



Safe Church Policy

TRINITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Gettysburg, PA
2021

*"Awakening joyful service guided
by our Still Speaking God! "*

TRINITY, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



60 East High Street
Gettysburg, PA 17325
(717) 334-7266

Email: tuccgburg@gmail.com

SAFE CHURCH POLICY

Policy Prohibiting Abuse, Exploitation and Harassment:

As a community of Christian faith, Trinity United Church of Christ is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities and a community in which members, friends, staff and volunteers can worship, learn and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation. All persons associated with Trinity should be aware that the church is strongly opposed to Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Harassment and that such behavior is prohibited by church policy. It is the intention and responsibility of the church to take whatever action may be needed to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and, if necessary, to discipline those persons who violate this policy.

Definitions of Titles/Terms used in this document:

Minister: any person engaged by Trinity UCC to carry out its ministry. Minister includes elected or appointed leaders of the church, employees, and volunteers, as well as authorized ministers.

Authorized Minister: a person who holds ordained ministerial standing or has been commissioned or licensed by an association of the United Church of Christ or region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

Ministerial Relationship: the relationship between one who carries out the ministry of the church and the one being served by that ministry.

Corporal Punishment: Physical punishment (such as spanking) inflicted on a child by an adult or anyone in an authority position.

Isolation: Submitting a child to punishment by means of segregating the child from the view/contact of other children and adults.

- Corporal Punishment and Isolation by volunteers and ministers are prohibited on church grounds or at church sponsored activities.

Sexual Exploitation: sexual activity or contact (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which a minister engaged in the work of the church takes advantage of the vulnerability of a participant by causing or allowing the participant to engage in sexual behavior with the minister.

Sexual Harassment: repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to his or her wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person with the intent of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing the other person, or subjecting the person to public discrimination. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition or circumstance of instruction, employment, or participation in any church activity; Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel or church-related decisions affecting an individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or participation in church activities or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or church environment.

Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones, particularly:

- Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, e-mails, invitations or use of any type of electronics or Social Media;
- Verbal contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits, sexual propositions;
- Physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual intercourse; and
- Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters, or magazines.

Sexual harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome and using sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, salary, work, learning, or worship environment of another. It is impermissible to suggest, threaten, or imply that failure to accept a request for a date or sexual intimacy will affect a person's job prospects, church leadership, or comfortable participation in the life of the church. It is forbidden either to imply or actually withhold support for an appointment, promotion, or change of assignment, to suggest that a poor performance report will be given because a person has declined a personal proposition; or to hint that benefits, such as promotions, favorable performance evaluations, favorable assigned duties or shifts, recommendations or reclassifications, will be forthcoming in exchange for sexual favors.

Ministerial Conduct:

The pastors, every staff member, elected and appointed lay leaders, and every volunteer are all Ministers of the congregation. As such, each is responsible for understanding the ways in which their words or actions may affect others.

Sexual Exploitation or Sexual Harassment, of parishioners or others, by anyone engaged in the ministry of Trinity UCC is unethical and unprofessional behavior and will not be tolerated within this congregation.

All Ministers of the church may sometimes deal with individuals who are emotionally or personally vulnerable in some way. It is also important that every Minister of the church be adequately prepared and educated for the ministry in which they serve others, and to understand the ways in which their actions may impact those who may be vulnerable to their use or misuse of power.

It is the policy of Trinity UCC to encourage its, Ministers and Authorized Ministers, to nurture safety within Ministerial Relationships by being attentive to self-care, education, and the importance of referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources. It is also expected that those engaged in providing ministry will commit to a full attitude of confidentiality.

Requirements for employment or to Volunteer:

- Before an offer of employment is made to any individual (whether ordained, commissioned, licensed or other position), a criminal background check and Child Line child abuse history check will be completed. Currently, Trinity UCC is using the Pennsylvania State Police Request for Criminal Record Check. Checks “may” be annually updated.

- *All reports generated by required checks are considered confidential and will be safeguarded in the church office.*
- The (named position: pastor, church school leader, child/youth volunteer) of the church will conduct a review of the registered sex offender registry for each new employee or volunteer, by searching their name on the Department of Justice website at www.nsopr.gov. The registered sex offender registry (Megan's Law Web Site) will be periodically reviewed.
- Authorized Ministers of the church will attend all boundary workshops suggested or required by Gettysburg Association of the Penn Central Conference of the United Church of Christ or will attend at least one workshop every three years, whichever is more frequent.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

God embraces children with love, placing their nurture and care in our hands. We believe that children should be safe from all forms of abuse and neglect. We, the church, are advocates for children and establish clearly defined safeguards, policies and procedures for their protection. We recognize the seriousness and sinfulness of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Trinity UCC, is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God's love.

The following guidelines have been established:

- We expect that those who volunteer to work with minors will have been members of Trinity UCC for at

least six months or if not members, regularly and frequently associated with Trinity UCC for at least one year.

- It is the policy of this church to provide adequate supervision and safeguards for all children/youth activities. In any situation where participants are not readily visible to other church members, there will not be fewer than two adults or an adult and a youth worker over the age of 15 present with children/youth.
- All volunteers and employees who work with children and youth will receive orientation to the overall policy on an annual or bi-annual basis.
- All correspondence with children/youth by staff or volunteers will be done on a group level and not individually. This includes all: post card mailings, letters and or e-mails. If e-mailing on an individual basis, there must be a (cc) to another staff member, volunteer or parent.
- The use of drugs, alcohol or firearms during youth events or activities is strictly prohibited.
- A parent or guardian signed permission slip will be required for all youth activities off of the church property, including any overnight activities.
- A participation permission slip including physician name and contact information and current health insurance information must be completed before any youth can participate in activities off of church property.

Guidelines for Ministry with Children/Youth:

A Trinity United Church of Christ sponsored activity is any event or activity that is planned or approved by the Consistory of Trinity, its staff or any church ministry board, committee or sub-committee designed specifically for children/youth. In keeping with the theme of this policy, any church-sponsored activity involving children/youth will be supervised by church approved workers. At the end of any such event, two approved adult workers should remain until all children/youth are gone or released to a parent.

Two Adult Rule: At least two adult workers or approved youth worker age 15 or older should be present during any church sponsored program, event or ministry involving children/youth. If it is not possible for two then adult “roamer” shall monitor activity in rooms and bathrooms.

Open Door Policy: When there is no window in the classroom door or in the rare case when two adults are not available, the door should be left open so that passersby may clearly see into the area.

Parental Permission: Parents should be well informed of all information regarding the events in which their children/youth will be participating. Signed permission slips must be completed beforehand. In any situation when an adult would be alone with a child/youth, parental consent must be obtained beforehand. These situations could be in the form of a mentoring program, transporting children/youth to an off site location, acolyte duties, etc. If meetings are to take place with one adult and one child/youth the following is strongly suggested:

- Meet with the student in a well lighted area, and in open rooms with windowed doors.
- Keep doors open.
- Keep the meeting brief.

If an adult/youth leader, mentor or anyone with an established role in youth ministries meets with youth for

*purposes unrelated to the church, the meeting **will not** fall under the policy, but rather be considered personal. It is strongly suggested that the adult obtain parental permission and be conscious of other prudent measures as described in this policy.*

Transportation Policy: Those transporting children/youth must be 21 years of age or older, hold a valid senior driver's license, present current insurance of car being used and obey all traffic laws, including use of seat belts for all in the vehicle.

Overnight Rule: At least one adult female and male chaperone from Trinity UCC will be present at all times for all overnight events if children/youth from both genders are participating. Parental consent is required for all overnight events.

Bathroom Policy: Only approved adult/youth (15 and older) workers will give bathroom assistance to the children in our church. Those individuals should take children to the bathroom in groups of two or more whenever possible. The stall/bathroom door should remain open if assistance is required. If the child can assist themselves the door may be closed with the adult worker outside of the door. If diapers are in need of changing, only approved volunteers may assist with at least two adults present at all times.

Procedures for Reporting Suspected Abuse:

Anyone working with the children/youth of Trinity UCC has the personal responsibility and moral obligation to promptly report any suspected abuse to the Pastor and or appropriate lay leaders of the congregation in addition to contacting *Child Line* at 1-800-932-0313. All efforts should be made to maintain confidentiality, and all efforts will be made to ensure those who have been subject to such

violence and behaviors have their needs met in a timely manner.

Periodic Policy Review:

This safe church policy is under the ownership of the Board of Christian Education as commissioned by the Consistory of Trinity UCC. The Board will assume responsibility for reviewing the policy periodically, and always within three years of the last review.

**This document was created:
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TRINITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
60 East High Street
Gettysburg, PA 17325

www.gettysburgtrinityucc.org
OFFICE HOURS: 8:00 AM – 1:30 PM, MONDAY – FRIDAY