

# Safe Conduct

United Church of Christ, Congregational, of Boxborough

Effective Date: 14 June 2018

Supersedes Date: 14 September 2017

## 1. Purpose

This document outlines the policy and procedures that will enable our church to provide a healthy, nurturing environment for our members and friends, their children, and our staff and volunteers. It is our duty to put reasonable safeguards in place for our children, youth, and vulnerable adults. In addition, it is our goal to answer God's call for radical hospitality to all, including individuals accused or convicted of sexual misconduct. Therefore, this policy seeks to discern whether or not individuals with a history of sexual misconduct can safely participate in Congregational life, and if so, to outline procedures guiding that participation.

## 2. Definitions

*Abuse* is non-accidental conduct that involves verbal harassment, physical injury or impairment, or offensive physical or sexual contact.

*Bullying* is the use of threats, force, or coercion to abuse, intimidate, or aggressively dominate others.

*Covenant Partners* may be designated by a Sexual Misconduct Response Team. Covenant Partners are aware of an individual's background and Safe Conduct Covenant, and agree to monitor and help the individual abide by the Safe Conduct Covenant. Family members may be considered candidates for Covenant Partners. Covenant Partners are interviewed and approved by the Response Team, and the assignment is reviewed at least twice a year.

*Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI)* is information about adult criminal cases from a Massachusetts state court. The information is recorded even if the case is dropped, the defendant is found not guilty, or the defendant pleads guilty to a lesser charge. CORI information does not include abuse or harassment prevention orders (i.e., restraining orders), child abuse or neglect orders, or information about criminal cases from other states or the federal courts.

*Hazing* is the practice of rituals and other activities involving harassment, abuse, or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group.

*Mandatory reporting* is the requirement under Massachusetts state law that suspected abuse or neglect of a child under the age of 18 years must be reported to the state Department of Children and Families. The abuse can be physical, mental, or sexual abuse inflicted by a person responsible for a child's care or by a person given access to the child.

For purposes of this document, a *minor* is a person under the age of 18 years.

*Parishioner* is anyone involved in Congregational life, except for clergy and staff. This includes both members and non-members of the church.

*Parole* is the release of a person from incarceration before the sentence is complete, subject to good behavior, under the supervision of a parole officer who closely monitors the parolee to ensure compliance with the terms of the parole.

*Physical Harassment or Molestation or Exploitation* is placing a person in fear of bodily injury by threatening or tormenting behavior, compelling a person by force or threat of force to engage in conduct from which the person has a right to abstain, restricting substantially the movements of another person without that person's consent, or communicating to a person a threat to commit an act against the person or another person or entity where the natural consequence of the threat is to place the threatened person in fear or cause that person to engage in conduct in which (s)he would not otherwise engage.

*Probation* is the action of suspending a sentence in lieu of incarceration, or in some cases after release from a period of incarceration, subject to good behavior, under the supervision of a probation officer.

*Registered Sex Offender* is an individual who has been convicted of committing or attempting to commit an act that involves illegal, forced, or coerced sexual conduct against another person, and has therefore been required to register with the federal/state's Sex Offender Registry in order that law enforcement can place restrictions on the individual's activities and monitor compliance with those restrictions. While other convicted criminals are free of supervision once they are released, or complete their time of parole or probation, sex offender laws provide law enforcement the authority to impose conditions of supervision for an extended period of time, or for life in many cases. These conditions include approving where a sex offender may live and work, including prohibiting a sex offender from living within a certain specified distance from any school, as well as working in any occupation that involves contact with children. Since 2007, there have been uniform registration requirements in all 50 states, and three different tiers of sex offenders, each of which has prison and reporting requirements for various crimes.

*Sexual Abuse* means any sexual touching or activity that causes a person to engage in any sexual act or conduct without the person's consent, or in the circumstances where that person is unable to provide consent due to age, mental capacity, or unusual vulnerability derived from the person's mental health or from the existence of a relationship of significant dependency or trust.

*Safe Conduct Covenant* is an agreement between an individual and the Sexual Misconduct Response Team on behalf of the Congregation that establishes the conditions for and extent to which the individual can participate in Congregational life. A *Preliminary Safe Conduct Covenant* is a similar agreement for the duration of initial information gathering and discernment.

*Sexual Harassment* is making sexual advances or requests for sexual favors to another person, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, where the other person by words or conduct has indicated

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that such words or conduct are not desired, or when a reasonable person would expect that such words or conduct would not be desirable.

*Sexual Misconduct* is a broad term encompassing any unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that is committed without consent. A minor, by definition, is understood as unable to give consent, as is a vulnerable adult. An individual in a lower power position is also understood as unable to give consent.

*Sexual Misconduct Response Team* is convened on an as-needed basis to gather information to discern whether an individual can safely participate in the life of the Congregation, and to implement a Safe Conduct Covenant that guides the individual's participation. The Response Team consists of the Pastor, the Moderator, a representative of the Deacons, a representative of the Pastor Parish Relations Team, and possibly other members of the Congregation who have relevant professional experience.

*Sexual Molestation and Sexual Exploitation* are activities that place another person in a situation where that person feels compelled to engage in sexual conduct to which that person would not voluntarily consent, or in circumstances where that person is unable to provide consent due to age, mental capacity, or unusual vulnerability derived from the person's mental health or from the existence of a relationship of significant dependency or trust.

*Sex Offender* is a person who has been convicted of a crime involving sex. This policy intentionally covers a broad range of situations, including individuals who are accused or convicted of sexual misconduct.

*Vulnerable adults* are adults who by reason of age, physical disability or dependence, developmental disability, mental illness, or cultural or economic circumstances may be susceptible to physical, sexual, or financial exploitation as a result of being unable to physically resist or render appropriate judgments regarding their own well-being.

### **3. Policy**

Our church is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all. This commitment requires that we take prudent, proactive measures designed to maintain a faith community in which members, friends, staff, volunteers, and children can worship, work, and learn together in an atmosphere free of all forms of abuse, discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Included in these proactive measures are background checks for anyone who has the potential for unmonitored contact with minors, or who hold positions of faith or counseling support, financial responsibility, or computer access. If a history of sexual misconduct is revealed for anyone who currently participates in or seeks to join in the life of the Congregation, the church has an approved, well-defined process to determine whether those individuals can safely participate in Congregational life, and if so, to outline procedures to guide that participation.

This policy does not address mandatory reporting obligations of individuals under state law. All individuals who have mandatory reporting obligations under the law must follow those obligations. Any

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individual may voluntarily report any suspected abuse of a child or vulnerable adult at any time to the appropriate authorities.

## **4. Procedures**

### **4.1 Use of Background Checks**

Massachusetts state law requires volunteer organizations that provide programs or activities for minors to conduct CORI background checks of anyone with potential for unmonitored contact with a minor. Our church requires more comprehensive background checks to be performed by a company approved by the Insurance Board of the United Church of Christ. These checks include not only Massachusetts CORI information, but also nation-wide criminal history reported at the county level. Our church requires these comprehensive, national background checks for all staff and volunteers who may have contact with minors, and who hold positions of faith or counseling support, financial responsibility, or computer access, including:

- Final applicants who are otherwise qualified for paid staff positions at the Church
- Employees of the Church
- Volunteers who work with minors
- Volunteers who attend overnight events with minors
- Called to Care ministry team members
- Deacons ministry team members
- Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer
- Collector and Assistant Collector

If a background check reveals a finding of sexual misconduct, Paragraph 4.3 of this policy shall guide the church's response. For other findings, the Pastor shall determine whether each finding warrants further investigation or action. The Pastor may share the finding with the individual in question, will keep a record of all conversations about the finding, and can decide if and when any restrictions need to be placed on the individual's participation in Congregational life because of the finding.

### **4.2 Safeguards for Participants in Spiritual Nurture Activities**

#### **4.2.1 Selection of Staff and Volunteers**

##### **4.2.1.1 Six-month Rule**

All people applying to be volunteers who work with minors must have been members of our church for at least six months or associated with our church for at least one year.

A volunteer who has not been a member for six months or associated with our church for one year can be paired, as an assistant, with an adult teacher/leader who has been active in Spiritual Nurture and/or youth programs for more than one year.

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#### 4.2.1.2 Age Requirements

All employees and volunteers who work in our youth programs must be at least five years older than the oldest youth participant.

In our Spiritual Nurture classes, one adult teacher must be at least 18 years of age, unless the Spiritual Nurture ministry team feels the person under the age of 18 is of sufficient maturity to handle the class.

#### 4.2.2 Registration

All children and youth participating in Spiritual Nurture programs must have a copy of the attached Spiritual Nurture Registration Form on file with our church's Administrative Assistant. A new copy of the Registration Form must be completed in September of each year. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to update the information on file if it is no longer accurate.

#### 4.2.3 Code of Conduct

##### 4.2.3.1 Purpose and General Requirements

This Code of Conduct is intended to protect minors and vulnerable adults from abuse and to protect church staff and volunteers from engaging in patterns of behavior that may be construed as abusive or predatory.

All minors and vulnerable adults must be treated with respect at all times, and fairly without regard to age, race, ethnicity, gender, family make-up, sexual orientation, or sexual identity.

##### 4.2.3.2 Prohibited Behaviors

The following behaviors are prohibited on church property and at church-related events when they involve interactions with minors or vulnerable adults:

- a. Having any romantic or sexual involvement.
- b. Discussing the teacher/leader's personal problems or issues.
- c. Discussing sexual encounters or possessing sexually oriented materials, except for educational purposes.
- d. Staring at or commenting on people's bodies.
- e. Using profanity or off-color jokes.
- f. Using alcohol with minors.
- g. Using illegal drugs.
- h. Engaging in inappropriate electronic communication, including text messages, email, or use of social media websites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.).
- i. Performing any type of abuse, including but not limited to these types:
  - Physical – Hitting, shaking, unnecessarily restraining
  - Verbal – Degrading, threatening, cursing, name-calling

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- Sexual – Inappropriate touching, exposing oneself, or engaging in sexually oriented conversations
  - Mental – Shaming, humiliating, acting cruelly
- j. Bullying
  - k. Hazing
  - l. Manipulating or exploiting a minor or vulnerable adult
  - m. Neglecting, e.g., by withholding food, water, or shelter
  - n. Keeping secrets regarding any of the prohibited behaviors above
  - o. Performing any other behaviors involving interactions with minors or vulnerable adults that are deemed inappropriate or unwelcoming by our Pastor or Congregation.

#### 4.2.3.3 Reporting Requirements

Concerns or complaints about church staff or volunteers, other adults, or minors shall be reported to the teacher/leader for the activity, or to the Pastor.

Under the mandatory reporting requirements of Massachusetts state law, allegations of suspected abuse must be reported to law enforcement or to the Department of Children and Families. Mandatory reporters include clergy, church leaders, volunteers performing duties on behalf of a church, or persons employed by a church to supervise, educate, or counsel minors on a regular basis. All individuals who have mandatory reporting obligations under the law must follow those obligations regardless of this policy. Any individual may, and is encouraged to, voluntarily report any suspected abuse of a child or vulnerable adult at any time to the appropriate authorities regardless of this policy.

#### 4.2.3.4 Response to Policy/Procedures Violations

Our church supports the highest standards of personal conduct toward others. The church affirmatively nurtures good behavior and shall discipline those who violate this policy and procedures in a manner that is consistent with the seriousness of the violation.

When there is an allegation of behavior outside policy boundaries, we shall (1) seriously consider the concerns of victims, (2) undertake a fair and thorough investigation, (3) protect the confidentiality of those being investigated, (4) report to as required and cooperate fully with public authorities, (5) communicate with the Congregation within the bounds of individual rights to confidentiality, and (6) notify the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, as appropriate.

### 4.2.4 Requirements for On-site Activities

#### 4.2.4.1 Bathroom Supervision

Bathroom facilities should be checked frequently to ensure the safety of minors. No staff member or volunteer shall enter a bathroom with a single unrelated child unless the entry door is propped open.

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#### 4.2.4.2 Diaper Policy

No church staff member or volunteer shall change diapers for an unrelated child.

#### 4.2.4.3 Ratios

We recognize that the Pastor's job requires that s/he perform one-on-one counseling following accepted standards of conduct for pastoral care. Other adults must never be one-on-one in a private setting with an unrelated minor. If two adults cannot be present, the minimum requirement is one adult with two or more minors.

### 4.2.5 Requirements for Off-site Activities

#### 4.2.5.1 Pre-trip Permissions

Any teacher/leader planning a day trip or overnight outing must have prior permission from the Pastor.

There shall be an Off-site Activity Permission Form for each outing. The Permission Form shall clearly identify the off-site activity with its date, time, activities involved, and method of transportation. The Permission Form must make parents/guardians aware of the fact that their child may be a passenger in a car with other youth and with a driver as young as 18 years. No minor shall participate in an activity that takes place away from the church property until (s)he has submitted to the trip organizer an Off-Site Activity Permission Form that has been signed by his/her parent or guardian.

#### 4.2.5.2 Chaperones

All chaperones must be approved in advance by the Pastor.

There shall be a ratio of one chaperone for every six youth. Chaperones must be gender balanced on all outings.

#### 4.2.5.3 Transportation

Drivers must be at least 18 years of age and must complete a Volunteer Driver Application Form in advance of the outing.

As required by Massachusetts law, each occupant of each vehicle shall wear a seatbelt.

Adults must never be one-on-one in a vehicle with an unrelated minor, except with prior written permission of the minor's parent or guardian. If two adults cannot be present in each vehicle, the minimum requirement is one adult and two or more minors in a vehicle.

#### 4.2.5.4 Day Trips

Safety requirements for day trips are determined by the nature of the destination and exposure to the public at large.

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Each chaperone shall be assigned a specific group of children/youth to supervise.

Parents/guardians shall be provided a means to make emergency contact with the trip leader.

#### 4.2.5.5 Overnight Outings

Overnight activities present the potential for higher risk than day trips due to the 24-hour supervision that is required.

A roster shall be maintained by the trip leader of all lodging assignments for each youth and adult.

For the possibility of a building evacuation, an outdoor rally point shall be identified to all chaperones and youth.

Adult-youth ratios shall be maintained for outings away from the lodging site.

Parents/guardians shall be provided a means to make emergency contact with the trip leader.

#### 4.2.6 Photographs

Photos may be taken of minors only for the purpose of sharing about a church-related event in which they participated. The photos can be shared only among event participants or in church publications (including the church website), and no identifying information can be shared beyond the minor's first name.

### 4.3 Response to Individuals with a History of Sexual Misconduct

#### 4.3.1 Applicability

The legal definition of "sex offender" is limited to individuals who have been convicted of sex offenses. The range of offenses varies greatly by state and at the federal level. This policy intentionally covers a broader range of situations and individuals, including those who are accused, are under litigation, or have pleaded guilty to any sexual misconduct.

Specifically, this policy applies to the following:

- Individuals who have been convicted of or pled guilty to a charge of sexual misconduct or who have been determined to have engaged in any abuse of a child or a vulnerable adult in any civil, criminal, administrative or ecclesiastical forum.
- Individuals who have been accused of sexual misconduct, or are currently involved in a civil, criminal, administrative or ecclesiastical litigation of such a charge.
- Individuals for whom facts and circumstances are such that the leadership of the Church determines that the individuals should be covered under this policy.

This policy does not apply to sexual misconduct by the Pastor. In such cases, the Church Moderator should be contacted immediately and the Moderator in turn should contact the Committee on Ministry of the Central Association of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ.

### **4.3.2 Initial Discovery**

When a situation involving sexual misconduct is discovered, the Pastor will meet with the individual in question as quickly as possible to discuss the issues that have been raised. The Pastor can arrange this meeting in whatever way ensures safety for all parties, including having a lay leader present. If appropriate, the Pastor may also reach out to the individual's family.

If the individual is not a Registered Sex Offender and the Pastor determines that limited participation can be permitted during the Response Team's period of investigation and discernment, the individual will be given, and required to sign, a Preliminary Safe Conduct Covenant that establishes the conditions for and extent to which participation in Congregational life will be allowed. A template for a Preliminary Safe Conduct Covenant is attached to this policy; it can be updated to reflect the programs and activities existing in the church at the time.

If the individual is a Registered Sex Offender, the individual *will not* be permitted to participate in the life of the Congregation until further investigation is done to determine whether the person could safely participate in Congregational life, given specific restrictions set forth in a Safe Conduct Covenant. Both the Council and the Congregation will be notified about any investigation and discernment regarding a Registered Sex Offender.

The Pastor will also immediately inform and call together a Sexual Misconduct Response Team (hereinafter, "Response Team") for investigation and discernment about the individual and the issues revealed.

### **4.3.3 Response Team Process**

#### **4.3.3.1 Preparation for Serving on a Response Team**

In order to be ready to serve on a Response Team, all members of the Deacons Ministry and Pastor Parish Relations teams will meet with the Moderator each year after the election of officers and governance team members to review and become familiar with the content of this policy.

In addition, each person chosen to be on a Response Team will undergo a background check as defined in paragraph 4.1 of this policy before serving on the Team.

#### 4.3.3.2 Initial Meeting

The Response Team will convene in response to the Pastor's referral and request for further discernment. If the Response Team determines that the referral does not warrant further investigation or action, members shall share their determination with both the Pastor and the individual in question and keep a record of their deliberations on file at the church. The Preliminary Safe Conduct Covenant will be ended, and the Response Team will deem the matter resolved unless additional information is discovered at a later date.

If the Response Team determines that the referral does warrant further investigation, the Preliminary Safe Conduct Covenant will continue in effect during the Team's period of information gathering and discernment.

#### 4.3.3.3 Information Gathering

The Response Team, or a delegation of at least two members, will meet with the individual.

The individual will be asked to sign the attached Release Form so the Response Team can contact appropriate legal authorities, including parole and/or probation officers, and the person's treatment provider and/or current therapist. Should the individual refuse to sign the release form or decline to participate in any aspect of the Response Team Process, the Response Team may refuse participation in any Congregation activity and will inform the Council of its decision.

The Response Team will review court and parole records, as well as publicly available information, and may also conduct reference checks. The Response Team will contact the individual's probation or parole office to determine what legal restrictions have been imposed, if any. The probation or parole officer will also be asked for their professional assessment of the likelihood that the individual will re-offend. Their input will also be sought regarding restrictions in a Safe Conduct Covenant.

The Response Team will determine if the treatment provider and/or current therapist are members of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA). The treatment provider and/or therapists will be asked for their professional assessment of the likelihood that the individual will re-offend. Their input will also be sought regarding restrictions in a Safe Conduct Covenant.

The Response Team may also choose to consult a lawyer, engage a third-party background check service, or require a professional external assessment at any time.

#### 4.3.3.4 Discernment and Preparation of a Safe Conduct Covenant

The key question the Response Team must be able to answer is this: *Given what professionals have advised you, will this person sign and can (s)he comply with a Safe Conduct Covenant with Church leadership in order to assure the safety of children, youth and vulnerable adults?*

#### 4.3.3.4.1 A Positive Determination

If the Response Team's investigation *positively* answers this question<sup>1</sup>, the Team will develop a Safe Conduct Covenant that the individual must sign and comply with. The Covenant will establish specific terms for participation in ministry activities or entry of spaces. It will also specify a timing of reviews and resigning, and address any specific concerns. A template for a Safe Conduct Covenant is attached to this policy; it can be updated depending on the activities and programs existing in the church at the time.

The Safe Conduct Covenant may also identify one or more Covenant Partners. Covenant Partners are aware of an individual's background and Safe Conduct Covenant, and agree to monitor and help the individual abide by the Safe Conduct Covenant. Family members may be considered candidates for Covenant Partners. Covenant Partners are interviewed and approved by the Response Team, and the assignment is reviewed at least twice a year.

If the individual refuses to sign or re-sign the Safe Conduct Covenant, or violates the terms of a signed Safe Conduct Covenant, the Team may deny the person access to Congregational functions and/or church property. An individual who has been denied access and enters church property will be asked to leave. If the person further refuses, the local police will be called for assistance.

The individual also agrees to report to the Response Team within 10 days any change in status, including a new accusation, charge, arrest or indictment, for the duration of their participation at the church.

An individual who has signed any type of Safe Conduct Covenant should inform the Pastor if (s)he chooses to end participation at the church for any reason.

#### 4.3.3.4.2 A Negative Determination

If a Response Team's investigation *negatively* answers this question<sup>1</sup>, and/or determines that the Congregation does not have appropriate resources to provide adequate supervision, it may deny that person involvement in Congregational life and access to Church property. After treatment, the person has the option to re-apply, and the Response Team always has the option to reconsider their earlier decision.

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<sup>1</sup> It is beyond the scope and experience of congregations to assess the risk or probability that an individual will re-offend. According to the Center for Sex Offender Management, even therapists with special training in treating sex offenders can be wrong. They write, "There are no absolutes or magic bullets in identifying these risk factors. Rather, this process is an exercise in isolating factors that are associated with specific behaviors. While this association reflects likelihood, it does not say that all individuals who possess certain characteristics will behave in a certain manner. Some offenders will inevitably commit subsequent sex offenses...likewise not all sex offenders who have re-offense characteristics will recidivate." The Team might take into account that the person has completed or is participating in treatment.

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#### 4.3.3.5 Confidentiality of Response Team Investigations and Deliberations

A confidential written record of all Response Team meetings and findings will be maintained.

Copies of these files, including Safe Conduct Covenants, will be treated with care, and will be kept in a limited-access secured file.

#### 4.3.3.6 Notifying the Congregation

If the Response Team denies all involvement or any access to the premises, it will inform the Council immediately.

For all cases involving Registered Sex Offenders, the Council and the Congregation will be informed of the individual's agreement to abide by a Safe Conduct Covenant, once one is in place.

Staff and/or lay leaders with primary responsibility for Spiritual Nurture with children and youth will be informed of the name of any person with a signed Safe Conduct Covenant, along with any relevant restrictions. The Pastor will also share the names of individuals who have signed a Safe Conduct Covenant with any parent or parishioner who requests it in a private meeting. For all other situations, the Response Team will decide on a case-by-case basis who needs to know within the Congregation that an individual has a history of sexual misconduct.

#### 4.3.4 Continuing Support and Continuity

A delegation of at least two members of a Response Team will meet a minimum of twice per year with any individual with whom the Team has a Safe Conduct Covenant to review the arrangement and address any concerns. Prior to each meeting, a new background check will be performed and reviewed.

When the Pastor or the Moderator leaves his/her position, the departing person will inform his/her replacement of the existence of all signed Safe Conduct Covenants to ensure provision of Pastoral support for the individuals as well as continuity of awareness of the situation for the Council.

### 5. Amendments to This Document

Amendments to this document can be proposed at any regularly scheduled Council meeting and approved by a simple majority at the next Council meeting.

## **6. Forms**

### **6.1 Spiritual Nurture Registration Form**

See next page.

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**United Church of Christ, Congregational, in Boxborough  
Spiritual Nurture Registration Form**

<u>Name(s) of Child(ren)</u>	<u>Birth Date</u>	<u>Grade</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Parents / Guardians: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies / Dietary / Medical Concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

Permission to take photos for bulletin boards, newsletter, etc.? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

It takes a village to nurture the spirituality of our young people! How would you like to participate? Check all that apply. I / We would like to:

\_\_\_\_ Join the Spiritual Nurture ministry team, which sets direction and plans activities

\_\_\_\_ Lead one of the Sunday morning gatherings, maybe once, maybe more

\_\_\_\_ Help as "extra hands" occasionally

\_\_\_\_ Provide a snack

\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to the Church Office via email ([boxborochurch@verizon.net](mailto:boxborochurch@verizon.net)) or hard copy. Thank you!

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## **6.2 Off-site Activity Permission Form**

See next page.

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## United Church of Christ, Congregational, of Boxborough Off-site Activity Permission Form

As the parent or legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_,  
I hereby give my permission for him or her to participate in this Church-sponsored activity that takes place away from the Church premises:

Off-site Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Activity Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Gathering Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Departure Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Return Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation: \_\_\_\_\_

Drivers can be as young as 18 years old. Other youth may be in the vehicle.

Allergies, dietary restrictions, or medical issues chaperones should be aware of:

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I give permission to the leaders and chaperones of this off-site activity to render First Aid, should the need arise. In the event of a medical emergency, I also give permission to the physician selected by the adult leader in charge to hospitalize, secure proper anesthesia, order injection, or secure other medical treatment, as needed.

I further agree to hold the United Church of Christ, Congregational, of Boxborough and the leaders and chaperones of this off-site activity blameless for any accidents that might occur during this outing, except for clear acts of negligence under the Church's Safe Conduct guidelines.

In case of emergency, I can be reached by phone at \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

If I cannot be reached, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ at this phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

(Parent or Guardian)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name: \_\_\_\_\_

(Parent or Guardian)

## **6.3 Volunteer Driver Application Form**

See next page.

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## United Church of Christ, Congregational, of Boxborough Volunteer Driver Application Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Driver's License No. & State: \_\_\_\_\_ License Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Carrier \_\_\_\_\_ Insurance Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Liability Policy Limits: Bodily Injury: \_\_\_\_\_ Property Damage: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Are all licensed vehicles you drive covered by insurance as required by law? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
2. Have you ever been denied a driver's license or had one suspended or revoked? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_
3. Have you had any moving traffic violations or accidents in the past three years? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

**If the answer to question 2 or 3 is YES, please explain.**

**Give dates and details of violations and accidents on the back of this form.**

**I agree to the following as conditions of being permitted to act as a Volunteer Driver:**

1. The vehicle owner's insurance is the primary liability insurance coverage in the event of an accident.
2. The owner of the vehicle which I am driving is responsible for keeping the vehicle in safe working order.
3. The owner of the vehicle which I am driving is responsible for all damage to the owned vehicle, however caused.
4. The owner of the vehicle which I am driving shall maintain liability insurance in the amounts of at least:
  - Bodily Injury -- \$250,000 per person and \$500,000 per accident; and
  - Property Damage -- \$50,000 per accident
5. The Church's insurance shall apply in excess of the vehicle owner's liability insurance limits in the event the primary limits are exhausted, and only to the extent the Church is legally obligated to pay damages.
6. I will indemnify and hold the Church harmless from liabilities and damage resulting from my operation of a motor vehicle not owned by the Church.
7. I will not make or answer telephone calls or initiate or respond to text messages while operating a vehicle for Church activities.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please attach a copy of your Driver's License and Vehicle Registration(s) to this completed Application.**

## **6.4 Preliminary Safe Conduct Covenant**

See next page.

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## **United Church of Christ, Congregational, of Boxborough Preliminary Safe Conduct Covenant**

The United Church of Christ, Congregational, of Boxborough affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being a community of faith open to those who desire to worship and grow with us, especially in times of serious personal trouble.

It is our duty reasonably to promote the safety of all persons in our Congregation. This Preliminary Safe Conduct Covenant is called into effect whenever a history of sexual misconduct is revealed regarding a parishioner. Its purpose is to govern your church activity during a time of information gathering and discernment. Implementation of this Covenant implies neither future participation nor restriction of participation in this Congregation.

For participation in certain activities, we require the presence of a Covenant Partner. A Covenant Partner is a person designated by the Sexual Misconduct Response Team who is aware of your background and agrees to monitor and help you abide by this Preliminary Safe Conduct Covenant. The Response Team interviews these Covenant Partners and reviews their assignment periodically.

We encourage you to participate and be involved as fully as you wish in Congregational life, subject to the restrictions stated on the following pages. Within these guidelines, the Congregation welcomes your participation in adult worship services, coffee hours, committee meetings, adult education, adult social events, and well-supervised intergenerational events.

Please direct any questions or concerns regarding this Covenant to the Pastor or a member of the Sexual Misconduct Response team.

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## United Church of Christ, Congregational, of Boxborough Preliminary Safe Conduct Covenant, continued

By virtue of this Preliminary Safe Conduct Covenant:

- I agree not to volunteer for or chaperone church-sponsored events for children or adolescents, including children's spiritual nurture classes, youth groups, youth mission trips, children's or adolescents' activities during intergenerational programs, and transportation of children and young people, except my own children.
- I commit to remaining in the presence of adults at all times when children (other than my own) are present.
- I will inform the Pastor if I choose to end my participation at this church for any reason.
- I will report to the Response Team within 10 days any change in status, including a new accusation, charge, arrest, or indictment, for the duration of my participation at the church.
  
- I understand I am welcome to participate in the following activities with a Covenant Partner:
  - Worship
  - Coffee Hour
  - Adult meetings with or without children in the building
  - Intergenerational group outings (e.g., baseball games, ice skating, etc.)
  - Church-sponsored social activities in other members' homes with youth present
  - Merrie Christmas Fair
  - Fifer's Day Strawberry Shortcake Booth
  - Christmas tree sales
  - Neighborhood BBQ
  - Living Nativity
  - Blessing of the Animals
  - Music Sunday
  - Youth Coffee House
  - Easter Vigil
  - Youth Field Trips
  
- I understand I may not:
  - Have a key to any church building
  - Meet alone in the church building with staff, except the Pastor
  - Meet alone in the church building with a lay leader
  - Participate in any overnight activities (e.g., mission trips)

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**United Church of Christ, Congregational, of Boxborough**  
**Preliminary Safe Conduct Covenant, continued**

I understand I may:

- Meet with the Pastor under whatever circumstances the Pastor approves

I accept that appropriate ministry team leaders may be told of my circumstances and the limitations of this Covenant.

I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the church's Safe Conduct Policy.

I have reviewed this Covenant and agree to abide by its provisions. I understand that my continued participation in the activities of Congregational life depend on my adhering to this Covenant.

I understand that this Covenant will be reviewed regularly, at least every six months, and will remain in effect until a time determined and communicated by the Pastor and the Response Team.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Covenant Partner \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Response Team Member \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## 6.5 Release Form

### United Church of Christ, Congregational, of Boxborough Release Form

I hereby give my permission for the church's Sexual Misconduct Response Team to contact appropriate legal authorities, including parole and/or probation officers, and to contact my treatment provider and/or current therapist. Any meetings at which the information gathered is discussed will not be open meetings, and the minutes will be kept confidential.

I understand that should I refuse to sign this Release Form or decline to participate in any aspect of the Response Team Process, the Response Team may refuse participation in any Congregation activity and will inform the Council of its decision.

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Signature of Applicant

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Printed Name of Applicant

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Date

## **6.6 Safe Conduct Covenant Template**

See next page.

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## **United Church of Christ, Congregational, of Boxborough Safe Conduct Covenant Template**

The United Church of Christ, Congregational, of Boxborough affirms the dignity and worth of all persons. We are committed to being a community of faith open to those who desire to worship and grow with us, especially in times of serious personal trouble.

It is our duty reasonably to promote the safety of all persons in our Congregation. Based on your history of sexual misconduct, it is necessary to have particular guidelines and restrictions concerning your contact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults in our Congregation. The following guidelines are designed to reduce the risk, to both you and them, of an incident or accusation.

For participation in certain activities, we require the presence of a Covenant Partner. A Covenant Partner is a person designated by the Sexual Misconduct Response Team who is aware of your background and Safe Conduct Covenant, and agrees to monitor and help you abide by this Safe Conduct Covenant. The Response Team interviews these Partners and reviews their assignment at least twice a year.

We encourage you to participate and be involved as fully as you wish in Congregational life, subject to the restrictions stated on the following pages. Within these guidelines, the Congregation welcomes your participation in adult worship services, coffee hours, committee meetings, adult education, adult social events, and well-supervised intergenerational events.

Representatives of the church's Sexual Misconduct Response Team will meet with you at least twice a year. Those meetings will be to support you and reaffirm this Covenant. In the meantime, please direct any questions or concerns regarding this Covenant to the Pastor or a member of the Response Team.

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## United Church of Christ, Congregational, of Boxborough Safe Conduct Covenant Template, *continued*

By virtue of this Safe Conduct Covenant:

- I agree not to volunteer for or chaperone church-sponsored events for children or adolescents, including children's spiritual nurture classes, youth groups, youth mission trips, children's or adolescents' activities during intergenerational programs, and transportation of children and young people, except my own children.
- I commit to remaining in the presence of adults at all times when children (other than my own) are present.
- I will inform the Pastor if I choose to end my participation at this church for any reason.
- I will report to the Response Team within 10 days any change in status, including a new accusation, charge, arrest, or indictment, for the duration of my participation at the church.

The following activities checked "Yes" are appropriate activities for your participation:

Worship Services

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

Coffee Hour

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

Adult Meetings without children in the building

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

Adult Meetings with children in the building (example: Jr. Choir)

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

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**United Church of Christ, Congregational, of Boxborough**  
**Safe Conduct Covenant Template, continued**

Have a key to the building

- No
- Yes

Intergenerational group outings (examples: ice skating, baseball games, etc.)

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner (but no transport/carpooling)
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

Alone in the building with Pastor

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

Alone in the building with other Staff Person

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

Church sponsored social activities in other members' homes with youth present

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

Merrie Christmas Fair

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

Fifer's Day Strawberry Shortcake Booth

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

Christmas Tree Sales

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

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**United Church of Christ, Congregational, of Boxborough**  
**Safe Conduct Covenant Template, continued**

Neighborhood BBQ

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

Living Nativity

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

Blessing of the Animals

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

Music Sunday

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

Youth Coffee House

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

Easter Vigil

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

Adult Mission Trip

- No
- Yes, with Covenant Partner
- Yes, without Covenant Partner

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**United Church of Christ, Congregational, of Boxborough  
Safe Conduct Covenant Template, continued**

I accept that appropriate ministry team leaders may be told of my circumstances and the limitations of this Covenant.

I have read, understood, and agree to abide by the church's Safe Conduct Policy.

I have reviewed this Covenant and agree to abide by its provisions. I understand that my continued participation in the activities of Congregational life depend on my adhering to this Covenant.

I understand that this Covenant will be reviewed regularly, at least every six months, and will remain in effect until a time determined and communicated by the Pastor and the Response Team.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Covenant Partner \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Response Team Member \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_