

The Staff Parish Relations Personnel Committee, The Staff Parish Relations Committee, And The Safe Sanctuary Administrative Board have specific responsibilities and duties regarding this policy, each of which are listed below. In addition, they will regularly review our policies and procedures and update them as appropriate for our church.

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

STAFF PARISH RELATIONS AND PERSONEL COMMITTEE DUTIES

1. The SPRC personnel committee will implement and operate the following screening process for potential employees, volunteers, and those who work with preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Keeping the records safe and secure is of paramount importance in this process. Copies of the applications and the actual reports should be "double locked" - locked file cabinet in a locked office.

A. Volunteer/Worker Enlistment Policy

The SPRC Personnel Committee is the committee solely responsible for the administration of the screening process for individuals who would like to work with our churches preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults. The following procedures will be used in the worker/volunteer enlistment screening process.

- 1) All employees of the Church (both paid and unpaid as defined above) desiring to work with our preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults will be required to complete an Employment Application and Confidential Screening Form.
- 2) After an application is received, prior employment and volunteer service and personal references will be checked. It is suggested that, at a minimum, personal references be telephoned and a written memorandum be made of the contents of those telephone conversations, and that prior employment and church service references be contacted in writing.
- 3) Any prospective worker that has prior incidents of sexual misconduct or child abuse should not be allowed to serve in any capacity where they would have contact with our preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults unless exception be made by the unanimous decision of the SPRC Personnel Committee.
- 4) Criminal background checks will be performed on each employee (as defined above) after the applicant has signed Background Investigation Consent for, and prior to being enlisted as a worker. Criminal background checks may be performed on any volunteer worker. Annual criminal background checks will be performed on employees and workers, randomly or as deemed necessary. After every five years a new criminal background check will again be performed.
- 5) Only the Pastor and members of the SPRC Personnel Committee of the Church will have access to the criminal background check report. Each applicant will be given a signed copy of the Church Privacy Statement disclosing those officials who serve on the SPRC Personnel Committee. Recommendations will be given by the SPRC Personnel Committee to the Staff Parish Relations Committee, the Safe Sanctuary

Administrative Board or other appropriate individual or committee as to the qualification of applicants.

- 6) Standard interview questions will be developed and used in personal interviews with employee and volunteer worker applicants, after reviewing the applications of the applicant, checking all references, and receiving a criminal background check report. These interview sheets will be filled out with the results of the interview and kept in a secure, confidential supervisory file, together with the reference checks, the applications and the criminal background check report, if any. A separate supervisory file will be maintained permanently on each employee and worker, whether paid or a volunteer.
- 7) All programs for children and youth will at all times observe the Church's Basic Procedures for Safe Ministry with our preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults, and all employees and workers must agree to abide by the Church's Code of Ethics.
- 8) When an employee (as defined above, including volunteers working in a supervisory capacity) is engaged to work (whether paid, unpaid, and/or volunteer) with our preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults, they will be photographed and the picture(s) will be kept in the person's file. Photographs will be updated every five (5) years or as deemed necessary.
- 9) At the applicant's request, the Church shall allow the applicant to review his/her criminal history record transcript at the Church, but in no event shall the Church allow the applicant to retain and/or copy of the transcript of his/her criminal background check.
- 10) The Church shall immediately notify the SPRC Personnel Committee or other qualified church official if an internal grievance (applicant disputes) is filed by an applicant because of incorrect information or other reasons related to criminal histories provided by the agency.

The SPRC Personnel Committee will review the worker/volunteer enlistment policy and process yearly. The SPRC Personnel Committee has the sole authority and discretion to revise the worker/volunteer enlistment policy and process as needed.

B. OCCASIONAL VOLUNTEER WORKERS

- 1) Those who only volunteer occasionally must go through the entire volunteer screening process. There are to be no exceptions for anyone to go through the complete process.
- 2) Teenagers under eighteen (18) wanting to serve as teen workers in any capacity with activities, studies, or programs for preschoolers or children will need to fill in a Teen Volunteer Information Form and go through the training. The only step in the process they are exempt from is the criminal background check. Teenagers must be assigned in accordance with the Five-Years Older Rule (see Basic Procedures for Safe Ministry with Preschoolers, Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults).

C. Volunteer/Worker Information Forms

Employees, teachers of our preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults, and volunteers of activities or programs for the preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults of the Church will be required to complete Application and Screening Forms providing personal and confidential information necessary to perform security background checks and reference checks on each individual worker. While this process understandably trespasses into the privacy of our lives, the security of our children outweighs the personal invasion inherent with such investigation and disclosures. All personal information voluntarily disclosed, the results of all security background and

reference checks or the refusal of any person to participate in a program or activity in lieu of such disclosure requirements will be maintained in the strictest of confidence.

D. Application Forms

Adult worker application forms shall include the following:

- Volunteer/Employee Application and Screening Form with Attachments
 - Code of Ethics
 - Basic Procedures for Safe Ministry with Children and Youth
 - Application Form
 - Confidential Screening Form
 - Background Investigation Consent
 - Church Privacy Statement
 - Authorization and Release of References
 - Child Abuse Prevention Reporting
 - Teen assistant worker application form shall include the following:
 - Screening Form for Teens
 - Code of Ethics
 - Basic Procedures for Safe Ministry with Children and Youth
2. The SPRC Personnel Committee has determined, whether disclosed voluntarily or by result of the security background check, the following items will automatically disqualify a paid staff member or employee or volunteer from participating in the leadership, sponsorship or supervising of any activities or programs with preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults:

A. Worker/Volunteer Disqualification

Any conviction for:

- Criminal homicide;
- Aggravated assault;
- Crimes related to the sale of drugs or controlled substances;
- Sexual abuse;
- Sexual assault (rape);
- Aggravated sexual assault;
- Injury to a child;
- Incest;
- Indecency with a child;
- Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a child;
- Possession or promotion of child pornography;
- The sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor;
- Employment harmful to children;
- Abandonment or endangerment of a child;
- Kidnapping or unlawful restraint;
- Public lewdness or indecent exposure;
- Enticing a child.

All charges for these crimes or charges or convictions for any other crimes not listed above will be reviewed by the members of the SPRC Personnel Committee. Only the Pastor and the SPRC Personnel Committee may view information obtained on the criminal history record transcript, and the Church's Privacy Statement shall be faithfully followed.

3. To develop the Safe Sanctuary Policy and Procedures as it relates to the Screening process, and the Church as a Safe Sanctuary.
4. To develop a Code of Ethics for our church regarding the Cornerstone United Methodist Church Policy for Safe Ministry with Preschoolers, Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults
5. The SPRC personnel committee will develop and provide recommendation of personnel policies for church staff, unpaid staff, volunteers, and those who work with preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
6. Members of the SPRC and SPRC Personnel Committee shall keep themselves informed of all personnel matters in relationship to the church's policy, professional standards, liability issues, and civil law. This committee is responsible for communicating and interpreting such matters to the staff and pastor.
7. The SPRC personnel committee will handle all personnel issues for staff, unpaid workers and volunteers, and those that work with preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults.
8. The SPRC Personnel Committee will limit the number of persons who know the outcomes of the background and criminal checks to the appointed clergy person, the Staff Parish Relations Committee chairperson, and perhaps one other designee.
9. No Exceptions!
 - a. No one (except the Pastor who has undergone screening by the NC Conference) is exempt from the screening, even the woman who has been working with children for sixty (60) years.
 - b. The key to explaining this need is the reality that the procedure is designed to protect not just the children, but also the adults from false accusations.
 - c. Another key to explaining this need is that if all current staff and volunteers are properly screened then new staff and volunteers more readily understand the need.

SAFE SANCTUARY ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD DUTIES

This policy will be implemented by the Safe Sanctuary Administrative Board. The members of this Board will consist of membership by leadership position rather than individuals nominated. This is because these positions will be involved with ministries to preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults. This Board will consist of:

The Pastor
Lay Leader
Christian Education Director
Board of Trustees Member
Child and Youth Coordinator
Children's Church Coordinator
Nursery Coordinator
Day Care Director
Sunday School Superintendent
SPRC Personnel Committee Member
Social Worker/School Counselor
Lawyer

Listed below are the duties:

- A.** The Board should meet at least six times per calendar year.
- B.** The Board should report directly to the Administrative Council.
- C.** Education (provided by Safe Sanctuary Administrative Board):
 - 1) Formally educate all volunteers and employees annually.
 - a. This might mean that multiple training sessions will need to occur in order to reach all persons, especially seasonal volunteers/staff (sport coaches, Vacation Bible School teachers, new staff, etc.)
 - b. All workers (staff and volunteers) should be required to attend training annually on the church's policy(s), procedures and expectations for working with children and youth (e.g., hand washing, two adult rule, five year older rule, sign in and sign out sheets, what to do if an accident occurs, reporting an alleged incident of child abuse, information on state child abuse laws, and the like).
 - c. Either send or provide training for all adult volunteers and staff who are working with children and youth. As a part of implementing the process insure that all who have been working with children and youth participate.
 - 2) Educate all children and youth.
 - a. In a children and youth brochure or resource packet made available to Sunday school, choir, weekday school, fellowship groups, parents, youth group, etc.
 - 3) Informally educate our congregation annually about the contents of the policy and why it is necessary.
 - a. Send a letter to the congregation stating that the policy has been adopted by the North Carolina Annual Conference, and that the members will be hearing more about it in the near future. Explain in the letter, the need for the policy, to whom it will apply and how it will be implemented.
 - b. Have the SPRC Chairperson write newsletter articles and speak to it from the pulpit.
 - c. Post the synopsis of the policy statement all over the church: in classrooms, bathrooms, etc.
 - d. Use the church newsletter, web-site, send an annual letter, etc.
 - e. When new members join the church (in their orientation and membership classes).
 - f. During Child Abuse Prevention Month (in April each year).

D. Institute Standards

1. Criteria
 - a. Minimum Age -- No Workers under age 18! Putting children in charge of children invites disaster. It is common practice in many churches to allow junior or high school aged volunteers to supervise nursery or young children. People under the age of eighteen can not be expected to have developed the maturity and judgment that is needed to fully respond to young children. However, people under age eighteen can assist a responsible adult, but they should not substitute for an adult under the Two Adult Rule (see the "Two Adult Rule" under responsibilities Item a. below).
 - b. The "Six Months Involvement Rule" requires that all volunteers, seeking to serve in areas of children and youth ministries show evidence of membership in good standing in a local church or campus religious organization for a minimum of six months. Persons not meeting this minimum requirement may serve only in an assistant capacity with two other non-related adults
 - c. The "Five-Years Older Rule" requires that leaders of youth ministry should be a minimum of five years older than the oldest youth.
 - d. Screening Procedures (Developed, Implemented, and Operated by the SPRC Personnel Committee)
 - e. Policy Instruction and Parent and Family Education -- When a congregation has a commitment to a comprehensive plan for the prevention of abuse with its ministries, it will want to provide information about the plan to the congregation

and parents. A family education event or series of events is highly effective in the disseminating of the components of the church plan. An event could include: (1) a speaker from your local law enforcement agency, (2) a speaker from a local child/adult protective service agency, (3) a doctor or counselor who is experienced in treating abused children, (4) an attorney experienced in advising churches about risk management or loss prevention, (5) a video about the incidence of sexual abuse within churches, (6) printed copies of your churches abuse prevention policies and procedures, and (7) a time for worship and prayer.

2. Responsibilities

- a. The "Two Adult Rule" requires no fewer than two adults present at all times during a church sponsored program, event or ministry involving children or youth. Risk will be reduced more if the two adults are unrelated. Abusers thrive on secrecy, isolation and their ability to manipulate victims. When abusers know they will not be left alone, they lose interest in working with children.
- b. Adult/Child Ratio -- All ratios must be understood in light of first having two adults present at all times. Example: Recommendations for a "Conference or District Event" state that there must be 1 adult to 12 children if grades 9-12. You must have 2 adults at all times, so really for the first 12 youth, you must have 2 adults. For youth numbers 13-24, you need 2 adults according to the ratio, but you already have two adults for safety. Once you have 25 youth you need a third adult.
 - 1) Participants who are physically impaired -- The above ratio should be adjusted depending on the degree of impairment. The following ratios should be considered as a guide:
 - Needing constant and individual assistance or supervision – 1 leader to 1 child/youth.
 - Needing close, but not constant, assistance or supervision – 1 leader to 2 children/youth.
 - Needing occasional assistance – 1 leader to 4 children/youth.
 - Needing minimal assistance – 1 leader to 5 children/youth.
- c. Rooming in a motel/hotel setting:
 - Select a hotel with rooms opening to the interior (i.e. a closed hallway) of the building. Where possible, select adjoining rooms on a single hallway.
 - When two adults cannot be assigned to a room housing youth, the youth should be roomed separately from the adults. If adjoining rooms are available with doors that can be left in the open position, a single adult in each of the adjoining rooms is acceptable.
 - An adult should not share a bed with a child/youth.
 - Where adults need to be assigned to separate rooms, it is recommended that one adult room be located between every two youth rooms on the hall.
 - Adults should develop a rotating schedule allowing for the hallway to be monitored throughout the night.
 - If room checks are needed, they should involve two adults of the same gender as the room residents.
- d. Transportation (Refer to item 10 on page 6 and 7 regarding Transportation requirements.)
- e. Mentoring Some Assumptions: Mentoring programs or other efforts to pair children with caring adults are good things. In fact, we know that at-risk children who beat the odds and "make it" frequently credit their success to an on-going relationship with an adult outside their family who took an interest in them and their future, and was there "for the long haul."

Some Initial Suggestions:

- Work through existing programs in the community that have established, supervised mentoring programs already in place, such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, YMCA's, Boy and Girl Scouts, public schools, etc.
 - Provide basic screening of all adults who will be working with children and youth.
 - Establish clear written guidelines for settings, boundaries, and environment. Provide training for all adults (or youth, if they will be working with children) who are interested in being mentors.
 - Make it clear that all persons are expected to follow congregation, agency and/or conference guidelines for reducing the risk of child/youth abuse.
 - Outings should be in public places;
 - Routes, time frames, etc. should be agreed upon in advance, and known to all;
 - Plan activities and outings that include several adults and children (such as two sets of mentor and child);
 - One-to-one mentoring or tutoring should take place in a group setting, such as one large room rather than individual rooms spread through the church building.
- f. Interpersonal Boundaries -- Youth ministry [more so than children's ministry] can be described by many adjectives, but the first one is almost always relational. Youth [and many children] get involved, and stay involved, with ministries because the ministries offer opportunities to experience relationships with peers and adults that are healthy, both physically and spiritually. Whether they can articulate this or not, the youth [and children] want and need to see good examples from the adult leaders of appropriate ways to relate to others. Adults who model respectful and nurturing behaviors that do not interfere with another's privacy provide these types of good examples. The youth [and children] follow the lead of the adults in this regard; therefore, it is important for the adult workers to be clear about appropriate behaviors. Adult workers must be attentive to:
- appropriate dress codes, [It is suggested that your group adopt dress codes that address types of swimsuits, shirts, etc. that can and cannot be worn at any group function.]
 - appropriate use of language,
 - appropriate demonstrations of affection and encouragement. A good rule of thumb for adult leaders is to never initiate a hug and to always be the one to end the hug. (Melton, 2003, pg. 37)
- g. Visiting at Youth and Children's Workers Home
- 1) Follow the two-adult rule (non-related adults)
 - 2) Suggestions:
 - i. If youth or children "drop by" you can visit outside in the front yard, tell them you will meet them at a local restaurant or have them go recruit another adult to be present.
 - ii. Educating youth and children of these requirements before they "drop by" is most beneficial. This way they either recruit another adult ahead of time or call you to have you meet them at a local restaurant.
- h. Discipline

- 1) Appropriate Discipline – A well-designed and managed program contributes to good behavior by:

- limiting the number of children in a classroom
- having adequate staff
- discouraging competition
- encouraging children to express feelings, and be empathetic
- developing and discussing rules of conduct.

The purpose for setting disciplinary guidelines is to enable children to develop internal control mechanisms that foster growth and promote societal values. Children must be trained in basic rules of conduct.

- 2) Age-Level Characteristics – Knowing what is appropriate for each age level enhances the learning by our students. Each level has its own unique aspects that when they are acknowledged and planned for, produces more learning and less discipline problems. Here are some sample ideas, more can be found in curriculum resources and educational textbooks.

Ages 3-6:

Moral Development: Preschoolers are very “me-oriented.” They are the center of their own worlds. Their entire view of right and wrong – along with their faith – is based upon what influential models (such as parents and teachers) tell them.

Cognitive Level: Preschoolers’ play is symbolic of real life.

Ages 6-8:

Moral Development: For younger children, the moral code is “an eye for an eye.” If they are pinched, they pinch back. Personal values are rooted in a “law and order” approach. Things that benefit young children are almost always seen as right, whereas harmful things are almost always viewed as wrong. The world, like their faith, is black and white.

Cognitive Level: Young children think in concrete terms about the ideas and concepts they are learning. They need help understanding symbolic or abstract ideas.

Ages 9-12:

Moral Development: Children at this age begin to see shades of gray in their world. They question authority more and understand that individual values can impact the lives of others. They also begin to understand that doing “wrong things” means more than just “getting into trouble” or facing punishment from parents or teachers. Faith becomes a working, personal faith.

Cognitive Level: Older children continue to think in concrete terms, although by the end of childhood they can more readily understand abstract concepts.

Ages 13-15

Ages 15-18

- 3) Suggested steps to follow...

- If a child or youth is behaving inappropriately, the leader or worker will tell the child specifically what he/she is doing that is not acceptable and state the expected behavior, e.g., “We do not throw blocks. We use blocks for building.”
- If measure #1 is not effective, the child or youth will be guided to another activity.
- If inappropriate behavior continues, the child or youth may be placed at a table to work alone away from the other students.

- If the child or youth's disruptive behavior continues after these steps have been taken, the child or youth may be taken to the Pastor or the primary leader for the activity and left under his/her supervision, with others around or contact the parents.
- 4) Guidelines...
- No physical punishment or verbal abuse, e.g., ridicule, are to be used at any time.
 - If isolating the child or youth within the classroom or removal from the room becomes necessary, the situation should be discussed with the parents or guardian as soon as possible.
- 5) Discipline While on Trips
- Create a Covenant
 - In order to make events safe and most beneficial for everyone involved, guidelines must be followed. Children, youth, adults and parents are encouraged to sign a covenant outlining the actions that will be taken by the adult leaders attending the event if set guidelines are broken. These policies are important for all who are members or guests of the event to follow and understand.
 - ✓ Warning for first infraction, unless a major infraction.
 - ✓ Child or youth will be escorted for a time by an adult chaperone.
 - ✓ Child or youth will call home to conference with a parent.
 - ✓ Child or youth will be sent home at parent's expense.
 - ✓ Child or youth will not be allowed on next outing.
- i. Open Door Counseling Policy -- At any counseling sessions with children or youth or vulnerable adults, the doors on the room used should remain open for the entire session, ideally when others are nearby even though not in listening distance. Counseling sessions conducted behind closed doors are a breeding ground for false allegations of abuse. Closed doors make it easy for a child abuser.
- j. Windows in All Classroom Doors -- Each room set aside for children and youth should have a door with a window in it or half door. A window removes the opportunity for secrecy and isolation. A half door offers protection against children wandering outside the classroom and allows for full visual access. Adding a window to the pastor's door study or office protects against false allegations of misconduct. Any classroom doors without windows should remain open at all times.
- k. First Aid/CPR Training -- Providing first aid and CPR training on an annual basis for all church workers with children and youth is a basic step to assure the safety of preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Competency goes a long way toward building the confidence of children, youth, vulnerable adults and parents involved in the these ministries.
- l. Advance Notice to Parents -- A basic rule with children and youth ministry is to always give parents advance notice and full information regarding the event(s) in which their children will participate. Before the event, parents must give written permission for their child to participate. Churches are protected insofar as the parent has been informed of the event. Advance information gives a guideline to parents about scheduling and allows parent and child to decide if the event and its content is suitable for their participation. It also demonstrates that the church has planned thoroughly to provide the safest experience.
- m. Participation Covenant for All Participants and Leaders -- A written covenant of participation should be developed and provided to all leaders and participants in children's and youth ministry in which they agree to: (1) take part in the ministry, (2) give their best efforts to the ministry, (3) respect the other participants, (4) treat others as well as they would wish to be treated. Such a

covenant is especially useful for establishing the onset of behavior standards expected by everyone. It is also an important reminder for leaders that abusive behavior toward the children and youth will not be tolerated.

- n. Appropriate Equipment and Supervision -- It is very important for those planning ministries with preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults to think through in advance, the advantages and disadvantages of the setting they are considering. If the ministry involves using special equipment, knowledge of its operation should be familiar. Incredible as it seems, children are often left alone on a playground while adults are inside at dinner. A child can be injured or taken by a stranger without a single adult witness. Do not let our church take the risk!

E. Ensure compliance with the policy.

F. Assist Pastor in filling out the annual Charge Conference Report.

G. Be available to answer questions about the policy.

H. Grant any exceptions to the policy, in appropriate circumstances.

I. Review and renew the policy annually or as needed.

J. Evaluate Board functions.

K. Assist, with investigations, when called upon.

L. Other Issues to Think About

- 1) Make the physical setting safe and conduct periodic safety inspections. For example:
 - a. All classroom doors should have windows or a half door, if an office has no window in the door, the door should remain open during counseling sessions or private meetings.
 - b. The bathrooms should not be isolated or far removed from classroom/play areas.
 - c. Consider using hall monitors.
 - d. Sign in/out procedures can be helpful, especially for younger children (age 10 and younger).
 - e. All other aspects of safety should be considered as well to minimize the risk of serious injury when accidents occur.
- 2) Communicate regularly with parents.
 - a. Provide advance notice and full information/disclosure about event and activities, with written permission forms and information on who will be supervising and working with the children and youth.
 - b. Give information to families about the church's policy and procedures for preventing child abuse.
 - c. Encourage parents to communicate with someone in authority about any concerns, fears or worries about their children and/or a volunteer or staff person.
 - d. Know the church's families.
 - e. Be prepared for how to handle sensitive and confidential matters with families and concerned church members.
- 3) Be prepared for the worst at all times.
 - a. "This is our church; it won't happen here" is a naïve viewpoint that can create an environment and opportunities for accidents and abuse to happen while prevention steps are crucial, also be prepared for the worst, and never make assumptions about what might or might not happen in a church.
 - b. This also means being prepared with a plan for responding immediately to allegations of abuse, including state reporting obligations.
- 4) Always remember that this is a Church!
 - a. The Church is a sanctuary, and churches make a commitment to protect children each and every time a child is baptized.
 - b. Churches should be role models in the community for the time and attention given to the care of children and youth.

M. Insurance Requirements.

The Church shall obtain a sufficient level of liability insurance coverage that are available and would cover child abuse and sexual misconduct claims. If available, the Church should have the levels of coverage which are required for limited immunity. Maintain adequate liability insurance coverage for the Scope of our Ministry. Every local church needs to be adequately insured for the scope of its ministry! Most insurance companies are now cutting back on insurance coverage for sexual misconduct cases. Many have specific requirements or a church's safe sanctuaries program which should be consulted. Among those requirements it is becoming increasingly common to require national criminal background checks on certain staff and volunteers. Screening for the driving record of drivers, including volunteers, for church sponsored programs for children and youth is also often required by insurers. Failure to obtain required records checks could jeopardize insurance coverage.

- 1) Check your church's liability coverage.
- 2) Make sure all employees and volunteers are protected in the coverage.
- 3) The coverage must apply to all the different activities of the church, at and away from church premises.
- 4) The church should work with a knowledgeable insurance agent who knows the needs of a church.
- 5) Remember, too, that the least expensive insurance may have significant gaps in coverage.
- 6) The church should understand what coverage they have for sexual misconduct.
- 7) Work with your insurance agent and attorney to review coverage.
- 8) Does your insurance require background checks, yearly training, etc.?
- 9) Keep a detailed folder of all efforts your church makes in the area of reducing the risk of child abuse.

N. Know the child intervention resources in your area and make that information available to your church.

- 1) Department of Social Services
- 2) Area Child Protective Services
- 3) National Committee To Prevent Child Abuse
- 4) National Child Abuse Hotline 1-800 4-A-CHILD
- 5) Parents Anonymous 1-800-421-0353
- 6) NC Sex Offender Registry <http://ncregistry.ncsbi.gov/>

Conclusion

Churches need to be prepared! This is the legal reason for creating safety policies, but there's a deeper, more significant reason – to protect our preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

In our ministries with preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults, this congregation is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each person is "surrounded by steadfast love...established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal", Baptismal Covenant II, United Methodist Hymnal, p. 44.

Policies are only printed expressions of the value placed on preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults. If the only reason for safety policies is to protect the organization, the Church has missed God's love for preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Some people may think that our Church is too small or that our Church "knows" everyone to worry about these safety problems. Remember it's much easier to make plans and develop safety policies as a means of prevention, rather than wait until they are needed as a reaction to an abuse case.

Some churches tend to take the biblical concept of trusting God to an extreme. They think nothing bad can happen to Christians. We must not be unwise regarding preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults safety.

There is no automatic protection from evil for the faithful. We're to watch and be ready.

Accidents will always happen. There will always be unforeseen circumstances that need to be handled. But the Church should build into its organization sturdy safety-policy fire blocks into the walls of its ministry to protect all of our preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Our Church desires to be a "Safe Sanctuary" for preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults through the implementation of the above policy. Adoption of these provisions will enable the Church to provide a more safe and secure environment for each individual of our Church family and its guests.

Signatures of SPRC Personnel Committee Members

Date: _____

Committee Members: _____, Chairperson

Signatures of Staff-Parish Relations Committee Members

Date: _____

Committee Members: _____, Chairperson

Approval

The " Cornerstone United Methodist Church Policy for Safe Sanctuary Ministry with Preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults (Also Known as Cornerstone’s Safe Sanctuary Policy)" was duly adopted by the Church Administrative Council of Cornerstone United Methodist Church, and as such it is adopted policy. This policy is to be reviewed by the Safe Sanctuary Administrative Board annually.

Council Chairperson Signature: _____ Date: _____

Pastor Signature: _____ Date: _____

SPRC Chairperson Signature: _____ Date: _____

Final Approval

The "Cornerstone United Methodist Church Policy for Safe Sanctuary Ministry with Preschoolers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults (Also Known as Cornerstone’s Safe Sanctuary Policy)" was duly adopted by a vote of the Charge Conference of Cornerstone United Methodist Church.

Charge Conference Chairperson Signature: _____ Date: _____

Pastor Signature: _____ Date: _____

SPRC Chairperson Signature: _____ Date: _____