

Approved by Safety Church Committee: May 12, 2021  
Approved by Board of Deacons: May 18, 2021  
Approved by Church Executive Council: June 1, 2021  
Approved by Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Plymouth Congregational Church of Fort Wayne  
United Church of Christ  
Safe Church Policy**

**PREAMBLE**

Plymouth Congregational Church of Fort Wayne celebrates freedom, inclusion, and diversity of belief, recognizing the love of God as the creative and supporting force in life. The purpose of this policy is to protect the physical safety and emotional well-being of the congregation.

**I. POLICY PROHIBITING  
ABUSE, EXPLOITATION, HARASSMENT AND INTIMIDATION**

As a community of Christian faith, Plymouth Congregational Church (Plymouth Church) is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities and a community in which members, friends, staff and volunteers can worship, learn and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation. All persons associated with Plymouth Church should be aware that the church is strongly opposed to Abuse, Exploitation, Harassment and Intimidation, and that such behavior is prohibited by church policy.

**II. APPROPRIATE CONDUCT**

It is important that every church employee and volunteer understand the ways in which their use or misuse of authority may impact others.

It is the policy of Plymouth Church to encourage its employees and leaders 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.

Sexual Abuse, Exploitation, Harassment or Intimidation of parishioners or others is unethical behavior and will not be tolerated within this congregation.

### **III. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR CHILD AND YOUTH MINISTRY**

Plymouth Church 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 regularly and frequently attended Plymouth Church for at least six months.
2. All volunteers who regularly work with children and youth will annually complete and submit the Plymouth Church Disclosure Form for Religious Educators, Youth Group Staff and Volunteers found in Appendix A. Background checks will be conducted annually for all volunteers who work with children and youth.
3. Before beginning their duties, all prospective employees will be screened according to the Plymouth Church Human Resources Policy. In addition, the Sunday School Director, Youth Director, Child Care Director, and any other staff who work with children and youth will be subject to an annual background check.
4. All volunteers and employees 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 guardian of a minor is required for all activities off the church property, and for any overnight activities.
7. Written consent of one parent or guardian of a minor is required for any photographs of minors intended for publication in print or electronic media, including the Plymouth Church website.
8. Children and youth not in a scheduled activity need to be under a parent's supervision. Parents or guardians are expected to know where their child or youth is if not in immediate proximity.
9. Children and youth need to remain in their class or activity for the full scheduled time.
10. Parents, guardians, or a designated representative are asked to personally pick up second grade and younger children promptly from their classrooms at the end of the activity.

11. For child care, parents or guardians will sign their child in when they arrive to the child care room and sign their child out when they leave.

#### IV. DEFINITIONS

**Sexual Exploitation:** Sexual activity or contact (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which one person takes advantage of the vulnerability of another person by causing or allowing that person to engage in sexual behavior.

**Sexual Harassment:** Repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to their wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person with the intent of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing the other person, or subjecting the person to public discrimination. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute Sexual Harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition or circumstance of an individual's instruction, employment, or participation in any church activity.
2. Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for evaluation in making human resource 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 work or church environment.

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, text or other social media messages, 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, email attachments, cartoons, posters, or magazines.

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.

**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.

**Abusive Acts:** Any act or series of acts 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 the 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.

## **V. PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE, 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 be familiar with the terms and procedures of the Safe Church Policy. Additionally, Response Team members will be required to have had or to complete training relevant to issues of abuse, exploitation, harassment and intimidation.

- 1. Members of the Response Team will be the Senior/Associate Pastor, the Moderator, the Chair of the Board of Deacons, Chair of the Human Resources Board, and Chair of the Safety Committee.
- 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, the Assistant Moderator will serve as the fifth member. Should the Assistant Moderator be unable

to serve, the fifth member will be an available Licensed Minister.

3. The Response Team members should not be related. In the event that Response Team members are related, one of the related parties shall recuse themselves and the procedure for adding members outlined above will be followed.
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 vote 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.

B. Several approaches may be taken in addressing incidents of alleged Sexual Abuse, 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 Senior/Associate 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 Senior/Associate 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, 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 sexual exploitation or harassment did not occur.
    - ii. Finding that Sexual Abuse, Exploitation, Harassment or Intimidation has occurred, and that the appropriate body of the church is called upon to 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 for church activity participation;
- c) Probationary standing, with the terms of the probation clearly defined;
- d) Dismissal from employment or authorized volunteer position in the church.
- e) Banned from church property and all church activities.

c. The Response Team may seek the advice of legal counsel or others to advise it in performing its functions.

4. The Senior 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 inappropriate behavior is directed need not be the complainant. Moreover, neither consent nor acquiescence will excuse or exonerate inappropriate behavior. At any time the church may initiate or proceed with the formal complaint process.
- E. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes Sexual Abuse, Exploitation, Harassment or Intimidation, 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, they have the right to appeal to the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the United Church of Christ (referred to hereafter as the IK Conference). The subject of any such appeal to the IK 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 IK Conference will be the final resolution of the matter. If the IK 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**

Plymouth Church will make a report to appropriate authorities, including but not limited to Indiana Dept. of Child Services for Allen County (260-458-6100), 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 Senior/Associate Pastor and Moderator so that the church may take appropriate action in a timely manner. The Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline currently is: 1-800-800-5556 or call 911.

## **VII. CLERGY**

All allegations of behavior which call into question the fitness for ministry of the Senior/Associate Pastor will promptly be referred to the Plymouth Church Moderator and Chair of Human Resources, which will forward them to the Conference Minister of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the United Church of Christ, in accordance with the policies of that Conference.

The UCC Indiana-Kentucky Conference may be contacted at: 1-317-924-1395. Information on its current leadership may be found at [www.ikucc.org](http://www.ikucc.org)

## **VIII. GUIDELINES REGARDING SEX OFFENDERS**

Sex 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 sex offender does not have the opportunity to re-offend in the Plymouth Church congregation. Nor should the sex offender be permitted in situations where they can be accused falsely. For these reasons, convicted sex offenders\* who are mandated to be registered with the federal, state, and/or local official sexual offender registries or convicted rapists will not be allowed to be involved with Plymouth Church and its activities or on its premises at any time.

No person\* who has been convicted of, or with an unresolved accusation of, any sexual misconduct will be permitted to be involved in any children's religious education or youth group activities at Plymouth Church. 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 function.

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

- In the circumstance where a person has not been mandated to register with the state for a sex offense, or who is temporarily placed on but has been taken off the registry and has clinical proof that they do not pose a danger to re-offend, they shall be referred to the Response Team for consideration for the Covenant for Limited Access.

## IX. SITUATIONS OF COVENANT OF LIMITED ACCESS

- 1) The following procedures will apply to a situation involving either a current or prospective participant in the congregation, **excluding** convicted sex offenders\* (see Section 8) who are mandated to be registered with the federal, state, and/or local official sexual offender registries or convicted rapists. The situation may be revealed by public notice, private information, or an individual coming forth voluntarily. If sexual 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 Senior/Associate Pastor will meet privately with the individual as quickly as possible to discuss the concerns that have been raised. The Senior/Associate Pastor will check the sex offender federal and state registries of all past and current city and state residences of the individual before this meeting. If the person is a member of the congregation and has a partner who also attends Plymouth Church, then the Senior/Associate 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.

(If the Senior or Associate Pastor is the one being accused, these steps do not apply. Instead, the Moderator and Chair of Human Resources should be contacted immediately and will promptly forward the allegations to the Conference Minister of the Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the United Church of Christ. The Indiana-Kentucky Conference may be contacted at: 1-317-924-1395. Information on its current leadership may be found at [www.ikucc.org](http://www.ikucc.org).)

- 3) If the Senior/Associate 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) It is beyond the scope and experience of Plymouth Church, its membership and its leadership to assess the risk or probability that a person will offend or re-offend. With this in mind, whether or not the person currently is or previously has been in the criminal justice system, they will be asked to sign a release form so that the Response Team can contact their sex offender treatment provider and/or current therapist, 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) 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 Plymouth's entire congregation, including

our children and youth?

- 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?
- 6) 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 C.)

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, hospitality and education 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 are present. It may identify specific persons who are required to be with the person on Plymouth Church property. It denies the person access to keys to any church building.

- 7) 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 Plymouth Church 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 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.
- 8) 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 member of the Response Team or their

designee. If the person further refuses, the Fort Wayne Police Department will be called for assistance.

- 9) The Response Team will meet at least quarterly with any individual with whom Plymouth Church has a Covenant of Limited Access to review the arrangement and address any concerns.
- 10) 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.
- 11) 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.
- 12) 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.
- 13) The congregation grants the Response Team authorization to execute the provisions of this policy. Any action approved unanimously 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, notification of the action taken and the specific terms of any Covenant of Limited Access will at the discretion of the Response Team. The identity of the individual and the specifics of the Response Team investigation will remain confidential.

If the Response Team is unable to obtain unanimity, 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.

- 14) Any changes to a Covenant of Limited Access will be governed by the procedures in #13, 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 inappropriately sexually touching another child comes to the attention of the Senior/Associate Pastor or other staff member, the Senior/Associate Pastor will initiate contact individually with the parents of both children to discuss the allegation and next steps.

The Senior/Associate Pastor should encourage the parents of the child who was touched to seek

an evaluation for this child. Depending on the state law and the nature of the incident, it may be necessary to notify Child Protective Services. Regardless, before the alleged initiator is permitted to continue to attend any church activities, they should receive an extensive assessment by a child psychologist or psychiatrist with experience with children with sexual behavior problems. The Senior/Associate Pastor may choose to provide church funding for such assessment, but is not required to do so.

It is *not* the responsibility of the Senior/Associate 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 Plymouth 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 Senior/Associate 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 with other children, then the Senior/Associate Pastor and the parents will meet with the child to discuss the importance of never repeating the behavior, the harm it can do to other children, and the consequences should such a situation occur again.

If the treatment provider reports that the child has a sexual 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 any church activities. 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. SUPERSESSION**

The adoption of this Safe Church Policy supersedes any relevant policy previously or currently in effect and will remain in effect until such time as a new policy supersedes it.

## **XII. PERMISSIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

This policy is heavily adapted from the *Pilgrim United Church of Christ Safe Church Policy Concerning Abuse Prevention*, (Carlsbad, CA) March 28, 2007.

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>.

Some materials in this policy are adapted from *A Time to Heal* by Rev. Debra Haffner (copyright 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 recommended Safe Church Policy shall be inserted in its entirety in the call to the congregational meeting and notice issued weekly beginning at least one month in advance.  
B. The Plymouth Safe Church Policy will go into effect after such time as it is approved by a two-thirds majority vote of a quorum during each of the following events:

1. The Church Safety Committee must approve the policy by a two-thirds majority vote and send such recommendation to the Board of Deacons.
  2. The Board of Deacons must approve the policy by a two-thirds majority vote and send such recommendation to the Church Executive Council.
  3. The Church Executive Council must approve the policy by a two-thirds majority vote and send such recommendation to the Church Congregation.
  4. The Congregation must approve the policy by a two-thirds majority vote.
- C. Upon approval by the Congregation, the policy will take immediate effect.

### **XIV. AMENDMENT**

Upon its adoption at a congregational meeting, the Safe Church Policy may be amended as necessary by a vote from Executive Council upon the recommendation of the Safety Committee.

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## Appendix A

### PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF FORT WAYNE, UCC CHILDREN AND YOUTH VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

*A congregation committed to "safe church" policy*

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

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle Initial

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City/State/Zip

HOME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ BUSINESS PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Other name(s), if any, by which I have been known: \_\_\_\_\_

Other address(es) of past 5 years: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

I have never been found guilty, or plead guilty or no contest, to a criminal charge:

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

No civil lawsuit alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct has ever resulted in a judgment being entered against me, been settled out of court, or been dismissed because the statute of limitations had expired.

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

I have never terminated my employment or service in a volunteer position, or had my employment or authorization to hold a volunteer position terminated, for reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct.

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

If you answered "False" to any of the above statements, give a short explanation. (Please indicate the date, nature, and place of the incident, and the precise disposition of the charges.)

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Do you have a valid driver's license?      Yes \_\_\_\_\_      No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, please list:      State \_\_\_\_\_      License # \_\_\_\_\_

With respect to your driving record, you have not had your license suspended or revoked within the last five years due to reckless driving or driving while intoxicated and /or under the influence of a controlled substance.      True \_\_\_\_\_      False \_\_\_\_\_

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:

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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 this application, or for termination of the position I am seeking to fill. I acknowledge that it is my duty to reasonably 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 this relationship with an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for continuing and healthy covenant between volunteers and the church they seek to serve. To that end, I authorize Plymouth Congregational Church of Fort Wayne, United Church of Christ, and/or its agents to make inquiries regarding all statements I have set forth above. I also authorize all entities, persons, former employers, supervisors, courts, law enforcement and other public agencies to respond to inquiries concerning me, to supply verification of the statements I have made, and to comment on and state opinions regarding my background character. To encourage such persons and entities to speak openly and responsibly, I hereby release them from all liability from their responses, comments, and statements made in good faith and without malice. This information will be kept confidential.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian signature if applicant is under 18

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to applicant

## Appendix B

### ADULT ADVISORS & CHAPERONES FOR PLYMOUTH YOUTH GROUPS CRITERIA AND CODE OF CONDUCT

#### General Requirements:

1. Shall be a member of Plymouth Church for at least six months;
2. Must be 21 years of age or older;
3. Must have demonstrated ability in relating to and working with Plymouth's youth;
4. Evidence of spiritual and emotional maturity;
5. Shall act as a team member in fulfilling this role;
6. Will treat the young people with respect, and fairly, without regard to race, age, gender, sexual orientation/gender identity, mental or intellectual level, or family circumstance.
7. Must complete and sign the Plymouth volunteer information form annually.
8. Shall comply with Plymouth's policy on social media.

#### General Prohibitions – The following behaviors are prohibited at all times:

1. Display affection toward a youth in privacy; or violate the personal space and boundary of a young person at any time.
2. Comment to or about a youth's physical/bodily development;
3. Use profanity or tell off-color jokes;
4. Discuss or involve the youth inappropriately in your personal problems or issues;
5. Abuse or demean the youth as a group or as individuals, including but not limited to the behaviors listed on the reverse side of this form.
6. Absent oneself, for any reason, from the youth you are supervising.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Over*

## CODE OF CONDUCT WITH YOUTH

1. **Approval and Affection** – In providing approval or affection, the following guidelines apply:

| <i><b>Appropriate Physical Interactions</b></i>  | <i><b>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</b></i>   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side hugs</li> <li>• Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs</li> <li>• Pats on the shoulder or back</li> <li>• Handshakes</li> <li>• High-fives and hand slapping</li> <li>• Verbal praise</li> <li>• Touching hands, shoulders, and arms</li> <li>• Arms around shoulders</li> </ul> <p>These may be inappropriate if unwanted by the child or the employee or volunteer.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kisses</li> <li>• Showing affection in isolated area</li> <li>• Lap sitting</li> <li>• Wrestling</li> <li>• Piggyback rides</li> <li>• Tickling</li> <li>• Any type of massage given by or to a youth</li> <li>• Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or the employee or volunteer</li> <li>• Compliments relating to physique or body development</li> <li>• Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas</li> </ul> |

2. **Verbal Interactions** – The manner of speaking with youth establishes respect. The following guidelines apply:

| <i><b>Appropriate Verbal Interactions</b></i>  | <i><b>Inappropriate Verbal Interactions</b></i>  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive reinforcement</li> <li>• Appropriate jokes</li> <li>• Encouragement</li> <li>• Praise</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name-calling</li> <li>• Discussing sexual encounters or inappropriately involving youth in the personal problems or issues of employees and volunteers</li> <li>• Secrets</li> <li>• Cursing</li> <li>• Off-color or sexual jokes</li> <li>• Shaming</li> <li>• Belittling</li> <li>• Derogatory remarks</li> <li>• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate youth</li> <li>• Derogatory remarks about the youth or their family</li> </ul> |

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF FORT WAYNE, UCC COVENANT OF LIMITED ACCESS

Plymouth Congregational Church, United Church of Christ celebrates freedom, inclusion and diversity of belief, recognizing the love of God as the creative and supporting force in life. However, based on your background, we have concerns about your contact with our congregation, especially the 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 Plymouth 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.

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 ( )                      Never ( )

Coffee Hour:

Yes ( )                      Never ( )

Alternate Worship Service intended principally for adults:

Yes ( )                      Never ( )

Adult meetings with children in the same building, (such as the Folsom Room):

Yes ( )                      Never ( )

Adult meetings without children in building:

Yes ( )                      Never ( )

Intergenerational church activities:

Yes ( )                      Never ( )

Intergenerational group outings offsite from the church campus:

Yes ( ☐ )                      Never ( ☐ )

Church rest rooms:

Yes ( ☐ )                      Never ( ☐ )

Church parking lot:

Yes ( ☐ )                      Never ( ☐ )

Choir: Yes ( ☐ )

Never ( ☐ )

Liturgist or other worship leadership or participation:

Yes ( ☐ )                      Never ( ☐ )

Usher: Yes ( ☐ )

Never ( ☐ )

Alone in any church building with minister or other staff:

Yes ( ☐ )                      Never ( ☐ )

Access to church computer:

Yes ( ☐ )                      Never ( ☐ )

Serve on church boards or committees:

Yes ( ☐ )                      Never ( ☐ )

Plymouth Church social activities in members' homes with children present:

Yes ( ☐ )                      Never ( ☐ )

Other:

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Yes ( ☐ )                      Never ( ☐ )

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Yes ( ☐ )                      Never ( ☐ )

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Yes ( ☐ )                      Never ( ☐ )

I accept that the congregation of Plymouth Congregational Church 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.

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| _____<br>Signature                       | _____<br>Date |
| _____<br>Senior/Associate Pastor         | _____<br>Date |
| _____<br>Moderator                       | _____<br>Date |
| _____<br>Chair, Board of Deacons         | _____<br>Date |
| _____<br>Chair, Board of Human Resources | _____<br>Date |
| _____<br>Chair, Safety Committee         | _____<br>Date |