

POLICIES FOR THE PREVENTION OF ABUSE

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH EATON RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

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FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of EATON RAPIDS

PROTECTION POLICY

2023

Preamble

Christians are called to live according to the gospel of Jesus. All persons are created by God. God intends all persons to have worth and dignity in their relationships. We are a connected body, and when one part of this body is injured physically, emotionally or spiritually, the entire body is rendered less than God intended.

The scriptures witness a God who brings about justice, mercy and grace. This policy is an act of hospitality to those who may be at risk due to their age, size, and mental and/or physical capacities.

The innocence of children is what best enables them to seek out God with fearless enthusiasm. That innocence is also what leaves them most vulnerable to abuse, bullying or neglect. Every 15 seconds a child is abused or neglected.¹ Often abuse occurs in settings where children, youth or vulnerable adults should have been able to feel safe -- homes, schools, camps, and sadly the church. In more than three quarters of the reported incidents of child abuse, the victim was related to or acquainted with the abuser.²

Although the practice of abuse, bullying and neglect, or the making of false accusations is not to be condoned, we will continue to acknowledge that God's grace is available to all. All persons are valued as human beings in God's image.

The purpose of this policy is to protect all who come to us, to protect both our paid and volunteer staff from potential false allegations of abuse, and to limit the extent of legal liability of First United Methodist Church of Eaton Rapids (FUMER). Therefore this policy, prompted by the 1996 General Conference of The United Methodist Church, is designed to minimize the risk of abuse, bullying and/or neglect to children, youth, and vulnerable adults at FUMER events.

¹ Joy Thornburg Melton, *SAFE SANCTUARIES: REDUCING THE RISK OF CHILD ABUSE IN THE CHURCH* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1998). Available through www.discipleshipresources.org and www.cokesbury.com. Rev. Melton is a deacon in the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church. She is both a Christian educator and an attorney.

² Ibid.

Part I: Introduction and General Information

A. Purpose of establishing policies: Children, youth and vulnerable adults are precious to God and to the Church. First United Methodist Church of Eaton Rapids is dedicated to ensuring that all children in our care continue to grow healthily, happily, and spiritually in a safe and caring Christian environment. As a result, we have developed and implemented policies for the prevention of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse. The purposes of our policies are:

1. To keep our children, youth, and vulnerable adults safe.
2. To protect the safety and reputation of our paid and volunteer staff.
3. To protect our church.
4. To make a positive statement to the community where we stand as a church.

B. Definitions: For the purposes of this policy:

1. The term Child/Children refers to all people under the age of 18.
2. The term Child Care Worker refers to any person holding any position paid or unpaid that involves supervision of minors and covers all activities sanctioned by the church.
3. The term vulnerable adult is defined as an individual age 18 or older who has functional, mental, or physical inability to care for themselves. It also refers to anyone who is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation.
4. The term individual care worker refers to any person holding any position paid or unpaid that provides supervision and or care of children and or vulnerable adults.

C. Inappropriate Conduct: To achieve the goal of preventing any abuse or the potential of false accusations of abuse, Individual Care Workers shall not engage in the following conduct:

1. Physical, verbal, or sexual abuse or neglect.
2. Disseminating, exhibiting, or displaying sexually explicit material to children
3. Selling, giving, or furnishing any child with any tobacco substance, nicotine, alcohol, or controlled drugs.
4. Selling, giving, or furnishing any over the counter or prescribed medications unless given written consent by the guardian.
5. Swearing or using obscene, foul, demeaning, threatening or sexually explicit language.
6. Demonstrating any romantic or sexual interest in a child or vulnerable adult
7. Engaging in sexual activity in a child's presence.
8. Sleeping in the same bed or bedding with any child or vulnerable adult.
9. Remaining alone in any room, parked vehicle, or private place along with a child or vulnerable adult.
10. Contributing to any child becoming a delinquent.
11. Denying anyone, who is not a threat, and who has a legitimate reason to access a room, vehicle, or other place in which the worker is present with a child.

D. Permitted Conduct: (to be posted in all rooms) It is natural, appropriate, and desirable for Christians to express their love and affection for each other and Christ. This is considered

essential to the healthy emotional and spiritual well-being and growth of a loving and caring Christian community, as adult members, and especially its children. Therefore, the following conduct by an Individual Care Worker shall be permitted under the terms of these policies:

1. Appropriately holding and comforting a child or vulnerable adult.
2. Occasionally and appropriately hugging or embracing a child or vulnerable adult especially when this contact is initiated by the child or vulnerable adult.
3. Sharing in emotional and spiritual concerns of the child or vulnerable adult.
4. Providing necessary medical care and attention to a child or vulnerable adult.

E. Admonishing Inappropriate Behavior:

1. If you observe anyone, including an individual care worker, behaving in a manner that is inappropriate, you should promptly report your concern to the appropriate paid staff or pastor or person with special responsibilities (PWSR) who will investigate the matter and take corrective measures.
2. If you observe anyone, including an individual care worker, behaving in a manner that seems to be innocent but may appear to others to be inappropriate, you should privately advise that person and encourage them to exercise greater care in words and actions. If one is uncomfortable in advising that person, they should seek the guidance of a staff member or PWSR.

F. Reporting Inappropriate Behavior: (See Part IV)

G. Private conversations between individual care workers and children/youth or vulnerable adults: These conversations can contribute greatly to spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being. They are very much a part of a caring and loving Christian community. However, private conversations create a high-risk environment in which abuse, the false appearance of abuse, and/or false accusations of abuse may occur.

1. Before engaging in a private conversation, one must consider the following:
 - a. Private conversations can be conducted in places that are very public, populated, and easily accessible by others. Conversations in isolated or intimate locations should be avoided.
 - b. The right and responsibility of parents to be the child's primary caregivers should be recognized and respected. Parents may need to be consulted about private conversations.
 - c. The substance of any conversations with children/youth and vulnerable adults shall be appropriate at all times.
 - d. Although hugging in a public location when others are present may be appropriate, physical contact during a private conversation carries a very high risk of being misconstrued and should be used with discretion.
 - e. Refer the child/youth or vulnerable adult to a pastor or professional counselor if you believe it to be necessary.
 - f. Confidentiality of the conversations should be respected, except when necessary to protect the health and welfare of either the child or others

involved. In some cases, it may be necessary to inform the pastor, parents, proper authorities, or another adult.

H. Responsibility for Screening and Training Workers:

1. All Individual Care Workers shall satisfactorily complete the recruiting and selection process (screening) required in these policies before being permitted to work with or provide any services to children/youth or vulnerable adults. Part of the screening process includes completion of a training session.
2. The Screening and Training Committee shall consist of the Discipleship Director, the Youth Director and one other person(s) appointed by the Discipleship Director as approved by the Church Council. The pastor shall serve as an advisor.

Part II: Recruiting and Selecting Individual Care Workers

A. Qualifications of Workers:

Qualifications will be established by the Screening and Training Committee as outlined in above section H item #2.

1. All potential Individual Care Workers must submit an application and consent to a criminal records background check and the background check will be reviewed annually.
2. A reference check will be conducted for everyone. These references will not include relatives and shall be someone that they have known for at least 6 months.
3. All Individual Care Workers must complete a training session (provided by the Screening and Training Committee as outlined above in Part IH2).
4. Personal interviews will be held as deemed necessary for adults.
5. Youth (ages 11-17) will be screened/interviewed.

B. Who may not be permitted to be an Individual Care Worker?

1. No one shall be permitted to serve as an Individual Care Worker who, if in the belief of the Screening Committee or pastor, may represent a potential threat of committing abuse or violating any of the provisions contained in these policies.
2. No one shall serve as an Individual Care Worker if they are known to have been previously convicted of or pled guilty to or “no contest” to:
 - a. Any crime involving abuse.
 - b. Any act or conduct which is of a sexual, molesting, seductive, or criminally deviant nature, whether or not such conduct involves a child. This includes, but is not limited to, crimes involving pedophilic behavior, incest, rape, assaults, murder, kidnapping, child pornography, sodomy, and any physical abuse or financial abuse.
 - c. This qualifying rule shall be applicable no matter how long ago the crime occurred.
3. No one shall serve as an Individual Care Worker who has:

- a. Had a verdict rendered against them in any civil action arising out of any personal conduct related to abuse, or
 - b. Has acknowledged or admitted that they have participated as a perpetrator in any previous act of abuse.
- 4. No one shall serve as an Individual Care Worker if they have ever been
 - a. Accused of, or been unsuccessfully charged with, any act or conduct related to abuse unless they have been unanimously cleared by the Screening Committee and the pastor.
 - b. No one shall serve as an Individual Care Worker if they admit to, or are known to have, any interest in child pornography.
- 5. If the Screening and Training Committee determines that the person is unsuitable to serve, the application shall be denied, and the applicant shall be notified. We reserve the right to not accept any person for volunteer or paid service. If at any time, before or after authorization, the applicant is found to be unsuitable, we have the authority to review and revoke participation.

C. Outside Youth Groups using the church:

- 1. All youth groups (e.g. Scouts, 4-H, etc.) may be allowed to use the church on a regular basis if they satisfy the screening requirements and qualifications provided in these policies or unless they have their own comparable policy in place.

D. Specific Guidelines for Individual Care Workers:

- 1. At least two non-related, non-cohabiting, authorized Individual Care Workers, one of whom must be an adult and at least 5 years older than the oldest child, shall be present at each function, activity, or event involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- 2. The two-care worker rule in the preceding paragraph may be waived at the discretion of the event director or Individual Care Worker in the following situations:
 - a. The authorized Individual Care Worker is an adult and there are at least three children over 13 years of age present.
 - b. One adult Individual Care Worker remains while the other Individual Care Worker temporarily leaves the area or room for a medical, family, or other reasonable necessity, e.g., escorting a child, youth, or vulnerable adult to the restroom.
 - c. One adult Individual Care Worker remains when the other Individual Care Worker must leave for an unexpected medical, family, or other reasonable necessity.
 - d. An Individual Care Worker is taking a child, youth, or vulnerable adult to or from a function, activity, or event. The waiver must be completed for each child, youth, or vulnerable adult.
 - e. An authorized Individual Care Worker temporarily remains with a child, youth or vulnerable adult while waiting for others to arrive or while the

child, youth or vulnerable adult is waiting to leave a function, activity, or event, providing there is another adult or older child present.

3. If adequate staffing cannot be found the event is to be canceled, or the group/class is to be combined with another group/class.
4. The coordinator of the function, activity, event, or program shall be responsible for providing adequate staffing from the pool of workers who have been screened.
5. The minimum age of any Individual Care Worker shall be thirteen (13) years old. Primary caregivers (adults) must be at least eighteen (18) years old.
6. All interior windows, including those on doors, must remain unblocked by curtains or other materials that may obstruct the view from the room. If the door does not have a window, it is to remain open.

E. Overnight Rules/Procedures:

1. There shall be at least two adult Individual Care Workers present on any overnight when children are present.
2. There shall be at least one adult male and one adult female Individual Care Worker at an overnight where both male and female children are present.
3. Visiting groups of youth who spend the night in our church building must abide by the above rules. Sponsors will be sent a copy of our Protection Policy ahead of time and will be required to sign a statement of compliance form.
4. When visiting groups of youth are “farmed out” to homes to spend the night, a minimum of two youth of the same sex are to be assigned to one home.

F. Social Media and Computer Technology:

1. When communicating with children, youth, and vulnerable adults the two-adult rules shall still apply.
2. If communication occurs through social media or other forms of technology, accounts used shall be accounts that are accessible by the public or utilized by the church.
3. When the conversation is initiated by the child, youth or vulnerable adult, the Individual Care Worker shall record the date, time and general conversation topics that were discussed.
4. Screen shots and other methods of saving communication should be utilized if possible.

G. Nursery Guidelines:

1. The Two-Worker rule, as defined above in this policy, shall be followed in the nursery.
2. No one other than the children in the nursery, their parents, or guardians, approved Individual Care Workers, and the children of the Individual Care Workers on duty shall remain in the nursery.
3. The door to the diapering facility shall remain open while diapering any child.

4. All interior windows, including those on doors, must remain unblocked by curtains or other materials that may obstruct the view from the room.
5. A nursery identification procedure (sign in and out sheet) shall be used to ensure that a child is released only to a properly identified, authorized person.

H. Restroom Guidelines:

1. No child over five (5) years of age shall be assisted in the restroom unless they are physically, mentally, or emotionally disabled.
2. When the individual does not need personal assistance inside the restroom, the Individual Care Worker may escort the individual to the restroom but shall stand outside the restroom. The restroom door may be left open slightly while the individual is inside.
3. The above rules shall be waived in each of the following situations:
 - a. The individual has a medical emergency or necessity.
 - b. The individual has a potentially embarrassing bathroom emergency.
 - c. There are at least two (2) Individual Care Workers present.

I. Confidentiality Issues:

1. Except as otherwise provided herein, all documents and information obtained and/or kept on file regarding all Individual Care Workers and unsuccessful applicants shall be kept under lock and key and or electronically password protected and be accessible only to the pastor and Screening Committee. All confidential files and information contained therein are the property of FUMER.
2. Notwithstanding the above, all documents and information obtained during the recruiting and selection process may be disclosed when it is reasonably necessary in the context of any criminal or civil litigation involving the Individual Care Worker or the Church. An Individual Care Worker's records, documents, files, and information may be disclosed for all other reasons with the consent of the Individual Care Worker.

J. Meetings in private homes:

1. When a child/youth group is meeting in a private home, two Individual Care Workers shall still be present.
2. When an Individual Care Worker is meeting with a vulnerable adult in a private home, two Individual Care Workers shall still be present.

K. Child/Youth Trips Requiring Transportation:

1. Permission Slips must be obtained from the parent/guardian. The waiver form currently used by the Church is adequate providing the parents have been informed of each outing.
2. Only responsible adults (21 and over) who possess a valid driver's license, possess up-to-date insurance coverage for the automobile and possess a good driving record will be allowed to transport children/youth to church activities. Proof of the

same may be required and enforcement shall be the responsibility of the leaders in charge of the activity.

3. Seat belts for every passenger are required. Responsibility for enforcement shall be that of the driver of the vehicle.

Part III: Worker Supervision

A. Policy Statement: FUMER shall provide proper supervision to all Individual Care Workers to guard its children/youth and vulnerable adults against abuse and to guard itself and its workers against false allegations of abuse. Effective supervision includes:

1. Training and educating its Individual Care Workers on issues involving abuse.
2. Providing them with effective direction and oversight during the performance of their responsibilities
3. Giving special attention to certain high-risk areas, such as nurseries, restrooms, and overnights.

B. Supervision Responsibilities: All church Individual Care Workers and all members of the church are responsible for assessing the appropriateness of Worker behavior and responding in an appropriate manner which should include notifying the appropriate supervising staff person. Persons with special responsibility for supervision include the Discipleship/Communications Director, the Youth Director, the Pastor and one of the Nursery Coordinators.

C. Oversight for the Implementation and Compliance of this Policy lies with the Discipleship/Communications Director as prayerfully approved and supported by the Pastor and the Administrative Board.

Part IV: Reporting Procedures

A. Persons Required to Report:

1. All Individual Care Workers who have reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult shall report all known and suspected cases of abuse or neglect which:
 - a. Occur on the local church premises.
 - b. Occur at a church function, activity, or event.
 - c. Are disclosed during a church function, activity, or event.
 - d. All other persons may report known and suspected cases of abuse or neglect in accordance with this Policy and the laws of the State of Michigan. This Policy supports mandatory reporting in compliance with the State of Michigan.
2. If any child, youth, or vulnerable adult arrives at an event with signs of abuse or neglect, the event director shall immediately implement this Policy's reporting procedures in compliance with state law.
3. The reporting requirements in this Policy are the minimum requirements. This Policy does not preclude anyone from reporting a known or suspected case of

abuse or neglect to others for the protection of children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Unless such protection requires otherwise, however, confidentiality of the information reported or received shall be respected to protect the rights and interest of the victim, the alleged perpetrator, and their families.

4. Under Michigan law, anyone reporting in good faith a known or suspected case of abuse or neglect, to Children's Protective Services or Adult Protective Services is immune from civil or criminal liability which might otherwise be incurred thereby.

B. Required Reporting Process:

1. The Individual Care Worker shall immediately report the known or suspected abuse or neglect to the person with special responsibility as listed above.
2. For the protection of all parties, if the suspected or alleged perpetrator is in/on the premises, they are to be isolated from the program and have no contact with the children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
3. As soon as possible and in all cases within 24 hours, the person with special responsibility shall telephone an oral report or use the Michigan Online Portal system through MI Bridges. Phone calls shall be made to Children's Protective Services or Adult Protective Services to the Centralized Intake TOLL FREE number for the State of Michigan (855-444-3911). This report shall be made in conjunction with the person who made the observations or received the disclosure. The following information is typically required in the report:
 - a. Name, age and gender of the alleged victim and other family members
 - b. Address, phone number and/or direction to the alleged victim's home
 - c. Parent's place(s) of employment (if known)
 - d. Name and address of alleged perpetrator
 - e. Description of the suspected abuse
 - f. Current condition of the alleged victim
4. If an oral report is made by phone, then within 72 hours, the person with special responsibility who observed or received the disclosure, shall submit a completed State of Michigan "Report of Known or Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect" to Children's Protective Services, or its equivalent to Adult Protective Services in accordance with the directions given at the time of the oral report using the link attached on the church website www.fumer.org. The Individual Care Worker will be a resource for completing this form.
5. All individuals present at the function, event, activity, or program shall cooperate with Children's Protective Services or Adult Protective Services.
6. Following contact with local Children's Protective Services or Adult Protective Services, the person with special responsibilities shall inform one of the following:
 - a. The Pastor.
 - b. Relevant church leadership.
 - c. District Superintendent and Bishop.
7. Notification of a parent or legal guardian of the alleged victim of abuse or neglect shall be determined by Children's Protective Services or Adult Protective Services. The persons with special responsibilities shall follow the parent's or legal guardian's

wishes regarding the continued participation of the involved child, youth or vulnerable adult, unless otherwise instructed by Children's Protective Services or Adult Protective Services.

8. Matters of known or suspected abuse or neglect are to be kept confidential, except as required by law, to assist appropriate agencies in their investigations, or as disclosed to local church representatives with a need to know such information consistent with the requirements of the law. The incident is not to otherwise be discussed with persons other than those involved in the reporting.

C. Reporting When the Alleged Perpetrator Is Clergy or Discipleship Director:

1. Shall be reported to the Chair of Staff-Parish Relations Committee (or proxy if unavailable) who then shall convey the report to the Children's Protective Services and the District Superintendent and then continue to follow all procedures for reporting listed in section IV.B.

D. Reporting When the Alleged Perpetrator Is Another Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult:

1. Unless instructed otherwise by CPS, APS, or the local enforcement agency, the person with special responsibility may confidentially inform the parents or guardians of involved parties.

E. Reporting All Other Suspected Cases of Abuse or Neglect:

1. In all other cases of suspected abuse or neglect, the person with special responsibilities and the Pastor shall be immediately notified, and the reporting procedures referenced in Section IV.B shall be implemented.

F. Section 380.1310b of The State of Michigan Law Addressing Bullying in Schools:

1. Bullying is not a mandated reportable offense. However, it is behavior that must be reported to protect participants, care receivers, caregivers, and church ministries. Reporting procedures follow:
 - a. The PWSR will be notified of alleged bullying incidents.
 - b. The PWSR will determine what, if any, follow up steps are to be taken. Consultation with the pastor or leadership team is recommended.
 - c. Together the PWSR, in consultation with relevant staff, shall determine what notification, if any, is appropriate to give to the parent or legal guardian, or the victim and the perpetrator or others.
 - d. The PWSR may submit a written report of the incident to the Pastor. It may be determined that the District Superintendent should be informed.

Section V. Follow-Up After Reports of Known or Suspected Abuse, Bullying or Neglect

A. General Goals and Objectives:

1. After reporting procedures have been completed, the following goals and objectives as prioritized below shall be addressed:

- a. Protection for the alleged victim and other children, youth, and vulnerable adults from any continued exposure to abuse, bullying or neglect.
- b. Care for the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator.
- c. Respect and preservation of the legal rights of both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator.
- d. Safeguarding the privacy of all parties involved.
- e. Care for the spiritual and emotional well-being of the local church
- f. Protection of the legal and financial interests of the local church.

B. Investigation:

- 1. In accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan, local church staff (paid and volunteer) shall not begin any investigation of reports or accusations of abuse or neglect. An internal investigation may be completed once given permission from CPS/APS or Law Enforcement authorities.
- 2. The local church shall cooperate in any proper investigations by the CPS, APS, law enforcement agency, liability insurer and the parties involved.
- 3. The local church may obtain the advice of an attorney who represents the local church.

C. Additional Response Requirements:

- 1. The church will work with our insurance company, our attorney and our District Superintendent to determine further steps.
- 2. If the media is involved, the Michigan Conference Director of Communications should be contacted.

D. Response to The Victim(s) And the Accused:

The Church recommends that appropriate sensitive care be expressed to the victim, and the accused, as well as their families. Although the practices of abuse, bullying, neglect, or the making of false accusations are not to be condoned, we will continue to acknowledge that God's grace is available to all.

Section VI. Revisions

This policy shall be reviewed regularly by our local church leadership. Edits may be made to any part of this policy at any time to be in compliance with applicable Michigan laws or changed circumstances. Such edits shall be included in annual reports.

Closing Statement

As Christians, we are called to live according to the gospel of Jesus. All persons are created by God. God intends all persons to have worth and dignity in their relationships. We are a connected body, and when one part of this body is injured physically, emotionally, or spiritually, the entire body is rendered less than God intended.

While the vast majority of those who work with our programs are of the highest moral and spiritual character and are deeply committed to the needs of those to whom they minister, the reality is that the potential for abuse, bullying or neglect is present.

We understand that those with clear backgrounds and records might find this process burdensome or offensive. Yet if we are to take seriously our responsibility for children, youth and vulnerable adults, all applications for workers and volunteers must be treated in the same manner. This policy is an act of hospitality to those who may be at risk due to their age, size, and mental and/or physical capacities. We thank you for your understanding and cooperation as we endeavor to make our programs safe and secure for all who participate.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SCREENING REQUIREMENTS FOR PROTECTION POLICY

Spring, 2023

Thank you for your interest in serving the children, youth and vulnerable adults of First United Methodist Church. Thank you for being willing to take the necessary training to allow you to serve in this way.

SCREENING REQUIREMENTS:

In accordance with requirements for our insurance company as well as First United Methodist's Protection Policy, volunteers who work with children, youth and vulnerable adults are required to go through a screening process. This process includes that:

- 1) You attend a training session
- 2) You return an application
- 3) You secure three references from non-relatives

The information you receive today includes the above as well as your own copy of the Protection Policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUES

The information given by you on the application form, the references others return on your behalf, and any other follow-up work deemed necessary will be reviewed only by the Screening Committee. The information will be stored in a secure location and will be kept in strict confidence except in the event of an investigation.

We are very committed to making sure all people are safe here at First United Methodist Church.

If you have any questions, please contact any of the persons listed below.

Pastor Melany Chalker
Samantha Carroll, Discipleship/Communications Director
Melissa Hampton, Youth Director

CONFIDENTIAL APPLICATION FOR INDIVIDUAL CARE WORKERS

First United Methodist Church, Eaton Rapids

This form is to be completed by all persons applying for any position involving the supervision or custody of minors. It is being used to help the church provide a safe and secure environment for the children and youth who participate in our programs and use our facilities.

PERSONAL

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Driver's License Number _____ Issuing State: _____

Date of Birth: _____

NOTE TO APPLICANTS: *If you prefer, you may answer the following questions during a confidential discussion with the pastor instead of answering them on this form. Simply check the box below for "Confidential Interview Requested."*

☐ Confidential Interview Requested

Criminal History:

Have you ever been charged with, convicted of, or pleaded guilty to any crime?

Yes____ No____

If "Yes", please attach a separate piece of paper and explain.

Were you a victim of abuse or molestation while a minor? Yes____ No____

CHURCH HISTORY AND PRIOR YOUTH WORK

Are you a member of First United Methodist Church? _____

How long have you been a member? _____

If not, how long have you regularly attended First United Methodist Church? _____

Please list the name and addresses of other churches you have regularly attended/held membership in during the past five years:

List all previous work, paid or volunteer, in this church or elsewhere, involving children/youth (give approximate dates, names and addresses of churches or organizations, type of work performed): _____

Please list three people (not including relatives) who have known you at least 6 months who can judge your qualifications for this volunteer position:

Name _____ Phone _____

Address: _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address: _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address: _____

Authorization and Statement of Understanding

I certify that the answers and information given by me in this application are true and complete. I authorize First United Methodist Church to verify the information I have provided and to make any investigation of my background deemed necessary. I also authorize third parties (such as former employers, law enforcement organizations, etc.) contacted by the church to furnish any information relevant to my application and further release all persons and organizations from any and all liability for any and all damages whatsoever for releasing such information.

In consideration of my application, I agree to conform to the rules and policies of First United Methodist Church.

My signature below indicates that I have read and understood the above paragraphs.

Applicant signature _____ Date _____

PERSONAL REFERENCE FOR CHILD/YOUTH WORKER

First United Methodist Church, Eaton Rapids

Instructions for Applicant:

Sign the statement below and give a copy of this form to each person you listed as personal references on your application. Ask each person to complete the form and return it in the attached envelope within 10 days of receipt.

Statement of Release

Having made application for service with children/youth at First United Methodist Church of Eaton Rapids, Michigan, and desiring the Church to be informed as to my past record and character, I authorize you to release to the Church any information you have regarding my record, character, and fitness for service with children/youth. I release you from liability from any damage that may result from furnishing such information to the Church, and I waive any right I may have to inspect any such information provided on my behalf.

Name of Applicant (printed)

Signature of Applicant

Date

“Service with children/youth” at First United Methodist Church means any position that involves the supervision or custody of minors, such as a nursery attendant, Sunday School teacher, youth group counselor, etc.

Name of personal reference (printed)

Phone No.

Instructions for Reference:

You have been selected to be a character reference for the applicant named above. To ensure the safety and well-being of the children and youth of First United Methodist Church of Eaton Rapids, we are asking those persons working with our children and youth to submit character references. Please complete the questions listed below and return this form to the church in the envelope provided. Your time and frank appraisal is important to us, and is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

How long have you known the applicant?

(over)

In what capacity have you known the applicant?

How well do you know the applicant?

_____ Very Well _____ Well _____ Casually _____ Little _____ Very Little

Describe the applicant's character, personality, and temperament, including strengths and weaknesses:

To the best of your knowledge, has the applicant ever been accused, investigated, arrested, or convicted for neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, assault, or any other acts of violence?

_____ No _____ Yes (if yes, please explain)

What is your overall recommendation:

_____ I recommend the applicant for service with children/youth.

_____ I believe the applicant is unsuited for service with children/youth.

Please feel free to provide additional information on a separate sheet of paper.

Thank you for your assistance. Please return this form in the attached envelope within 10 days of receipt.

Signature of Personal Reference

Date