

St John's United Methodist Church
2626 Arizona St. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110

Safer Sanctuaries Program
OPERATING POLICIES

Approved by St. John's United Methodist Church Council on 9/19/24 & by Trustees on 10/10/24

1. Purpose:

As a church, we believe that the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of children, youth, and vulnerable adults is vital. These policies are intended to ensure that church activities involving children, youth, and vulnerable adults are consistent with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the Christian tradition of nurturing children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

The primary purpose of this Safer Sanctuaries Program is to promote the safety and well-being of children, youth, and vulnerable adults by providing clear instructions about the operation of programs and ministries at St. John's United Methodist Church (SJUMC). The leaders of SJUMC sincerely request the cooperation of the adults in our church who must abide by the guidelines of this policy.

Safety of Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults Takes Priority: The greatest priority of SJUMC ministry programs is to the Gospel and ministry of Jesus Christ. It is obvious that any sexual exploitation, abuse, or endangerment directly contradicts this priority and the values of SJUMC. Staff and volunteer workers serving the Children's, Youth, or vulnerable adult programs are expected to observe these operating policies.

A Higher Standard: As ambassadors of Jesus Christ, we must strive to be worthy of a very high standard of trust. For this reason, every staff and volunteer worker at SJUMC must avoid even the appearance of inappropriate behavior. ALL staff and volunteer workers must diligently avoid any conduct that appears wrong to a reasonable observer, even if no actual misconduct takes place.

The Senior Pastor or Director of Children's and Family Ministries will dismiss any staff or volunteer worker who violates any of these policies.

This Entire Safer Sanctuaries Policy is available through a link on the SJUMC website. All members of the SJUMC congregation and/or the public have access to view this policy at any time.

2. Definitions:

Abuse means harm or threatened harm to the health and welfare of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult by any person responsible for the health and welfare of that child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Such harm can occur through non-accidental physical or mental injury, and can include, but is not limited to, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or mistreatment, sexual harassment, sexual contact, sexual molestation, or disseminating/exhibiting/displaying sexually explicit material. Such harm can also include neglect and financial abuse/exploitation.

Adult means any person at least 18 years of age. An "elder person" is a person of advanced years, most likely retired.

Appropriate means conduct that one understands would be acceptable and permissible by a child's parent or guardian. Criteria includes behavior that does **not** intentionally highlight or create an imbalance of power and does **not** include "transference" (the singling out and giving of gifts, affection, etc. only to one specific child, youth, or vulnerable adult but not to ALL children, youth, or vulnerable adults). Additionally, this definition prohibits people from engaging in grooming children, youth, or vulnerable adults in order to entrap them in an abusive relationship.

Child, Children, or Youth refers to a person under 18 years of age.

Financial Abuse/Exploitation refers to another person (caretaker, relative, acquaintance) controlling economic resources to the extent that the victim's capacity to support themselves is diminished and the overall result is dependence on the perpetrator.

Grooming means the act of engaging in behaviors or practices intended to gradually condition or emotionally manipulate a victim over time through friendship, gifts, affection, flattery, etc. in order to entrap the person in a sexually abusive or predatory relationship.

Leader means anyone directly responsible for supervising and overseeing a specific church-related function, event, or activity.

Parent or guardian means any parent, step-parent, foster parent, grandparent, or legally appointed guardian with general responsibility for the health, education, or welfare of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult.

Program Director means the staff member who directly oversees a department, area, or ministry.

Safer Sanctuaries Trainer means a person who has participated in a certification class and is identified as a Certified Local Church Trainer. A trainer is then expected to hold at least one Safer Sanctuaries basic class for the local church every year. SJUMC trainers will also offer annual Safer Sanctuaries refresher classes to those staff and volunteer workers who have already taken the initial basic course.

Sexual abuse means engaging in any sexual contact, sexual penetration, sexual exploitation, or sexual harassment of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult; or the dissemination, exhibiting, or displaying of sexually explicit material to a child, youth, or adult with special needs regardless of whether such conduct is with or without the knowledge or consent of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult. This abuse may be violent or nonviolent. It includes any conduct that involves children, youth, or vulnerable adults in sexual behavior for which they are not personally, socially, emotionally, or developmentally ready.

Sexual contact means the intentional touching of the intimate parts or the clothing covering the immediate area of the intimate parts of a youth, child, or vulnerable adult.

Sexual exploitation means allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child, youth, or vulnerable adult to engage in prostitution or in the photographing, filming, or creating of electronic or computer-generated images or other forms depicting a child, youth, or vulnerable adult engaged in actual or suggestive sexual conduct.

Sexual harassment means any sexual advance or demand, either verbal or physical, which is perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating, or coercive.

Staff means any paid employee of SJUMC.

Volunteer means a person who participates as a leader, an assistant to a leader, or as an individual in activities relating to any SJUMC, Conference, and/or District event or ministry without compensation.

Vulnerable adult means a person age 18 or older who has one or more mental, physical, or emotional impairments that render the person unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

3. Responsibilities of Staff and Volunteers Working with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults:

Reporting Responsibilities:

ALL ADULTS WORKING WITH CHILDREN, YOUTH, OR VULNERABLE ADULTS ARE MANDATED REPORTERS AND SHOULD IMMEDIATELY REPORT ANY CONCERNS OF ABUSE, NEGLECT, OR DISCLOSURES OF PAST ABUSE OR NEGLECT TO CYFD OR ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES DIRECTLY FIRST, THEN NOTIFY THE PASTORAL STAFF AND PARENTS, AND COMPLETE AN INCIDENT REPORT.

New Mexico is a mandatory reporter state. However, New Mexico DOES NOT provide immunity for those making reports in good faith. That means that the accused CAN bring a lawsuit against the reporter. However, CYFD/the State of New Mexico allows you to anonymously report abuse. Clergy are the only staff people of the church who do have protection in reporting. Reports to the clergy must be made in your name, but will remain confidential.

Worker to Child Ratios: SJUMC has a goal of maintaining the following ratios of staff and volunteers to children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Adherence to worker-child ratios is important to assist with the supervision of children and youth, ensuring safety and care, and it diminishes the transmission of communicable disease. When multiple age-groups are together, the lowest ratio should be followed. REMINDER: There must always be at least two (2) non-related, non-cohabitating workers present at all times, even if there is only one (1) child or youth present.

<u>Program</u>	<u>Adult Workers</u>	<u>Children/Youth</u>
Nursery (birth through one year old)	1	3
Preschool (two through five years old)	1	3
Elementary (grades 1 - 5)	1	5
Middle school (grades 6 - 8)	1	6
High school (grades 9 - 12)	1	8

4. Touching Policy:

We live in an age where child abuse is a reality in our society. The church should deal with this issue as a "good shepherd" by taking steps to protect the children, youth, and vulnerable adults in our care. SJUMC has implemented a touching policy that will safeguard individuals while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be carefully followed by anyone working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults. In ministry, healthy touch is generally best displayed in handshakes, high-fives, fist bumps, and side hugs. These forms of physical affection and acknowledgement allow each person in the group to greet others in non-sexual, non-threatening ways. Consent, however, is still necessary for these interactions.

- Hugging and other forms of appropriate physical affection between adult staff and volunteers and children are important for a child's development and are generally suitable in a church setting.

- Physical affections should be appropriate to the age of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult.
- Touching should be initiated by the child, youth, or vulnerable adult. It should not be based upon the adult's emotional need.

CHURCH STAFF AND VOLUNTEER WORKERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROTECTING CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND VULNERABLE ADULTS UNDER THEIR SUPERVISION FROM INAPPROPRIATE TOUCHING BY OTHERS. IF A QUESTION EVER ARISES ABOUT WHERE TO DRAW APPROPRIATE INTERPERSONAL BOUNDARIES, REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE THE ADULT, AND IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO BEHAVE PROFESSIONALLY.

5. Volunteer Workers Selection and Supervision

The following guidelines will be used as SJUMC reviews applicants for volunteer positions.

- 5.1. **Minimum Age:** An adult must be a minimum of 18 years old. Youth volunteers must always be supervised by an adult. There must be a five (5) year age difference between the oldest participant and the youngest sponsor/teacher. Young adults who work with mid-high students should have at least a year of college or have been out of high school for one year.
- 5.2. **Confidential Interview:** All applicants must be interviewed for suitability for the work they decide to do. Interviews will be conducted by the Program Director and reviewed by the Director of Children's and Family Ministries. Church policies and safety guidelines must be discussed during the interview.
- 5.3. **Six Month Rule:** Applicants must have been a member or regular attendee of SJUMC for a least six months. This time of interaction between Program Directors or other volunteers and applicant allows leaders to evaluate the suitability of an applicant for working in that program area. In some situations, this rule is not feasible and may be waived by the Senior Pastor only. If the six-month rule is waived, the Program Director must take additional steps to ensure the applicant is never left alone with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult.
- 5.4. **Volunteer Service Guidelines:** Applicants must complete and sign the volunteer service forms and related waivers giving permission to check references and background information.
- 5.5. **Background Check:** A criminal background check will be REQUIRED every two years for all adult staff and volunteers working with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Program Directors will work with the Director of Children's and Family Ministries to ensure that the paperwork for the background check is completed and attached to the application.
- 5.6. **References:** Program Directors will check at least two references for each volunteer. The reference checks will be done by phone, mail, or in person and will be reported to the Director of Children's and Family Ministries. The reference checks may include an employer, a supervisor, a fellow employee, or someone who has known the applicant for an extended period. The "Personal Reference" form will be filled out by the person conducting the reference check.
- 5.7. **Auto Safety:** Persons who will drive vehicles for transporting children, youth, or vulnerable adults must complete Attachment 5 (Auto Safety and Insurance Certification) of the Staff and Volunteer Worker Guidelines. The driver must have a current driver's license and vehicle insurance verification on file. The person driving the vehicle must agree not to let anyone else drive his/her vehicle unless an emergency exists. No person under 21 years of age is permitted to transport children, youth, or vulnerable adults. This rule does not apply to people who will not transport children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- 5.8. **First Aid Training:** Staff and volunteers are strongly encouraged to have training in basic first aid and CPR. First Aid/CPR training is mandatory for paid and volunteer employees of the Children's Ministry. Additionally, the lead adult, or another designated adult, of any SJUMC activity MUST be CPR certified.

- 5.9. Signatures and Guidelines: All applicants must agree, by signature, that they understand the guidelines and policies pertaining to their staff and volunteer positions and that they agree to abide by them. This requirement will be met by having applicants sign the "Guidelines" forms appropriate for their position.
- 5.10. Yearly Covenant: Staff and volunteers who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults on an on-going basis will be required to sign a Covenant each year to reaffirm their understanding of the Staff and Volunteer Worker Guidelines (Guidelines), be introduced to amendments, and agree to support the Guidelines and all other policies concerning work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. They will also be asked to make note of any changes to the Guidelines. A Safer Sanctuaries refresher course will also be made available annually.
- 5.11. Confidentiality of Information: SJUMC will make a reasonable effort to maintain privacy in record-keeping of information gathered through interviewing, reference checking, etc. of all applicants. Release of personal information will be approved by the Senior Pastor and will require written permission by the staff or volunteer, unless required by state or federal agencies or ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction.
- 5.12. Safer Sanctuaries Training: All new staff, volunteer workers, and members of active SJUMC ministries that include or work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults (Homebound Communion, New Sound/Sonrise/Chancel choirs, etc.) are required to attend an initial Safer Sanctuaries training course. Proof of completion will be kept by SJUMC and the trainee. The local Safer Sanctuaries Trainer(s) will also send the date of training and list of names of those who attended to Melissa Thacker (melissa@nmconfum.com) in the New Mexico Conference office. All trained staff, volunteers, and members are then required to take a Safer Sanctuaries refresher course annually. Online Safer Sanctuaries training or Protect My Ministry class is allowed ONE time. Subsequent Safer Sanctuaries training must be received in person.

6. Procedures to Become a Volunteer Worker

The following procedures must be followed by anyone wishing to become a volunteer worker with children, youth, or vulnerable adults at SJUMC.

- 6.1. Volunteer workers applying must be members or regular attendees of SJUMC for at least six (6) months before becoming a volunteer with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- 6.2. All volunteer workers must complete and sign all applicable sections of the Safer Sanctuaries Attachments.
- 6.3. All volunteer workers age 18 or older must sign a Release of Information Authorization Form so SJUMC may do background checks. Background checks will be conducted every two years.
- 6.4. After gaining the applicant's permission, the Program Director will contact the references provided by the applicant.
- 6.5. All volunteer workers will be interviewed by the Program Director to determine their suitability for working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- 6.6. All applicants who will be driving children, youth, or vulnerable adults must complete and sign Attachment 5 of the Guidelines and provide copies of their current driver's license and auto insurance.
- 6.7. Applicants must sign the agreement at the end of these Guidelines to indicate their commitment to observe these Guidelines.

- 6.8. All volunteers must read and sign an Annual Staff and Volunteer Covenant to reaffirm their understanding and agreement to comply with all Guidelines. They must also update any changes to their personal information on Attachment 2, the Volunteer Application to Work with Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults.

7. Attachments

- Staff and Volunteer Worker Guidelines – Attachment 1
- Volunteer Application to Work with Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults – Attachment 2
- Authorization for Release of Information – Attachment 3
- Annual Volunteer Covenant – Attachment 4
- Auto Safety and Insurance Certification – Attachment 5
- Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse – Attachment 6

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER WORKER GUIDELINES
St. John's United Methodist Church Safer Sanctuaries Program

Team Supervision: No fewer than two (2) non-related, non-cohabitating adults will be present at all times during any church sponsored activity. Teams of volunteer workers (preferably male and female) will supervise activities. This policy has three purposes:

- (1) it provides for more than one adult to help ensure appropriate levels of supervision;
- (2) it protects adults from unfounded allegations and;
- (3) it lessens the possibility of an adult having undue influence over an individual child, youth, or vulnerable adult.

For smaller events, the two (2) non-related, non-cohabitating adult rule can be met by using assigned adult roamers: volunteers who move in and out of classrooms and recreation areas as additional helpers. Communication devices in the office are mandatory for this practice.

Overnight Activities: At least two (2) non-related, non-cohabitating adults of each gender for every twelve youth will supervise overnight activities. If the participants are male and female, then male and female chaperones must be present. If these conditions cannot be met, then the event will be postponed. An adult chaperone may not share a bed with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Experienced adult workers should be included with adults who are newcomers to Children's and Youth Ministries.

Individual Counseling: Team counseling is preferable whenever possible. When team counseling is not feasible or not appropriate for the situation, another adult will bear accountability for the meeting by being visible and available. Counseling should be done in a public place where private conversations are possible but occur in full view of others. If possible, have female adults counsel female individuals and male adults counsel male individuals. A male/female team is generally appropriate for counseling either gender.

Informal Contact: Informal contact refers to phone calls, letters, emails, texts, face-to-face contact, etc. between an adult and a child, youth, or vulnerable adult that is not connected to official church activities. The church recognizes that informal contact between workers and youth frequently occurs. For example, when workers may hire teens as babysitters for their own children, or when teens may visit their own youth friends. The interaction is usually legitimate and beneficial. However, workers should seek permission of parents before having informal contact with their child.

Transportation: Transportation to and from meetings is not generally part of church activities. Parents are responsible for providing or arranging for this transportation. Parents are discouraged from asking staff or volunteers to transport children, youth, or vulnerable adults. However, the church may, from time to time, provide transportation as an official part of church activities. If this is the case, there must be at least two (2) children, youth, or vulnerable adults in the vehicle. There can never be one (1) adult and one (1) child, youth, or vulnerable adult in a vehicle. Related/married volunteers providing transportation to children, youth, or vulnerable adults may not serve in the same vehicle unless another non-related adult is present either in person or telephonically.

Confidentiality: Children and Youth staff and volunteer workers must report to the appropriate authorities (CYFD, police, etc.) if an individual discusses harming himself/herself or others, committing a crime, or being abused.

Youth Supervising Children/Youth: Youth may help adults lead Children and Youth activities only under the direct leadership and supervision of adults. A youth may be used to meet the team leadership guidelines discussed above. A youth must never be put in a supervisory position over other children or youth unless an adult is also present.

Gifts: Adult workers, both staff and volunteer, are discouraged from giving personal gifts or money to children, youth, or vulnerable adults. When the giving of personal gifts is desired, workers must first get approval from the Senior Pastor or Program Director. Gifts can easily be misinterpreted. Gifts given to groups of children, youth, or vulnerable adults are appropriate.

Corporal Punishment: Corporal punishment, meaning hitting, pushing, spanking, or other forms of punishment involving physical pain, is never appropriate in activities at SJUMC. This rule holds true even if parents have suggested or given permission for corporal punishment. Workers should consult with the Senior Pastor or Director of Children's and Family Ministries if they need help with discipline techniques.

Open Door Policy: All events involving children, youth, and vulnerable adults will be "open door." This means that staff, volunteers, and parents/guardians have the right to observe any church activity. Parents/guardians are allowed to visit classrooms, but other adults are not permitted in the rooms even if they are related, unless they are staff/volunteers. In addition, all doors must have glass windows (this should be for ALL doors).

Romantic Dating or Sexual Involvement: Adults are not allowed to date or be romantically or sexually involved with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult in SJUMC programs. Any adult with a prior conviction of sexual misconduct or abuse may NOT be a Children, Youth, or vulnerable adult volunteer worker at SJUMC. There are no exceptions to this guideline.

Reporting Misconduct or Abuse:

Staff and volunteer workers must immediately report suspected or observed misconduct by others toward a child, youth, or vulnerable adult to either CYFD or Adult Protective Services and local law authorities. All workers must then inform the Senior Pastor or Director of Children's and Family Ministries of any reported abuse of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult or any physical marks of abuse. The person making the report will immediately ensure that the child, youth, or vulnerable adult is safe, make all appropriate contacts, and complete a Report of Suspected Incident of Abuse form (Attachment 6).

SOCIAL MEDIA

Introduction

As an ever-increasing number of people use and prefer digital communication over other forms, it is essential that the church be present in this mission field. Social networking sites, on-the-spot communication devices, and email can enhance communication, faith sharing, and the deepening of relationships. The following recommended practices and guidelines apply principles of healthy boundaries and safe church to the virtual world of digital networking and communication. They are intended to raise awareness of issues and open doors of communication with ministry teams. We encourage all ministry teams to discern together the following guidelines, considering the nature of your ministry and being mindful that our calling is to meet individuals where they are, to model healthy boundaries, and to love and care for them safely. Adults engaged in ministry should present themselves and engage on social media in a manner that would be acceptable on church grounds.

Connecting on Social Networking Sites

In addition to participating on the ministry social media pages, individuals may wish to establish social media connections with church leaders and adult volunteers. Adults who are willing to participate in these relationships should use the following guidelines when establishing these connections.

- Adults should not submit “friend” requests to children, youth, or vulnerable adults. Individuals may feel like they are not able to decline such requests due to the disparity of power between themselves and adults.
- Due to the greater potential for misinterpretation, inappropriate discussions, and inadvertent exposure of individuals to inappropriate content, personal pages should be maintained appropriately. Church leaders and adult volunteers should avoid relationships with children, youth, or vulnerable adults via social networking sites, unless an actual relationship (ministry, family, friendship, etc.) already exists between them.
- As additional social media sites gain popularity, the Safer Sanctuaries Committee reserves the right to apply this approach to the various methods of digital communication.

Boundaries

- All church leaders and adult volunteers engaged in ministry are strongly encouraged to set strict privacy settings on any personal social networking profile, making every effort to prevent congregants from being introduced to objectionable content. Privacy settings on personal pages and information should be thoroughly scrutinized on a regular basis to prevent this information from being available to minors. In the event that a church leader or adult volunteer does not feel that they can set the proper privacy settings, then they are asked to completely restrict access to their pages.
- For the sake of their own privacy, church leaders and adult volunteers should not add or invite children, youth, or vulnerable adults to any groups, events, pages, chat rooms, etc. that are not solely dedicated to activities directly related to SJUMC ministries or ministry activities.
- Given the continuing evolution of privacy settings and capabilities on many social networking sites, church leaders and adult volunteers must be willing to continue to educate themselves on what settings are needed to support the above recommendations.

Communication

Social media is an excellent way to quickly share both good and sad moments in a person’s life with many people. However, as with all forms of communication, users should be respectful of the privacy of others. Leaders should be especially mindful of how information is presented in such a permanent medium and should never share news about another person without their express prior consent.

- Use prudent judgment about the time of day you contact individuals through social media, email, or other forms of digital communication. The “home phone rule” is a basic rule of thumb to use. If you would normally not call their home phone line before 9:00 a.m. or after 9:00 p.m., then the same rule applies for texting, chatting, etc.
- All church leaders and adult volunteers engaged in ministry should consider the content and nature of any posts that will be seen or read by others. Your voice is often considered the voice of the church.
- One-to-one video or chat room interaction is generally not appropriate. Such communications should only be engaged when face-to-face communication is not possible.
- When the content of received communications raises concerns or questions, it should be shared with the Senior Pastor and/or Director of Children’s and Family Ministries.
 - Email is not an appropriate communication method for matters that are pastorally sensitive, emotionally charged, or that require extensive conversation.
 - Email may be more appropriate where matters are deemed legally sensitive.

- Humor and sarcasm can be easily misinterpreted and should be used only where appropriate.
- All communication sent digitally (email, texts, social networking sites, notes or posts, etc.) may be shared or reposted to others. Adults should be mindful that comments may be shared in several ways and that misinterpretation of those comments may occur.
- Phone conversations and face-to-face meetings are the preferred mode of communication when responding to emotionally driven communication or pastoral emergencies, and they should be used, when possible, to provide the appropriate level of support.

Identity Protection

We will seek to protect the privacy and identity of all individuals in our use of social media. All church leaders and adult volunteers should closely monitor the privacy settings of any posted images to ensure that they are not accessible to individuals who do not have permission to view them.

- All church leaders and adult volunteers engaged in ministry must not post photos or videos that identify children, youth, or vulnerable adults on any website or printed publication without the written consent from a parent or legal guardian.
- Even with written consent from a parent or legal guardian, pictures should be posted to either the SJUMC Youth closed group or on personal pages where the privacy settings restrict viewing to only those associated with the Youth Ministry.
- We strongly encourage the respect and dignity of every person depicted in an image. Only pictures depicting youth in an appropriate light should be posted. If a picture would make the individual feel self-conscious, vulnerable, or would subject the youth to ridicule, then the picture should not be posted.
- When checking in with any location tagging social media, only check in yourself. Never check in minors or vulnerable adults. Be sensitive to tagging or revealing other participants' locations.

Administration of Official SJUMC Social Media Groups

- Each church related social media site, group, or page must have a minimum of two (2) non-related, non-cohabitating administrators who are either church leaders or adult volunteers engaged in the ministry.
- Sites must be monitored frequently to allow for quick responses in the event urgent or crisis concerns are posted.
- Administrators should review the access to the SJUMC Youth "closed" group.

Any inappropriate material posted to a church related social media site, group, or page must be deleted and addressed.

I HAVE READ THE GUIDELINES ABOVE AND I AGREE TO OBSERVE THEM FAITHFULLY. I UNDERSTAND THAT THESE POLICIES ARE NOT INTENDED TO CREATE AN IMPLIED OR EXPRESSED CONTRACT WITH ANY PERSON. THEY ARE NOT INTENDED TO CREATE A LEGALLY ENFORCEABLE OR BINDING PROMISE OR REPRESENTATION.

Staff/Volunteer Worker's PRINTED NAME

Date

Staff/Volunteer Worker's Signature

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION TO WORK WITH CHILDREN, YOUTH, OR VULNERABLE ADULTS

St. John's United Methodist Church Safer Sanctuaries Program

This application is to be completed by all applicants for any volunteer position involving supervision or custody of minors or vulnerable adults. This application is used by SJUMC to help promote a safe environment for the children, youth, and vulnerable adults who participate in SJUMC programs.

Any applicant who has ever been convicted of, or has charges pending for, child abuse, physical abuse, or domestic violence will NOT be allowed to volunteer to work in any church sponsored activities or programs that include children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

Applicants with criminal records of other types will be evaluated at the discretion of church leaders.

All applicants must agree to obey the guidelines that are provided for their program and position, guidelines of the United Methodist Church as indicated in the Book of Discipline, and any guidelines set forth by SJUMC.

Please answer each question below. All information on this application will be kept confidential.

Today's Date: _____

Name: _____
 LAST FIRST MIDDLE

Have you ever used any other names (including maiden name): **YES / NO** (circle one)
If "yes," please indicate the name(s) and date(s) of use on the following lines.

Current address (please include building and/or apartment number):

- Street address: _____
- Bldg./Apt. #: _____
- City, State, Zip Code: _____

Mailing address (only if different from current street address above – otherwise leave blank)

- Address: _____
- City, State, Zip Code: _____

Cell Phone #: _____ **Home Phone #:** _____ **Work Phone #:** _____

Social Security #: _____

Driver's License #: _____ **State Issued:** _____ **Date Expires:** _____ **Date Issued:** _____

What age of Children or Youth volunteer work do you prefer? _____

On what date would you be available to provide volunteer service(s)? _____

Please answer each question by **initialing in either the "YES" or "NO" box**. You may use a blank sheet for explanations.

#	YES	NO	Question
1			As a church volunteer worker, do you agree to observe all the guidelines and policies of SJUMC and the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church regarding working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults?
2			Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense (felony or misdemeanor) except for minor traffic violations? Answer "yes" if you have entered into a plea agreement, including a deferred sentence or deferred judgment arrangement, in connection with a criminal charge. <i>If you have been convicted of such an offense, please attach a statement or explanation, including nature of the offense, date, court where convicted, and any other relevant information.</i>
3			Have you ever been convicted of, or currently have charges pending for, any sexual offense, offense relating to children, youth, or vulnerable adults, or a crime of violence? <i>If "yes," please attach a statement of explanation, including nature of the offense, date, court where convicted, and any other relevant information.</i>
4			Have you ever been reported to a social service agency, law enforcement authority, child abuse registry, or similar organization regarding abuse or misconduct? <i>If "yes," please describe the circumstances, and include name, address, & phone # of the organization involved.</i>
5			Have you ever been subjected to expulsion, reprimand, or other discipline by a church, denomination, or other religious organization? <i>If "yes," please describe the circumstances, and include name, address, & phone # of the organization involved.</i>
6			Have you ever been disciplined or dismissed from employment or a volunteer position by any employer, including charitable and religious organizations, following an allegation of sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, or other immoral or inappropriate behavior or conduct? <i>If "yes," please describe the circumstances, and include name, address, & phone # of the organization involved.</i>
7			Have you ever been the subject of a civil lawsuit, investigation, or allegation of sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, or other immoral behavior or conduct involving children or adults? <i>If "yes," please describe the circumstances, and include name, address, & phone # of the employer, institution, or organization where the lawsuit, investigation, or allegation arose or occurred, and the outcome.</i>
8			Have you ever been the subject of a complaint or disciplinary proceeding against a professional license, or another license held by you, including, but not limited to, a license to provide childcare or similar services? <i>If "yes," please describe the circumstances, and include name, address, & phone # for the applicable department of the state where you held the license(s).</i>
9			Have you ever been the subject of any disciplinary action, transfer, or dismissal, or been named as a defendant in a civil or criminal lawsuit because of any accident or mishap? <i>If "yes," please describe the circumstances, and include name, address, & phone # of the employer or organization with which you and/or the child, youth, or vulnerable adult were associated at the time of the incident.</i>
10			Do you have any investigations, reviews, or disciplinary actions pending by an employer or organization in which you volunteered, for sexual misconduct, violence, or misconduct? <i>If "yes," please describe the circumstances, and include name, address, & phone # of the employer or organization with which these actions are pending.</i>

Church Activities:

- I am currently a member of a church: YES / NO (circle one) Church name: _____
 - *If a current member of SJUMC, how long have you been attending?* _____
- I do not currently attend, but in the past I have been a member of: _____
- I have never been a member of a church: Never a member / Does not apply (circle one)

- List previous volunteer work involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

- List any training, education, or special interest that may have prepared you for working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

- Please list the three most recent employers you have worked for since the age of 18; start with the current/most recent employer. Be sure to include each employer's address, phone number, email, and supervisor's name.
 - **Employer #1** Name: _____
 - Street Address: _____
 - Phone #: _____
 - Email: _____
 - Supervisor's Name: _____

- **Employer #2** Name: _____
- Street Address: _____
- Phone #: _____
- Email: _____
- Supervisor's Name: _____

- **Employer #3** Name: _____
- Street Address: _____
- Phone #: _____
- Email: _____
- Supervisor's Name: _____

APPLICANT STATEMENT

I hereby authorize all employers, organizations, churches, and other entities and persons identified in this form to release any information contained in their files or records concerning me.

I hereby release St. John's United Methodist Church (SJUMC) and any individual, church, organization, charity, employer, reference, or any other person or organization, including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature which may at any time result to me, my heirs or family on account of compliance or any attempts to comply with this authorization. I waive any right that I may have to inspect any information provided about me by any person or organization identified by me in the application.

- **I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THE FOREGOING RELEASE AND UNDERSTAND THE CONTENTS THEREOF. I SIGN THIS RELEASE AS MY OWN FREE ACT.**
- **I UNDERSTAND THAT SIGNING THIS APPLICATION IS NOT A GUARANTEE THAT I WILL BE ALLOWED TO VOLUNTEER FOR SJUMC AND THAT SJUMC HAS THE RIGHT TO REFUSE ME AS A VOLUNTEER FOR ANY REASON AT ANY TIME.**

I understand and agree that it is critical to the mission and ministry of SJUMC that all employees and volunteers conform to the highest standards of safety, interpersonal conduct, and sexual morality. I affirm that if I am asked to volunteer, I will strictly comply with the policies and procedures of SJUMC and guidelines of the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church. I understand and agree that failure by me to abide by such policies and procedures may result in my dismissal or disciplinary action, all at the discretion of the church.

My responses in this application are truthful and accurate. I understand and agree that if they are not truthful and accurate, SJUMC may determine that I am no longer qualified to be associated with its programs as a volunteer in any capacity.

Applicant's PRINTED NAME

Date

Applicant's Signature

AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults Volunteer

St. John's United Methodist Church Safer Sanctuaries Program

Name: _____

Social Security #: _____

Date of Birth: _____

I, _____, pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 29-10-6 (A) of the New Mexico Arrest
(Print full name)

Record Information Act, hereby appoint _____ as an
(Name OR if no agency, print "self")

authorized agent for me for the purpose of inspecting, and/or obtaining copies of, any New Mexico arrest fingerprint card supported record information maintained by the Department of Public Safety, including information concerning felony or misdemeanor arrests and information obtained from relevant fingerprint databases.

To the custodian of the records in question, I hereby direct you to release such information to St. John's United Methodist Church of Albuquerque, NM.

I hereby release the custodians of such records, and the State of New Mexico including any of their agents, employees, or representatives in any capacity, from all claims of liability or damages because of compliance with this Authorization for Release of Information or because of any use of these records. This release is binding, now and in the future, on my heirs, assigns, associates, personal representatives, or representatives of any nature. This release is valid for a period of up to 120 days from the date signed.

Applicant's PRINTED NAME

Date

Applicant's Signature

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 202__

SEAL:

Notary Public

My Commission Expires:

_____, 202__

ANNUAL STAFF AND VOLUNTEER COVENANT

St. John's United Methodist Church Safer Sanctuaries Program

Staff and volunteers who work with children, youth, or vulnerable adults on an on-going basis will be required to sign a covenant each year to reaffirm their understanding of the guidelines, and to reaffirm their agreement to support the guidelines and all other policies concerning work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Review of Staff and Volunteer Worker Guidelines:

1. No fewer than two (2) non-related, non-cohabitating adults will be present at all times during any church sponsored activity.
2. On overnight activities, female chaperones will supervise the girls and male chaperones will supervise the boys.
3. Team counseling should be done whenever possible. Counseling should be done in a public place.
4. Informal contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults outside church activities should be approved by the parents/guardians of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult.
5. Staff and adult volunteers must report any incidents/disclosures of abuse, neglect, or misconduct against a child, youth, or vulnerable adult to CYFD or Adult Protective Services (see reporting procedures), local authorities, and then SJUMC pastoral staff and anyone supervising the ministry area.
6. It is not permissible for youth to supervise children, youth, or vulnerable adults as the primary leader.
7. The Senior Pastor or Program Director will be consulted before an adult volunteer gives a gift to an individual.
8. Corporal punishment is not allowed in any form.
9. All church activities for children, youth, and vulnerable adults should be open and available for anyone to observe.
10. Adults are not allowed to date a youth or vulnerable adult, or to be romantically or sexually involved with any youth or vulnerable adult in SJUMC programs.
11. All SJUMC staff, volunteers, and members of ministry teams involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults are required to take an initial Safer Sanctuaries training course and also agree to take an annual refresher course.

I have read the guidelines in the Annual Staff and Volunteer Covenant, and I agree to observe them faithfully.

Staff/Volunteer's PRINTED NAME

Date

Staff/Volunteer's Signature

AUTO SAFETY AND INSURANCE CERTIFICATION

St. John's United Methodist Church Safer Sanctuaries Program

This certification is for staff and volunteer workers who conduct church business or transport children, youth, or vulnerable adults by vehicle.

**** Only persons over 21 years of age with a valid driver's license and current personal auto insurance may transport others as part of church activities. ****

1. Are you currently a licensed driver? **YES / NO** (circle one)
2. Do you currently have personal auto insurance coverage? **YES / NO** (circle one)
(Please present driver's license & proof of auto insurance to church staff so copies can be made for church records.)
3. Have you been ticketed for any moving violations within the past two (2) years? **YES / NO** (circle one)
(If "yes," please explain the violation and outcome on a separate sheet of paper.)
4. Have you ever been convicted of DWI or DUI? **YES / NO** (circle one)
(If "yes," please provide the circumstances, year of conviction, and state or area where offense occurred on a separate sheet of paper.)
5. I agree to immediately inform SJUMC staff/representative if any of the following circumstances occur. These notifications are required even if the offenses are not related to church volunteer work.
 - a. if my driver's license is suspended or revoked
 - b. if I am ticketed for a driving offense
 - c. if I have a DWI/DUI charge currently pending
 - d. if my personal auto insurance coverage is cancelled or not renewed
6. I agree to transport persons only in passenger seats equipped with appropriate seatbelts and child safety seats. I agree to always require seatbelt usage and child safety seat usage while the vehicle is in use.
7. I agree to transport persons only in vehicles that are in safe operating condition.
8. If necessary, I will allow the Program Director or another designee to inspect my personal vehicle prior to transporting children, youth, or vulnerable adults in the vehicle.

I agree to the above policies.

Staff/Volunteer's PRINTED NAME

Date

Staff/Volunteer's Signature

REPORT OF SUSPECTED INCIDENT OF ABUSE

St. John's United Methodist Church Safer Sanctuaries Program

1. Name of staff/volunteer worker observing/receiving disclosure of abuse: _____
2. Victim's name: _____
3. Victim's age and date of birth: _____
4. Victim's statement: (give detailed summary here – if you need more space to write, please use another blank sheet of paper and attach to this page)

5. Name of person being accused of abuse: _____
6. Relationship of accused to victim (parent, teacher, church worker, etc.): _____
7. Call to local Children, Youth, & Family (CYFD) **OR** Adult Protective Services (APS) agency:
 - o Which agency contacted? _____
 - o Date & time of call: _____
 - o Spoke with: _____
 - o Summary: _____

8. Call to local law enforcement agency:
 - o Name of agency contacted: _____
 - o Date & time of call: _____
 - o Spoke with: _____
 - o Summary: _____

9. Notification made to the SJUMC Senior Pastor and/or the Director of Children's and Family Ministries:
 - o Name of SJUMC person notified: _____
 - o Date & time of notification: _____
 - o Notification made by: **PHONE / EMAIL / TEXT / IN-PERSON** (circle one)
 - o Summary: _____

10. Call made to victim's parent(s)/guardian(s):

- o Name of person contacted: _____
- o Date & time of call: _____
- o Summary: _____

Local agencies & contact information:

Children, Youth, & Families Department (CYFD) – use for victims birth through 17 years old
 4501 Indian School Rd. NE
 Albuquerque, NM 87110
 (505) 841-2911 – Open 8:00 am – 5:00 pm Monday – Friday ONLY
 1-855-333-7233 – Statewide Central Intake (SCI) – 24 hrs/day, 365 days/year
 #SAFE – Contact directly from a cell phone to Statewide Central Intake (SCI) – 24 hrs/day, 365 days/year

Adult Protective Services (APS) – use for vulnerable adults 18 years of age or older
 8500 Menaul Blvd. NE
 Suite 350
 Albuquerque, NM 87112
 1-866-654-3219 – Regular hours are 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, but line is also answered after hours as well

- Listen to menu options and select the appropriate choice (i.e. developmentally disabled, elderly, etc.)

Albuquerque Police Department
 400 Roma NW
 Albuquerque, NM 87102
 911 – emergency calls
 (505) 242-COPS (2677) – non-emergency calls

Bernalillo County Sheriff Department
 400 Roma NW
 Albuquerque, NM 87102
 911 – emergency calls
 (505) 798-7000 – non-emergency calls
 (505) 468-7100 – Regular hour are 8:00 am – 4:00 pm Monday – Friday ONLY

Reporting Abuse or Neglect

Mandated Reporting

Every person who knows or has reasonable suspicion that a child is being abused or neglected in New Mexico must report the matter immediately to CYFD's Statewide Central Intake child abuse hotline (**1-855-333-SAFE [7233] or #SAFE from a cell phone**), or to law enforcement or the appropriate tribal identity. Specific professionals mentioned under the law as mandated reporters are: licensed physicians, residents or interns, law enforcement officers, judges presiding during a proceeding, nurses, schoolteachers, school officials, social workers, and members of the clergy who have information not privileged as a matter of law.

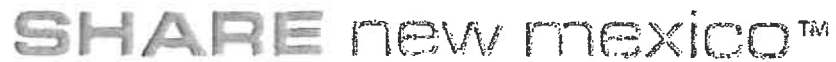
Reporting Abuse or Neglect

It is important for every person to take child abuse and neglect seriously, to be able to recognize when it happens, and to know what to do when you see it. Call CYFD's Statewide Central Intake (SCI) at 1-855-333-SAFE [7233] or #SAFE from a cell phone if you suspect child maltreatment is occurring.

When making a report of abuse or neglect, you may choose to remain anonymous as the reporter, and will be immune from liability, civil or criminal, as long as you have acted in good faith by reporting. We encourage reporters to provide information about who they are, as it assists us in the investigative process. The reporter's name remains confidential unless ordered to be released by a court of law. In rare cases, a reporter could be required to testify in court if such testimony is necessary to protect the child.

While we make every effort to protect a reporter's identity, CYFD cannot guarantee that an alleged perpetrator will not figure out who has made the report. There do exist cases in which parents or alleged perpetrators are able to guess who reported the abuse based on the nature of the report. In these cases, CYFD's role is to attempt to redirect the alleged perpetrators and engage them in focusing on the concerns for the child.

As a reporter of abuse or neglect, it is important to include as many details about the suspected maltreatment as possible. In order for a report to be screened in for investigation, you must be able to provide enough information about so that we might be able to find the child. While certainly desirable, it is not necessary to know the name and address of the child and/or parents. All descriptive information you can provide about the child, parent, and location of the abuse helps, such as: the child's school, parent's work place, vehicle license plate, etc



Adult Protective Services

If you suspect an adult is being abused, neglected, or exploited, call Adult Protective Services Statewide Intake, toll free at 866-654-3219 or 505-476-4912.

The Adult Protective Services Division is mandated by New Mexico law to provide a system of protective services to persons over the age of 18 who are unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

New Mexico has a "Duty to Report" provision in the Adult Protective Services Act (27-7-30) which states: "Any person, or financial institution, having reasonable cause to believe that an incapacitated adult is being abused, neglected or exploited shall immediately report that information to Adult Protective Services." Adult Protective Services remains on call for emergent reports of adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Investigations are conducted through a network of regions and field offices that cover all New Mexico counties. Caseworkers meet with alleged victims in their homes to investigate allegations, perform assessments, and address immediate safety needs. When necessary, APS provides short-term services, including emergency protective placement or caregivers, home care, adult day care, attendant care, and legal services, including filing of guardianship or conservatorship petitions in district court. The program works with health care providers, law enforcement, the judicial system, behavioral health agencies, and a wide range of community agencies to prevent continued abuse, neglect, or exploitation of adults who do not have the capacity to protect themselves.

