SAFE CHURCH POLICY AND PROCEDURES CONCERNING ABUSE PREVENTION
Peace United Church of Christ, Webster Groves, Missouri

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STATEMENT OF POLICY

As a community of Christian faith, Peace United Church of Christ (Peace UCC) is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities and a community in which members, friends, staff and volunteers can worship, learn and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation. The congregation of Peace UCC supports principles that include individual responsibility to fulfill the highest standards of personal conduct toward others and to lead and guide the congregation in fulfillment of the standards set by our Christian faith. Peace UCC strongly opposes and prohibits sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, or any form of exploitation, bullying or abuse of others regardless of age, sex, sexual orientation, sexual identification or mental capacity. It is the intention and responsibility of the church to affirmatively nurture good behavior, and to take action in an attempt to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and, if necessary, to discipline those persons who violate this policy.

Every member of the Congregation, whether “authorized minister”, leader, staff, volunteer or parent, has a role to lead those who look to them individually for guidance, to monitor their behavior and redirect them as they cross boundaries of safety. Our congregation shall nurture good conduct as demonstrated by personal behaviors that are consistent with our Christian values.

MINISTERIAL CONDUCT

Relationships among people are at the foundation of Christian ministry and as such are central to the life of Peace UCC. Defining healthy and safe relationships through policies and codes of conduct is not meant, in any way, to undermine the strength and importance of personal interaction in our ministries. Rather, it is to assist in more clearly defining behaviors and practices that allow the church to more fully demonstrate its love and compassion.

All persons engaged in the ministry of Peace UCC (authorized ministers, employees, elected and appointed lay leaders, and authorized volunteers) are ministers to the congregation.

It is important that every minister to the church be adequately prepared and educated for the ministry in which they serve others, and to understand the ways in which their use or misuse of authority may impact others.

It is the policy of Peace UCC to encourage its ministers to nurture safety within ministerial relationships by being attentive to self-care, education, maintenance of appropriate boundaries, and the importance of referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources.

Sexual exploitation, sexual harassment or any other form of abuse of parishioners or others by anyone engaged in ministry on behalf of Peace UCC is unethical behavior and will not be tolerated within this congregation.

MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT WITH CHILDREN, YOUTH AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Peace UCC is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment in which young people and vulnerable adults can learn about and experience God’s love. Relationships in child and youth ministries should always be experienced as caring and without intention to do harm or allow for the occurrence of harm.

All ministers of our children and youth ministries must:

• Agree to do their best to prevent abuse and neglect among children and youth involved in church activities and services.
• Agree to not physically, sexually or emotionally abuse or neglect a child or youth.
• Comply with the policies for general conduct with children and youth as defined in these policies and procedures.
• Comply with guidelines for appropriate affection and verbal interaction (Exhibit G).
• Comply with guidelines for appropriate for use of electronic media (Exhibit H).
• Agree to immediately report any observations of inappropriate displays of behaviors or possible policy violations with children or youth to the People Team leader.
• Acknowledge their obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth and agree to report known or suspected abuse of children or youth to appropriate church leaders and state authorities in accordance with these policies.
• Understand that the church will not tolerate abuse of children, youth or vulnerable adults and agree to comply in spirit and in action with this position.
• Understand that as a minister of the church, they must report to the Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline if they have reasonable cause to believe that a minor may be an abused or neglected child.

DEFINITIONS

Minister: A person authorized by the church to carry out its ministry. Ministers include Governing Body leaders of the church, employees, and volunteers, as well as authorized ministers.

Authorized Minister: A person holding ordained ministerial standing or commissioned or licensed by an association of the UCC or region of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). An authorized minister is one type of minister within the meaning of this policy.

Children and Youth: Child is defined as anyone under the age of 12 years. A youth is anyone who is at least 12 years old but not yet 18 years old. A youth may also be an individual who is 18 years old or older but still in high school.

Vulnerable Adult: Anyone aged 18 or over, who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Ministerial Relationship: The relationship between one who carries out the ministry of the church and the one being served by that ministry.

Physical Abuse: An injury that is intentionally inflicted upon another.

Emotional Abuse: Mental or emotional injury to a youth that results in an observable and material impairment in the youth’s growth, development or psychological functioning.

Neglect: The failure to provide for a child’s or youth’s basic needs or the failure to protect a child/youth from harm.

Sexual Exploitation: Sexual activity or contact (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which a Minister engaged in a ministerial relationship with another takes advantage of the vulnerability of the person being served by causing or allowing that person to engage in sexual behavior with the Minister.

Sexual Harassment: Repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to his or her wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person with the intent of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing the other person, or subjecting the person to public discrimination. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

• Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term, condition or circumstance of instruction, employment, or participation in any church activity;
• Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel or church-related decisions affecting an individual; or
• Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s performance or participation in church activities or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or church environment.

Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones, particularly:

• Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, e-mails, texts, pictures, photos or invitations;
• Verbal contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits, or sexual propositions;

• Physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another’s body, impeding or blocking movement, assault, or coercing sexual intercourse; and

• Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another’s body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters, or magazines.

Sexual harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome and using sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, salary, work, learning, or worship environment of another. It is impermissible to suggest, threaten, or imply that failure to accept a request for a date or sexual intimacy will affect a person’s job prospects, church leadership, or comfortable participation in the life of the church. It is forbidden either to imply or actually withhold support for an appointment, promotion, or change of assignment; to suggest that a poor performance report will be given because a person has declined a personal proposition; or to hint that benefits, such as promotions, favorable performance evaluations, favorable assigned duties or shifts, recommendations or reclassifications, will be forthcoming in exchange for sexual favors.

**Bullying:** Peace UCC will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one youth or vulnerable adult by another youth or vulnerable adult. In addition, Peace UCC will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying and, to the extent that such actions are disruptive, will take steps needed to eliminate such behavior.

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including:

- **Physical bullying** – when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.

- **Verbal bullying** – when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful names.

- **Nonverbal or relational bullying** – when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.

- **Cyberbullying** – the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs). Cyberbullying can involve:
  - Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
  - Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
  - Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad.
  - Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
  - Hazing – an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person’s willingness to participate.
  - Sexualized bullying – when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposures of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.

Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This policy applies to all youth, vulnerable adults and Ministers.
Procedures Prohibiting Abuse, Exploitation and Harassment

COMMENCING AND CONTINUING MINISTRY

Requirements for Authorized Minister, Employees and Governing Body Leaders

- Before beginning their duties, all Governing Body leaders will submit an authorized volunteer application/disclosure form (Exhibit A).
- Authorized ministers and employees will complete an employment application (Exhibit B) and employment disclosure form (Exhibit C).
- Prior to being presented as a nominee to the congregation, Governing Body leaders will be personally interviewed by a member of the People Team to assess the suitability of their character and qualifications for the position they seek.
- Candidates being considered for paid employment will be personally interviewed by an interview team to assess the suitability of their character and qualifications for the position they seek.
- Prior to extending an employment offer, reference checks will be completed with current and previous employers.
- Before beginning their duties, all prospective employees will undergo a background check, including but not necessarily limited to, inquiries of references and a criminal history verification by a third-party vendor. Criminal records check will be completed in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years, and other states, if any, as determined by the church.

Additional Requirements for Ministry with Vulnerable Persons, Children and Youth

Peace UCC is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God’s love. In order to promote this, we have established the following guidelines, in addition to the general requirements, for ministers who regularly work with children and youth as well as those working with vulnerable persons of the church. This includes, but is not limited to, teachers, chaperones for overnight stays, employees, youth leaders and nursery assistants.

- We expect that those who volunteer to work with minors will have been members of Peace UCC for at least six months or, if not members, regularly and frequently associated with Peace UCC for at least a year (12 consecutive months).
- Before beginning their duties, all employees, authorized ministers, and ministers working regularly with vulnerable persons, children and youth will submit an authorized children and youth volunteer application/disclosure form (Exhibit D).
- The church will conduct a registered sex offender review for employees, authorized ministers, and ministers working regularly with vulnerable persons, children and youth by searching their names on the Department of Justice website at www.nsopr.gov. Searches will be completed for any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven (7) years. This registered sex offender review will be repeated on an annual basis.
- Written permission to conduct a background check shall be obtained from each applicant prior to executing the check. Background checks also include:
  - Multistate criminal records search
  - Social security number trace
  - County criminal records search for every county where the applicant has lived or worked for the past seven years
• Prior to a minister transporting children or youth, we will ask to see a valid driver’s license and insurance card.

Requirements for Transferring Ministers

• Ministers who transfer within the UCC of Missouri and apply for or are asked to or who do undertake a minister position are required to undergo the same requirements outlined in this section “Commencing and Continuing Ministry.” This requirement may be met through a transfer of a copy of their personnel file to Peace UCC.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

• Child abuse prevention education and training is required for all ministers who regularly work with or around children or youth before they start their work with children or youth or, if that is not possible, these ministers must complete child abuse awareness training before they start their work and fulfill the rest of the training within three months of starting.

• All volunteers and employees who occasionally work with children and youth will receive orientation regarding Safe Church policy and procedures.

• Authorized ministers of the church will attend all boundary workshops required by UCC Mid-South Conference or will attend at least one workshop on this topic every three years, whichever is more frequent.

MONITORING AND SUPERVISION

Program Guidelines

• Every program for children and youth must have established ratios for adults and children. Compliance with the established ratio is required at all times, including activities that occur off church premises.

• Ministers need to collaborate with the Learning and Worship Teams when developing new activities for children and youth to ensure the plan for a new activity includes adequate adult supervision.

• Each program will develop age-appropriate procedures to ensure the safety of children and youth using restrooms.

• Each program will have procedures to ensure that children are released only to their parents or legal guardians or those designated by them.

• Written consent of one parent or guardian of a minor will be required for all activities off the church property, transportation, and any overnight activities.

• Transportation will only be provided from church to off-site activities and back, and all cars must have no fewer than three individuals.

• Youth and parents must sign covenants every year (Exhibits E and F).

Minister Supervision and Behavioral Guidelines

• Other than authorized ministers, ministers are prohibited from being alone with a child or youth or multiple children or youth where other adults cannot easily observe them.

• Ministers over the age of 21 must directly supervise ministers under the age of 18 and be physically present during all activities in which an under-18 minister presides.

• Other than relationships with authorized ministers, every ministerial relationship involving youth should have no fewer than three individuals present at any given time.

• In situations where participants are not readily visible to each other, there will be no fewer than two unrelated adults present with children. Youth over the age of twelve may assist an unrelated adult in supervising
activities for children; however, such assistance does not alter the requirement that at least two unrelated adults be present.

- Ministers will follow the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection & Verbal Interactions (Exhibit G).
- Ministers will follow the Guidelines for Electronic Media Usage (Exhibit H).
- When supervising or assisting private activities such as dressing, showering or diapering infants or children, ministers will remain in an area observable by other adults or work in pairs.
- While participating in or assisting with programs or activities, ministers are prohibited from using, possessing, distributing or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or the misuse of legal drugs.
- Ministers will respond to children and youth with respect, consideration and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture or socioeconomic status.
- Ministers are prohibited from dating or becoming romantically involved with a child or youth.
- Ministers are prohibited from having sexual contact with a child or youth.
- Ministers are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children or youth except expressly permitted as part of a pre-authorized educational program, such as “Our Whole Lives” (OWL).
- Ministers are prohibited from using the Internet to view or download any sexually oriented materials on church property or in the presence of children or youth.
- Ministers are prohibited from discussing their own sexual activities, including dreams and fantasies, or discussing their use of sexually oriented or explicit materials such as pornography, videos, or materials on or from the Internet, with children or youth.
- Ministers will not have secrets with youth and vulnerable adults and will only give gifts with prior permission.
- Ministers will not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with youth and vulnerable adults.
- Ministers are prohibited from sleeping in the same beds and sleeping bags unless the adult is an immediate family member of the child. With parental permission, ministers may share tents, hotel rooms or other rooms with children or youth. All sleeping arrangements must have no fewer than three individuals. It is acceptable to have multiple adults sleep with all the children or youth participating in one open space such as a church basement or camp lodge.
- Ministers are prohibited from dressing, undressing, bathing, or showering in the presence of children or youth.
- Ministers are prohibited from abusing youth and vulnerable adults physically, verbally, sexually, mentally or by neglect. This includes physical punishment in any way for behavior management of children and youth. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force. Physical restraint may only be used to stop a behavior that may cause immediate harm to the individual or to a child, youth or others.
- Ministers are prohibited from using harsh language, degrading punishment, or mechanical restraint such as rope or tape for behavior management.
- Ministers are prohibited from participating in or allowing others to conduct any hazing activities relating to children’s or youth ministry or camp activities.
- Ministers may not have engaged in or been accused or convicted of youth and vulnerable adult abuse,
Counseling Requirements for Authorized Ministers and Other Ministers

- The counselor should be visible (e.g., glass door or window) when alone with one person during a counseling session.
- Another staff member must know about a counseling session and preferably be on site.
- After four to six counseling sessions, the counselor needs to make a referral or enter into professional supervision.
- Counselors with professional credentials may conduct more than six counseling sessions as long as they enter into professional supervision.

REGISTERED SEX OFFENDER POLICY

As a community of faith, serving by the example of Jesus Christ, we also seek to attend to the needs of all who seek healing, redemption and fellowship among us. We shall be prepared to accept in our midst those who have violated the most sacred mores of our society at large, in order to provide them refuge, peace, example and support in their recovery and penitence. We commit to doing so with utmost care for the welfare of our congregation, collectively and individually, and the community we serve.

We accept that there are risks to be born in our deliberate association with and ministry to sex offenders who are considered a pariah among the community-at-large as evidenced by the many constraints placed upon their interaction with the community. We agree to honor the needs of the congregation and our community to have reasonable assurance that a sex offender in our care will not have an opportunity to re-offend as a result of lapses in our management of the offender.

We shall consider limited participation or membership of a sex offender in our congregation with utmost care which shall include the following elements:

Document understanding of the statutory limitations applying in the State of Missouri to the movement and activities of a sex offender, taking into account the programs of the church or the operations of tenants. (Examples: Sunday school, day care, pre-school, sports leagues, seasonal camps and associations which serve children and “vulnerable adults”)

Consider and understand the character of the crimes which have resulted in requiring an individual to register as a sex offender, the passage of time without repeated conduct or behavior and the risk and opportunity of re-offending that is presented by the particular programs of our congregation.

Document understanding of limitations and prohibitions placed upon the offender by courts and probation authorities. The opinion of a mental health professional regarding the suitability of the person to participation in the life of the church shall be obtained. In all cases where probation is in force, we shall obtain the explicit approval of and conditions of participation specified by the probation officer. A recommendation by law enforcement or mental health professionals to deny participation to an offender shall be honored in all cases.

Understanding that, with respect to a person who is an employee, volunteer or in a position of church leadership, who has previously been conviction for acts of sexual misconduct as defined by insurance contracts, knowledge by church leaders and managers of such prior conviction will have the effect of voiding coverage for the individual employee, volunteer or church leader and for the church for future acts of sexual misconduct by that person.

Given that criminal convictions are a matter of public record, there shall be no expectation of secrecy on the part of the offender. As a condition of participation in our faith community, the offender must agree that the Peace UCC leadership shall make it known to members, constituencies and customers of the church that we have accepted among us a registered sex offender. The conditions and limitations that apply to participation in the life of the church shall be known to all.

With the advice of legal counsel, and in all cases, the conditions of participation by a registered offender shall be defined by a “limited access agreement” (see Exhibit L) executed by the offender and church. Such agreement shall be approved.
by probation authorities as may be necessary according to para. 3., above. The agreement shall be reviewed annually to validate ongoing eligibility. Violation of the agreement by the offender shall be considered as grounds for immediate cancellation of the agreement.

The following additional considerations shall apply:

**Victims in the congregation** – In such case as the victim of a RSO (registered sex offender) is a member of the congregation, employee or is a client of other services provided by the congregation, the RSO shall not be permitted to attend the church or church activities.

**Clergy-penitent privilege** – “Clergy-penitent privilege” is a “Rule of Evidence” defining or limiting information which clergy may reveal in a court of law only. “Clergy penitent privilege” does not prevent clergy from informing the congregation of matters which may be relevant to their safety; it does not require clergy to hold information in secrecy.

Ordained clergy shall assume responsibility and take extraordinary care to understand the scope and limitations of clergy-penitent privilege in the State of Missouri, and the parameters of confidence and privilege as defined by our denomination. Authorized clergy shall inform the leadership of the church of the general principles of confidence and privilege under which (s)he performs his/her clerical duties.

**Escorts (Parish Associate)** – Conditions of limited access for a RSO will commonly require that the offender have an escort while on the church premises or at church events elsewhere. A person serving as an escort shall not be a spouse, partner or relative of the offender.

**Approval & Supervision**

With the advice and prior approval of the Church Board, a Limited Access Agreement with a Petitioner (known RSO) may be signed only by the Senior Authorized Minister.

The Senior Authorized Minister, in association with other “authorized clergy” and parish associates (escorts), who shall be named in the Limited Access Agreement, shall be responsible for the general supervision of the Petitioner in all of the latter’s activity in relation to the church. Elements of supervision shall include the following:

- Knowledge of the terms of the Limited Access Agreement, including activity limitations placed upon the Petitioner.
- Knowledge of the Petitioner’s offense history sufficient to understand the risks of association with Peace UCC and its ministries.
- Willingness to assert activity limitations and to report any violation of restrictions placed upon the Petitioner.
- Willingness to intervene in any onset of a risky or problem behavior.
- Willingness to report all cases of non-compliance to the Senior Authorized Minister.
- The Senior Authorized Minister shall assess, prior to selection, whether a proposed parish associate is willing to fulfill the above elements of supervision.

**Professional privacy** – Members who are employed in certain occupations may have a statutory obligation to maintain privacy around the criminal history of clients who may also be parishioners. Such members shall decline to accept leadership roles which may put them in a decision-making position regarding individuals who may be their professional clients.

**Juveniles** – While the criminal record of a juvenile is ordinarily concealed by the courts, the church may come to know the juvenile’s history by other means. Honest disclosure by a juvenile and parents in the volunteer application and screening process may reveal that a record exists without knowing the specifics. While a limited access agreement will be required for the juvenile, as for others, every precaution will be taken to preserve the privacy and confidentiality which the law affords a juvenile.
RESPONDING TO PROBLEMS

There are three different types of responses based on the nature of the problem. We need to (1) report and respond to inappropriate behavior and policy violations, (2) report suspected abuse of children or youth, and (3) investigate and take appropriate action for sexual harassment complaints. Each situation is taken very seriously and has a specified approach for handling, which is outlined below.

(1) Reporting and Responding to Inappropriate Behaviors or Policy Violations

When a minister observes any inappropriate behaviors, behaviors that are inconsistent with the Guidelines for Appropriate Affection & Verbal Interactions (Exhibit G), or which may violate any policy or provision of the Peace UCC’s Safe Church Policy and Procedures the minister must:

- Report their observations either to a staff member, an authorized minister or the current People Team leader.
- Report the incident by telephone or in a face-to-face meeting within 24 hours of the observed behavior. A Confidential Notice of Concern (Exhibit K) must be completed by the observer/reporter. The Confidential Notice of Concern must be reviewed and signed by two of the following leaders: staff member, authorized minister, or People Team leader; and then forwarded to the People Team leader.
- Recognize that all reports of inappropriate behavior and policy violations will be taken seriously and treated confidentially. Each report will be investigated by the People Team leader and appropriate staff and recommendations will be made to resolve the matter, including any consequences that may be deemed necessary.
- Understand that the Governing Body will determine if notification of the Missouri Mid-South Conference is warranted.

(2) Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Children or Youth

Each member of Peace UCC – as well as each member of the wider community – has a social responsibility for the safety of children and youth. Ministers of children and youth have a state-mandated responsibility to report to appropriate authorities if at any time they have reasonable cause to believe that a minor may be an abused or neglected child.

In accordance with Missouri Reporting Requirement (210.115.1 RSMo), if any minister or other person responsible for the care, custody and control of a child or youth (mandated reporter) has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, that person shall immediately report or cause a report to be made to the Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline (1-800-669-8689).

- In addition to reporting to the state authorities, the minister is required to report any known or suspected abuse or neglect to an authorized minister or the current People Team leader so that immediate and proper steps may be taken to ensure the safety of alleged victims and all children and youth in the congregation. A Confidential Notice of Concern must be completed by the observer. The Confidential Notice of Concern must be reviewed and signed by two of the following leaders: staff supervisor, authorized minister, or People Team leader; and then forwarded to the People Team leader.

The law provides immunity from civil and criminal liability for persons required to report suspected abuse/neglect provided the report is made in good faith and without malice. Failure to report is a crime for “mandated reporters.” It is also a crime to intentionally file a false report.

Definitions
Abuse: Any physical injury, sexual abuse or emotional abuse inflicted on a child or youth other than by accidental means by those responsible for the child’s care, custody, and control or by any other person. (Discipline, including spanking, administered in a reasonable manner, by the child’s parent or legal guardian, shall not be construed as abuse.)

Neglect: Failure to provide, by those responsible for the care, custody and control of the child or youth, the proper or necessary support, education as required by law, nutrition or medical, surgical, or any other care necessary for the child’s well-being.

Mandated Reporter: Anyone responsible for the care, custody and control of a child or youth, including, but not limited to, the parents or guardian of the child, other members of the child’s household, or those exercising supervision over a child or youth for any part of a 24-hour day.

Reasonable cause to suspect: a standard of reasonable suspicion, rather than conclusive proof.

(3) Procedures for Handling Complaints of Sexual Exploitation or Harassment

All Situations

A ministry circle of the People Team with no less than two members, one male and one female, will be established each year in preparation for the possibility of hearing complaints under this policy. The ministry circle, hereinafter referred to as the “Response Team,” will be familiar with the terms of this policy, as well as the established procedures of the church for dealing with a complaint.

Several approaches may be taken in addressing incidents of alleged sexual exploitation or harassment:

- The complainant can attempt to resolve the matter directly with the respondent, the individual accused of sexual exploitation or harassment.
- The complainant can report the incident to an authorized minister, in an effort to resolve the matter informally.
- If an informal resolution of the complaint does not seem wise, appropriate, possible, or does not succeed, the complainant may request that the Response Team institute formal proceedings which shall include the following steps:
  1. The Response Team shall advise the authorized minister and Governing Body president of the receipt of all complaints and shall keep them apprised of ongoing steps and actions taken. If either the authorized minister or president is the subject of the complaint, this notice requirement shall not apply as to that person.
  2. The Response Team shall gather statements or other information from the individuals involved in the alleged exploitation or harassment and from others who may have pertinent information, such as qualified professional consultants, and present such information to the People Team.
  3. The People Team shall make determinations and take actions appropriate to resolve the matter. These may include:
     a. finding that sexual exploitation or harassment has occurred, and that the appropriate body of the church is called upon to take action accordingly; such action may include one or more of the following:
        i. a formal reprimand, with defined expectations for changed behavior;
        ii. recommending or requiring psychological or psychiatric assessment, counseling and/or treatment;
        iii. probationary standing, with the terms of the probation clearly defined;
        iv. dismissal from employment or authorized volunteer position by, affiliation with, or membership in, the church.
b. finding that sexual exploitation or harassment did not occur.

4. The Response Team may seek the advice of legal counsel or others to advise it in performing its functions.

- A written summary of the People Team proceedings in such cases will be maintained in a locked cabinet in the church office.

- The person(s) toward whom the inappropriate behavior is directed need not be the complainant. Moreover, neither consent nor acquiescence will excuse or exonerate inappropriate behavior. At any time the church may initiate or proceed with the formal complaint process.

- In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment or exploitation, consideration shall be given to the record of the alleged incident(s) as a whole and to the totality of the circumstances, including the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred.

- Any person bringing a sexual harassment or exploitation complaint or assisting in investigating such a complaint will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment or church membership or affiliation, or otherwise discriminated against or discharged.

- If the complainant or respondent is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter by the People Team he or she has the right to appeal to the Governing Body president, or to the secretariat if the president is the subject of the complaint, who shall refer the matter to the Governing Body. The subject of any such appeal to the Governing Body shall be limited solely to whether the procedures of this policy were followed. The matter will not be reconsidered on the merits and the decision of the Governing Body will be the final resolution of the matter. If the Governing Body determines that the procedures of this policy were not followed, it will refer the matter back to the People Team to complete the processing of the complaint in accordance with these procedures.

Situations involving Clergy

Apart from any disposition of the matter by the church, all allegations of behavior which call into question the fitness for ministry of any authorized minister will promptly be forwarded to the Church & Ministry Committee of the Mid-South Conference of the UCC.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Policy and Procedures

- The People Team is responsible for the oversight of the policy and procedures to ensure adherence, answer questions, and review/update annually.

Application and Screening Process

Paperwork

- As part of the Governing Body on-boarding process, the People Team will ensure newly elected Governing Body leaders will complete an authorized volunteer application/disclosure form (Exhibit A).
- The People Team will request applicants being considered for employment to complete an employment application (Exhibit B) and employment disclosure form (Exhibit C).
- All paperwork will be maintained in a confidential, locked file in the office administrator’s office.

Interviews

- Prior to being presented as a nominee to the congregation, lay leaders will be personally interviewed by a member of the People Team to assess the suitability of their character and qualifications for the position they seek.
- The People Team will review applications for employment, conduct phone screens, and coordinate the team
A Safe Church Policy and Procedures Concerning Abuse Prevention

Reference and Background Checks

- The People team will check references for candidates being considered for employment and authorized ministers. The registered sex offender review will be repeated on an annual basis. Where a criminal record exists, consideration shall be given to:
  - Seriousness of the crime;
  - Statutes that may legally disqualify the person from working with minors;
  - Length of time since the last offense;
  - Pattern of criminal activity; and
  - Activities the applicant has been involved in since the offense(s) occurred.
- Conviction for the following crimes shall be considered barriers to employment or volunteer work with children:
  - Violent crimes;
  - Sexual assault;
  - Sexual abuse or neglect of a child; and
  - Drug offenses or driving offenses (depending upon position requirements).
  - Arrest data are not grounds for disqualification, only convictions. The status or relevance of other crimes will be considered individually.
- Following the review, each committee member shall sign and date one of two documents that becomes part of the applicant’s or employee’s permanent personnel file:
  - “We have reviewed the criminal history of Applicant X and determined, based on the information we had available at this time, the applicant would be acceptable for the position.” OR
  - “We have reviewed the criminal history of Applicant X and determined, based on the information we had available at this time, the applicant is not acceptable for the position.”
- The church will conduct background checks through the Insurance Board for those who regularly work with children and youth ministry of the church. This could include registered sex offender review, national criminal records search, social security number and alias search, and county criminal records search.

Education and Training

- As part of new employee and Governing Body on-boarding process, the People Team will provide a copy of the Safe Church Policy and Procedures and review it in the session.
- A training circle of the People Team will present and monitor UCC Insurance Board online training for staff and volunteers who regularly work with children, youth and vulnerable persons.

Monitoring and Supervision

- The Learning and Worship Teams are responsible for ensuring program requirements are followed at all times and reviewed as needed.
- All lay leadership, employees, and authorized ministers are responsible for the adherence of minister supervision and behavioral requirements. The congregation empowers these individuals to take appropriate actions as necessary.

Responding to Problems

- The People Team will ensure Confidential Notice of Concern forms (Exhibit K) are completed and confidentially maintained in the church office.
- The People Team will establish a Response team in August of each year.
## Appendix

**EXHIBIT A: PEACE UCC AUTHORIZED VOLUNTEER APPLICATION AND DISCLOSURE FORM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: Last</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Middle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address: Street</td>
<td>City/State</td>
<td>Zip code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daytime Phone</td>
<td>Evening Phone</td>
<td>Email</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References: One reference should be related to you and the other references should not be related to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Zip code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q I have been a member of this church since ______________
Q I have been a friend of this church since ______________

I have never been convicted of, nor pled guilty or no contest to, a crime. (Exclude convictions that have been sealed, expunged or legally eradicated, misdemeanor convictions for which probation was completed and the case was dismissed, or offenses about which inquiry is not permissible in this state.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q True</th>
<th>Q Not True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If not true, please briefly describe the nature of the crime(s), the date and place of conviction and the legal disposition of the case. The church will not deny a position to any applicant solely because the person has been convicted of a crime. The church, however, may consider the nature, date and circumstances of the offense, as well as whether the offense is relevant to the duties of the position applied for.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the responsibilities of the position for which you are applying?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q Yes</th>
<th>Q No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
If yes, please provide a brief explanation.

The covenants between persons seeking authorized volunteer positions in the church require honesty, integrity, and truthfulness for the health of the church. To that end, I attest that the information set forth in this application is true and complete. I understand that any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of consideration for, or termination of, the position I am seeking to fill. I acknowledge that it is my duty in a timely fashion to amend the responses and information I have provided if I come to know that the response or information was incorrect when given or, though accurate when given, the response or information is no longer accurate.

Beginning such relationships with an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for a continuing and healthy covenant between volunteers and the church they seek to serve. To that end, I authorize Peace United Church of Christ and/or its agents to make inquiries regarding my character and qualifications, including all statements I have set forth above. I also authorize all entities, persons, former employers, supervisors, courts, law enforcement, and other public agencies to respond to inquiries concerning me, to supply verification of the statements I have made, and to comment on and state opinions regarding my background, character, and qualifications. To encourage such persons and entities to speak openly and responsibly, I hereby release them from all liability arising from their responses, comments, and statements.

Peace UCC authorized volunteer recruitment process involves the sharing of information regarding applicants with those persons in a position to recruit, secure, and supervise both the position I am seeking to fill and program I am seeking to participate in. To that end, I authorize Peace UCC and its agents to circulate, distribute, and otherwise share information gathered in connection with this application to such persons for these purposes. I understand that Peace UCC will share with me information it has gathered about me, if I request it to do so.

I acknowledge my receipt and understanding of the Peace UCC Safe Church Policy.

__________________________________________
(PRINT NAME & SIGN)

__________________________________________
(PRINT NAME & SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN FOR APPLICANTS UNDER 18)
# EXHIBIT B: PEACE UCC EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

## Applicant Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>M.I.</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Address</td>
<td></td>
<td>Apartment/Unit #</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>ZIP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>E-mail Address</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Available</th>
<th>Social Security No.</th>
<th>Desired Salary</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Position Applied for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you a citizen of the United States?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you ever worked for this church?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you ever been convicted of a felony?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

## Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School Address</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Did you graduate?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Address</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Did you graduate?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Address</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Did you graduate?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## References

Please list three professional references.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Name</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Phone (     )</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Name</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Phone (     )</th>
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<td></td>
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</table>
### Previous Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Phone ( )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Starting Salary $</th>
<th>Ending Salary $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Reason for Leaving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

May we contact your previous supervisor for a reference?  
[ ] YES  [ ] NO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Phone ( )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
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</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Reason for Leaving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

May we contact your previous supervisor for a reference?  
[ ] YES  [ ] NO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Phone ( )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Reason for Leaving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

May we contact your previous supervisor for a reference?  
[ ] YES  [ ] NO

### Volunteer Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Duties</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>
## Military Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rank at Discharge</td>
<td>Type of Discharge</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>If other than honorable, explain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please list your addresses in the past five years:

---

### Disclaimer and Signature

I certify that my answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

If this application leads to employment, I understand that false or misleading information in my application or interview may result in my release.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
EXHIBIT C: PEACE UCC EMPLOYMENT DISCLOSURE FORM

The Peace UCC is committed to protecting children and other vulnerable individuals from sexual and physical abuse. Have you ever been convicted of a crime involving sexual or physical abuse of any kind? (Exclude convictions that have been sealed, expunged, pardoned, or legally eradicated, a misdemeanor conviction for which probation was completed and the case was dismissed, or an offense about which inquiry is not permissible in this state.)

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please briefly describe the nature of the crime(s), the date and place of conviction, and the legal disposition of the case. The Church will not deny a position to any applicant solely because the person has been convicted of a crime. The Church, however, may consider the nature, date and circumstances of the offense, as well as whether the offense is relevant to the duties of the position applied for.

I have never terminated my employment, professional credentials, or service in a volunteer position or had my employment, professional credentials, or authorization to hold a volunteer position terminated for reasons related to allegations of actual or attempted sexual, physical and/or child abuse.

True ☐ Not True ☐

If not true, give a short explanation. (Please indicate the date of termination, name, address, and telephone number of employer or volunteer supervisor, and nature of the incidents(s)).

Is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the responsibilities of the position for which you are applying?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please provide a brief explanation.
The covenants between persons seeking employment or sanctioned volunteer positions in the church require honesty, integrity, and truthfulness for the health of the church. To that end, I attest that the information set forth in this application is true and complete. I understand that any misrepresentation or omission given in this Employment Disclosure Form and/or during interview(s) may be grounds for rejection of consideration for, or termination of, the position I am seeking to fill, regardless of when the misrepresentation or omission is discovered. I acknowledge that it is my duty in a timely fashion to amend the responses and information I have provided if I come to know that the response or information was incorrect when given or, though accurate when given, the response or information is no longer accurate.

Beginning such relationships with an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for a continuing and healthy covenant between employees or volunteers and the church they seek to serve. To that end, I authorize Peace United Church of Christ and/or its agents to make inquiries regarding all statements I have set forth above. I also authorize all entities, persons, former employers, supervisors, courts, law enforcement, and other public agencies to respond to inquiries concerning me, to supply verification of the statements I have made, and to comment on and state opinions regarding my background and character.

Peace UCC’s hiring and authorized volunteer recruitment process involves the distribution of information regarding applicants with those persons in a position to recruit, secure, and supervise the position I am seeking to fill. To that end, I authorize Peace UCC and its agents to circulate, distribute, and otherwise share information gathered in connection with this application to such persons for these stated purposes. I understand that Peace UCC will share with me information it has gathered about me, if I so request.

(Signature)

(Date)
EXHIBIT D: PEACE UCC AUTHORIZED CHILDREN & YOUTH VOLUNTEER APPLICATION & DISCLOSURE FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name: Last</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Middle</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address: Street</td>
<td>City/State</td>
<td>Zip code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daytime Phone</td>
<td>Evening Phone</td>
<td>Email</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

References: One reference should be related to you and the other references should not be related to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Zip code</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>State</th>
<th>Zip code</th>
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<th>State</th>
<th>Zip code</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Q I have been a member of this church since _____________________________

Q I have been a friend of this church since ______________________________

I have never been convicted of, nor pled guilty or no contest to, a crime. (Exclude convictions that have been sealed, expunged or legally eradicated, misdemeanor convictions for which probation was completed and the case was dismissed, or offenses about which inquiry is not permissible in this state.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q True</th>
<th>Q Not True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

If not true, please briefly describe the nature of the crime(s), the date and place of conviction and the legal disposition of the case. The church will not deny a position to any applicant solely because the person has been convicted of a crime. The church, however, may consider the nature, date and circumstances of the offense, as well as whether the offense is relevant to the duties of the position applied for.

No civil lawsuit alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct has ever resulted in a judgment being entered against me, been settled out of court, or been dismissed because the statute of limitations has expired.
If not true, give a short explanation of the lawsuit. (Please indicate the date, nature, and place of the incident leading to the lawsuit; where the lawsuit was filed; and the precise disposition of the lawsuit.)

I have never terminated my employment, professional credentials, or service in a volunteer position or had my employment, professional credentials, or authorization to hold a volunteer position terminated for reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct.

If not true, give a short explanation. (Please indicate the date of termination; name, address, and telephone number of employer or volunteer supervisor; and nature of the incident(s) leading to your termination.)

Do you have a valid drivers' license?

Q Yes Q No

With respect to my driving record, I have not had my license suspended or revoked within the last five years due to reckless driving or driving while intoxicated and/or under the influence of a controlled substance.

Q True Q Not True

Is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the responsibilities of the position for which you are applying?

Q Yes Q No

If yes, please provide a brief explanation.

The covenants between persons seeking authorized volunteer positions in the church require honesty, integrity, and truthfulness for the health of the church. To that end, I attest that the information set forth in this application is true and complete. I understand that any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of consideration for, or termination of, the position I am seeking to fill. I acknowledge that it is my duty in a timely fashion to amend the responses and information I have provided if I come to know that the response or information was incorrect when given or, though accurate when given, the response or information is no longer accurate.

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applicants with those persons in a position to recruit, secure, and supervise both the position I am seeking to fill and program I am seeking to participate in. To that end, I authorize Peace UCC and/or its agents to circulate, distribute, and otherwise share information gathered in connection with this application to such persons for these purposes. I understand that Peace UCC will share with me information it has gathered about me, if I request it to do so.

I acknowledge my receipt and understanding of the Peace UCC Safe Church Policy.

(PRINT NAME & SIGN) ___________________________ DATE ___________

(PRINT NAME & SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN FOR APPLICANTS UNDER 18) ___________________________ DATE ___________

• Sex Offender Registry (www.nsopr.gov) review performed on ____________________________

• Personal interview conducted by staff on ____________________________

• Background Check completed on ____________________________

• Church membership for 6 mos. or association for 1 year confirmed on ____________________________

• Safe Church awareness training and policy orientation performed on ____________________________
EXHIBIT E: PEACE UCC COVENANT FOR CHILDREN/YOUTH

(This covenant must be signed by any minor over 12 years of age intending to participate in any programming event at Peace UCC, as well as by the parent/guardian of the youth.)

Because God calls us to be a community of faith and leaders in Christ’s church, I covenant with God, all members of Peace UCC and Peace-sponsored groups to conduct our life together in a manner that promotes a community of faith.

1. I will be mindful of my actions and behavior, and maintain an atmosphere that is welcoming to all, regardless of race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, or political views. I will not be rude, aggressive, disrespectful or hurtful to anyone in this group, and I will treat others (and their property) with the utmost consideration.

2. I will use the facilities made available to me with care. If I lose, damage or destroy Peace UCC property or any property where an event may occur, I will immediately notify a member of the staff of the loss damage or destruction.

3. I will not indulge in any illegal or unsafe activities. This includes drugs, alcohol, sexual activity, hazing, violence, bullying, theft or any other activity that the leaders deem unsafe. If I violate this rule, I understand that not only will my parent or guardian be notified but it might result in expulsion from the group.

4. I understand that all discussion within the group must remain in the group to promote honesty and openness within it. If there is anything said that indicates serious harm could occur to any member of the group, the group leaders will discuss this matter with the member in question before sharing it with an outsider who can help. The situation must be very serious for the leaders to go to an outsider.

5. When staying overnight at an event I will observe the following guidelines:
   a. I will room with only members of my sex.
   b. I will be mindful of my roommates’ rights to privacy.
   c. I will honor curfews and will be in my room at “Lights Out.”

6. I realize that as a member of a Peace UCC sponsored group, I am responsible for my own behavior for the duration of any activity. I am conscious of my roles as a model for the other youth in my group, and I will abide by the “two for one” rule, never traveling alone and not allowing myself to be alone with an adult or other staff member out of public view.

7. While meeting, I will turn off or silence any phones/media players, etc., unless there is a specific reason why I should not. Possible reasons include parent contact, emergency situations, and if the group situation allows such devices.

8. I will expect, demand and contribute to a safe and healthy environment at all youth functions.

9. I will also abide by any activity-specific rules which will be explained before the activity.

10. I will try my best to enjoy myself despite all these rules and remember that they exist for a reason.

VIOLATION OF THIS CONVENANT COULD MEAN RETURNING HOME FROM AN EVENT AT MY OWN EXPENSE, BEFORE THE EVENT’S CONCLUSION AND MY DISMISSAL FROM THE PEACE UCC-SPONSORED GROUP.

Participant Signature: _____________________________ Date: __________

Parent’s Signature: _____________________________ Date: __________

A signed copy of this covenant will be kept in the Church’s confidential files.
EXHIBIT F: PEACE UCC COVENANT FOR PARENT/GUARDIAN OF CHILDREN/YOUTH

(This covenant must be signed by the parent/guardian of any minor over 12 years of age intending to participate in any programming event at Peace UCC.)

Because God calls us to be a community of faith and leaders in Christ’s church, I covenant with God, all members of Peace UCC and Peace-sponsored groups to conduct our life together in a manner that promotes a community of faith.

As a parent or guardian of children and youth involved in church-related activities, I agree:

▪ to check that there are at least two adult leaders for an event before I drop off my young person.
▪ to check that I am not leaving a single child/youth with the adult leaders when I pick up my young person from an event.
▪ that I will be responsible for costs incurred if my child/youth must be returned home because of inappropriate behavior.
▪ to be aware of the safety of all children left in the care of adults for a church-related event.
▪ to ensure that my child/youth is participating in a church-sponsored event and that I am fully aware of details and plans for the event before allowing my child/youth to participate.
▪ to participate in some degree in at least one church-sponsored activity for children and youth during the program year.
▪ to assist in enabling my child/youth to honor the covenant of behavior and to abide by rules of a church-sponsored activity.
▪ To drop off and pick up my young person at the church for any event which requires driving to an off-site location.

Parent's Signature: __________________________________________  Date: __________

A signed copy of this covenant will be kept in the Church’s confidential files.
EXHIBIT G: GUIDELINES FOR APPROPRIATE AFFECTION & VERBAL INTERACTIONS

Love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children and youth. Peace UCC encourages appropriate physical contact with youths and prohibits inappropriate displays of physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by Ministers towards youths in the organization’s programs will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some positive and appropriate forms of affection are:</th>
<th>The following forms of affection are considered inappropriate with children and youth in ministry setting because many of them are the behaviors that child molesters use to groom children or youth and their parents for later molestation or can be considered sexual abuse. These forms include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• side hugs</td>
<td>• inappropriate or lengthy embraces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• pats on the shoulder or back</td>
<td>• kisses on the mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• handshakes and hand slapping</td>
<td>• holding children over three years old on the lap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• verbal praise</td>
<td>• touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• touching hands, faces, shoulders</td>
<td>• showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff-only areas or other private rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• arms around shoulders</td>
<td>• occupying a bed with a child or youth who is not an immediate family member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• holding hands while walking with small children</td>
<td>• touching knees or legs of children or youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• sitting beside small children</td>
<td>• wrestling with children or youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children</td>
<td>• tickling children or youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• holding hands during prayer</td>
<td>• giving piggyback rides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• pats on the head when culturally appropriate</td>
<td>• any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• any form of unwanted affection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• commenting or complimenting (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• snapping bras or giving wedgies or similar touch of underwear whether or not it is covered by other clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• giving gifts or money to individual children or youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• having private meals with individual children or youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or the staff or volunteer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</th>
<th>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Positive reinforcement</td>
<td>• Name-calling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appropriate jokes</td>
<td>• Discussing sexual encounters or in any way involving youths in the personal problems or issues of Clergy, employees, and volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encouragement</td>
<td>• Secrets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Praise</td>
<td>• Cursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Off-color or sexual jokes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Shaming</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Belittling</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Derogatory remarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate youths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Derogatory remarks about the youth or his/her family</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXHIBIT H: GUIDELINES FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA USAGE

Electronic Communication

Any private electronic communication between staff and youths, including the use of social networking websites like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, instant messaging, texting, etc., is prohibited. All communication between staff and youths must be transparent. The parent and youth covenants include agreements about electronic communication.

The following are examples of appropriate and inappropriate electronic communication:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate Electronic Communication</th>
<th>Inappropriate Electronic Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Sending and replying to emails and text messages from youths ONLY when copying in a supervisor or the youth’s parent</td>
<td>• Harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning or humiliating comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communicating through “organization group pages” on Facebook or other approved public forums</td>
<td>• Sexually oriented conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Private” profiles for Ministers which youths cannot access</td>
<td>• Private messages between Ministers and youths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Posting pictures of organization participants on social media sites</td>
<td>• Posting inappropriate comments on pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Friending” participants on social networking sites</td>
<td>• “Friending” participants on social networking sites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cell Phone Use

While assigned to work with youths, Ministers may only use electronic communications device during approved breaks, emergency situations, or for the direct employment of web sites/pages that support the topic being presented/discussed. Text messaging and/or emailing pictures while assigned to work with youths is strictly prohibited regardless of the type of device used and whether for business or personal reasons. Employees need to ensure that friends and family members are aware of this policy.

Use of personal electronic communication devices to contact (via voice, text, or pictures/video) organization members and/or program participants for personal and/or inappropriate reasons shall be grounds for discipline up to and including termination of employment.

There are occasions in which staff will need to use personal or organization-issued electronic communication devices. In these cases, staff will have explicit direction from supervisors governing use. Situations which may require use of organization issued or personal electronic communication devices include:

a. Field Trips;
b. Off-site Programs; and
c. Emergencies.
EXHIBIT I: MEDICAL RELEASE FORM

EXHIBIT J: TRANSPORTATION RELEASE FORM
EXHIBIT K: CONFIDENTIAL NOTICE OF CONCERN

After an observer has made a report of an inappropriate behavior, policy violation, or suspected abuse of children or youth to an authorized minister, staff supervisor, or People Team leader, the observer must complete the Notice of Concern. The Confidential Notice of Concern must be reviewed and signed by two of the following leaders: staff supervisor, authorized minister, or People Team leader; and then forwarded to the People Team leader. This form will be maintained in a confidential file in the church office.

All reports will be taken seriously and treated confidentially. Each report will be kept confidential (only those who need to know) and investigated by the People Team leader and appropriate staff and recommendations will be made to resolve the matter, including any consequences that may be deemed necessary.

Please reference Safe Church Policy and Procedures Concerning Abuse Prevention – Responding to Problems for more details.

Individual(s) of concern: ________________________________________________

Date of occurrence: ______________________________________________________

Time of occurrence: ______________________________________________________

Type of concern:

☐ Inappropriate behavior with a child, youth or vulnerable person
☐ Policy violation with a child, youth, or vulnerable person
☐ Suspected abuse or neglect of children or youth
☐ Other concern: __________________________________________________________

Describe the situation: What happened, where it happened, when it happened, who was involved, who was present, and who was notified? If reported to the state, what was their recommendation about investigating? Attach additional sheets if needed.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Has this situation ever occurred previously? Attach additional sheets if needed.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
What action was taken? How was the situation handled, who was involved, who was questioned, were police called? Attach additional sheets if needed.

________________________________________________________

What is the follow-up plan? Does anyone else need to be notified? Will the situation need monitoring? Would you like someone to call you to discuss this situation? Attach additional sheets if needed.

________________________________________________________

Signature of Observer: ___________________________________________

This notice of concern as been reviewed by the following:

Two Signatures Required: __________________________________________

________________________________________________________
EXHIBIT L: LIMITED ACCESS AGREEMENT

This Limited Access Agreement is executed between:
Peace United Church of Christ, referred to below as “we,” “the congregation” and “clergy”;
And
__________________________________________, referred to below as “you” and “your”

Peace United Church of Christ is an “open and affirming congregation” and as such affirms the dignity and worth of all persons as expressed in our Welcome Statement. We are committed to being a religious community open to those who are in need of worshiping with us, especially in times of distress and serious personal troubles. However, based on your background, we have concerns about your contact with children and youth in our congregation. The following guidelines are designed to reduce the risk to both you and them of an incident or accusation. We welcome you to our congregation and our membership but your participation will be limited to ensure the safety of our children and youth and to assure that you will not be subject to future accusations.

Within these guidelines, the congregation welcomes your participation in worship services, coffee hour, meetings, adult education and all adult social events. Do not enter the classroom wing or the lower level of the church building. You are to avoid all contact with children and youth on church property or congregation-sponsored events. This includes the following:

- Do not talk with children.
- Do not volunteer or agree to lead, chaperone or participate in events for children and youth including such things as religious education classes, stories or talks for worship, youth group events, activities during intergenerational events, driving or otherwise transporting children and/or youth.
- You will remain in the presence of a Parish Associate who knows your situation at all times. You must meet that person before coming onto church property (or before arriving at any church-sponsored event), remain with him or her at all times, and depart with him or her.
- If a child or youth in the congregation approaches you, either at church or in a community place, politely and immediately excuse yourself from the situation.
- Avoid being in the church or any church-owned building or church-rented space at any time without a Parish Associate present with you at all times.
- Do not ask for, seek access to, nor remove from the church any materials, files, directories, etc. listing members and friends of the church.
- We ask that you limit your time in coffee hour to about ten minutes.

As a part of this agreement it is understood that you will have three (3) members of this congregation, approved by the clergy, who know thoroughly your history and are willing to serve as your Parish Associates. You will be welcome on church property and at church-sponsored events but must be accompanied at all times by one of the Parish Associates named below:

(Named Parish Associate 1)

(Named Parish Associate 2)

(Named Parish Associate 3)

To engage your integration into the congregation and to assist you in maximizing your experience with the church it is agreed that you will meet on a bi-monthly basis with the Parish Associates and the Senior Authorizing Minister together or separately to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern. These meetings will also serve as an ongoing review of the implementation of this agreement.
Implementation of this agreement is based upon a review by the clergy of the most current supporting documents as follows:

- A statement from the court as to the nature of the conviction.
- A risk assessment from a qualified therapist.
- A report from a certified treatment provider indicating that you are not at too high a risk for recidivism.

Any change in the above must be reported immediately to a member of the clergy.

**Reasons for excluding a person from all congregational activities include, but are not limited to:**

- Refusal to allow the clergy to contact the treatment provider and parole officer.
- Refusal to go for a risk assessment with a qualified therapist.
- Report by a treatment provider that the individual is at too high a risk for recidivism.
- Refusal to sign a Limited Access Agreement.
- Refusal to comply with the requirements of the Limited Access Agreement.

This agreement will remain in effect until/unless:

- You fail to honor the terms of the agreement, thus nullifying it.
- It is superseded by any policies and procedures put in place by the church’s People Team, responsible for the Safe Church Policy and Procedures Concerning Abuse Prevention. The People Team in consultation with the clergy is the body responsible for providing you with guidelines, support and counsel for your participation in the life of the congregation.
- You, the clergy, and the People Team mutually agree to change the terms of this agreement.

**ATTEST:** I have reviewed the terms of the above limited access agreement and agree to abide by its provisions. Failure to honor its terms will result in my being denied access to church property and all church events.

_________________________________________        ____________________________
Signature                                                                                     Date

_________________________________________
Petitioner Name

_________________________________________
Address

**WITNESS FOR THE CHURCH:**

_________________________________________        ____________________________
Signature                                                                                     Date

_________________________________________
Name

_________________________________________
Church Official Title

**Peace United Church of Christ**
204 East Lockwood Avenue
Webster Groves, MO 63119