

Pilgrims' United Church Of Christ

Safe Church Policy Concerning Abuse Prevention

PREAMBLE

Pilgrims' United Church of Christ (Pilgrims' UCC) celebrates freedom, inclusion, and diversity of belief, recognizing love as the creative and supporting force in life. As outlined in Galatians 3:28-29, Pilgrims' UCC welcomes persons of all ethnic backgrounds, social categories (age, ability/disability/wellness, physical size and shape, socioeconomic status and domestic relationship status), and gender status (gender, gender identity and orientation). Except as limited by this policy, Pilgrims' UCC is committed to full and unhindered inclusion and participation of all persons in the life and work of the congregation. The purpose of this policy is to make this church and the church facility and grounds a safe place for all and to protect the physical safety and emotional well-being of the congregation, its friends, visitors, and guests.

I. POLICY PROHIBITING ABUSE, EXPLOITATION, HARASSMENT AND INTIMIDATION

As a community of Christian faith, Pilgrims' UCC is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities and community in which members, friends, visitors, guests, staff and volunteers can worship, learn and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of abuse, discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation. All persons associated with Pilgrims' UCC should be aware that the church is strongly opposed to abuse, discrimination, exploitation, harassment, and intimidation, and that such behavior in all its forms, including emotional, mental, physical, sexual, and verbal, is prohibited by church policy. It is the intention and responsibility of the church to take whatever action necessary to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and, if necessary, to discipline and/or exclude those persons who violate this policy and/or to refer them to law enforcement for further action. The Resource Board administers the provisions of this policy.

II. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CONDUCT

It is important that every congregation member, contractor, employee and volunteer understand the ways in which their behavior or speech, and/or use or misuse of authority may impact others, particularly those who are emotionally or personally vulnerable in some way.

It is the policy of Pilgrims' UCC to encourage its staff and officers to nurture safety by being attentive to self-care, education, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and the importance of referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources.

Any abuse, discrimination, exploitation, harassment or intimidation of parishioners or others is unethical behavior for clergy and laity and will not be tolerated within this congregation.

Before an offer of employment or an outside contractor relationship is made to any individual, a comprehensive background check, including criminal records check, will be completed. Scope of check will include the counties of residence and counties of work over the prior seven (7) years.

Before staff begin the work relationship, and, church officers, within thirty (30) days following the Annual Meeting of their first election to office, will submit a disclosure form (Appendix A or C, as appropriate) and be checked in a registered sex offender review by searching for their names on the Federal Sex Offender Registry website at www.nsopr.gov. In addition, all persons with a history of felony conviction for any of the categories of behavior prohibited in this policy, whether expunged or not, whether sexual or not, whether included in an Offender Registry or not, are required to divulge such conviction(s). Church officers include all persons named in Articles 8 and 9 of the By-Laws, and the Deacons. Afterward, each January, each person so designated in this paragraph shall submit an affirmative statement or new disclosure form stating "no changes," or detailing any changes in status, from the previous filing, and also be reviewed in the Registry.

III. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD AND YOUTH MINISTRY

Pilgrims' UCC is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God's love.

In order to promote this, the following guidelines apply, in addition to the general requirements listed above.

1. Those who volunteer to work with minors will have been members of Pilgrims' UCC for at least six months. This applies to adult chaperones and volunteers even if they have minors in the programs/activities.
2. All volunteers who regularly work with children and youth will annually complete and submit the Pilgrims' UCC Disclosure Form for Religious Educators, Youth Group Staff and Volunteers found in Appendix A. Volunteers will be annually screened against the Federal Sex Offender Registry.
3. Before beginning their duties, all prospective staff will be screened according to the Pilgrims' UCC Personnel Policy. In addition, before beginning work, each will be subject to a criminal record clearance, done either by Pilgrims' UCC or, if available, by the Florida Conference of the UCC.
4. All volunteers and staff who regularly work with children and youth will receive orientation regarding safe church policy and procedures.
5. It is the policy of this church to provide adequate supervision and safeguards for youth activities. In situations where participants are not readily visible to each other, there will be no fewer than two unrelated adults present with children, except in occasional and unforeseen circumstances.
6. Written consent of one parent or legal guardian of a minor is required for all activities off the church property, for any overnight, and for any photographs intended for publication in print or electronic media, including the Pilgrims' UCC website. Written objection by another custodial parent or guardian shall void the permission until a resolution is reached and a new consent, signed by both/all parents/guardians is obtained.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Prohibited Behavior: Abuse, discrimination, exploitation, harassment, and intimidation, whether emotional, mental, physical, sexual, verbal, or other, prohibited by law, custom and/or this policy.

Discrimination: Any act or speech intended to deny a person full, free, and unfettered access to and participation in the life and work of Pilgrims' UCC, based on a person's age, race, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic status, ability/disability/wellness, physical size or shape, gender, gender orientation, gender identification, and/or marital/civil union/domestic partnership status or based on any criterion or standard other than a person's capability, ability, and availability. Requirements based on statutory definitions of legal majority and minority are not discrimination, neither is exclusion or restriction as provided in this policy as applied to those covered by offender registries or felony conviction notification.

Exploitation: Activity or contact in which one person takes advantage of the vulnerability of another person by causing or allowing that person to engage in prohibited behavior. This term also includes the offer of sexual favors, unwarranted preference, or improper enticements of any kind, in order to gain position, promotion, election, appointment to any office or position, or for any other gain.

Harassment: Repeated or coercive advances toward another person contrary to his or her wishes, wherever, whenever, and however communicated or transmitted. It includes behavior directed at another person with the intent of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing the other person, subjecting the person to public discrimination, or classified as stalking. Unwelcome advances, requests for favors, and other verbal or physical conduct constitutes Harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition or circumstance of instruction, employment, or participation in any church or church-related activity.
2. Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel or church-related decisions affecting an individual; or

3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or participation in church activities or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.
4. Prohibited Sexual Harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones, particularly:
 - a) Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, e-mails, Internet postings, or invitations;
 - b) Verbal contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits, sexual propositions;
 - c) Physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual intercourse; and
 - d) Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters, or magazines.
5. Sexual Harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome and using sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, salary, work, learning, or worship environment of another. It is impermissible to suggest, threaten, or imply that failure to accept a request for a date or sexual intimacy will affect a person's job prospects, church leadership, or comfortable participation in the life of the church. It is forbidden either to imply or actually withhold support for an appointment, promotion, or change of assignment, to suggest that a poor performance report will be given because a person has declined a personal proposition; or to hint that benefits, such as promotions, favorable performance evaluations, favorable assigned duties or shifts, recommendations or reclassifications, will be forthcoming in exchange for sexual favors.

Abuse: Any act or series of acts and/or language of actual or threatened abuse or molestation done to any person, resulting in injury to that person, including any act or series of acts of actual or threatened sexual abuse or molestation done to any person, resulting in injury to that person, by anyone who causes or attempts to cause that person to engage in a sexual act:

- a) Without the consent of or by threatening the person, placing the person in fear or asserting undue influence over the person;
- b) If that person is incapable of appraising the nature of the conduct or is physically incapable of declining participation in or communicating unwillingness to engage in the sexual act; or
- c) By engaging in or attempting to engage in lewd exposure of the body done with intent to arouse or to satisfy the sexual desire of any person.

All interrelated or continuous abusive acts committed by one person or persons acting in concert, shall be deemed to be one abusive act.

Injury: Physical injury, sickness, disease, mental anguish, mental injury, shock or fright or death of the person(s) who is the subject of an Abusive Act.

Intimidation: Any act or language calculated to frighten a person into submission, compliance, or acquiescence through an actual or implied presence or operation of a fear-inspiring force, including behavior and speech commonly referred to as "hate crimes" and "hate speech."

Malicious Accusation: A form of abuse, by which one person alleges falsely that another person has engaged in any of the forms of prohibited behavior, where none has actually occurred, as a means for defaming the person(s) accused.

Offender: A person who has been convicted or adjudged an "offender" or "felon" by a court of competent jurisdiction. A **Sex Offender** or **Sexual Predator** is an offender whose conviction includes a specifically sexual dimension.

Staff: Contractors, employees, pastor(s), paid or volunteer, regular or honorary, who work in positions of service to/for the congregation, whether or not listed in the By-Laws.

**V. PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS OF
ABUSE, DISCRIMINATION, EXPLOITATION, HARASSMENT OR INTIMIDATION**

- A. A Response Team of five members will be convened when needed to handle complaints and concerns arising in relation to this policy. The Response Team will operate as a subcommittee of the Resource Board and will be familiar with the terms and procedures of the Safe Church Policy.
1. Members of the Response Team shall all be year-round members of Pilgrims' UCC and will be the (Senior) Pastor, the Moderator, the Chair and two members of the Resource Board. The two members of the Resource Board shall be selected by the Board chair, in such a manner as to ensure that no more than three members of the Response Team shall be of the same gender.
 2. In the event that a complaint concerns a member of the Response Team or a member of the Response Team is unable to participate in ongoing proceedings or the gender balance must be ensured, the Vice-Moderator will serve as the fifth member. Should the Vice-Moderator be unable to serve, the fifth member will be the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Afterward, precedence shall fall to the Lead Deacons of the Ministries (in alphabetical order by Ministry). Within each ministry, precedence shall continue after the Lead Deacon to the Senior Deacon, then Junior Deacon, as required.
 3. The Response Team members should not be closely related. In the event that Response Team members are related, one of the related parties shall recuse him/herself and the procedure for adding members outlined above will be followed. "Related" shall mean, "members of the same household," and/or "related by blood in the first degree." (Partners in civil unions or domestic partnerships are also related.)
 4. All deliberations of the Response Team will be confidential prior to the delivery of any final recommendation, should such be required. Materials related to Response Team investigations will be treated with care and kept in a secure file.
 5. A 3/5 majority of the Response Team will be necessary to make any recommendation for further action. In the event that any recommendation of the Response Team is not unanimous, a report of the Minority is required.
 6. The Response Team is not required to meet on any regular basis in the absence of specific matters related to the Safe Church Policy.
 7. Due to the variable nature of the requirements of paragraphs 1, 2, and 3, above, a Response Team constituted to handle one specific case/person may, of necessity, be different from a Team constituted to handle another specific case/person, though the respective Teams be operating at the same time and have one or more Team members in common.
- B. Several approaches may be taken in addressing incidents of alleged Abuse, Discrimination, Exploitation, Harassment or Intimidation:
1. The complainant can attempt to resolve the matter directly with the respondent, the accused individual.
 2. The complainant may report the incident to the Pastor, in an effort to resolve the matter informally.
 3. If an informal resolution of the complaint does not seem wise, appropriate, possible, or does not succeed, the complainant or the Pastor may request that the Response Team be convened to institute formal proceedings. The complainant may approach any or all of the persons comprising the Response Team as set forth in Section A above. Formal proceedings shall include the following steps:
 - a. The Response Team shall gather statements or other information from the individuals involved in the alleged Abuse, Discrimination, Exploitation, Harassment or Intimidation, and from others who

may have pertinent information, such as qualified professional consultants.

- b. The Response Team shall make determinations and take actions appropriate to resolve the matter. These may include:

- i. Finding that the alleged prohibited behavior did not occur AND that no malicious accusation has occurred.

- ii. Finding that the alleged prohibited behavior did not occur BUT that malicious accusation has occurred. In this case, actions detailed in iii, below, may be prescribed for the complainant(s).

- iii. Finding that the prohibited behavior has occurred, and that, after review by the full Resource Board, the Resource Board recommends that the Church Council take action accordingly. Such action may include one or more of the following:

- a) A formal reprimand, with defined expectations for changed behavior;
 - b) Recommending or requiring psychological or psychiatric assessment, counseling and/or treatment;
 - c) Probationary standing, with the terms of the probation clearly defined;
 - d) Dismissal from membership, contract, employment or authorized volunteer position in the church.

- c. The Response Team, Resource Board, or Church Council, as applicable, may seek the advice of legal counsel retained by the church, or other appropriate professionals to advise it in performing its functions.

- 4. The Pastor or Response Team may deem it necessary to request that the accused person not participate in church activities until the matter is resolved.

C. A confidential written summary of the Response Team proceedings in such cases will be maintained.

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

E. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes prohibited behavior, consideration shall be given to the record of the alleged incident(s) as a whole and to the totality of the circumstances, including the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred.

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

G. If the complainant or respondent is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter by the Response Team, s/he has the right to appeal to the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ (referred to hereafter as the Conference). The subject of any such appeal to the Conference shall be limited solely to whether the procedures of this policy were followed. The matter will not be reconsidered on the merits and the decision of the Conference will be the final resolution of the matter. If the Conference determines that the procedures of this policy were not followed, it will refer the matter back to the Response Team to complete the processing of the complaint in accordance with these procedures.

VI. CHILD ABUSE

Pilgrims' UCC will make a report to appropriate authorities, including but not limited to the Florida Department of Children and Families, if at any time the church has reasonable cause to believe that a minor may be an abused or neglected child. Any member of the church who becomes aware of facts or circumstances that child abuse or neglect has occurred or that there exists a substantial risk that child abuse or neglect may occur in the reasonably foreseeable future shall immediately report the matter to the Pastor and Moderator so that the church may take appropriate action in a timely manner. The District 13 Office of DCF is in Wildwood; the telephone number is: (352) 330-2177.

VII. CLERGY

All allegations of prohibited behavior or any behavior which calls into question the fitness for ministry of the Pastor(s) or any member of Pilgrims' UCC who is ordained, licensed, or commissioned clergy (whether or not having standing in the UCC), will promptly be referred by the Response Team to the Conference Minister of the Conference, in accordance with the policies of the Conference.

Licensed, ordained, and commissioned clergy of Pilgrims' UCC, as named in Article 8 of the By-Laws will attend boundary workshops required by the Conference or will attend at least one required workshop each three (3) years, whichever is more frequent.

The Conference office in Orlando may be contacted at: 407-835-7501 or 800-432-8311. Information on its current leadership may be found at www.uccfla.org.

VIII. GUIDELINES FOR INVOLVING OFFENDERS AND CONVICTED FELONS

No person who has been convicted of, or with an unresolved accusation of, any prohibited behavior toward minors will be permitted to be involved in any children's religious education or youth group activities at Pilgrims' UCC. A person with a known history of sex offense against children will never be allowed to interact with children, work with children and youth, or socialize with children at any congregational functions.

Offenders who have completed prison sentences and mandated treatment as well as registered with the state have, according to the court system, complied with their punishments. However, the church must assure that a convicted offender does not have the opportunity to re-offend in the Pilgrims' congregation. Nor should the offender be permitted in situations where he or she can be accused falsely.

Movement and participation of offenders with a conviction history of prohibited behavior (including rape, assault, and other violence against persons) toward adults and/or children, may be similarly restricted.

The church also recognizes that the presence of any offender in the congregation creates concerns for the membership. The physical safety and well-being of the congregation as a whole may at times outweigh the rights and privileges of the individual.

IX. INTEGRATING AN ACCUSED, ADMITTED, CONVICTED OR POTENTIAL OFFENDER INTO CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 1) The following procedures will apply to a situation involving either a current or prospective participant in the congregation. The situation may be revealed by public notice, private information, or an individual coming forth voluntarily (as noted in Section II, above). If offenses against children are at issue, the provisions in Section VI. Child Abuse, above, will be followed.
- 2) No matter how the situation is revealed, the Pastor will meet privately with the individual as quickly as possible

to discuss the concerns that have been raised. The Pastor will check the sex offender registry before this meeting. If the person is a member of the congregation and has a partner who also attends Pilgrims' UCC, then the Pastor should attempt to involve the partner as well. In the instance of a domestic situation which may involve custody issues or unsubstantiated allegations, these same procedures will be followed.

- 3) If the Pastor determines that there is reasonable cause for the concern, the person will then be asked to meet with the Response Team., and to refrain from attending church activities until the process is completed. Response Team members and procedures will be the same as in Section V. A, above.
- 4) Whether or not the person currently is or previously has been in the criminal justice system, he/she will be asked to sign a release form so that the Response Team or a professional engaged by the Response Team can contact his/her offender treatment provider and/or current therapist, if applicable, and determine if those people are members of ATSA, the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers. The therapist and, if applicable, the probation or parole officer will be asked for their professional assessment of the likelihood that the person will offend or re-offend, and whether additional restrictions beyond the standard Covenant of Limited Access ought to be placed on the person's participation. It will be necessary to know the number, timing and nature of all reported offenses.
- 5) It is beyond the scope and experience of Pilgrims' UCC, its membership and its leadership to assess the risk or probability that a person will offend or re-offend. The Response Team will require the person to go for one or more professional assessments with therapists selected by the Response Team who specialize in working with offenders. The Response Team may choose, but is not required, to commit church funds for such assessment.
- 6) The Response Team must consider these questions:
 - a) Given what professionals have advised, will this person sign and obey a Covenant of Limited Access in order to assure the safety of children and youth and/or affected adults?
 - b) Can a Covenant of Limited Access reasonably protect the physical safety and emotional well-being of the congregation as a whole?
 - c) In an instance of a domestic situation involving custody issues or unsubstantiated allegations, is a Covenant of Limited Access necessary to assure the safety of children, youth, or adult congregational members?
- 7) If the assessment indicates that the person has completed or is participating successfully in treatment and is not at high risk for offending, the Response Team may choose to develop a Covenant of Limited Access. (See Appendix B.)

This Covenant permits the person to participate in certain aspects of congregational life, setting clear boundaries and prohibitions. Typically a Covenant of Limited Access will specify participation in some combination of worship services, coffee hour, committee and/or Board meetings, adult education, and all-adult social events as permitted. It may require the person to avoid all contact with children on congregation property or at congregation-sponsored events. This includes not talking to children, volunteering for or chaperoning children's or youth events, including children's religious education classes, and talking with children before, during or after worship. It may require the person to remain in the presence of an adult who knows the situation at all times when children or affected adults are present. It may identify specific persons who are required to be with the person on the Pilgrims' campus. It denies the person access to keys to any church building. Under no circumstances may the person ever be in areas designated for Children's Ministries.

All persons known to have past histories of offenses involving prohibited behavior will be required to sign a Covenant of Limited Access. Depending on the circumstances, the person may be asked to sign one annually.

- 8) If the professional assessment indicates that the person is at high risk for offending, it is appropriate and necessary to deny that person involvement in any Pilgrims' UCC activities.

Any of the following reasons will be considered sufficient to exclude a person from all congregational activities:

- a) Refusal to allow the Response Team to contact the treatment provider and parole or probation officer.
 - b) Refusal to go for a risk assessment with a qualified therapist or therapists.
 - c) Report by a treatment provider that the individual is at too high risk for offending.
 - d) Refusal to sign a Covenant of Limited Access.
 - e) Refusal to comply with the requirements of the Covenant of Limited Access at any time after it is signed.
- 9) The Response Team may decide at any time to select and appoint a Support Group of approximately five persons, supervised by the Minister, who will agree to offer support for the person. The group should acquaint itself with any therapeutic program the person has undergone or will continue to be part of. The group should meet the person, the person's probation or parole officer, and other appropriate people so that clear boundaries can be established for the protection of children and youth, the physical safety and emotional well-being of adult congregation members, and to reduce the likelihood of false allegations or suspicions. If the person has a partner in the church, that person should be involved in developing the Covenant of Limited Access as well.
- 10) A person who is denied a Covenant of Limited Access, or who is asked to sign a Covenant of Limited Access and refuses to do so, will be informed that if they enter the congregation or its property, they will be asked to leave by a Pastor, officer, or member of the Response Team or the Board of Trustees. If the person further refuses, the local Police Department will be called for assistance.
- 11) The Response Team will meet at least quarterly with any individual with whom Pilgrims' UCC has a Covenant of Limited Access, and with any applicable Support Group, to review the arrangement and address any concerns.
- 12) Any time that a member of the Response Team changes, the other members of the Response Team must make available to the incoming person copies of any Covenants of Limited Access currently in effect.
- 13) In sharing information appropriately, it is also important to remain aware of confidentiality and privacy for all involved. Hard copies of files related to Covenant of Limited Access information should be treated with care, and kept in a secure file.
- 14) If and when legal questions arise, the Response Team should contact a lawyer who can provide information and advice informed by applicable state and local statutes.
- 15) The congregation grants the Response Team authorization to execute the provisions of this policy. Any action approved by at least four of five members of a duly constituted Response Team that has fulfilled all the procedural requirements of Section IX of this Policy shall be final.

If the decision is to admit the individual, the congregation will be informed of the action taken and the specific terms of any Covenant of Limited Access at a duly noticed and convened Congregational Meeting. The identity of the individual and the specifics of the Response Team investigation will remain confidential.

If the Response Team is unable to obtain a 4/5 majority, a Covenant of Limited Access will not be offered.

Additional information may be confidentially made available to church staff who have a need to know and to any church member who requests that information. It is understood that the Response Team has a responsibility to keep certain information confidential.

- 16) Any changes to a Covenant of Limited Access will be governed by the procedures in 15, above.

X. YOUTH WHO MAY BE ABUSERS

When an incident in which a teenager or child in the congregation is or has been accused of prohibited behavior toward another child or toward an adult, the Pastor will initiate contact individually with the parents of both children or the parents of the alleged initiator and the affected adult, to discuss the allegation and next steps.

The Pastor should encourage the parents of the child who was affected to seek an evaluation for this child. Depending on the state law and the nature of the incident, it may be necessary to notify the Florida DCF. Regardless, before the alleged initiator is permitted to continue to attend religious education, he or she should receive an extensive assessment by a child psychologist or psychiatrist with experience with children with behavior problems. The Pastor may choose to provide church funding for such assessment, but is not required to do so.

It is *not* the responsibility of the Pastor or the Response Team to decide if abuse has occurred, but rather to assure that such assessment does take place.

While this review is occurring, the alleged initiator's religious education teacher will be informed of the allegation and the parents must agree to closely monitor their child at all times on the Pilgrims' campus. The child may be removed from religious education during this time, and will not be allowed unsupervised time with other children until the assessment is complete.

The Pastor will decide if the situation warrants the involvement of the entire Response Team and at what point this involvement should occur. If the therapist recommends that the child can safely attend church functions, then the Pastor and the parents will meet with the child to discuss the importance of never repeating the behavior, the harm it can do to others, and the consequences should such a situation occur again.

If the treatment provider reports that the child has a behavior problem that is likely to be repetitive, then the Response Team and the parents will meet to decide how and if the child can safely be involved with Religious Education or Youth Group programs. A modified Covenant of Limited Access will be developed and signed by both the child and the parents.

In some cases, a family will want to bring a child who has been treated for sexual offenses back into the congregation after treatment is completed. In such cases the steps for involving an adult offender will be followed, including a Covenant of Limited Access signed by both the youth and the youth's parents.

XI. SUPERCESSION

The adoption of this Safe Church Policy supersedes any Safe Church Policies, and Covenants of Limited Access previously or currently in effect.

XII. PERMISSIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Some materials in this policy are adapted from the United Church of Christ Sample Church Policy and Disclosure Forms, at <http://www.ucc.org/ministries/safe/SafeChurchPolicy.pdf> and the Policy based on that Sample adopted by Pilgrim United Church of Christ, Carlsbad, California.

Some materials in this policy are adapted from *A Time to Heal* by Rev. Debra Haffner (© Lifequest, 2005) and are used by permission. This book was derived from material in the Unitarian Universalist Association online handbook, *Balancing Acts: Keeping Children Safe in Congregations*, at <http://www.uua.org/cde/ethics/balancing/index.html> which is also used by permission.

XIII. ADOPTION OF SAFE CHURCH POLICY

A. The Pilgrims' United Church of Christ Safe Church Policy Concerning Abuse Prevention will go into effect once it has been recommended by the Trustees and the Church Council and approved by a meeting of the Congregation.

B. Upon approval by the Congregation, the policy will take immediate effect.

XIV. AMENDMENT

This Policy may be amended by vote of the members at any duly called and convened Congregational Meeting in the same manner as provided for Amendments to the By-Laws. (Simple updates to phone numbers, website URLs and contact information are not amendments and can be made when necessary.)

Recommended Trustees 11/08/07 Church Council 12/12/07 Adopted Annual Meeting 1/20/08

Appendix A

PILGRIMS' UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**DISCLOSURE FORM FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS,
YOUTH GROUP STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

Thank you for your interest in working with the children and youth of Pilgrims' United Church of Christ. Our congregation takes seriously our responsibility of assuring the safety of our youth.

Please fill out this form and give it to the Pastor or a Deacon of the Christian Growth Ministry. Thank you for your support in providing a safe and secure environment for all of the congregation's children and youth.

NAME:

First Middle Last

Have you ever used a different name? ___ No ___ Yes

If yes, please list name or names with dates:

How long have you been a member of this church? _____

How long have you been attending this church? _____

ADDRESS:

Street

City State Zip

Number of years at current address: _____

If you have not lived at this address for at least 5 years, please list any previous addresses with dates for the last 5 years.

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

Place of work _____

Number of years at current employment _____

May we call your current employer for a character reference? ___ yes ___ no

If not, please tell us why.

A. Have you ever been convicted of, pled guilty or no contest to, any crimes against a person, including assault, sexual battery, rape, incest, sexual exploitation of a minor, or sexual or physical assault of a minor?

If yes, please provide details:

B. Have you ever been a defendant in a civil lawsuit alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct that has resulted in a judgment being entered against you or been settled out of court?

If yes, please give a short explanation of the lawsuit, including the date, nature, and place of the incident leading to the lawsuit; where the lawsuit was filed; and the precise disposition of the lawsuit:

C. Have you ever resigned from employment or been disciplined or terminated by any employer for reasons related to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; or child abuse?

If yes, please provide details:

D. Other than the above, is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the supervision, guidance, and care of children and youth?

If yes, please provide details.

CONGREGATION HISTORY AND PRIOR WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

List congregations you have attended during the past five years.

Name of congregation: _____

City State

When you did attend: _____

List all previous work involving children and youth (list name, type of work performed, person you were responsible to):

Please list two references who are not relatives who have known you for at least three years and who are familiar with your character as it pertain to your experience with children or youth:

1) Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Relationship to you: _____

2) Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

Relationship to you: _____

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

Beginning such relationships with an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for a continuing and healthy covenant between employees/volunteers and the church they seek to serve. Therefore, I authorize Pilgrims' United Church of Christ and/or its agents to contact the entities, persons, and organizations whose names I have provided in order to obtain verification of the statements I have made in this disclosure form. I also authorize such persons and entities to speak openly and responsibly to Pilgrims' United Church of Christ and/or its agents when responding to inquiries from the Church.

Pilgrims' United Church of Christ recruitment process involves the sharing of information regarding applicants with those persons in a position to recruit, secure, and supervise both the position I am seeking to fill and program I am seeking to participate in within the Church. To that end, I authorize Pilgrims' United Church of Christ and its agents to share information gathered in connection with this application with such persons within the Church for these limited purposes. I understand that Pilgrims' United Church of Christ will share with me information it has gathered about me, if I request it to do so.

I acknowledge my receipt and understanding of the Pilgrims' United Church of Christ Safe Church Policy.

(PRINT NAME & SIGN)

DATE

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

DATE

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

Personal interview conducted by staff on _____

Reference inquiries completed on _____

Church membership for six months confirmed on _____

Safe church awareness training and orientation on _____

(If required) Criminal History Verification on _____

Appendix B

**Pilgrims' UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
COVENANT OF LIMITED ACCESS**

Pilgrims' United Church of Christ celebrates freedom, inclusion and diversity of belief, recognizing love as the creative and supporting force in life. However, based on your background, we have concerns about your contact with children and youth in our congregation. The following guidelines are designed to reduce the risk both to you and them of an incident or accusation. Your participation will be limited in ways to ensure the safety of our Pilgrims' family and to assure that you will not be subject to unwarranted accusations.

You understand that you will not be allowed to interact with children or adolescents, including: volunteering or chaperoning events for children or adolescents; children's and youth religious education classes; talking with children before, during or after worship; or interacting with children during intergenerational events. You will not be permitted keys to any church building. Under no circumstances will you ever be in the buildings or on the grounds of the Pilgrims' Children's Center.

A Support Person is a person who knows about your history/situation and has been designated with our approval to accompany you to activities where children and youth may be present.

We feel that the following checked activities are appropriate for your participation:

Worship services:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

Coffee Hour:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

Alternate Worship Service intended principally for adults:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

Adult meetings with children in the same building, (such as Pilgrims' Fellowship Hall):

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

Adult meetings without children in building:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

Intergenerational church activities:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

Intergenerational group outings offsite from the church campus:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

Church rest rooms:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

Church parking lot:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

Choir: Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

Liturgist or other worship leadership or participation:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

Usher: Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

Alone in any church building with minister or other staff:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

Access to church computer:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

Serve on church boards or committees:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

Pilgrims' UCC social activities in members' homes with children present:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

Other:

_____ Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

_____ Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

_____ Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person () Never ()

I accept that the congregation of Pilgrims' United Church of Christ will be informed of this Covenant of Limited Access at a duly noticed and convened Congregational Meeting.

I have reviewed this document and agree to abide by its provisions. I agree that if I violate this Covenant, I will be denied access to future church functions and church property.

I understand that the terms of any Covenant of Limited Access, information about the type, number and dates of convictions, general reasons for the decision to require a Covenant of Limited Access and my identity may be disclosed to church staff and church members. I hereby consent to such limited disclosure and waive my right to take legal action against the church, its employees, and members for such disclosure authorized by this Policy.

I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every three months and will remain in force for an indefinite period.

_____ Signature _____ Date

_____ Pastor _____ Date

_____ Moderator _____ Date

_____ Christian Growth Lead Deacon _____ Date

Appendix C

**Pilgrims' United Church of Christ
Application and Disclosure Form**

Name: Last	First	Middle
Address: Street	City/State	Zipcode
Daytime Phone	Evening Phone	Email

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

Name

Address	City	State	Zipcode
Telephone	Email		

Name

Address	City	State	Zipcode
Telephone	Email		

Name

Address	City	State	Zipcode
Telephone	Email		

I have been a member of this church since

I have been a friend of this church since

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

True

Not True

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

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.

(For either of the above questions, to provide a brief description, please use a separate sheet of paper and staple it to this form.)

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

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

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

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

(PRINT NAME & SIGN)

DATE

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

DATE

- Sex Offender Registry (www.nsopr.gov) review performed on
- Personal interview conducted by staff on
- Reference inquiries completed on