

# Safe Sanctuary Policy and Procedures for Green Street United Methodist Church

## **Introduction:**

Green Street United Methodist Church actively welcomes people from all racial, economic and cultural backgrounds. The Church has established itself a community gathering place, prides itself on its inclusive outreach ministries and regularly hosts community dinners and community groups. The congregation and staff of Green Street United Methodist Church are committed to making the Church a safe and secure environment for all people who enter our doors and in particular for those who could be most vulnerable, children and youth.

## **Purpose:**

In keeping with the resolution adopted by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in April 1996 and the Western North Carolina Conference of 2004, we the congregation of Green Street United Methodist Church adopt the following policy and procedures in order to provide a safe sanctuary for children (ages up to 12) and youth (ages 12-18), and also for all those who enter our doors.

## **Statement of Covenant and Policy:**

As a Christian community of faith, Green Street United Methodist Church pledges to conduct its ministries in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of our children, youth, and adults. We as a congregation and staff pledge our utmost to protect all who enter our doors by adopting the following procedures which are designed to prevent any type of child, youth, or adult abuse, neglect or exploitation as defined by the General Statutes of North Carolina. These can be specifically found in Chapter 7B and 14 of the North Carolina Criminal Law and Procedure. Nothing in this policy or procedure is designed to hinder or prevent the investigation of suspected, reported or confirmed violations of any North Carolina Criminal Laws.

## **Procedures:**

1. The Church will not tolerate any physically, emotionally or sexually abusive behavior.
2. The Church will offer annual training and orientation in the Safe Sanctuary Procedures to its staff and volunteers of Church related programs and make the training and orientation available to its congregation. In addition, the church will publicize and encourage attendance at similar area workshops sponsored by the United Methodist Church or other organizations.
3. The Church shall make every effort to ensure that two or more adults (preferably unrelated and five years older than the oldest child/youth) are present for any Church activities involving children and youth, but all church sponsored youth and children's activities shall have adult supervision. While a youth may be utilized as a volunteer under that supervision of an adult (18 years and older), such as a tutor or nursery worker, in no event

shall a child or youth be responsible for the supervision of children or youth activities. During children's activities when two adults are not present, the Church shall have an adult serve as a "roamer" to make periodic, unannounced visits to the activity area. There will be clear communication between parent(s)/guardian(s) and Church leaders or staff regarding drop off and pick up for Church related activities. (See specific policy/guidelines for Kids Café program.)

4. With respect to any room where children or youth activities are conducted either the door must have an unobstructed window, or the door to the room shall remain completely open during the entire activity.
5. Pastoral counseling and consultation is an important ministry of the church. Any room utilized for such counseling or consultation must have a window in its door, or the door will remain open. The Church acknowledges that there may be times when the Pastor will find it necessary to protect the identity of the person or people being counseled, the Pastor may cover the window. However, it should be standard practice for the window to be unobstructed.
6. When counseling, or meeting individually with a child or youth the Pastor or staff member should advise another adult or the counseling prior to its taking place. The interaction should occur where other people are nearby (but outside the range of hearing), with the door to the room open, or in a room with an unobstructed window.
7. The Church shall require its staff, including interns, to take CPR training. Volunteer workers will be encouraged to take CPR training. The Church will work with the local Red Cross, or other similar agency to try to provide such training at the Church.
8. The Church will maintain at least two first aid kits, one in the kitchen of the fellowship hall and the other in the Church offices.
9. Any church related children's or youth activity which includes travel from the Church premises shall require the approval of the Senior Pastor and the written permission of the parent or guardian for each child or youth. Two or more trained adults must be present on any such trip.
10. Any suspected or reported case of inappropriate behavior, neglect, abuse, or exploitation occurring during or resulting from any Church related activity should be reported immediately to the Senior Pastor, unless the Senior Pastor is a suspected offender. If for any reason the Senior Pastor is unavailable, then the case should be should be reported immediately to the closest available ministerial staff member. If the Senior Pastor is a suspected offender, the case should be reported immediately either to the Chair of the Pastor/Parish Committee or to the District Superintendent. The Senior Pastor or other notified person of the Church must immediately fill out an incident report with all available details, and notify the District Superintendent as soon as is practical after the suspected abuse or neglect is reported. The Senior Pastor or the District Superintendent shall notify all appropriate agencies according to the North Carolina law and the Safe Sanctuaries training procedures and shall report the incident to the Church's insurance carrier as reasonably practical following knowledge of the complaint.  
Any person named as an alleged offender shall immediately be required to cease any contact with children and youth, and shall cease all supervisory activities in the Church. The alleged offender may resume these activities at such time as the District Superintendent and Senior Pastor shall deem it appropriate.  
In the event any complaint comes to the attention of the media, only the Senior Pastor, the District Superintendent, or their designee shall make any statements or release of information to the media.
11. All staff shall submit to a criminal background check from an appropriate law enforcement agency. All volunteers (including Church members) who work regularly with children or

youth must be willing to submit to a criminal background check. All prospective staff must be willing to submit to a criminal background check prior to being approved for a position and must provide references.

**Conclusion:**

In all of our ministries at Green Street Methodist Church, the staff and the congregation are committed to the safety of all who enter our doors. Through training, accountability, and supervision, we strive to make ours a safe sanctuary of worship, fellowship, education and healing.

**Addendum to the Safe Sanctuary Policy for**  
**Children and Youth in Response to the**  
**Jessica Lundsford Act for North Carolina, Effective 12/01/08**  
**For Green Street United Methodist Church**  
**Winston-Salem, NC**

1. We, as the church, invite all people to be a part of the worshipping community of faith. However, we must weigh the duty to protect the children and youth of the church with the right of all people to experience God's redeeming love through worship. In furtherance of our Safe Sanctuary policy and in compliance with North Carolina law, a registered sex offender who wishes to be part of a church community should expect to have conditions placed on his/her participation.
2. No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (including sexual abuse, physical abuse or emotional abuse) shall be permitted to work/volunteer with minors in any church sponsored activity. N.C. Gen Stat. § 14-208. 17(a) (2008)
3. A registered sex offender shall not be in attendance at any church event where children or youth are the primary audience. These events include, but are not limited to, United Methodist Youth Fellowship activities, Vacation Bible School, and scouting activities.
  - If a registered sex offender does attend such an event, he/she will be told to leave and a report will be made to the sheriff's office.
4. A registered sex offender shall not be within 300 feet of any location on the church property intended primarily for the use, care or supervision of minors.  
N.C. Gen Stat. § 14-208.18(a) (2) (2008)
5. A registered sex offender shall not be in any area of the property intended primarily for the use, care or supervision of minors, including but not limited to, the nursery, preschool classrooms, children's Sunday School classrooms and playground. N.C. Gen Stat. § 14-208.18(a) (1) (2008)
6. While on church property, a registered sex offender must be accompanied by an unrelated, same-gender adult covenant partner provided by the church.
7. A registered sex offender should identify himself/herself as a registered sex offender to the pastor or the Director of Christian Education. A registered sex offender who wishes to be part of our church community shall read and sign a Church Participation Covenant Statement. This document will also be signed by the pastor(s) and the Chairperson of the Church Council and be kept on file at the church.

## Registered Sex Offender Church Participation Covenant Statement

The congregation of \_\_\_\_\_ United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children and youth. In furtherance of our Safe Sanctuary policy and in compliance with N. C. Gen. Stat. §§ 14-208.17,14-208.18, all registered sex offenders who wish to be part of our worshipping community must abide by the following procedures:

1. As a registered sex offender, I will have and abide by conditions placed on my participation in the church community.
2. While on church property, I will be accompanied by an unrelated, same-gender adult covenant partner. Providing a covenant partner will be the responsibility of the church.
3. I will not be permitted to work/volunteer with children or youth in any church- sponsored activity.
  - i. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-208.17 (2008)
4. I will not be in attendance at any event where children or youth are the primary audience. This includes, but is not limited to, United Methodist Youth Fellowship activities, Vacation Bible School and scouting activities. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-208.18 (a) (3) (2008) If I attend such an event, I will be told to leave and a report will be made to the sheriff's office.
5. I will not be within 300 feet of any location intended primarily for the use, care or supervision of minors. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-208.18(a) (2) (2008)
6. I will not be in any area of the property designated for the use, care or supervision of children or youth. N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-208.18 (a)(1) (2008). These areas include, but are not limited to, the nursery, preschool classrooms, children's Sunday School classrooms and playground.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Council Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed \_\_\_\_\_