

Saint Mark United Methodist Church

Trustees Manual

2901 Columbiana Road
Birmingham, Alabama 35216
205.822.5980

Table of Contents

REVISION HISTORY	3
INTRODUCTION	4
DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES	4
TRANSPORTATION POLICY	5
GENERAL FACILITY GUIDELINES	9
DOOR SECURITY	11
KEY ISSUANCE GUIDELINES	12
SANCTUARY & FAMILY LIFE CENTER	14
KITCHEN USE GUIDELINES	15
GUIDELINES FOR ROOM USE	16
AUDIO/VISUAL EQUIPMENT	17
COURTYARD USE	18
PRIORITIES OF USE	19
DISASTER RELIEF AND FACILITIES	19
OUTDOOR SIGNAGE	20
PARKING SPACES	20
RECORDS RETENTION POLICY	20
SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY	21
ENDOWMENT FUND	31
EVACUATION AND SHELTER PLAN	32
EVACUATION FLOOR PLAN	34

REVISION HISTORY

Initial Issuance: May 17, 2006

Updated: December 14, 2007

Updated: June 18, 2013

Updated: December 28, 2015

Updated: February 22, 2016

Updated: October 24, 2017

Updated: December 17, 2018

Last Update: October 22, 2019

INTRODUCTION

Why do we need a Trustees Manual?

To keep track of major decisions and policies approved by the Board of Trustees and retain this information in a single document for future use. This manual replaces all previous documents approved by the Board of Trustees on topics covered in this manual. This document should be maintained by the Secretary of the Board of Trustees and dated to reflect the latest revisions approved by the Board.

DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1. Supervision, oversight, and care of all real property owned by the church and of all property and equipment acquired by the church.
2. Supervision, oversight and care of endowments received by the church.
3. Review annually the adequacy of property, liability, crime and insurance coverage on church-owned property, buildings and equipment.
4. Review annually the adequacy of personnel insurance.
5. Make sure use of facility by outside organizations is consistent with social discipline of church.
6. Conduct annual accessibility audit (handicapped, etc.).
7. Report to charge conference which should contain the following:
 - Legal description of all property
 - If new property was acquired, does deed contain trust clause
(paragraph 2503 of Discipline)
 - Inventory/valuation of all church-owned property
 - Income received from income-producing property
 - Amount received/spent for improving all property
 - All capital debts incurred/outstanding
 - Statement of insurance coverage
 - Name of custodian of legal documents and where they are stored
 - List of all trust to which church is beneficiary, include how invested, is investment consistent with the Social Discipline of the Church/Discipline
 - Accessibility evaluation
8. Annually review the Trustees Manual for relevance and to ensure that it reflects the current Saint Mark UMC environment.
9. The Trustees will meet at least once a month for at least 10 months during the calendar year.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

USAGE

Vehicles will be scheduled through the church secretary or his/her designee on a first-come, first-serve basis. Trips greater than 75 miles from the church require at least three-day notice so the vehicle can be inspected prior to departure.

Use limited to church-related activities. Vehicles will NOT be used for personal vacations, trips, etc. Non church-related activities must be preapproved by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Under normal circumstances, buses will be used to transport only passengers, and their personal baggage, with no fewer than five passengers per trip.

In no case will more passengers be allowed in any vehicle than seats are available.

NO SMOKING is allowed in any church vehicle!

Vehicles will not be taken outside the United States.

DRIVER CRITERIA

Driver must be 25 years of age or older,

Have a valid Alabama driver's license,

Be a member or employee of Saint Mark UMC,

Have a photocopy of their driver's license on file in the church office.

Drivers of 14-passenger buses must have successfully completed applicable inhouse driver training.

Drivers must be re-certified every 5 years.

Drivers will be provided a copy of this transportation policy. They must certify that they have read and understand this policy. A copy of this certification will be kept on file with the copy of their driver's license.

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

Ensure that state driver's license is up to date.

Be free of alcohol, drugs or any other substance that may adversely affect mental or physical ability.

Have ample sleep.

Do not drive longer than four hours in a stretch. A one-hour rest period is required before driving an additional four hours.

Must operate vehicle in a safe manner.

Have overall responsibility of the vehicle while on a trip.

If a non-church owned trailer will be used with the church vehicle, it is good practice for the driver who is responsible for obtaining the necessary trailer information, to complete a form containing that information, communicating the trailer information to Saint Mark's insurance agent, and leaving a completed form in the church office.

Responsible for any/all traffic or parking citations.

Have another adult in vehicle if other passengers are under 18 years of age.

Notify the Facilities Manager or church office, within 24 hours, of any damage or mechanical defects that come to his/her attention.

Complete the transportation log for each trip.

Check engine oil each time gasoline is purchased. (Buses use gasoline with at least 87 octane rating.)

Driver and all passengers will wear seat belts while vehicle is in motion. This includes car seats for infants and children as required by state law.

Do not take up slack in belt by tying knot(s) in the belt! (If the belt is defective, do not use the seat, and notify Transportation Committee member upon returning the vehicle.)

Obtain keys from church secretary and return when trip is completed.

Make sure the inside and outside of the vehicle is left in a clean condition with a full tank of gasoline.

PASSENGER RESPONSIBILITIES

Be free of alcohol, drugs or any substance that may adversely affect mental or physical ability.

Wear seat belt while vehicle is in motion. Extenders are available if needed. In the Chevy bus, they are located in the overhead and driver area. In the Ford bus, 3 seats have large belts plus regular belt.

Do not take up slack in seat belts by tying knot(s) in the belt. If a belt is defective, notify Driver.

Do not use seat with a defective seat belt.

Report vehicle defects to the driver.

Don't be a litter bug; place your trash in litter bag.

Upon exiting vehicle, remove all personal property and trash from vehicle.

Leave seat belt in the seat where it is readily accessible for the next passenger.

Leave backrest in upright position, and aisle sliders (if applicable) against the adjacent seat.

USE OF TRAILERS WITH CHURCH BUSES

The current insurance policy extends the liability from the vehicle to the trailer it is pulling.

The coverage is trailer specific. If there are plans to pull a non-church owned trailer, it is good practice to provide the insurance agent with a description of the trailer including make, model, length, width, number of wheels and VIN. The power unit will always extend liability to the trailer it is pulling.

The trailer itself is not covered for physical damage, i.e., collision, fire, theft, etc. This coverage is available but is not automatically provided by the current policy.

The contents of the trailer are not insured unless specific contents coverage is requested. We have a separate provision under the package for disaster relief tools/equipment when loaded in trailers and in community relief.

CHURCH OWNED TRAILERS

Church owned trailers shall be kept on church property.

Their contents must be inventoried at least once a year. A copy of the inventory shall be filed in the church office.

Trailers must be inspected prior to use to ensure that lights are working properly, and tires are properly inflated.

Driver rules for pulling the trailer will be the same rules as for driving the church bus.

Individuals pulling the trailer with their personal vehicle should have sufficient liability insurance coverage for the trailer.

The trailer will still be covered by the church insurance if pulled by an individual's vehicle, but the church's liability on the trailer will not be in force. Church liability is excess over an individual coverage pulling the trailer.

The trailer can only be used within the United States (and its territories) due to insurance coverage.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Transportation Committee is made up of three members: Chairman appointed by the Trustees, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and a Member-at-large appointed by the Trustees. The names and home phone numbers of the Transportation Committee members are maintained in the church office (205-822-5980).

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Implement guidelines and criteria for drivers and the inspection, use, service and maintenance of all church vehicles.

Maintain an up-to-date listing of approved drivers for buses. Provide this list annually to the Trustee Insurance Chairperson.

Provide driver training.

Perform periodic inspections of the buses.

Insure that an annual inspection is performed, in accordance with Department of Transportation regulations. A copy of the inspection report is to be kept with each vehicle.

VEHICLE ACCIDENT

Follow the instructions on the insurance card in the vehicle logbook. Notify the Facilities Manager or church office as soon as possible after an accident.

GENERAL FACILITY GUIDELINES

1. No alcoholic beverage may be served, and no smoking is allowed in any of the church facilities.
2. Pets are not allowed in the building. The only exception is service dogs. A service dog is a type of assistance dog specifically trained to help people who have a disability.
3. All church supplies and household equipment (tables, chairs, kitchen items, etc.) will be signed out through the church office. No church equipment (computers, music/sound equipment, furniture, etc.) is to be removed from the building without the permission of the Facilities Manager.
4. The kicking or bouncing of balls into the ceiling or wall of the gym is prohibited.
5. Any candles used on the Altar must be drip-less. Candles used in the candelabra must be protected by shields, cups, or foil paper on the carpet to prevent drippings.
6. No hurricane lamps or candles are permitted on windows or on the pews. Battery operated candles may be used instead. After the candles are extinguished, they should be permitted to cool for a few minutes before being removed so the liquid drippings will harden and not spill on the carpet.
7. No furnishings or equipment in the sanctuary may be removed without approval of the Worship Committee.
8. No tacks, nails, screws or other material may be used that might permanently mar, deface, or otherwise damage any part of the church building or furnishings
9. No food or beverages will be allowed in the sanctuary except those used in the worship services.
10. No controlled substances may be used on the church premises under any circumstances.
11. Damage, other than normal wear and tear to the facilities and equipment of the Church, shall be repaired at the cost of the group using the facility (those making the reservations) at the time of the damage. All damages should be reported to the Facilities Manager, who will coordinate the repair.
12. The opening of any window is prohibited except when required during emergencies.
13. Close the door to the room you are using to better control the heating and cooling.
14. Hallways of the ELC are closed and locked for safety reasons during the week when preschool is in session. Parents may enter with appropriate code keyed on the keypad to access the children's area during the week. Each classroom in the ELC is equipped with individual locks on all doors. Anyone visiting the ELC must enter via the church office and obtain a visitor nametag.
15. Turn off all lights when leaving.

16. The group using the facilities shall be responsible to see that the area is cleaned up and restored to substantially the same condition as it was immediately prior to use. It is expected that all chairs and tables will be replaced in their storage areas and floors swept with the available dust mops. If food is involved with the event, trash must be taken to the dumpster.
17. The person in charge of the group will sign out the required keys from the Church office the day of the event. This person is responsible for locking all doors after the event. Keys are to be returned as soon as possible (but no later than the next day) by placing them in the wall box outside the church office.
18. The person in charge shall see that adequate supervision is present at all times. Activities are confined to rooms reserved. All children/youth of adults participating in activities are expected to remain with supervising adults during the activity unless a nursery is provided, or they are scheduled in an additional activity. Children/youth should not be allowed to roam the halls or gym unless accompanied by an adult. All activities involving children/youth must adhere to the Conference and Church Safe Sanctuary Policy.
19. Any advertisements, announcements, flyers, posters, etc. should be placed on the "tacking strips" or bulletin boards located throughout the church.

DOOR SECURITY

EXTERIOR DOORS

Daily Closing, Monday thru Friday

The Church Staff will lock the doors when the office closes (approximately 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday). On Wednesdays, the Church Staff will lock the doors after the planned Wednesday evening activities.

Sunday Opening

The Trustees are responsible for appointing a team for opening the doors on Sunday mornings at approximately 8:00 AM.

Sunday Closing and Special Services during Advent and Holy Week

The Trustees are responsible for locking the doors after the services on Sunday and special services occurring during Advent and Holy Week.

All Other Events or Activities

For all other events or activities not covered above, the responsibility for locking the doors lies with the person directing the event or activity.

INTERIOR SECURITY DOORS

Office Doors

The Church Staff will lock their office doors when they leave for the day. If the office space is used for church events outside the normal office hours, the responsibility for opening and locking the office doors will follow the same procedures as for exterior doors.

ELC Keypad Doors

Keypad-Secure doors are located at 3 entrances to the ECL lobby and the entrances from the Back Playground. These doors are secured during all times that the ELC is in session.

The ELC Director or designee is/are responsible for securing and un-securing the Lobby doors each school day.

Trustees or Church Staff are responsible for securing and un-securing the Back Playground doors for Sunday and Wednesday Night activities.

The ELC director controls the keypad codes and changes them as needed.

KEY ISSUANCE GUIDELINES

General

The Trustees are responsible for securing church facilities and maintaining guidelines for access. Keys are required to access the building after normal business hours. Keys are also required to access areas that are normally locked at all times. Keys will be issued to persons with a demonstrated need for access. It is not the intent of the Trustees to issue a key to every member of the church. Occasional, infrequent access does not meet the guidelines. Arrangements can be made to obtain a key from the office when needed. The Trustees will be responsible for resolving disagreements regarding the need for a key.

Everyone issued keys has a responsibility to safeguard them. When keys are lost or stolen, the church incurs a large expense having locks changed and keys reissued. Church keys should be kept secure and carried only when needed.

Responsibility

The Church Facilities Manager will be responsible for issuing all keys to the church. The key administrator shall maintain a record of the persons receiving keys. The Facilities Manager will maintain a locked key cabinet with a key to all door locks, to include office areas. Access to the key cabinet will be restricted.

Exterior Door Keys - Staff and Church Members

Exterior door keys will be issued to the following:

- Church staff
- ELC teachers and administrators
- Committee chairpersons
- Trustees
- Church members assigned to unlock and lock the church
- Kitchen volunteers
- Church members with regularly scheduled after-hours activities

Exterior Door Keys – Non-Members

Groups with regularly scheduled after hours activities will be provided one or two keys for access.

Groups with non-recurring after hours activities may check out a key prior to their event during normal business hours. Key must be returned following the event.

Student Center Keys

The Director of Student Ministries shall provide the Facilities Manager with the names of persons authorized to have a key to the Student Center.

Church Office

Church office keys will be issued to the following:

- Church Staff
- Church members assigned to unlock and lock the church
- Office volunteers

Staff Offices

Staff will have a key to their assigned office.

Staff may authorize the Facilities Manager to issue additional individuals a key to their assigned office.

Storage and Closet Areas

The Facilities Manager will issue keys to storage areas and closets on a demonstrated need basis.

SANCTUARY & FAMILY LIFE CENTER

General Guidelines

The Family Life Center stage is generally off limits for safety reasons. If you need the stage for your event, contact the staff for assistance.

Fragrance-Free Zones

A Fragrance-Free Zone is a fragrance and chemical free area, designed for those who report mild to serious reactions to these items. We do not want to be the reason why someone does not attend Saint Mark for fear of becoming ill. Therefore, fragrance-free zones have been established.

Working with the recommendations of the Disabilities Coordinator of the North Alabama Conference, the Trustees have designated the first 4 rows of pews in the Sanctuary in the right section facing the pulpit as a fragrance-free zone. For Modern Worship, the last 6 chairs on the back right side facing the stage have been designated fragrance-free. These zones have been selected because they have easy access and are away from high traffic areas.

These zones are in effect for all worship services. The only exceptions may be weddings or funerals if the family requests that the zones be removed.

Weddings

The planning and ceremony for a wedding must adhere to the Wedding Policies and Procedures (published on the Saint Mark website). A couple desiring to use the Sanctuary or any area of Saint Mark should contact the church secretary, who will distribute the wedding application packet and forward the completed application to the wedding coordinator. Once the wedding has been approved, the church secretary will enter it on the church calendar.

Receptions or Teas

The Family Life Center, Fellowship Hall, and the Courtyard are available for receptions and teas. The following are applicable to these facilities:

1. All areas should be scheduled/reserved through the church office.
2. The church does not furnish tablecloths, kitchen help, etc. Supplies which are available to a wedding party will be discussed by the Saint Mark Wedding Coordinator.
3. The parties concerned will arrange for the reception and pay for all expenses thereby incurred.

KITCHEN USE GUIDELINES

The kitchen is here for use by any group that has reserved it in the office. You should find it clean and in good order and leave it the same way. If it is NOT clean and in good order, please report this to the Church Office. These guidelines are intended to help anyone leave the kitchen “cleaner” than they found it.

1. For safety reasons, children under the age of five are not allowed in the kitchen.
2. Follow the use directions when using the stove. (Note the exhaust fan)
3. Follow the use directions when using the dishwasher. (Posted on the dishwasher.)
4. When cleaning up after a function, ALL dishes, utensils, pots and pans must be washed, dried and put away.
5. All flowers, balloons and other decorations must be disposed of and vases washed, dried and put away.
6. Any washable tablecloths and dish cloths are either to be washed in our washer or taken home and washed. Please return these promptly.
7. If the steam table is used, it must be drained and returned to its storage area.
8. All sinks and counter tops must be wiped with disinfecting cloths. Spraying with a suitable sanitizing agent is suggested.
9. Supplies in the pantry are here for the use of Saint Mark events only. Outside groups using the kitchen are expected to furnish their own supplies.
10. Sweep the floor, mop up any spills and remove any garbage to the dumpster.
11. Do not leave any leftover food in the refrigerator for someone else to remove. Label any leftover food with a date and the intended use of this food.
12. If anything is placed in the freezer, it must be labeled and dated. Once a month, all unlabeled food will be discarded.
13. Use of the kitchen must be scheduled through the church office.

GUIDELINES FOR ROOM USE

“To provide a facility and environment in which members and guests of the Church can safely and comfortably practice the faith of The United Methodist Church.”

Scheduling

Any use of a room outside of the regular Sunday School class times must be scheduled by the Church office. Nursery reservations must be made by the Director of Children’s Ministries.

Supplies

Sunday School classes furnish their own coffee, cups, etc. Other groups should not use the Sunday School classes’ supplies which are kept in the Sunday School classrooms.

Clean-up

Rooms are used by many groups and need to be left clean for the next use. Leaving any room with leftover food, coffee spills, dirty tables and chairs attracts insects and rodents. Please consider those who follow you by doing the following:

- Dispose of coffee grounds in the trash can. Pour out any coffee at the nearest sink and thoroughly wash your coffee pot. Put away any coffee supplies.
- Dispose of food via vinyl lined trash can and tie up the top of the liner.
- Clean off counter tops, wipe up spills and clean tables.

Room Set-up

Note the room set-up diagram and leave tables and chairs according to the instructions.

AUDIO/VISUAL EQUIPMENT

All Audio/Visual (A/V) systems and equipment belonging to the church are operated, maintained, and controlled by the A/V Committee. The A/V Committee is comprised of the following:

- Sound & Media Team Leader(s)
- Technical Consultant
- Facilities Manager

The A/V Committee is responsible for the appropriate training and/or certification of anyone that uses any of the A/V equipment or systems. No one can use or operate any of the A/V equipment or systems unless appropriately trained or certified.

The scheduling of any of the A/V equipment or systems is to be requested at least one week prior to the need date through the church office secretary.

Sound & Media Team Certified System Engineers will be paid at the rate of \$125 per hour when supporting non-church group events or non-church wide events.

The Facilities Manager is responsible for maintenance and storage of TV's and their ancillary equipment.

The message boards located throughout the church facility are maintained by the Church Staff.

COURTYARD USE

1. The use of the Courtyard is to be scheduled through the church office.
2. A church member must be present during the scheduled event, responsible for clean-up following the event, and accountable for any damages which occur during the scheduled event.

PRIORITIES OF USE

For other than regularly scheduled church activities to which the entire congregation, or a substantial portion thereof is invited, the following priorities of use are established and shall be followed.

Category 1: Saint Mark United Methodist Church groups (defined as those in which the majority of the membership belongs to the church) such as Sunday School Classes, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Youth Fellowship, Good Neighbor Fellowship, Respite Care, Men's Club, weddings of church members, etc. shall have first priority.

Category 2: Church-sponsored groups (defined as those groups sponsored by the church but in which the majority of the membership does not necessarily belong to the church) such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc. shall have second priority.

Category 3: Church-connected groups (defined as a group that is connected with the church by at least one of its members being a member of Saint Mark United Methodist Church) shall have third priority, for use consistent with the mission and purpose of the church.

Category 4: Any non-church sponsored or non-church connected group or individual shall not be permitted use of the facility without approval of the Trustees.

The church reserves the right to bump reservations of groups in Categories 2, 3, and 4 below outside of 90 days prior to the event or date of reservation. Within the 90-day period, the reservation will stand.

Events in Categories 2, 3 and 4 must obtain and complete the Facilities Use By Non-Members packet before the event will be scheduled.

DISASTER RELIEF AND FACILITIES

The facilities of Saint Mark United Methodist Church are available for use during disaster relief.

OUTDOOR SIGNAGE

All outdoor signs and/or banners must comply with the Vestavia Hills signage ordinance. This ordinance limits the number of banners to one per property. The banner cannot be more than 6 feet high and cannot exceed 24 square feet. The maximum number of days that a banner can be posted is 30 days.

The digital roadway sign's communication content is updated and maintained by the Church Staff. The content of the messages must adhere to the following:

- Compliant with Vestavia Hills ordinances
- Simple and clear messages that inform and invite everyone to come to Saint Mark
- Personal messages should be avoided

PARKING SPACES

The parking spaces have been painted to designate the following:

- White - general use
- Yellow - reserved for senior adults over 75 years of age
- Blue - handicapped-accessible parking

Five parking spaces in the upper parking lot have also been designated for parents with infants.

One parking space is designated for the kitchen crew.

These designations should be observed only on Sundays, Wednesdays after 4:00 pm, and during major church events.

RECORDS RETENTION POLICY

Saint Mark has developed a records retention policy and the church staff has been assigned areas of responsibility with the senior pastor taking overall responsibility for its implementation. The start of the implementation is in late 2018 and it should allow many of the church records to be purged and / or labeled for future purging as needed. This will reduce the storage requirements, as well as allow for secure disposal of those records that require disposal.

SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY

Why we have this policy

- **Biblical Mandate:** “Then Jesus took a little child and put her among them; and taking her in his arms, he said to them, ‘Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.’” (Paraphrase of Mark 9:36- 37) Jesus also said, “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones..., it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.” (Matthew 18:6)
- Part of the **baptism covenant** we make with each child: The Church, above all institutions, is called to welcome and nurture the child. Our goal is to maintain a safe, secure, loving place where children may grow and where those who care for them may administer to their needs in responsible ways.
- Mandated from the **General Conference of 1996** that each United Methodist Church have a policy: The 1996 General Conference approved a resolution that called upon local churches and annual conferences to institute policies and procedures to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in our churches and church related activities. We, in the North Alabama Conference, accept the nature of this call and seek to expand it to include all forms of child abuse or neglect that could be possible in these settings or that could come to our attention regarding children in our care.
- For the protection of volunteers in case of false allegations of abuse
- Our Insurance company will not cover the church without a policy in place

PURPOSE

It is the purpose and intent of the churches in the North Alabama Conference to provide a safe, secure environment to teach and care for the children and vulnerable adults of our faith family.

GOAL

Our goal is to protect children and vulnerable adults from sexual abuse, child molestation or any type of inappropriate sexual behavior by employees or volunteers of the church and to protect employees and volunteers from false accusations.

STATEMENT OF COVENANT

- Acknowledge the risks
- Adopt an ongoing plan

- Take steps to implement the plan
- Continue ministry to our church families and neighbors

We uphold the idea that to report abuse is to be a witness to the world of the love and justice of God and fully recognize that reporting abuse is a form of ministering to the needs of those crying out for help. Simply, to report abuse can help to stop existing and prevent further abuse.

As caring Christians, we are also committed to protect and advocate for children, youth, and vulnerable adults participating in the life of the church. The Church, at all levels of its organization, is entrusted with the responsibility of providing an emotionally and physically safe, spiritually grounded, healthy environment for children, youth, and adults in which they are protected from abuse. Additionally, we care for abused children and their families by offering resources that will contribute to healing. Further, we recognize the grace that God gives in upholding Christian community; and we will look for grace filled ways of dealing with both the victim and the accused.

DEFINITIONS

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: (The National Resource Center on Child Sexual)

Abuse defines child sexual abuse as "any sexual activity with a child or vulnerable adult, whether in the home by a caretaker, in a day-care situation, in any organized ministry, whether at the main facility (church) or away, or in any other setting, including on the street by a person unknown to the child. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child. Child sexual abuse can be violent or non-violent. It is criminal behavior that involves children or vulnerable adults in sexual behavior. Child sexual abuse can involve fondling; penetration of the oral, genital, and anal areas; intercourse; and forcible rape. Other forms of abuse can include verbal comments, any exposure to pornographic materials, inappropriate internet activity, obscene phone calls, exhibitionism, or allowing children to witness sexual activity.

MINOR: A minor is any individual under the age of 18 years.

VULNERABLE ADULT: Any person over 18 years of age with physical, mental and/or developmental disabilities.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The policy and procedure set forth below will apply to all people who give supervision or have custody of minors or who have opportunity to have contact with minors in church facilities or church sponsored activities whether clergy, paid staff, or volunteer. This policy will address four areas that are critical for the protection of the children, our employees and our church: (1) selection process, (2) protection policy, (3) reporting procedures, and (4) responses to allegations.

DEFINITIONS:

- A. **EMPLOYEE** – anyone who is paid by the church on a full-time or part-time basis, whether or not they work directly with preschoolers, children and students.
- B. **VOLUNTEER** – anyone who is not paid by the church on a full-time or part-time basis and is serving in any position involving the supervision or custody of minors. Examples: Nursery, childcare, preschool, grade school, middle school, high school, and college workers, bus drivers, teachers, chaperones, others as designated.
- C. **MINORS** – In addition to the above requirements a minor who is an employee or volunteer must also submit a separate certification from his or her parent or guardian that the parent or guardian “knows no reason why the minor should not be allowed to work directly or indirectly with other minors.” Minors should NEVER be allowed to supervise children without constant adult supervision.
- D. **SAFE SANCTUARY TEAM**
 - a. Membership will be comprised of the following individuals at Saint Mark UMC:
 - i. Senior Pastor
 - ii. Director of ELC
 - iii. Director of Children’s Ministry
 - iv. Director of Student Ministry
 - v. Chairperson of Board of Trustees
 - b. Responsibilities will include:
 - i. Develop, implement, and maintain a check-in process for all children and youth.
 - ii. Conduct safe sanctuary training, provide copy of operating and reporting procedures and recommended guidelines.
 - iii. Have all staff/volunteers sign that they have been trained and understand procedures and guidelines
 - iv. Supervise paid and volunteer workers to see procedures are being followed

- v. Review policy and procedures annually. Additionally, review the North Alabama Conference's Safe Sanctuary policy and document any changes made. Submit any recommended revisions to the Saint Mark Board of Trustees for approval.
- vi. Update background checks every 3 years
- vii. Keep all information on confidential file.

SELECTION PROCESS

PERSONNEL

Current or new employee

- Must have a job description approved by the Staff/Parish Relations Committee (SPRC)
- Must complete a confidential application form with 3 reference checks including former employers
- Must complete a background check consent form
- Must have received appropriate clearances of all checks to work with minors
- Personal interview summary on file
- Must attend yearly safe sanctuary training
- Background check renewals will be performed every 3 years

Regular, Occasional, and Last-minute Volunteer

- Complete a confidential Volunteer Chaperone Application (Background Check can be substituted for application.)
- Provide 2 to 3 references
- Grant signed permission to run a criminal records check
- Attend yearly Safe Sanctuary training
- Receive appropriate clearances on all checks to work with minors

RECORDS

All records, forms and reports will become a part of the employee's confidential personnel file. All volunteer records, forms and reports will be kept on confidential file by the Safe Sanctuary Team.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

A background check must be performed for all in Saint Mark UMC who work with, teach, counsel or chaperon children or vulnerable adults at any church, district or conference function. All adults without background checks may serve in a non-contact function under supervision of those approved. The name of each person in your church with a clear background check will be placed on church letterhead, signed by the Safe Sanctuary Team and sent to the appropriate District office to be kept on confidential file.

Criminal records checks will be limited to any criminal activity involving the following: (1) a minor; (2) child molestation, (3) any type of sexual offense; (4) any type of pornographic or obscene material; (5) any type of physical violence; and (6) suspected child abuse (7) any other offense that might jeopardize the safety of a minor.

BACKGROUND CHECK RENEWAL IS EVERY THREE YEARS with Safe Sanctuary training yearly.

SIX MONTH HOSPITALITY POLICY

In addition to the above requirements, a volunteer must be a member of Saint Mark UMC, or a regular attendee (75% of worship services), for at least six (6) months. A volunteer who does not meet these membership requirements may serve only upon completion of the Volunteer Chaperone Application and/or Background Check and approval of the Safe Sanctuary Team and appropriate age-group director/coordinator for a specific time period or event. There are ways to allow people to volunteer without direct contact with the children.

SAFE SANCTUARY TRAINING

Must be performed yearly by a member of the Safe Sanctuary Team and include:

- Copy of Saint Mark UMC's Safe Sanctuary covenant statement
- Policies to be implemented
- Procedures for ministry
- Steps to report
- Details of state law

PROTECTION POLICY

TWO ADULT RULE

Two non-related, non-cohabitating adults must always be present in groups of children except in emergency situations and where not reasonably feasible.

ALL PERSONS MUST BE AT LEAST FIVE YEARS OLDER than the age group they lead or supervise.

SIX MONTH HOSPITALITY RULE:

Any volunteers working with children must be a member or attend regularly for at least six months. (SEE POLICY ABOVE)

RATIOS OF ADULT/CHILD

1: 3 for birth to 30 months

1: 5 for 2.5 to 5 years

1: 7 for 5 years and up

POTTY PROCEDURES

Infants: change diapers in open, visible areas

Toddlers: Supervised independence

School Age: Supervised independence

Always check the bathroom before sending in a child

VIEW WINDOWS/OPEN DOORS

The preschoolers, children and students will be placed in rooms with view windows (in doors or walls), half doors or open doors for all teaching/learning activities. A “floater” or hall monitor may also be used to make frequent room and restroom checks.

SIGN IN AND OUT PROCEDURES

Ages 0 through 6th grade: clipboard sign in and out, signature required

Ages 7th through 12th grade: teachers check attendance, monitor coming and going

CHECK-IN PROCESS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

All children and youth will be checked in when they arrive for Sunday school and/or other age-level activities on Sundays and Wednesdays and other days when preschool, childcare, or nursery are offered. The process followed is determined by the Safe Sanctuary Team, who is also responsible for ensuring its adherence.

OVERNIGHT ACTIVITIES – (following all Safe Sanctuary policies and)

Hotel Setting: No adults in the bed with a child. Adults sleep in separate rooms with frequent room/hall/bathroom monitoring or check-ins. If possible, choose hotels with rooms opening to inside hallway.

Bunkroom Setting: At least 2 same gender adults may sleep in a large room with multiple bunk beds.

Off-site trips information exchange: Parent must receive contact information that includes: start/stop times and location of event, program content and lodging information. Covenant rules expected of their child on trip.

Staff/volunteer/bus/car driver: The church must receive from parent: all contact information, parent/guardian permission/liability form signed with health/emergency information included.

TRANSPORTATION

- Driver should have license and insurance on file with church.
- Each parent must sign a permission/liability/emergency information form
- Everyone should wear seat belts
- No one under 85 pounds should sit in the front seat
- If a charter bus is rented ask the coach company if a background check is done on their drivers. If not, our suggestion is to look for another charter bus company.
- Never let a youth drive from the church
- To off-site location

Either plan to meet at location or transport with adult drivers.

At least 2 adults and 2 youth when driving personal vehicles.

Consent forms may be completed for a one-year period and should be renewed annually. All consent forms will be considered valid until renewed.

UMVIM and DISASTER RELIEF GUIDELINES

Policies and procedures have been documented for children and adults participating in UMVIM and Disaster Relief activities and should be followed by all Saint Mark members volunteering in these areas, in addition to the Saint Mark Safe Sanctuary Policy. Please refer to the appropriate documents posted on the North Alabama Conference website at www.northalabamaumc.org.

PRESCHOOL SECURITY POLICIES and AGE-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Each church preschool must have a detailed, working preschool security policy that should be conscientiously followed and all Employees and Volunteers shall abide by the preschool security policy as well as any other applicable age-specific guidelines of the Safe Sanctuary policy.

WEEKDAY PROGRAMS

Due to the professional relationship of the teacher and student, parents understand that only one teacher may be present in certain learning or artistic performance programs. All professional teachers shall complete the “employee” selection process, even if they are volunteers.

All staff and volunteers will be required to read and sign that they understand the guidelines for working with children/youth at Saint Mark UMC.

VULNERABLE PERSONS

All Safe Sanctuaries policy requirements apply, in addition to the following:

- Age appropriate training, including training for dealing with special needs (including personal hygiene issues), will be conducted and verified for volunteers or staff person, who intends to work with vulnerable persons. Retraining to be conducted and verified annually.
- Persons leading any group must be 18 years of age or older.

OUTSIDE GROUPS MEETING IN CHURCH FACILITIES

The Board of Trustees requires that all outside organizations review and agree to comply with all of the church’s safe sanctuary policy.

They must provide their own background checks and train their own leadership, such as Scouts and bring a copy of those documents to the chairperson of the Safe Sanctuary Team.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

Alabama State law encourages voluntary reporting of child abuse in faith-based ministry settings. In keeping with Christian beliefs that children should not be abused and neglected, Saint Mark UMC will practice and advocate voluntary compliance with the Alabama State law suggesting reporting of suspected abuse/neglect of children and vulnerable adults.

PROCEDURE:

1. Allegations of suspected abuse/neglect will be reported to the senior pastor, the Department of Human Resources and local law enforcement (Vestavia Hills Police Department).
2. A written abuse report is required to be placed to the authorities within 24 hours.
3. Notification must also be given to the District Superintendent, the communication department of the NAC, and the Bishop.
4. If the Pastor is accused of abuse the Staff/Parish Relations Committee chairperson must directly report the incident to the District Superintendent.

*Nothing in the accomplishment of this policy is intended to call upon a pastor to violate the confidentiality of confession or clergy counseling relationship. Being mindful of the complex nature of Child Abuse, reporting, training, and consultation will be available to clergy and laypersons to prepare them for a faithful response.

RESPONSE PROCEDURES

1. A quick, compassionate and unified response to alleged incident of child abuse is expected.
2. All allegations will be taken seriously, with grace shown to ALL parties.
3. The Pastor will yield to the District Superintendent and church personnel are not to undertake an investigation of the incident. However, in all cases of reported or observed abuse in a children's activity, all those present should be at the service of official investigation agencies.
4. The Church staff will not deny, minimize, or blame any individuals involved in the allegations. The church will minister to all involved and cooperate with authorities.

Conclusion

Keep a Christian perspective on how the church portrays the incident to the community and let the law decide the opinions of truth. Show respect to both parties and as a community of faith vow to keep these matters privy and provide the respect and privacy that the accused and accuser both so rightly deserve.

DOCUMENT FILING

The official and most current version of the Saint Mark UMC Safe Sanctuary Policy will be kept in the Trustee Manual, which is maintained by the Trustees and resides on the Saint Mark server and website.

APPROVAL AND REVISION HISTORY

On May 21, 2013, this Safe Sanctuary Policy was approved by the Board of Trustees and, effective June 1, 2013, replaces the Saint Mark UMC Child Protection Policy approved on January 1, 2005, with the latest revision dated January 31, 2011. All subsequent revisions to the Safe Sanctuary Policy will be noted and dated below upon approval of the Board of Trustees.

The Safe Sanctuary Policy was amended on April 13, 2015, by the Trustees to provide for the following:

- Two Adult rule was modified to include "non-cohabitating" adults
- Check-in policy for children and youth
- Change the reporting procedure to the Staff/Parish Relations Committee Chairperson when any possible abuse involved the Senior Pastor.

The Safe Sanctuary Policy was amended on November 9, 2016, by the Trustees to provide for the following:

- Change of titles for Safe Sanctuary Team members.
- Updated ratios.
- Potty Procedures.
- Sign in provisions.

On October 21, 2019, the Safe Sanctuary Policy was updated and approved by the Board of Trustees to remove the positions of Church Administrator and Lead Teacher, as these positions are no longer relevant.

ENDOWMENT FUND

Endowment Advisory Committee

Due to the changing nature of the makeup of the Board of Trustees and in an effort to provide continuity in knowledge of the history of the Saint Mark Endowment Fund, the 2013 Board of Trustees at the May 21st meeting voted to create an Endowment Advisory Committee.

- The committee will serve as a liaison between the investment company managing the endowment and the Board of Trustees. The actual management of the fund will be done by a paid manager at the investment company.
- The committee will report to the Board on a monthly basis the current state of the Endowment Fund.
- The committee members will serve until they resign or until by vote of the current Board of Trustees it is determined to replace any one of them. A Trustee representative will serve on the Committee and be appointed each year by the Board of Trustees.
- The committee will develop investment directives to recommend to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- The committee will develop an informational and reporting strategy for the congregation and publish it quarterly upon the approval of the Board of Trustees.

Fund Guidelines

- The Board of Trustees will make a conscious effort to comply with "The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church" as the Discipline states in paragraph 717 regarding investments of the endowment fund.
- Definition of Income - Income is capital gains and the distribution of interest and dividends.
- Investment Risk - The Board of Trustees agrees to a split between equities and fixed income investments. Risk will be moderate to aggressive.
- Goal - The Board of Trustees approved the motion that the Endowment Fund was established for growth. Money should not initially be withdrawn from the Fund. It should instead be allowed to grow to the point (approximately one million dollars) that investment income is significant enough to use for church operating expenses.
- Report - The Board of Trustees will report to the congregation quarterly on the state of the Endowment Fund.
- Morgan Stanley was chosen to manage the Endowment Fund at this time. Morgan Stanley uses a global investment committee with model overlay for investments and will make every effort to be in compliance with the Board of Trustees' directives.

EVACUATION AND SHELTER PLAN

The following plan was developed by the Trustees and approved by the Vestavia Hills Fire Marshall on December 14, 2007.

PLAN MANAGEMENT

- The senior Church staff member will be in charge during the activation of either the evacuation or shelter plan. If none of the staff are on premises, the program director will be in charge.
- Staff members, program directors and ushers will know the plan and be able to direct people in an emergency occurring during Sunday services, Sunday school or other large church events.
- To ensure that both Church staff and ushers know the plan they will be issued copies of the plan at the beginning of each year.

THE PLAN

- A floor plan and evacuation instructions will be posted in each room of the church informing people what to do in an emergency.
- The Church staff and ushers must keep the following in mind and act accordingly:
 1. During a building evacuation there is only one handicapped exit readily available from the sanctuary and it is through the vestibule.
 2. During a shelter alert from the sanctuary the Upper Room is only area available for anyone who cannot negotiate the stairs.
 3. Help must be dispatched to the nurseries to aid with the children.
 4. The NOAA weather radios must be moved from the office to the shelter areas.
 5. "Sweep" the buildings to ensure all have evacuated as required.
- During any evacuation people may have to pass by some large windows. These windows are tempered glass and will shatter into small pellets if broken and not into large flying shards. Window breakage should not be life threatening or produce any serious injuries. However once in the sheltered areas, people should be kept back from any windows.

EVACUATION INSTRUCTIONS

Remain calm and proceed to the nearest exit. All exits are marked.

The staff, program directors and ushers will direct any evacuation during church services or large events and ensure all have evacuated as required.

Assemble in the parking lots. Do not assemble in the courtyard during an evacuation.

WEATHER SHELTER PLAN

Calmly proceed to the designated shelter areas as quickly as possible.

Primary shelter areas are located on the bottom floor as shown on the attached map. Overflow areas are also indicated on the map.

The ushers and staff will help direct you to the shelter areas during church services or large events.

The Upper Room has been designated as a shelter area for anyone who cannot negotiate the stairs.

Two NOAA weather radios will be available for monitoring. Both will be kept in the office area and moved to the upstairs and downstairs shelter areas during activation.

EVACUATION FLOOR PLAN

