



## **SAFE CONDUCT POLICY**

FOR

**CENTER CHURCH**  
**FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST UCC**  
*Revised Fall, 2019*

675 Main Street Hartford, CT 06103  
860-249-5631  
[www.centerchurchhartford.org](http://www.centerchurchhartford.org)

## Table of Contents

	Page(s)
<b>Section I:</b> Theological Statement and Background .....	3
<b>Section II:</b> Definitions .....	3-4
<b>Section III:</b> Policy Statements .....	5
<b>Section IV:</b> Policy Requirements .....	5-7

### APPENDICES

<b>APPENDIX A:</b> “Inappropriate Forms of Affection With Children...” .....	8
<b>APPENDIX B:</b> “Code of Conduct for Protections of Children...” .....	9-10
<b>APPENDIX C:</b> “Behavioral Covenant with Persons Participating in Ministry...” .....	11
<b>APPENDIX D:</b> “Employment/Authorized Volunteer Application Form...” .....	12-14
<b>APPENDIX E:</b> “Reporting and Response Procedures” .....	15-16
<b>APPENDIX F:</b> “Safe Conduct Incident Form” .....	17
<b>APPENDIX G:</b> “Limited Access Agreement Form” .....	18-19

## Section I: Theological Statement and Background

The Rev. Thomas Hooker established The First Christ of Christ, Hartford, also known as Center Church, with vision and spirit. It is the same vision and spirit that endures throughout the history of the United Church of Christ. Contained therein is the idea that our faith is not so dependent on adhering to a creed as to owning a covenant. Our covenantal faith calls us to embrace what we must do as much as what we believe.

The first covenant in the new world reads like this, “We do bynde our lives to walk together in all God’s ways.” In the United Church Of Christ statement of faith, we acknowledge that “You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death..... You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ’s baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.” It is one thing to cling to a set of beliefs and another to commit to a way of life by signing on as a disciple for we are a covenantal people.

Our desire to live out our covenant is challenged by the shifting moral and spiritual tides of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We are challenged by the realities of a fallen world. We as human beings tend to deny and /or distort the image of God in ourselves or in other human beings. As a consequence, Christian communities must recognize that some persons among us at some time may dishonor God, themselves and other human beings by engaging in disrespectful and sometimes clearly abusive behaviors.

As a community of Christians bound by our covenant to God and to one another, the clergy, staff and members of Center Church, Hartford are committed to ensuring that the church continues to be a safe, physical, psychological and spiritual environment for every parishioner, employee and guest of the church. Therefore, criminal or illegal behavior as well as any behavior deemed inappropriate in this policy will not be tolerated. To this commitment we add another which is to actively nurture and enhance the spiritual well being of our congregants, employees and guest. Therefore, the following Safe Conduct Policy has been developed.

## Section II: Definitions

(Some definitions are adapted from Model Policies for Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse, Church Pension Group, April, 2004.)

**Child:** anyone under the age of 18. A person under the direct care of the Department for Children and Families (DCF) who is under the age of 21 shall also be defined as a child in this policy, as it is in CT state law. The use of “child” or “children” in this policy, then, is to be understood to include all infants, toddlers, babies, children, youth, teenagers, and anyone under the age of 18 (or 21 if in DCF care).

**Elderly Person:** someone 60 years or more years of age only for the purposes of this policy. This is because people this age who are *also* unable to perform or obtain services which are necessary to maintain physical and mental health are deemed “in need of protective services” by the state of CT.

**Vulnerable Person:** children, elderly people dependant on others to take care of essential tasks, as well as those who are mentally, physically, or emotionally challenged.

**Authorized Minister:** a person who holds ordained ministerial standing or has been commissioned or licensed by an association of the United Church of Christ (also referred as Pastor or Sr. Minister).

**Authorized Volunteer:** a person in a volunteer position for a Center Church activity who has been annually screened against the national sex-offender registry and has completed all the safe-church volunteer forms required at Center Church. (i.e., Church School Teacher, Youth Music Director, Youth Leader, Chaperone, etc.)

**Youth Leader:** a paid staff member or authorized volunteer working with youth or children, who must be at least two years older than the oldest participant.

**Church School Teacher and Music Leader-** paid or authorized volunteer working with church school children and church school staff.

**Nursery Staff-** paid staff person who heads the nursery on a weekly basis and works with volunteer helpers.

**Authorized Lay Leaders:** any Center Church committee members, youth leaders, child care volunteers, lay ministers, chaperones or other lay volunteers who interact regularly in a leadership position with children, the elderly, vulnerable persons or other adults in church programs and activities.

**Confidentiality:** When investigating a complaint, those involved shall maintain complete confidentiality with respect to names and events. The guiding rule of confidentiality is to tell only who needs to know and only what they need to know. This shall be followed by all involved.

## **TYPES OF ABUSE**

**Economic exploitation** is the deliberate misplacement, exploitation, or wrongful temporary or permanent use of a person's belongings or money.

**Emotional abuse, including sexual harassment,** is mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the abused person's growth, development or functioning.

**Neglect** is the deliberate failure to provide for a person's needs or the deliberate failure to protect a person from harm by a person obligated to do so.

**Physical abuse** is non-accidental injury, which is intentionally inflicted upon a person.

**Sexual abuse perpetrated by an adult** is when an adult causes another person to engage or attempt to engage in any sexual act by threatening or placing that other person in fear or engages (or attempts to engage) in a sexual act with another person if that other person is a child or incapable of appraising the nature of the conduct. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the adult or the other person.

**Sexual abuse perpetrated by a child or youth** is any contact or activity of a sexual nature that occurs between a child or youth and another child or youth when one child or youth has power over the other child or youth. This includes any activity which is meant to arouse or gratify the sexual desires of the child and/or youth.

### Section III: Policy Statements

- A. **Prohibition of Sexual Exploitation and Harassment** – All persons associated with Center Church should be aware that Center Church is strongly opposed to all types of abuse (see Definitions) and that such behavior is prohibited by Center Church policy. It is the intention and responsibility of Center Church to take whatever action may be needed to prevent and correct behavior which is contrary to this Policy.
- B. **Ministerial Conduct (lay and ordained)** – All members engaged in the ministry of Center Church (including elected or appointed leaders, employees, authorized volunteers and authorized ministers) are responsible for knowing the possible impact of their words and actions in ministering to the emotional, mental and spiritual needs of persons who come to them for help or over whom they have any kind of authority. Abuse of parishioners, vulnerable persons or other individuals by anyone engaged in the ministry of Center Church is strictly prohibited and may result in termination of employment or appropriate restriction of further Church activities.
- C. **Protection of Vulnerable Persons** – Center Church is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment in which all children, elderly, as well as those who are mentally, physically or emotionally challenged can learn about and experience God’s love.

### Section IV: Policy Requirements

In order to ensure the above Policies are met, the following requirements have been established:

- A. **Review and Acknowledgement of Policy** - All Church employees, authorized volunteers, youth leaders, and chaperones must and agree to abide by all facets of this Policy. (Refer to **Appendix A** “Inappropriate Forms of Affection with Children, Elderly and Vulnerable Persons,” **Appendix B** “Code of Conduct for Protection of Children, Elderly and Other Vulnerable Populations” and the “Behavioral Covenant” form in **Appendix C**).
- B. **Required Documentation and Clearances** – All persons seeking employment with Center Church or volunteering (in a leadership or ongoing role) for Center Church activities involving children, youth or vulnerable persons will be required to complete an “Employment/Authorized Volunteer Application Form” (Refer to **Appendix D**). In addition, all employees and authorized volunteers must agree to be checked against the national list of registered sex offenders. Those seeking Center Church employment must also undergo a general background check (financial and employment listing), a criminal background check and a call to their last employer.
- C. **Experience** - All individuals applying to be authorized volunteers with a desire to work with minors in a supervisory or ongoing active role will have been members Center Church at least six months or have participated regularly with Center Church for at least one year.
- D. **Two Person Rule and Open Doors** – Reasonable and appropriate effort must be made to ensure that, at all times, no less than two unrelated adults are in supervision of activities involving children and youth. In situations this is not possible at Center Church, the door must be wide open with the teacher and students visible from the hallway.
- E. **Chaperoning** – Chaperones must fill out the appropriate form to transport children other than their own on church-related activities. Chaperones do not have to be accompanied by an additional adult as long as there are multiple children in the car. The only instance in which a chaperone may transport a child (other than their own) without any others in the car would require a specific permission slip from the parent indicating that this is permissible that day and time, and naming the chaperone by name.
- F. **Mandated Reporters** – CT State Law (Public Acts 02-106 and 02-138) mandates that any person paid to care for a child in any public or private facility is mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect to DCF or a law enforcement agency. By that definition, the Sr. Minister, Minister of Faith Formation, Warburton Director of Outreach Ministries and paid Nursery staff are mandated reporters and Center Church is thus a mandated reporter. If any at Center Church suspects that a child is being abused or neglected, **whether they**

**believe the abuse or neglect has happened/is happening at the church function or not**, they are to notify one of the mandated reporters (or Moderator if Pastor is alleged) immediately. It is acceptable to call DCF yourself (especially if the suspected abuse/neglect seems to be happening in non-church related settings. See **Appendix E** “Reporting and Response Procedures” for greater detail.)

- G. **Reporting** – All breaches of this Policy should be brought to the attention of the minister or any paid Center Church staff member responsible for the oversight of children so that an incident report (**Appendix F** “Safe Conduct Incident Report”) can be written. Staff or reporters should send these written incident reports directly to the Senior Pastor (or Moderator if the allegations concern the Pastor). If the Pastor is alleged in a Safe Conduct Policy breach, the oral or written report can be sent directly to the Connecticut Conference Regional Minister, contact information available at ctucc.org or by contacting the Conference Office at 860-233-5564. Regarding all reports received by the Pastor or Moderator, written documentation will be maintained covering all relevant details of the reported incident. (Refer to **Appendix E**.)

**Response to Reports of Incidents Involving Non-Clergy** – Incident reports should be given immediately to the Senior Pastor. Upon receiving an incident report of an alleged breach of the Safe Conduct Policy, the Senior Pastor will meet with at least one of the following persons to discuss the appropriate actions: the chair of the Personnel Committee, the Moderator, the Faith Formation Minister. See **Appendix E** for greater detail.

Moreover, any person bringing forth a complaint under the terms of this Policy, or assisting in investigation of such complaint, will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment, church membership or otherwise discriminated against or discharged unless such person knowingly filed a false complaint or testimony.

- H. **Healing/Support** – In the event of any instance/breach occurring within the scope of this Policy, Church leadership will endeavor to provide necessary support and appropriate referral to all those affected.
- I. **Non-Church Use of Center Church Facilities** - Any organization or individual using Center Church facilities for non-church sponsored activities must comply with all aspects of this Policy. It shall be the responsibility of the Church employee/member overseeing/authorizing the third-party relationship to obtain written confirmation of receipt and acknowledgement of this Policy at the time at which contract is made for use of the facility. Anyone not willing to abide by this Policy will be denied use of our facilities.
- J. **Restrictions** - Any person currently on the Sex Offender Registry or under current investigation for (1) criminal sexual contact, (2) neglect of a child, or (3) physical abuse will not be permitted to work or volunteer in any Church-sponsored activity involving children or youth, with the exception of Sunday Worship. In addition, such persons must sign a Limited Access Agreement (sample attached, **Appendix G**) tailored to their specific situation (and in consultation with probation officers, if applicable). Anyone who knowingly withholds information about their status on the registry, or who violates the terms of the Limited Access Agreement, may be asked to leave the Church and banned from all Church activities.
- K. **Education and Awareness** – The Faith Formation Team, serving as the Safe Conduct Committee, shall oversee the ongoing education and awareness activities with respect to Safe Conduct requirements in the following ways:
- a. Church staff, Moderator, Chair of Personnel, Church School teachers and all other volunteers who interact with infants, children, youth or elderly and vulnerable persons must complete Center Church’s Safe Conduct Training Session once a year. Those missing the regularly scheduled sessions have six months to attend a training session before losing their privilege of holding whatever position(s) necessitated such training.
  - b. The Safe Conduct Committee will apprise the Center Church congregation, including members and guests, of our Safe Conduct Policy via various media, including, but not limited to: Announcements during Sunday services, Bulletin Inserts, Newsletter, Website, Letters to the congregation, Handouts to committee members and Church School registration forms at least once a year.

- c. Church School participants who are children, and their parents shall be notified of the policy, particularly **Appendices A and B**.

**Administration** – Center Church leadership (authorized lay leaders as well as paid staff) will generally ensure that all aspects of this Policy are met. Where appropriate, church leadership will delegate oversight of various components of this Policy to other groups/individuals within the church community (i.e. Administrative Committee, Administrative Assistants, etc). However, it is the responsibility of the leader/coordinator of each respective Center Church activity to become familiar with this Policy and to ensure that all aspects of this Policy have been fully implemented and shared with continuing participants. All documentation maintained, and statements made, in support of this Policy shall be held in strictest confidence. Only those Center Church officials and relevant civil personnel (i.e police, or Coordinating Executive Team [CET]) with the responsibility of administering the terms of this Policy may be granted access to its underlying documentation. This Policy will be reviewed, and approved, at least annually by Church leadership. Questions regarding this Policy should be directed to the CET.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **INAPPROPRIATE FORMS OF AFFECTION WITH CHILDREN, ELDERLY AND VULNERABLE PERSONS<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Model Policies for Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse, Church Pension Group, April, 2004.

The Center Church community is committed to creating and promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministries to our children and youth that protect members of these groups from abuse. Misunderstandings related to confusion about safe boundaries also can be avoided by clarifying inappropriate forms of affection; otherwise, that decision is left to each individual. Stating which behaviors are inappropriate allows all clergy, staff and designated lay leaders to comfortably show positive affection in ministry, and yet identify individuals who are not maintaining safe boundaries with children or youth.

These guidelines are based, in large part, on avoiding behaviors known to be used by child molesters to groom children or youth and their parents for future abuse. They are to be carefully followed by all clergy, staff and designated lay leaders working around or with children or youth.

The following forms of affection are considered INAPPROPRIATE with children in ministry settings 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, in and of themselves, sexual abuse.

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
- Kisses on the mouth.
- Holding children over three years old on the lap.
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas.
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas or other private rooms.
- Occupying a bed with a child or youth
- Touching knees or legs of children or youth.
- Wrestling with children or youth.
- Tickling children or youth.
- Piggyback rides.
- Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult.
- Any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth.
- Any form of unwanted affection.
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development. Examples would be, "You sure are developing," or "You look really hot in those jeans."
- Snapping bras or giving wedgies or similar touch of underwear whether or not it is covered by other clothing.
- Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth.
- Private meals with individual children or youth.



## **APPENDIX B**

### **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PROTECTION OF CHILDREN, ELDERLY AND OTHER VULNERABLE POPULATIONS<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from Model Policies for Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse, Church Pension Group, April, 2004.

Relationships among people are at the foundation of Christian ministry and as such are central to the life of the church. 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. Instead, it is to assist in more clearly defining behaviors and practices that allow the church to more fully demonstrate its love and compassion and respect for children and youth in sincere and genuine relationships.

Relationships in ministry should, ideally, always be experienced as caring and without intention to do harm or allow harm to occur. This Code of Conduct (the Code) has been adopted by Center Church to help the church create safe environments for children and youth and for those who minister to them. All clergy, staff, authorized lay leaders and authorized volunteers are asked to carefully consider each statement in the Code before agreeing to adhere to the statements and begin service to the church. Clergy, staff, elected lay leaders and authorized volunteers agree to:

1. Do their best to prevent abuse and neglect among children, the elderly and other vulnerable populations involved in church activities and services.
2. Abstain from physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect of persons from any of the aforementioned groups.
3. Comply with the Guidelines for Inappropriate Forms of Affection with Children and Youth.
4. Upon observing any inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations with persons from any of these groups, immediately report their observations to their supervising staff person.
5. Acknowledge their obligation and responsibility to protect all persons in these groups and report known or suspected abuse of such persons to appropriate church leaders and state authorities in accordance with these policies.
6. Be aware that no person will be allowed to volunteer to work with these groups until the person will have been members Center Church at least six months or have participated regularly with Center Church for at least one year.
7. Be aware that programs for infants and children seventeen (17) and under will have procedures to ensure that children are released only to their parents or legal guardians or those designated by them.
8. Know that the use, possession, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or the misuse of legal drugs while participating in or assisting with programs or activities specifically for the above-mentioned groups are prohibited.
9. Understand that parents or guardians must complete written permission forms before clergy, staff or designated lay leaders will be allowed to transport children and youth for a church sponsored activity or for any purpose on more than an occasional basis.
10. Respond to children, the elderly and other vulnerable persons with respect, consideration and equal treatment, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture or socio-economic status.
11. Portray a positive role model for children by maintaining an attitude of respect, patience, and maturity.

12. Not date or become romantically involved with a child.
13. Not have sexual contact with a child.
14. Not possess any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing etc.) on church property or in the presence of children, youth, the elderly or other vulnerable persons, except as expressly permitted as part of a pre-authorized educational program.
15. Not use the Internet to view or download any sexually oriented materials on church property or in the presence of the above-mentioned groups.
16. Not discuss 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, the elderly or other vulnerable persons.
17. Not sleep in the same beds, sleeping bags, tents, hotel rooms or other rooms with children unless the adult is an immediate family member of all children in the bed, sleeping bag, tent, hotel room or other room. (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. In settings where sleeping space can be or must be divided into Males in one place and Females in another, there should ideally be two adults of the same gender in each sleeping area, but if there are 6 or fewer children on the overnight trip, it is permissible for 1 adult with children of that gender as long as they are not alone with one child.)
18. Not dress, undress, bathe, or shower in the presence of children, the elderly or other vulnerable persons.
19. Not use physical punishment in any way for behavior management of children. No form of physical discipline is acceptable. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force. Physical force may only be used to stop a behavior that may cause immediate harm to the individual or to a child, youth or others.
20. Not use harsh language, degrading punishment, or mechanical restraint such as rope or tape for behavior management.
21. Not participate in or allow others to conduct any hazing activities relating to children's or youth ministry or camp activities.
22. Reasonable and appropriate effort must be made to ensure that at all times no less than two unrelated adults are in supervision of activities involving children and youth. Any time there cannot be two adults, the door must be wide open with both adult and child/children visible from the hallway.

**APPENDIX C**

**BEHAVIORAL COVENANT FOR PERSONS PARTICIPATING IN MINISTRY  
WITH CHILDREN, ELDERLY PERSONS AND/OR VULNERABLE PERSONS**

---

This is the certify that I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understood The Inappropriate Forms of Affection with Children, Elderly and Vulnerable Persons as well as The Code of Conduct for Protection of Children, Elderly and Other Vulnerable Populations.

I covenant with Center Church to carry out my ministry at the church according to the standards specified in the Code of Conduct. I agree to engage in only those behaviors that are consistent with that Code of Conduct in an effort to ensure the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of children, the elderly and/or other vulnerable populations whom I serve.

I also covenant with Center Church to complete the Safe Conduct Training Orientation program offered each year by Center Church as well as Safe Conduct training related to the recruitment, screening, selection and supervision of persons to work with children, youth, the elderly, or vulnerable persons, as soon as possible, but no later than six months after the training is first made available after the behavioral covenant has been signed. I understand that this covenant is designed to make Center Church a safe place for everyone, including those who served as well as those who are served. I also agree to keep a copy of each of these documents and to review them at least once a year, and whenever I begin a new Center Church ministry with children, youth, the elderly or other vulnerable populations.

\_\_\_\_\_  
NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

**APPENDIX D**  
**First Church of Christ (Center Church), Hartford CT**  
**Employment/Authorized Volunteer Application Form**

---

\*Name \_\_\_\_\_

\*Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\*Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_ \*Evening Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Previous experience related to the ministry for which I am seeking involvement includes (Please attach additional pages as appropriate)

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Involvement \_\_\_\_\_

Reference: (name) \_\_\_\_\_ (relation) \_\_\_\_\_

Reference Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Involvement \_\_\_\_\_

Reference: (name) \_\_\_\_\_ (relation) \_\_\_\_\_

Reference Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Involvement \_\_\_\_\_

Reference: (name) \_\_\_\_\_ (relation) \_\_\_\_\_

Reference Contact Info: \_\_\_\_\_

\*required for volunteers

\*Name of Church where I am a member/participant \_\_\_\_\_

\*I have been a member / participant of this Church since \_\_\_\_\_

\*I have never been terminated from employment or service in a volunteer position for reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse.

True \_\_\_ False \_\_\_

If not true, give a short explanation of the charge. (Please indicate the date, nature, and place of the incident leading to the charge; where the charge was filed; and the disposition of the charge)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\*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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

**Chaperoning** Please fill out in order to chaperone any church events with children.

\*Driving: \_\_\_ Please allow me be an authorized driver (fill out ALL questions below)  
\_\_\_ I do not wish to be an authorized driver (answer only question 5)

Driver's License: State: \_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_ exp: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you carry at least the minimum liability automobile insurance required by the State of Connecticut?  
\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
2. Have you ever driven a vehicle other than a passenger automobile \_\_\_ Bus \_\_\_ Van
3. Have you ever operated a vehicle or have been accused of being under the influence of drugs of alcohol?  
\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No. If yes, please explain:
4. Can you safely drive at night or under low light conditions? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
5. Do you agree not to invite other people (including family and friends) to the church activities you chaperone without prior permission from the Minister of Faith Formation?  
\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No

## Safe Conduct Covenant

The covenants between person seeking employment or 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 response 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 First Church of Christ (Center Church) 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 statement I have made and to comment on and state opinions regarding my background and character. I authorize my name to be checked against national and state sex-offender registries. 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 made in good faith and without malice.

First Church of Christ's (Center Church'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 Center Church 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 Center Church will share with me information it has gathered about me, if I request it to do so.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian  
for applicants under 18 \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX E REPORTING AND RESPONSE PROCEDURES**

The staff of Center Church shall treat every allegation of sexual abuse, misconduct and inappropriate behavior very seriously and shall thoroughly collect information and report every allegation in a prompt, professional and confidential manner.

### **Responding to Suspected Abuse or Neglect of Children**

In order to better identify and stop child abuse and neglect, laws encourage *everyone* and require certain people to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Center Church affirms the protection of children by requiring teachers, chaperones, nursery care providers, youth leaders and all adults who come into contact with children in Center Church to immediately tell an ordained or paid Center Church staff person responsible for overseeing children or youth if there is any suspicion of child abuse or neglect *even if the suspected abuse or neglect did not happen at Center Church*. Reporting to the appropriate paid staff ensures that the suspected abuse or neglect is reported to DCF and, if it happened at Center Church or by any Center Church staff, that it is handled appropriately by the church as well. Examples of staff people you can always approach with these concerns are: Minister of Faith Formation, Pastor, Paid Nursery Care provider, and Warburton Residents who work with youth or children.

While reporting the suspected abuse or neglect of children to a paid staff member in charge of children or youth will always ensure that the proper DCF and internal-church actions are made with respect to privacy and confidentiality, there are times it is appropriate to contact DCF without involving a staff member. Incidents of suspected abuse or neglect that *did not happen at Center Church* and *did not involve Center Church volunteers, staff or leaders* may be reported directly to the DCF hotline. Furthermore, you can always call the DCF hotline to report abuse and neglect *in addition to* the reporting staff members will do.

### **DCF Hotline: 1-800-842-2288**

DCF Reporting Forms can be found at:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DCF/1-DCF/Reporting-Child-Abuse-and-Neglect>

Example 1: A church member suspects a child is being neglected at church. The member reports this to the Minister of Faith Formation, who has them fill out a form, and then calls DCF, so that the alleged neglect can be dealt with both internally and with DCF.

Example 2: A Church School teacher suspects a child is being abused at home. The teacher needs to call DCF, or to report it to Center Church Staff so they can report it to DCF. The teacher decides to report it to one staff member, who will both call DCF and keep it confidential...but also decides to do a follow up call to DCF him- or herself to learn more about their recommendation and if there is anything she can do as a teacher.

## **Responding to Clergy Concerns**

When an allegation of Clergy misconduct has occurred, the person making the allegation will meet with a Center Church staff person or officer in order to make a written report. The report would then be sent to the Moderator of the congregation and then called into the Regional Conference Minister. The Response to such incidents will go to the Regional Conference Minister, and will be addressed according to their prescriptions. Regional Ministers can be reached at the Conference office in Hartford CT at: 860-233-5564 or toll free, 866-367-2822.

## **Responding to All other Alleged Breaches of the Safe Conduct Policy**

After an incident report is filled out and reviewed by the Senior Pastor, the pastor will discuss the situation with one or more of the following people: Church Moderator, Minister of Faith Formation, Chair of Personnel, depending on who is the most appropriate person in the circumstance. Incidents regarding other staff members are best discussed with the Chair of Personnel. An incident regarding a teacher would best be discussed with the Minister of Faith Formation etc. The Pastor and the appropriate other(s) will discuss the best options for dealing with the incident which may include but are not limited to the following:

- Document and closely monitor the accused.
- The accuser speaks to the accused directly regarding the situation
- Discussion with the accused to ensure he/she understands and respects appropriate limits of behavior;
- Discussion with the accused and immediate removal from the position and place on leave pending completion of the investigation.
- Overall evaluation of the incident, to include interviews with the alleged victim and accused and counseling referrals if necessary. If the nature of the incident does not require legal intervention and all parties agree that counseling will suffice, such a recommendation may be made and reviewed by counsel to church for legal sufficiency.
- A formal report may be filed at which time professional intervention shall be requested through the Department of Children and Families and the Connecticut State Police Department.
- The Pastor shall notify and discuss all allegations with counsel to the church to ensure that all legal requirements are met in the response process. In the event that the accused is the Sr. Pastor, the Church Moderator in consultation with the CET, and Chair of the Personnel Committee shall follow this course of action on behalf of the church.
- The Sr. Pastor and/or the Church Moderator shall notify Center Church's insurance carrier immediately upon any allegation of abuse or in the case of any information that confirms abuse. Every effort shall be made to comfort and protect the victim of the alleged abuse to ensure that the victim's needs are being met.
- If an alleged incident involves a minor, the parent or guardian shall be notified immediately.
- The accused shall be treated with respect and dignity during the collection of information and the documentation created.
- The ministers of the church need to be free to provide pastoral care to all parties involved.
- The ministers of the church will decide on a case by case basis if the counsel of the Regional Minister of the Connecticut Conference is needed and will make the appropriate phone call.
- Notification to the congregation will be handled on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Church Moderator, and the CET



**APPENDIX F**

**SAFE CONDUCT INCIDENT REPORT**

**Center Church Hartford**

*for Suspected Abuse / Neglect / Breach of Policy at Center Church or its events*

**Reported by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date Reported:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Name and Title

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street

\_\_\_\_\_

City

State

Zip Code

Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of staff or officer approached to file report:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Staff Action Taken** (for staff only) : \_\_\_\_\_ **Date/Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Person suspected of misconduct:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Name and Title

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Other person(s) involved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

**Report of Suspected Abuse** (*use back if necessary*)

Describe incident(s) of suspected abuse, including date(s), time(s), and location(s):

Identify eyewitnesses to the incident, including names, addresses, and telephone numbers, where available:

Other information which may be helpful in the collection of information regarding this incident:

## APPENDIX G

### Limited Access Agreement For \_\_\_\_\_

*This template will be modified to fit the particular restrictions necessary to ensure safety on a case-by-case basis.*

The church is committed to being open to those who wish to worship with us, especially in times of personal troubles. However, concerns have been raised with regard to your contact with minors and/or disabled adults in our congregation. Whether or not these concerns are valid or accurate, at minimum, they present a challenge for the church in creating a welcoming and safe environment for the families of children and youth.

Therefore, the following guidelines are designed to reduce the risk to both you and minors of an incident or accusation. We welcome you to our congregation and our membership, however, your participation will be limited in order to safeguard minors and to protect you from becoming the subject of accusations.

Within these guidelines, the church welcomes your participation in the church.

#### **Restrictions:**

1. You are to avoid all contact with minors and disabled adults on church property or at church-sponsored events, with the exception of Sunday worship. You will not be allowed to volunteer or attend events involving minors or disabled adults.

2. The following activities marked “Yes” or with other guidance (“Only with permission”) are activities that we feel are appropriate for your participation:

Participation in weekend worship services \_\_\_\_\_

Participation in an adult Bible study \_\_\_\_\_

Participation in adult meeting without minors present \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteering in ministry where minors will not be present \_\_\_\_\_

Participation in intergenerational church activities, other than worship \_\_\_\_\_

Meet in the building with clergy or staff \_\_\_\_\_

Participation in social activities in other church members’ homes with minors present \_\_\_\_\_

3. Additional restrictions:

Under no circumstances are you permitted to enter the Second floor of the Church House when children are present there. You may attend summer worship services, but you may not go outside of the worship space in the parlor.

When arriving at the church, you are to proceed immediately to the sanctuary or other meeting space. When the activity or service has concluded, you may attend coffee time but then leave. Do not loiter on the premises.

When you become involved in a program or Bible study, you are to disclose the restrictions in this Limited Access Agreement with the program leader to ensure their awareness of the conditions of your involvement.

You may use the rest rooms in both buildings, but you must depart immediately if a child is present.

You will not be permitted to volunteer for any team, committee, event or activity that involves anyone under the age of 18.

**Covenant Agreement:**

I have reviewed this Limited Access Agreement, understand it, and agree to abide by its provisions.

I accept that church leaders and participants may be told of my circumstances in order to protect minors involved in the church.

I will never allow myself to be in a situation where I am alone or in conversation with minors.

I will sit where directed in the church and will not place myself in the vicinity of minors.

I understand I must carry a copy of this Limited Access Agreement while attending any church-sponsored activity.

I understand that representatives of the church will review this agreement as needed and that it will remain in effect for an indefinite period.

I understand that if I violate this agreement, I will be denied access to future involvement with the church.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Pastor) (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Minister of Faith Formation) (Date)