state in which the vehicle is licensed and comply with or exceed the requirements of the United States. It is recommended, however, that coverage limits are a \$100,000 combined single limit. Any vehicle designed to carry 10 or more passengers is required to have a \$500,000 combined single limit. In the case of rented vehicles, the requirement of coverage limits can be met by combining the limits of personal coverage carried by the driver with coverage carried by the owner of the rented vehicle.

**Driver/Vehicle Information**

<b>Driver/Owner</b>	<b>Make</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Seat *</b>

\*Appropriate safety restraints for every occupant.

**Vehicle/Insurance Information**

Attach a copy of Driver's License, Vehicle Registration, and Insurance Card.

**Adult Leader** (must be at least 21 years old):

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact (person must not be involved in the event)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Insurance Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Insurance Carrier Policy Number

**Adult Leader** (must be at least 21 years old):

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact (person must not be involved in the event)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Insurance Information: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Insurance Carrier Policy Number

# Methodists United in Faith Volunteer (Children & Youth) Application

*(The information on this form is for internal use by MUF only.)*

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Last Name

First Name

Middle Initial

Address:

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Telephone: Home:

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Cell:

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Please indicate the type of youth or children's work you prefer:

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Name and address of church where you are presently a member.

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How long have you been actively involved in this church?

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List the name of the pastor, and names and addresses of other churches you have attended regularly in the past five (5) years.

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List all previous church work involving children or youth (identify church):

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Please list any other experience with children or youth:

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List any training, education, or other factors that have prepared you for work with

children or youth:

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Do you have a valid PA driver's license? (Please record # and expiration)

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Has your driver's license been suspended in any state within the past five (5) years?

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Have you ever been convicted of the following:

A criminal offense? Yes \_\_\_\_ When \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Child neglect or physical abuse? Yes \_\_\_\_ When \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Any crime involving sexual misconduct? Yes \_\_\_\_ When \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Possession, use or sale of illegal drugs? Yes \_\_\_\_ When \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Do you presently have Act 34 Clearance (Criminal Record), Act 33 Clearance (Child Abuse) or FBI Background Check? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, are they within one (1) year and will you provide MUF with a copy?

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Are you willing to complete any required training and obtain Clearances necessary for your work with the children and youth in the church and adhere to the Safe Sanctuary Guidelines of the Methodists United in Faith?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_



# References

*(No Relatives)*

1.

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Name Address

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Telephone Number Relationship

2.

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Name Address

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Telephone Number Relationship

3.

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Name Address

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Telephone Number Relationship

I certify that all of the statements made by me on this form are true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and are made in good faith. I, hereby, give the Methodists United in Faith permission to obtain any information, including opinions regarding my character and my fitness to work with children and/or youth, from any reference or church listed on this application. I release such references from any liability for furnishing such information about me to you, as long as they do so in good faith and without malice. I waive any right I may have to inspect references provided on my behalf.

Should my application be accepted, I agree to complete any required training. I also agree to be bound by the Safe Sanctuary Guidelines of the Methodists United in Faith and to refrain from unscriptural conduct in the performance of my services on behalf of the church.

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Signature of Applicant

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Date

.....  
**For Office Use Only**

Date of training completion: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of Training: \_\_\_\_\_

## Where and how to get your clearances

- d. ALL Volunteers, anyone age 18 years and older, dealing with children, youth, and vulnerable adults: 2 clearances required are State Police criminal background check (Act 34) and Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance (Childline, Act 33).

You can complete the state police criminal background check and the Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance online only if you have an email address. If you don't have an email, or just prefer, you may fill out the paper forms attached to this packet. Follow the directions on the forms and mail the completed forms to the address listed.

Child Abuse History Clearance: <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>

- If you have never done this before start with Create individual account. Be sure to write down your information; keystone id and security questions.
- After you have created your account you will need to log in to individual account and fill in several pages with your information.
- This clearance check is free for volunteers.

State Police Criminal Background Check: <https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>

- Click on the the yellow button "New Record Check"
- The first page you will enter the information for MUF, NOT your information.
- The second page will be for your personal information.
- Save and print off a copy of your clearance when you are done.