



# Glendale United Methodist Church

## Safe Sanctuary Policy

Updated and Approved on February 5, 2024

### Purpose

To do our best within our means to protect children, youth, and vulnerable adults participating in the programs and activities of Glendale United Methodist Church (GUMC) and to protect those who lead them.

### Covenant Statement

Glendale United Methodist Church hereby pledges to conduct the ministry of Jesus Christ in ways that assure the physical and emotional safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth as well as all of our workers with children and youth.

- We will follow reasonable safety measures when selecting and recruiting workers.
- We will implement prudent operational procedures in all areas of programming and care.
- We will train our workers with children and youth on our procedures and policies.
- We will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of Tennessee law.

### Policies

- **Age** - Paid staff and volunteers will be at least 21 years old and, when working with children and youth, will be at least 5 years older than the age of the children and youth with whom they are working. Anyone not meeting these requirements may assist paid staff and volunteers but will not be left alone with children, youth or vulnerable adults.
- **Six Month Hospitality Rule for Volunteers** - Volunteers for GUMC programs or activities for youth, children or vulnerable adults should have the opportunity to become acquainted with GUMC's missions and ministries by regularly participating in the GUMC congregation for at least six months before applying to be a volunteer.
- **Reference and Background Checks** – Paid staff and volunteers will complete a statement of commitment to this policy and will consent to reference and background checks. Reference and background checks will be conducted on all paid staff and volunteers with re-screening occurring at least every 3 years.

- **Training** - Glendale UMC volunteer and paid staff, including clergy, will be given the opportunity for training about Safe Sanctuaries policies, procedures, and child abuse issues on a regular basis, at least annually.
- **Two Adult Rule** - At least two adult paid staff or volunteers who are not related to each other will be present at GUMC activities or programs for children and youth. One of these adults may be a “roamer” who moves between activities in a monitoring role.
- **Clear Visibility Rule** - When GUMC activities or programs for children or youth are conducted indoors, the room door will be kept open or, if closed, a window in the door will provide clear visibility into the room.
- **Parent or Guardian’s Responsibility** - Parents or Guardians are responsible for the safety of their children and youth at all times other than when the children and youth are participating in a GUMC sponsored program or activity for children and youth.
- **Persons on the Sex Offender Registry** – Our church contains significant vulnerable populations; therefore, it is our expectation that anyone on the sex offender registry who wishes to attend in-person service at Glendale must inform the pastor or a member of the leadership team of their status on the registry.

### **Outside Groups**

Groups that are not sponsored by GUMC will be required to agree to and accept responsibility for their group abiding by this policy while on GUMC property. GUMC will not be responsible for enforcing their compliance with this policy.

### **Reporting Incidents of Abuse or Suspected Abuse of a Child, Youth or Vulnerable Adult**

Glendale United Methodist Church will take all reports of abuse or suspected abuse of a child, youth or vulnerable adult seriously. Under Tennessee law, any person who knows of or reasonably suspects that abuse has occurred is required by law to report it to appropriate authorities, which include the Department of Children Services for children under age 18 (1-877-237-0004) and the Department of Human Services, Adult Protective Services Division for adults age 18 or older (1-888-277-8366).

If any recipient of this policy, including paid staff or volunteers, receives a complaint of or knows or suspects that abuse has occurred in a GUMC program or activity, that person should first ensure the immediate safety of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult; this would include calling 911 in the case of an emergency situation. The responsible person should immediately report the situation to the GUMC staff member responsible for that program or activity or the Senior Pastor. If the appropriate agency has not yet been contacted, the GUMC staff member or the Senior Pastor who has been notified will immediately contact the appropriate agency and, if available, will include the reporting person on that call. If paid staff or a volunteer is engaged in the abuse or suspected to be engaged in the abuse, that person will be immediately removed from contact with children, youth and vulnerable adults in GUMC activities or programs until the reported incident has been resolved.

### **Interpretation of this Policy**

The Glendale United Methodist Church Leadership Team is responsible for the interpretation of this policy.