



SAMPLE POLICY – Safe Sanctuaries

PREAMBLE

God has called us to make our ministries safe, protecting our children, youth and vulnerable adults from abuse and exploitation. God has also called us to create communities of faith where children, youth and vulnerable adults can be safe and grow strong.

Jesus taught that *“Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me,”* (Mark 9:37 NRSV) and *“If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones...it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.”* (Matthew 18:6 NRSV).

The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church state that *“...children must be protected from economic, physical, and sexual exploitation and abuse.”*

At each child’s baptism, we affirm our responsibility to their safety by our congregational response, pledging:

“With God’s help, we will so order our lives after the example of Christ, that this child, surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal.” (From *The Book of Worship, Baptismal Covenant, Congregational Pledge II*)

Building on these foundations, we recognize that our faith calls us to offer hospitality and protection to all children, youth and vulnerable adults, as well as those who are committed to ministering to them as volunteers and employees. Every 15 seconds, a child is abused or neglected. Often, abuse occurs in places where children and youth feel safe – homes, schools, camps, and even churches. In over three quarters of reported cases, the victim was related to or acquainted with the abuser. In light of this, the State Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and Wesley United Methodist Church has seen fit to outline policy and procedures that can 1) prevent such abuse from happening in our church; 2) be a place where children can feel safe in disclosing abuse; 3) protect the loyal volunteers and employees that minister to our children, youth and vulnerable adults and 4) allow those known sexual offenders who choose to worship at Wesley United Methodist Church to do so in a



manner that protects our children, youth and vulnerable adults while at the same time protects and safely integrates those known sexual offenders into our congregation.

Building on the Safe Sanctuaries policies established by the State Conference, Wesley Wesley United Methodist Church has incorporated within its Safe Sanctuaries policies additional measures to further protect children, youth and vulnerable adults and those known sexual offenders worshipping as a part of our congregation.

This policy sets forth the requirements in the areas of;

- 1) Screening,
- 2) Supervision,
- 3) Reporting,
- 4) Response Plan, and
- 5) Protection and Integration of Known Sexual Offenders.