

Penn Yan United Methodist Church
SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

Table of Contents

1. Introduction (pg. 2)
2. Purpose (pg. 2)
3. Covenant Statement (pg. 3)
4. Policy Statement on Sexual and Gender Harassment and Misconduct of a Sexual Nature (pg. 4)
5. Procedures (pg. 6)
 - I. Staff and Volunteer Recruitment and Selection guidelines (pg. 6)
 - a. Age
 - b. Application
 - c. Position Description
 - d. Background Checks
 - e. Prior Convictions
 - f. Interview
 - g. References
 - h. Required Forms and Signatures
 - i. Confidentiality
 - II. Staff Supervision Guidelines (pg. 8)
 - a. Two Adult Rule
 - b. Goals for Worker to Child Ratios
 - c. Nursery/Sunday School Checkout Procedure
 - d. Open Door Policy
 - e. Outside Access
 - f. Doors and Windows
 - g. Individual Counseling
 - h. Attendance
 - i. Touch
 - j. Outings Away From Church Property
 - k. Classroom Discipline
 - l. Education
 - III. Reporting and Response (pg. 11)
 - a. Steps for Reporting
 - b. Response Plan
 - IV. Social Media (pg. 13)
6. Policy on Convicted Sexual Offenders in the Life of the Congregation (pg. 14)
 - I. Sample Sex Offender Covenant Letter (pg. 16)
 - II. Sample Safe Sanctuary Worship and Attendance Covenant (pg. 17)
7. Forms and Applications (pg. 19)
 - I. Authorization for Criminal Records Check (pg. 19)
 - II. Application to Work with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults (pg. 20)
 - III. Signed Consent Form (pg. 23)
 - IV. Application for Teens Working with Children (pg. 24)

Penn Yan United Methodist Church
SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

Introduction:

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church, in April 1996, adopted a resolution aimed at eliminating any potential for child abuse in the church. The adopted resolution includes the following statement:

Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes a child welcomes me." (Matthew 18:5). Children are our present and our future, our hope, our teachers and inspiration. They are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of Christ.

Jesus also said, "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18:6) Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the children. The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state; "Children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional and sexual exploitation and abuse." (para. 162C)

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. God calls us to make our churches safe places, protecting children and other vulnerable persons from economic, physical, emotional and sexual abuse. God calls us to create communities of faith where children and adults grow safe and strong.

Purpose:

Our purpose for establishing this Safe Sanctuary Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our total and unwavering commitment to the economic, emotional, physical and spiritual safety of all our children, youth and vulnerable adults.

A vulnerable adult is someone aged 18 and over; who due to age, illness or a mental or physical condition is less able to take care of himself/herself, or less able to protect himself/herself against harm or exploitation. This includes but is not limited to physical and sexual abuse, neglect by self or other, financial or material exploitation, emotional or psychological mistreatment.

All individuals working with children, youth and vulnerable adults must complete a Safe Sanctuaries Training course once every four years. Records of course completion will be kept digitally and in a folder in the Christian Education office. All persons working with children, youth and vulnerable adults must also read and sign that they have read and understand the Safe Sanctuary policy on a yearly basis.

Penn Yan United Methodist Church
SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

Covenant Statement:

The Penn Yan United Methodist Church hereby pledges to conduct the ministry of Jesus Christ in ways that assure the emotional, physical safety and spiritual growth of all children, youth and vulnerable adults as well as all of our employees and volunteers working with our children, youth and vulnerable adults. We will follow reasonable safety measures when selecting and recruiting employees and volunteer workers; we will implement appropriate operational procedures in all areas of programming and care. We will train our volunteers working with children, youth and vulnerable adults on our procedures and policies; we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse consistent with New York State law.

We adopt this policy in accordance with the statement we as a congregation make at each Baptism. We will “nurture children and youth in the Christian faith and life and include them in our care.” With this policy, we renew our Baptismal pledge to “live according to the example of Christ” and surround children and youth with a “community of love and forgiveness that they may grow in their trust of God, and be confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to eternal life.”

The pastor, Director of Education and Outreach, Church Council and Safe Sanctuary Team, will review this Safe Sanctuary Policy annually.

Penn Yan United Methodist Church
SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

Policy Statement on Sexual and Gender Harassment and Misconduct of a Sexual Nature

The Penn Yan United Methodist Church affirms the 2016 Book of Discipline, Sexual Abuse within the Ministerial Relationship and Sexual Harassment within the Church, which states that sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship and sexual harassment within the church are incompatible with biblical teachings of hospitality, justice and healing. In accordance with *The 2016 Book of Discipline*, ¶161 F, all human beings, both male and female, are created in the image of God, and thus have been made equal in Christ. As the promise of Galatians 3: 26-29, states all are one in Christ, we support equity among all persons without regard to ethnicity, situation, or gender.

Sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship occurs when a person within a ministerial role of leadership (pastor, educator, counselor, youth leader or other person of leadership) engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employee, student, staff member, co-worker or volunteer.

Sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual advance or demand, either verbal or physical, that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating, or coercive. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment or intimidating or coercive behavior that threatens or results in a tangible employment action, and discrimination on the basis of gender (2016 Book of Discipline ¶ 161).

Gender harassment is behavior that is harassing in nature against a woman because she is a woman or against a man because he is a man.

Sexual abuse within the ministerial relationship involves a betrayal of sacred trust, a violation of the ministerial role and exploitation of those who are vulnerable. Similarly, gender or sexual harassment are usually understood as exploitations of power relationships rather than as exclusively sexual or gender issues.

Sexual and gender harassment, sexual abuse and misconduct of a sexual nature within the life of the church interfere with its moral mission. Penn Yan United Methodist Church prohibits and will not tolerate these behaviors, which are sinful, demeaning, abusive and wrong. The Penn Yan United Methodist Church commits itself to fair and expedient investigation of any complaint of sexual and gender harassment, sexual abuse or misconduct of a sexual nature within the church and take action deemed appropriate and in compliance with *The Book of Discipline*. Further, the Penn Yan United Methodist Church bears affirmative responsibility to create an environment of hospitality for all persons, male or female, which is free of these sins and encourages respect, equality and kinship in Christ.

Some instances of harassment can be resolved informally by conversation between the parties or facilitated mediation. In all other instances, the conduct must be reported immediately to the chair or another member of the Staff Parish Relations Committee and the pastor. If the conduct involves the pastor, it must be reported to the pastor's supervisor, District Superintendent or the Bishop.

Penn Yan United Methodist Church

SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

The Penn Yan United Methodist Church will not retaliate against any person who brings forward a complaint. All staff leaders and members are expected to immediately report any knowledge of harassment, abuse or misconduct to any one of the persons listed above. Prompt and appropriate investigation and corrective action will be taken, including discipline.

While the Penn Yan United Methodist Church cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality, it will make every reasonable effort to maintain confidentiality by disclosing information about the complaint only on a “need to know” basis and as necessary to promote God’s call for justice, reconciliation and healing.

Anyone who has questions or concerns about this policy or the issues addressed are encouraged to air those questions or concerns to the SPRC or the pastor.

This Basic Policy Statement on Sexual and Gender Harassment and Misconduct of a Sexual Nature was adopted by the Penn Yan United Methodist Church on August 1, 2017, and is on file in our church office and on the church website at www.pyumc.org.

Procedures:

I. Staff and Volunteer Recruitment and Selection Guidelines

A. Age

In recruiting volunteers and hiring paid staff to work with children and youth in any leadership position of authority, individuals must be 18 years of age and at least 5 years older than the age of the persons they are working to serve. This standard allows persons to be separated by enough years to have a better perspective and recognition as an authority figure with the group they are serving. Persons not meeting these standards may not serve as the primary authority role; however, they can be utilized as assistants to those in leadership positions.

B. Application

Interested workers shall complete an application that includes photo identification, address, employment history for the past five years, volunteer work during the past five years, experiences and skills specifically related to the position, prior church membership (if any), personal references (not related to the applicant) with complete address and contact information, waiver of any right to confidentiality and of any right to pursue damages against the church/charge caused by the references' responses, certification that the information is true and correct, voluntary disclosure of past criminal convictions, and authorization to conduct a criminal background check.

C. Position Description

A written position description that includes the essential functions of the job shall be provided for any positions in ministry with children, youth and vulnerable adults.

D. Background Checks

Criminal background checks shall be made of all clergy, paid staff, and volunteers who have supervisory program responsibility for children and youth (e.g. Sunday school teachers) and all other church employees, to the extent permitted by law, prior to serving, to determine current or historic child abuse or sexual misconduct, criminal records, violent crimes or pedophilic behavior. Background checks must be updated/renewed every TWO years.

E. Prior Convictions

Individuals who have been convicted of emotional, physical or sexual abuse or neglect may not work in any church-sponsored activity or program for children, youth or vulnerable adults.

F. Interview

All selected applicants must be interviewed for suitability for the work they desire to do. Interviews will be conducted by the leader of the program in which the applicant will work, the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, or by other persons designated by the program leader. A team of interviewers may be used. Church policy and guidelines should be discussed during the interview.

Penn Yan United Methodist Church
SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

G. References

The pastor, Education and Outreach Director or a designated Safe Sanctuary team member shall check references provided by the applicant. The reference check shall include questions about the applicants ability to work with children, youth or vulnerable adults (depending on ministry) and leadership ability.

H. Required Forms and Signatures

All staff and volunteer workers must sign “Authorization and Request for Criminal Background Check” and “Participation Covenant Statement” forms before they can work with children, youth and vulnerable adults.

I. Confidentiality

Penn Yan United Methodist Church will keep confidential all information received in the applicant/volunteer selection process. Selection information will be marked as such and stored with limited access afforded only to church staff. If there is an incident, confidentiality of all persons involved will be safeguarded. If information needs to be discussed publicly, the pastor will discuss the situation with the District Superintendent and the Bishop. The Bishop is the only person designated to address the media regarding cases of maltreatment or misconduct within the local church.

Penn Yan United Methodist Church
SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

II. Staff Supervision Guidelines

All meetings of children and/or youth affiliated with Penn Yan United Methodist Church will be governed by the following guidelines.

A. Two Adult Rule

Two approved adults must be present at all times. This applies to classroom activities, activities away from the church facility. Whenever possible, teachers will be assigned in teams of two or more per Sunday school classroom. Concerted effort will be made to recruit sufficient numbers of volunteer teachers/leaders to permit such team teaching. Other church sponsored or community groups of children or youth who meet at the church should also have two or more leaders present whenever possible. When feasible, both male and female leaders will be present. If the group stays overnight at the church, or if a church sponsored group leaves the premises, two or more adult leaders must be present and must include at least one male and female if the group is mixed gender.

B. Goals for Worker to Child Ratios

Penn Yan United Methodist Church has a goal of maintaining the following ratios of ministry workers to children whenever possible. These ratios are goals. The church recognizes that in some circumstances achieving these ratios may not be feasible, such as unexpected number of children showing up for an event.

Program	Workers	Children
Nursery	2	10
Sunday School	2	14
Youth Programs	2	16
VBS	2	14

C. Nursery/ Sunday School Checkout Procedure

All nursery staff, Sunday school teachers and parents utilizing the nursery and those children up to fifth grade will observe the check-in/checkout procedure. A parent, grandparent or other appropriate adult whose name has been given to the nursery staff/classroom teacher by a parent or guardian in advance must sign out children.

SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

D. Open Door Policy

Further protection for children requires that an open door policy be in place. This policy shall state that the parents of the children served, the clergy, administrative and professional staff of the church have the right to visit and observe the children's/youth activity, classroom, or church sponsored program at any time.

E. Outside Access

There must be access to a phone/cell phone when groups are at or away from the church facility. The church office or authorized church representative will be given this number prior to the groups' departure from the church.

F. Doors and Windows

All classrooms and office doors will have a window or visibility from hallway but are encouraged to remain open while occupied. Windows shall not be blocked and doors should never be locked while persons are inside.

G. Individual Counseling

One-on-one interactions are sometimes necessary and appropriate but care must be taken. Adults must conduct them in an environment that provides visibility to others. If at all possible, another adult is to have knowledge of staff members' whereabouts and with whom they are meeting.

H. Attendance

Records shall be kept for all ministry events/activities involving children and youth. These records shall include at a minimum, the date and names of all participants and adult workers and shall be kept on record.

I. Touch

Physical affection should be appropriate to the age of the child. (For example, it is generally appropriate for a 2 year old to sit in a nursery workers lap, but it is not appropriate for a teenager and youth leader to behave this way.) The child should initiate touching. It should be a response to the child's need for comforting, encouragement, or affection. It should not be based on the adult's emotional need.

Touching and affection should only be given when in the presence of other adult workers. It protects both the children and adult workers and makes it much less likely that touches become inappropriate or misconstrued. This is especially important when diapering a baby or helping a young child use the restroom. Touching behavior should not give even the appearance of wrongdoing. As ministry workers our behavior must foster trust at all times; it should always be above reproach. A child's preference not to be touched should be respected. Do not force affection upon a reluctant child. Church workers must promptly discuss inappropriate touching or other questionable behavior by other workers with their supervisor, staff member, pastor, or member of the Staff Parish Relations Committee.

J. Outings Away From Church Property

All children and youth participating in out-of-town and overnight outings must have written consent and a medical release form. (Medical release and consent forms may be completed for a one-year period and must be renewed annually.) There must be access to a phone or cell phone when groups are away from the church property. In no circumstances is one adult (other than the parent) to take a child or group of children on an overnight outing alone. On youth overnight outings, there will be at least one male and one female adult supervisors. It is preferred that no adult sleep in the same room with any child or youth with the exception of a parent/child combination. Drivers of children and youth must be 21 years of age. The ministry worker shall be required to keep a copy of their current license and proof of insurance card on file.

K. Classroom Discipline

All teachers and workers will use the following discipline procedures:

1. If a child is behaving inappropriately, the teacher or worker will tell the child specifically what he/she is doing that is not acceptable behavior and state what the expected behavior is. (e.g. "We do not throw blocks, we use them for building.")
2. If this measure is not effective, the child will be guided to another activity.
3. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child can be placed at a table with an activity to work alone away from the other students.
4. If the child's disruptive behavior continues after these steps have been taken, a teacher will notify the Education and Outreach Director who will then talk with the child and work with the child's parents or guardian.
5. No physical punishment or verbal abuse, e.g. ridicule, are to be used at any time. If isolating the child within the classroom or removal of the child from the room becomes necessary, the situation must be discussed with the child's parents or guardian the same day or as soon as possible.

L. Education

All adults and youth who are leading younger children who have regular contact with children, youth and vulnerable adults will be Safe Sanctuary trained. Topics should include but not limited to the need for Safe Sanctuary training, types and signs of abuse, recognizing signs of abuse and neglect, basic procedures in hiring/selecting workers, basic procedures in supervising workers and program participants, responding when abuse or neglect is disclosed or suspected, and reporting abuse. All adults who work with children, youth and vulnerable adults shall have an annual orientation that includes but is not limited to the church's Safe Sanctuary policy and procedures as it applies to the ministry.

III. Reporting and Response

Reporting shall be required by any staff or volunteer that personally witnesses an incident of abuse or exploitation, when an allegation of an event of abuse or exploitation is made to staff or a volunteer by a third party and/or when a child, youth or vulnerable adult discloses abuse or exploitation to a staff member or volunteer. It is crucial that reporting be immediate and the allegations dealt with as soon as possible to the incident or disclosure.

Steps for Reporting

1. The staff person or volunteer who observes alleged abuse or to whom such abuse is reported or disclosed, or who suspects abuse shall be required to report the incident or suspected abuse immediately to the person in charge of the ministry. Upon receiving the information, the person in charge of the ministry shall immediately call:
 - New York State Child Protective Services Hotline: (800) 342-3720
 - NYS Office of Children and Family Services Adult Abuse Hotline: (844) 697-3505

Identification information for the alleged victim and the adult responsible for their care is required for the report. The pastor in charge and immediate supervisor are to be informed immediately before or subsequent to the making of a report. The person in charge of the ministry in which the alleged abuse was observed or disclosed shall immediately attempt to obtain necessary information such as the name of the alleged victim and his/her address and family information.

2. If the accused is the appointed clergy, or a member of his/her family, the allegations shall be immediately reported to the District Superintendent. The District Superintendent shall immediately report to the proper authorities as set forth in above paragraph. The District Superintendent shall take responsibility and act according to established rules in *The Book of Discipline* with respect to claims against the pastor. If the District Superintendent is not available, the incident shall be reported to the Bishop's office.
3. Every clergy in any active status or relationship with the Conference whose appointment is set or approved by the Bishop, every person serving as a supply pastor and retired clergy performing ministerial functions are included in mandatory reporting as required by *The Book of Discipline*.
4. After the person in charge of the ministry has reported the suspected abuse to the proper authorities, the appointed clergy shall report the incident immediately to the District Superintendent. If the District Superintendent is not available, the incident shall be reported to the Bishop's office.
5. The person in charge of the ministry must keep a written report of the steps taken by the church in response to the reported abuse. The report should be kept brief and contain only factual information relevant to the situation. The report should be kept in a secure place. It should be typed to prevent it from being changed.

Penn Yan United Methodist Church
SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

6. Never discuss allegations with any other people except law enforcement or designated county investigators. To do so can cause irreparable harm to the victim, their family, the church and community.

Response Plan

1. A quick, compassionate and unified response to an alleged incident of abuse is expected. All allegations shall be taken seriously. In all cases of reported or observed abuse, there shall be cooperation with all official investigating agencies.
2. All media requests for statements shall be directed to the Conference director of communications.
3. Take all allegations seriously and reach out to the victim and the victim's family. Show care and support to help prevent further hurt. Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed. The care and safety of the victim is the first priority. Respond in a positive and supportive manner to the victim and the victim's family.
4. Immediately, and with dignity and respect for the accused, remove the accused from further involvement with children, youth and vulnerable adults and advise the accused that there has been an allegation of abuse. Details of the allegations of the abuse should not be discussed with the accused at the time of removal. In any removal of a staff member or volunteer from any activity/ministry, care shall be taken to handle the removal in a discreet manner, recognizing that there will be an investigation by New York State and church authorities.
5. When it has been alleged that a member of the church staff or volunteer, has committed an act of abuse or exploitation, the staff member or volunteer shall be required to refrain from all ministry/activities with children, youth and vulnerable adults until the incident has been fully resolved by the appropriate State authorities and/or in accordance with *The Book of Discipline*.
6. Notify the parents/guardians of the victim and take whatever steps necessary to assure the safety and well being of the child, youth or vulnerable adult until the parent(s)/guardian(s) arrive. **Note:** If one or both of the parents/guardians is the alleged abuser follow the advice of the authorities concerning notifications of others.
7. The church shall provide a supportive atmosphere to all those who are affected, offering both objectivity and empathy as it seeks to create a climate in which healing may take place.

IV. Social Media

As an ever-increasing number of people use and prefer digital communication over other forms, it is essential that the church be present in this mission field. Social networking sites, on-the-spot communication devices and email can enhance communication, faith sharing and deepen relationships.

Connecting on Social Networking Sites

1. In addition to participating on the ministry pages, youth may wish to establish social media connections with church leaders and adult volunteers engaged in youth ministry. Adults who are willing to participate in these relationships should use the following guidelines when establishing these connections:
 - a. Adults should not submit “friend” requests to children or youth. Children and youth may feel that they are unable to decline a request. However, it is acceptable for a child/youth to request an adult as a “friend.”
 - b. Due to the greater potential for misinterpretation, inappropriate discussions, and inadvertent exposure of youth to inappropriate content; personal pages should be maintained appropriately. Church leaders and adult volunteers should avoid relationships with children/youth via Social Networking sites, unless an actual relationship (e.g. ministry, family friendship) already exists between them.
 - c. As additional social media sites gain popularity, the Safe Sanctuary team reserves the right to apply this approach to various methods of digital communication.
2. A written parent permission information form is required for children and youth before;
 - a. Posting, sending or sharing pictures/videos on any website or any other visible location.
 - b. Emailing, calling or texting information to a child/youth by computer or cell phone.
 - c. The sharing of any full name or contact information.
3. Limit individual contact and communication with children and youth
 - a. Conduct all communication in a professional manner.
 - b. Save all communication you have with children and youth.
 - c. Any email or text message should always have a parent/guardian involved. Group messaging is always encouraged.
4. Safety measures for sharing pictures electronically
 - a. When posting pictures, refrain from using names and never use last names or identifiable information.
 - b. Check all pictures for vulnerable/compromising situations making sure they uphold your ministry. Make sure name tags are not distinguishable.

Policy on Convicted Sexual Offenders in the Life of the Congregation:

The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church declare; “We recognize that family violence and abuse in all forms – verbal, psychological, physical, sexual-is detrimental to the covenant of the human community. We encourage the church to provide a safe environment, counsel, and support for the victim. While we deplore the actions of the abuser, we affirm that person to be in need of God’s redeeming love.”

Increasingly, churches are faced with a dilemma in their attempt to be faithful of both of the last two sentences above. Assuring the safety of children in our care, our facilities and our programs is a sacred duty. We must weigh that duty in the balance with what often seems the conflicting value of participation in the life of the church by a convicted child abuser. Being part of a worshiping community is not the only way for a person to experience God’s redeeming love, but it is an important one. Thorough knowledge, careful planning, and long-term monitoring must accompany welcoming a child sex offender into a congregation.

A convicted and/or registered sex offender who wishes to be part of a church community should expect to have conditions placed on his/her participation. Indeed, offenders who have been in treatment and are truly committed to living a life free of further abuse will be the first to declare that fact. In order to accomplish that, they must structure a life that includes on-going treatment, accountability mechanisms, and lack of access to children.

The following steps should be taken in order to be faithful to the Social Principles’ commitment both to safety from abuse and to ministry with registered offenders.

A. Local church should:

1. Hold discussions in the church council and in adult education settings about the possibility of facing the situation of a convicted sex offender returning or wishing to join the church. These discussions should be held and general agreements reached about actions to be taken should the church find itself in this circumstance.
2. Develop a carefully constructed and openly negotiated covenant between the offender and the church community. The covenant should include agreements in the following areas: participation in a professional counseling program for entire time of church membership or participation; adult “covenant partners” to accompany the offender on church property or attending church activities; areas of church facilities that are “off limits;” restrictions on leadership in or on behalf of the church; no role in church that includes contact with children or youth; any additional conditions for participation.
3. Assure that the covenant is maintained by having it written and signed by the offender, the pastor(s), and the chairperson of the church council. While confidentiality of victims should be respected, the covenant should not be secret. Monitoring of the covenant should be taken seriously as a permanent responsibility.

SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

B. The Individual will:

1. Uphold the mission of the church and the mission to provide safe sanctuary for all children and families. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Remain in the company of one or more “covenant partners” at all times while in or on any part of the church premises.
 - b. Enter and exit any and all church buildings via the most direct route.
 - c. Avoid the nursery and all children and youth Sunday school rooms and areas, and any other area where his/her presence may cause undue distress to others.
 - d. Will not accept or be offered any leadership or representational position within or on behalf of the church that directly involves children and youth.
2. Cooperate by giving needed information as requested and accept full benefit of the provided covenant group.
3. Volunteer work, if allowed by parole restrictions, will be limited to adult activities. Opportunities that provide contact with children and youth will not be permitted.
4. Rooms where children and youth programs are occurring will not be entered, even if accompanied by a “covenant partner.”
5. Understand that if he/she decides to relocate attendance and/or membership to another congregation, the Church Council will seek to inform the leadership of that congregation of the conditions of these guidelines.

If the covenant is not kept, the individual will not be permitted to be in attendance within the church facilities. Spiritual guidance can still be extended to the individual by the pastor and “covenant partners” in another location away from the church.

Penn Yan United Methodist Church
SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

I. Sample Sex Offender Covenant Letter

(Name and Address)

Re: Safe Sanctuary Worship and Attendance Covenant

Dear _____

It has come to our attention that you have been convicted of a serious crime (against a child or children, or vulnerable adult). Given the disposition of the criminal charge, and in keeping with our commitment to provide a safe place for all persons, and especially children and other vulnerable persons — as stated in our Safe Sanctuary Policy — we have established mandatory guidelines for your participation in activities at the Penn Yan United Methodist Church.

Our mandates are explained in the enclosed Safe Sanctuary Worship and Attendance Covenant. We are hopeful that you will agree to the terms of the Covenant, and that you will abide by them and continue to worship with us.

We trust that you understand our reasons for presenting this covenant relationship. We want to protect all children and vulnerable persons. We also want to protect you, and avoid any circumstances where further accusations against you could occur. By taking these steps, we are hopeful that the pastor, church staff and members of the congregation will be able to provide you with meaningful spiritual care. We recognize that everyone is in need of the mercy and grace that God offers.

Please know that the Safe Sanctuary Team and this congregation will be praying for you. We look forward to what God will do in your life, and in the lives of the other members of this congregation, as we continue to seek God's direction.

In Covenant Relationship,

Safe Sanctuary Team, Chair

Pastor,

Church Council, Chair

Penn Yan United Methodist Church
SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

II. SAFE SANCTUARY WORSHIP AND ATTENDANCE COVENANT

Between (NAME) and Penn Yan United Methodist Church

In keeping with the Penn Yan United Methodist Church's commitment to provide a safe place for all persons — especially children, youth and vulnerable adults — as outlined in the Penn Yan United Methodist Church Safe Sanctuary Policy, I, (NAME,) understand this covenant and will comply with the following mandates:

1. First, I share the church's mission to provide a safe and healthy environment for all persons —myself and others. I understand that the mandates in this covenant are for my protection, well-being and peace of mind, as well as that of others.
2. Beginning immediately, I agree that my presence in the church facilities will be limited to the worship areas, and that my attendance will be limited to worship services only. Attending worship means that I may enter the sanctuary no earlier than 20 minutes before worship service is scheduled to begin and that must leave no later than 20 minutes after worship ends. At a later time, the church may allow me to attend other activities, beyond worship. If that is permitted, my attendance at those activities will be subject to all of the other mandates in this covenant. This covenant will be reviewed by the pastor, Director of Education and Outreach, church council chair, safe sanctuary team chair, and myself every six months to determine any changes. These changes will be shared with the safe sanctuary team and church council.
3. I will restrict my contact to people who are eighteen years of age or older. I will not talk to, and will not have any contact with, any children or vulnerable adults associated with the congregation, either in person or by an electronic means (including via email, text or phone).
4. I will never be alone in the building. I will be accompanied by a designated covenant partner at all times, including all of my restroom visits. There are ('INSERT NUMBER) people who are available and have agreed to serve as my covenant partners. Their names and telephone numbers are listed at the end of this covenant. I will contact one of them prior to attending church. One of my covenant partners must meet me before entering the church and must be present with me at all times while I am in the church facilities. This includes accompanying me to the restroom.
5. I will not enter any space in the church facility that is dedicated to children or youth ministries. Those spaces include, but are not limited to, areas where the following occur: Sunday school, nursery care, children's music rehearsals, and wherever children or youth congregate.

SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

6. Until permitted by the church council and Safe Sanctuary team, I will not serve on any committees. I will not hold any leadership or teaching positions. I will not be given a key to the church.

7. I agree that the pastor or her or his designee may contact my probation officer and other individuals in order to obtain information about me, and to solicit any input on how to minister to me and to the congregation. By signing this covenant, I agree that any individual may share any information about me with the pastor or her or his designee, and I release all persons from any liability as a result of their releasing information about me. This authorization and release specifically includes information, written or verbal, associated with my medical, psychological and psychiatric treatment that otherwise might be protected from disclosure by federal or state law.

8. I agree to meet and consult with the pastor or representative of the Safe Sanctuary Team upon her or his request for the purpose of providing assistance to me or for the protection and security of the congregation and the community. I agree that it is necessary for the staff and members of the congregation to be advised of my status and the mandates agreed upon.

I UNDERSTAND AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE MANDATES IN THIS SAFE SANCTUARY WORSHIP AND ATTENDANCE COVENANT

Signature

Date

IN COVENANT RELATIONSHIP:

Pastor

Date

Safe Sanctuary Committee, Chair

Date

DESIGNATED COVENANT PARTNERS:

1. Name, Address, Phone Number

2. Name, Address, Phone Number

3. Name, Address, Phone Number



Penn Yan United Methodist Church

166 Main St., PO Box 242

Penn Yan, NY 14527

Authorization and Request for Criminal Records Check

I, _____, hereby authorize the Penn Yan United Methodist Church to request the Trak 1 Company to conduct a search and release any information regarding any record of charges or convictions contained in any criminal file maintained on me, whether it is a local, state or national file, and including, but not limited to, accusation for crimes committed against minors, to the fullest extent permitted by state and federal law.

Signature

Date

Please complete the following:

Print Full Name: _____
First Middle Last

Current Physical Address:

Current Mailing Address:

Driver's License/Photo ID Number:

Date of Birth:

Penn Yan United Methodist Church
SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

Application to Work with Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults

Date: _____

Name: _____

First

Middle

Last

List any other names that have been used (including maiden name or previous married name):

Date of Birth: _____ / _____ / _____

Current Physical Address:

Current Mailing Address (if different):

Previous Address (*If you have lived at your current address less than 1 year*):

Driver's License/Photo ID #:

Email:

Home Phone: (____) _____

Cell Phone: (____) _____

Best time to call: _____

Emergency Contact: _____ Phone: (____) _____

In which areas would you like to serve? Please check below:

Nursery Toddler Primary Elementary (1st - 3rd)

Older Elementary (4th - 5th) Middle School (6th - 8th) High School (9th - 12th)

When are you available to serve?

Sunday Worship hours: 8:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m.

Youth Group/Events Weekday Programs Sunday School Teacher

Penn Yan United Methodist Church
SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

References (please provide the names of two personal references who are not related to you):

Name: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Relationship to Applicant: _____

Current Physical Address: _____ Current Mailing Address (if different): _____

Name: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Relationship to Applicant: _____

Current Physical Address: _____ Current Mailing Address (if different): _____

Background:

How long have you been attending this church? _____

Are you a member of Penn Yan United Methodist Church?

yes no in the process

List any gifts, talents, training, skills or education that have prepared you to work with children:

Do you have any medical training or are you CPR certified? _____

Do you have any physical disabilities or conditions that might prevent you from certain types of activities?

no yes If yes, please describe: _____

Have you ever been convicted of a crime?

no yes If yes, please explain: _____

Have you ever been accused, arrested or convicted of child abuse, neglect or a crime involving actual or attempted sexual molestations of a minor or any other sexually related crime?

no yes

Penn Yan United Methodist Church
SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

WAIVER & CONSENT

I, _____, hereby certify that the information I have provided on this application is true and correct. I authorize the church to verify the information I have provided on this application by contacting the references I have listed, by conducting a criminal records check, or by other means, including contacting others whom I have not listed. I authorize the references listed in this application to give you whatever information they may have regarding my character and fitness for the position for which I have applied. Furthermore, I waive any rights I may have to confidentiality.

In the event that my application is accepted and I become involved in Children's/Youth Ministry of the Penn Yan United Methodist Church, I have read and agree to abide by and be bound by the Safe Sanctuary Policy of the Penn Yan United Methodist Church and to refrain from inappropriate conduct in the performance of my duties on behalf of the Penn Yan United Methodist Church.

I have read this waiver and the entire application and I am fully aware of its contents. I sign this freely and under no duress or coercion.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Signature of Witness

Date

SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

Statement of Consent

By signing my name below, I certify that I have read the above information. Any questions concerning these policies have been discussed. My signature also certifies my understanding of and agreement with the above policies. I understand I am responsible to uphold these policies. A photocopy of this document is as valid as the original. You may receive a copy of this full document upon request.

Name (Printed): _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

Safe Sanctuary Screening for Teens Working with Children

This form is to be completed for any position (paid or volunteer) involving the supervision or care of children or vulnerable adults. This is being used to provide a safe and secure environment for the activities and programs of the Penn Yan United Methodist Church.

Name: _____

Last

First

Middle

Parent(s) Name: _____

Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____

Driver's License/Photo ID #: _____

Current Physical Address:

Current Mailing Address (if different):

If you have lived at your current address less than one year:

Previous Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

School: _____

Grade: _____

I understand that in serving as a volunteer for the Penn Yan United Methodist Church, I am willing to abide by the Safe Sanctuary Policy and observe basic procedures for safe ministry with children to reduce the risk of child abuse in this church. I understand that child abuse is a serious matter and will do my part in the prevention of child abuse while serving the children of this congregation.

Signature of Teen Worker

Date

I do not know of any reason why my child should not serve as a Teen Worker with children. He/She does not demonstrate any signs of being a potential risk to the children of the church.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date