

# Trinity United Methodist Church

## SAFE SANCTUARIES

### ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

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#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

It is the policy of the members of Trinity United Methodist Church (TUMC) to protect the children, youth, and vulnerable adults that enter our doors from physical and verbal abuse and make them feel secure when entering our facility and participating in church sponsored programs and activities.

#### 2.0 PURPOSE & SCOPE

In April 1996, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church adopted a resolution (Resolution 65, “Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Churches, pg. 384, 1996 Book of Resolutions) aimed at reducing the risk of abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable adults in the church. As Christians, we must take our responsibilities to our children, youth, and vulnerable adults very seriously. While we may not be able to completely prevent abuse in every situation, it is possible for us to greatly reduce the risk by following a policy of prevention. We are responsible to create an environment of safe sanctuary for children, youth and vulnerable adults, and those who work with them. Thus the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference has established minimum standards for abuse prevention to demonstrate our concern for and commitment to the safety of all our children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

The purpose of the TUMC Policy is three-fold: 1) protect the children, youth, and vulnerable adults of our church from abuse, 2) protect the adult leaders that have direct contact with the, children, youth, and vulnerable adults, and 3) protect TUMC from emotional and financial liability of child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse within our church and other church sponsored programs or activities conducted beyond church property boundaries.

#### 3.0 TUMC POLICY

TUMC abuse prevention policy includes the following:

1. All staff persons and all volunteers who have regular and direct contact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall submit the application and screening procedure forms within a month of starting the job.
2. The staff application form (TUMC-1) or the volunteer application form (TUMC-3) shall be completely filled out including requested information such as references, social security number, drivers license number, etc. This information is required to perform the reference and background checks via the various agencies. It should be noted that the social security numbers will be deleted or blanked out from the applications once the background checks/screening process is completed. In addition, the “Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check” form (TUMC-2) and the “Participation Covenant” form (TUMC-5) shall be completed and returned with the appropriate application.

3. The Safe Sanctuary Review committee shall be established by Church Council and at a minimum shall consist of the Pastor, Staff Parish Relations Committee Chair, and the Scouting Coordinator.
4. The SSRC shall be under the direction of the SPRC Committee with the SPRC Chair also being the SSRC Chair.
5. The Safe Sanctuary Review committee is responsible for review and approval of each application within two months of receipt from the staff or volunteer with service in programs or activities with direct contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults and is responsible for determining if a rescreening (Section 3.0, step 6) is required.
6. The screening procedure for each individual staff or volunteer may be repeated every five years as determined by the Safe Sanctuary Review committee.
7. All records are confidential and shall be maintained in a locked file for a period of at least five years after termination of staff or volunteer services. The records shall be accessible only by the members of the Safe Sanctuary Review committee.
8. All volunteers involved with the children, youth, and vulnerable adults of TUMC must have been members of the congregation or an active participant at TUMC for at least six months before beginning a volunteer assignment. A waiver of this policy by an adult wishing to be involved and who has initiated the screening process may be granted at the discretion of the Safe Sanctuary Review committee.

## 4.0 DEFINITIONS

| Terminology                            | Definition  |
|--|---|
| <b>Abuse</b>                           | To treat in a harmful, injurious or offensive way. May include physical emotional, neglect, sexual abuse, and ritual abuse.   |
| <b>Active Participant</b>              | An individual that actively participates in the TUMC programs or activities, but may not be a member of the church and is recognized by the congregation as supporting the TUMC programs and policies.                                |
| <b>Activities</b>                      | Any activity or programs in which children, youth, or vulnerable adults are under supervision of staff persons or volunteers.   |
| <b>Adult</b>                           | A person 18 years old or older.   |
| <b>Background Checks</b>               | Researching references and records for indications of past or potential abusive and/or criminal activity.   |
| <b>Child</b>                           | Person from birth until they turn 12 years old.   |
| <b>Conference</b>                      | The Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.  |
| <b>Initial Training</b>                | A one-hour, one-time class room training session on the currently approved TUMC Abuse Prevention Policy. This training is for new staff or volunteers that have not previously completed the qualification process under this policy. |
| <b>Person-in-Charge (PIC)</b>          | Staff person or volunteer who is the person responsible for the event or activity.  |
| <b>Refresher Training</b>              | Training consisting of a read and sign of the revised TUMC Abuse Prevention Policy. The signed form must be returned before requalification can be granted.   |
| <b>Safe Sanctuary Review Committee</b> | A committee established by the TUMC Church Council and shall, at a minimum, consist of the pastor, the SPRC Chair, and the Scouting Coordinator.  |
| <b>Volunteer</b>                       | A person who assists in conducting activities under the supervision of person(s) in charge.   |
| <b>Vulnerable Adults</b>               | Any person 18 years of age or older with diminished physical, mental, or emotional capacities.  |
| <b>Youth</b>                           | Any person 12 years old to his/her 18th birthday.   |

## 5.0 SCREENING PROCEDURES

1. All adults, volunteer or staff persons, who have regular and direct contact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall be required to complete an application (TUMC-1 for staff or TUMC-3 for volunteers) which may include voluntary disclosure of information including legal name and other names previously used, social security number., date of birth, and voluntary disclosure of any convictions of abusive behavior prior to working with the youth. This includes the signing of the “Participation Covenant” form (TUMC-5) and the “Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check” form (TUMC-2).

**NOTE: Youth that work with children, other youth or vulnerable adults (i.e., nursery, etc.) should also complete the application and training process as described in the first step of this section. Permission from the youth’s parents is obtained by the parent’s signature on the application form.**

2. All volunteer applicants shall complete the application, screening, and training process prior to being allowed to be a TUMC approved person in charge (PIC) of children, youth or vulnerable adult activities. Applicants can participate as a second adult under the supervision of a volunteer or TUMC staff member that has completed the process and been accepted by the SSRC.
3. All applicants applying for a TUMC staff position shall complete an application. References will be contacted and a sex offender check will be completed before an offer is extended. The full screening process shall be completed within the 90 day probationary period after extension of an employment offer. Initial TUMC policy training shall be completed within 60 days of accepting an employment offer.
4. Minimum background screenings shall include:
  - a. Three references for an applicant for a staff position are checked by direct contact (i.e., phone call, etc). A Reference form (TUMC-4) shall be completed by the SSRC committee member performing the reference check for each of the three references submitted by an applicant. The results of the reference calls shall be entered into the appropriate database.
  - b. Review of the Idaho or any other appropriate state's list of sexual offenders.  
<http://www.familywatchdog.us/>
  - c. A State of Idaho or other agency (i.e., UMPACT TRAK-1 or other appropriate background check organization.) background check, as required by the Safe Sanctuary Review Committee.
  - d. A National background check, if applicant is from out of state and has not lived in the Idaho Falls area for more than one calendar year.
  - e. All or part of items a, b, c, and d can be waived by the Safe Sanctuary Review committee if an applicant is also an active member of another organization or group that requires comparable screening for their adult leaders (i.e., Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, local school district, etc.) and completion of the screening is verified
  - f. Update and maintain a database (i.e., ACCESS, EXCEL, etc.) established for tracking the application and training completion status for each applicant.

## 6.0 SUPERVISION

1. All persons having direct contact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults are required to complete initial training on this policy document. After initial training is completed, refresher training shall be completed on an annual basis. The refresher training shall consist of a read and sign of the revised or update information about the TUMC abuse prevention policy. The signed form shall be returned to the SPRC Chair and must be returned before requalification can be granted.
2. Compliance with the "two-adult rule" is preferred and requires that there will always be two adults present. A list of safe sanctuary qualified adults is maintained in the church copy room . When the two-adult rule is not possible, the minimum standard is an open space (open door, window, etc) such that activities can be openly observed. In addition, an adult is assigned to periodically observe the activities.
  - a) The Safe Sanctuary Review Committee will establish and maintain a current backup list of trained and qualified individuals that can assist with any of the children, youth, or vulnerable adult programs.
  - b) The list of screened and trained individuals shall be maintained and accessible in the Church copy room at all times.
3. No person shall supervise an age group, a group of children or youth unless he/she is AT LEAST 5 years older than the children or youth.

## 7.0 REPORTING AND RESPONSE

**NOTE: All information is to be treated as personal and confidential during and after the investigation.**

1. The adult who observes or hears of any alleged abuse shall:
  - a) Assure the safety of the victim.
    - i) Whatever the victim says is to be taken very seriously.
    - ii) Make sure that the victim is in a safe place and watched over.
    - iii) Do not confront the accused person with anger or hostility but immediately remove him/ her from further involvement with children and youth until the matter can be investigated.
  - b) If there is a situation of immediate risk or danger, call the police at 911. Otherwise report the incident immediately to the pastor and/or other designated persons. See the attached list of reporting phone numbers.

**Note: Idaho Code § 16-1619 provides:**

**Any physician, resident on a hospital staff, intern, nurse, coroner, school teacher, day care personnel, social worker, or other person having reason to believe that a child under the age of eighteen (18) years has been abused, abandoned or neglected or observes the child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse, abandonment or neglect shall report or cause to be reported within twenty-four (24) hours such conditions or circumstances to the proper law enforcement agency or the department [ of health and welfare].**

2. The pastor or designee shall:
  - a) Ascertain the details needed to make an accurate report.
  - b) Within 24 hours,
    - i) Write an incident report. The report should include the following information, if obtainable:
      - (1) The name, address, age and sex of the alleged victim;
      - (2) The name and address of the alleged victim's parents or other person responsible for his/her care;
      - (3) The nature and extent of the alleged abuse or neglect;
      - (4) Any evidence of previously known or suspected abuse or neglect of the alleged victim or their siblings;
      - (5) The name, address and relationship, if known, of the person who is alleged to have perpetrated the abuse or neglect; and
      - (6) Any other information known to the person making the report that would be helpful to the investigation of the alleged abuse.
      - (7) File the completed report in the SSRC file.
    - c) Contact the appropriate state or city law enforcement agency as soon as possible to file the abuse report and provide the aforementioned information and follow the instructions of the agency. (See the attached contact list)
    - d) Report the suspected child abuse to the child's family and any agencies required by law. See the attached listing of available resources for the victim and families.
3. The alleged perpetrators of the abuse are to be excluded from future events involving children, youth and vulnerable adults until the incident report is resolved. In any removal of a person from any activities, care must be taken to handle this in a discreet manner, recognizing that an investigation is being conducted and the information/incident is confidential.

## **8.0 TRAINING**

1. Each TUMC committee and program shall participate in the TUMC Safe Sanctuary training for persons in leadership and support positions who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
  - a) Initial training shall include but is not limited to the TUMC abuse prevention policy and any related procedures. Initial training and the application/screening process has to be completed within a month of to starting work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
  - b) Refresher training shall be held annually and all staff and volunteers must complete refresher training before working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults can continue. It is recommended that annual refresher training should be completed prior to the start of the fall programs in September.

## **9.0 POLICY REVIEW**

1. The Safe Sanctuary Review Committee shall review and revise the training material annually and prior to conducting any new refresher training.
2. Any identified changes shall be incorporated into the Church's training program and refresher training conducted as directed by the Safe Sanctuary Committee.
3. The TUMC Church Council shall approve all changes to the TUMC Abuse Policy.

## **10.0 FORMS**

Form TUMC-1 Employment Application

Form TUMC-2 Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check

Form TUMC-3 Volunteer Application

Form TUMC-4 Reference Check

Form TUMC-5 Participation Covenant for All Workers with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults

Form TUMC-6 Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse  
Form TUMC-7 Accident Report Form

## **11.0 CONCLUSIONS**

The TUMC members and active nonmembers are committed to the safety and protection of all children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Through this policy and its implementation TUMC is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each child, youth, and vulnerable adult is “surrounded by steadfast love as established in the faith, confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal.

The TUMC Policy on Prevention of Abuse is effective as of July 12, 2011 and is approved by the TUMC Church Council.

Church Council Chair: Original signed by on July 12, 2011

## Abuse Reporting Contact List

### Safe Sanctuary Review Committee Members

| Name             | Phone Number                                 | Title                      |
|------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Rev. Brenda Sene | Church No. – 522-7921<br>Home No. – 522-1235 | Pastor                     |
| Cheryl O'Brien   | Home No. – 523-1543                          | SPRC Chair                 |
| Robin Stewart    | Home No. – 529-5157                          | Scouting Coordinator       |
| TBD              | TBD  | Safe Sanctuary Coordinator |

### Local Authorities

| Organization                         | Phone No.   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| District Seven Health and Welfare    | 528-5900  |
| Idaho Falls Police Department        | 529-1200 (non-emergency)<br>911 (emergency)           |
| Bonneville County Sheriff Department | 529-1350, ext 1310 (non-emergency)<br>911 (emergency) |
| Idaho CareLine                       | 1-800-926-2588 or 211                                 |

### Victim Resources

| Organization   | Phone Number   | Internet Information   |
|--|--|--|
| Rape Response & Crime Victim Center, Inc.  | 24-hour hotlines<br>521-6018 or 521-6426   | Webpage: <a href="http://www.raperesponse.org/">http://www.raperesponse.org/</a><br><br>Email: <a href="mailto:rrcvc@srv.net">rrcvc@srv.net</a>  |
| A.A.R.D.V.A.R.C.<br>(An Abuse, Rape and Domestic Violence Aid and Resource Collection) | None   | Webpage:<br><a href="http://aardvarc.org/rape/states/idrp.shtml/">http://aardvarc.org/rape/states/idrp.shtml/</a><br><br>Email: <a href="mailto:aardvarcinfo@aol.com">aardvarcinfo@aol.com</a> |
| Safe Place Ministries  | Safe Place Ministries<br>2645 N. Cole Road, Suite H<br>P. O. Box 4892<br>Boise, ID 83711<br>Phone: 208-323-2169<br>Toll Free: 1-888-776-4443<br>Fax: 208-323-5570                              | Webpage:<br><a href="http://www.safepaceministries.com/">http://www.safepaceministries.com/</a><br><br>Email: <a href="mailto:splace@spro.net">splace@spro.net</a>                             |
| Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence                                     | Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence<br>300 E. Mallard Dr., Ste 130<br>Boise, Idaho 83706<br>Phone: 208-384-0419/V<br>TTY: 711<br>Toll Free: 1-888-293-6118<br>Fax: 208-331-0687 | Webpage:<br><a href="http://www.idvsa.org/">http://www.idvsa.org/</a><br><br>Email: see webpage  |
| Domestic Violence Intervention   | 208-529-4352 – crisis line<br><br>208-235-2412 – office  | Webpage:<br><a href="http://www.ci.idaho-falls.id.us/index2.asp?PageId=492">http://www.ci.idaho-falls.id.us/index2.asp?PageId=492</a>  |
| Family Violence & Sexual Assault   | 208-522-7016   | --   |