

**First Church of Christ, Congregational, in Bedford
United Church of Christ**

Safe Church Policies and Procedures

Original Safe Church Committee 2006

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Mission Statement

This document represents a promise and a commitment by our Church to make the First Church of Christ, Congregational, in Bedford a truly safe place. As a part of the body of Christ, The First Church of Christ, Congregational, in Bedford is called to follow Jesus' example of respect for the integrity and dignity of all persons. This is summed up in Jesus' Great Commandment to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and others as ourselves (Luke 10:27). To follow this commandment is to pursue love, safety, peace, and security for all who come within the reaches of our ministries. The *Safe Church Policies and Procedures* of The First Church of Christ, Congregational, in Bedford (hereafter referred to as First Church) require the people of its congregation to provide sanctuary for persons of all ages who are entrusted to its care. They also protect those who have responsibilities as leaders and teachers.

Introduction

Jesus calls us to offer hospitality to our children and youth, to nurture and to walk with them in their journey of faith. We at First Church know our children to be gifts from God, a vital part of our present and our future. We welcome them as full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God.

First Church is committed to providing a program of religious education for children from infancy through adulthood. In their work together, adults and children learn about and experience God's love through worship, mission, and Christian fellowship. Many members and associates of First Church are engaged in the ministry to its children and youth. We are grateful for and celebrate the dedication and love of God and people that the teachers and leaders bring to this ministry.

“But we’re a church! Nothing will happen here!” “It’s difficult enough to get volunteers now. We’ll never get anyone to teach church school or volunteer with youth if everyone has to be under such scrutiny.” “I can’t insult Joe Smith by asking him to sign a key policy.” “Our church has gotten along just fine the way it has for generations. Why must

we do something different now?” Okay, now all of the excuses are acknowledged and out of the way. The fact of the matter is, First Church, and all other churches, MUST have a safe church policy to deal with potential issues before they arise. To not have such a policy is to be irresponsible to our children, to our membership, and to our church.

The problem of abuse and neglect of children is not someone else’s problem. It doesn’t just happen in the home, or in some other town. It happens at churches of all denominations and at church-operated camps, schools and day care centers. Providing a safe place for all of our children, youth, and the church leaders who supervise them is one of the core values of our mission and ministry, both at First Church and within the wider UCC community.

Church leadership can create and maintain a safe church by:

- Using the pulpit to proclaim, educate and heal the realities of abuse and neglect,
- Encouraging congregational leadership to promote programs that address the realities of abuse and neglect,
- Making church school staff aware of signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect,
- Having resources and tools to minister to children and their families,
- Working with staff and boards to be sure our building is kept safe, first aid kits are up-to-date, emergency procedures are in place, and
- Establishing policies and procedures (Cabinet will have the authorization to approve/disapprove) that provide for the safety of children, youth and those who care for them.

Appropriate supervision and ongoing training are essential. The physical facilities of our church must be safe for all who enter its doors. Basic guidelines and safeguards must be in place to ensure that our church is a place of sanctuary for all. Paid staff and volunteers need to understand that these guidelines are for the benefit of all, adult and child alike. These guidelines can help to protect children from abuse and can help to protect staff and volunteers from situations that might lead to allegations against them. These guidelines also address safety issues for all ages.

Purpose

We have established these Policies and Procedures to make our church a safer church, to demonstrate our commitment to the physical safety and spiritual growth of our children, youth, teachers, caregivers, leaders, members, and visitors.

We are moved to do so because we know that, tragically, not all churches have proven to be safe places. Churches have been torn apart by the legal, emotional, and monetary consequences of litigation following accidents or allegations of abuse. By implementing this policy and these procedures, we hope to make First Church a safe environment for

all. We have established guidelines for personnel, caregivers, leaders and teachers, discipline, driving policies, building safety, and first aid.

Personnel Guidelines (Staff and Volunteers)

- First Church requires that all employees of First Church have on file a complete *Employment Application and Disclosure Form (EADF)*, which includes current and previous residences, current and previous employers, references, and a completed *CORI* (criminal records) check. The EADF shall be submitted to the Pastor and maintained as confidential. The CORI report shall be maintained by the designated CORI supervisor(s) and will be confidential.
- The designated CORI supervisor(s) will verify that a CORI report will be on file for any volunteer of First Church who may be in a situation that would be described as "unmonitored access to children and/or youth," e.g. caring for or teaching children, driving for a youth event accompanying a group of youth on an overnight event, etc.
- If additional information would be helpful, an *Application for Children/Youth Work at First Church of Christ, Congregational* is available for potential employees and volunteers. Such information would be submitted to the Director of Christian Education and the Pastor.
- Staff may use their discretion in getting a reference on an employee or volunteer (see Appendix for "Reference Form").
- Staff will input into the database the dates that volunteers and staff were CORIED.
- CORI checks on employees and volunteers are to be submitted before they begin their employment or volunteerism with First Church. Social security numbers are not to be included on web submittals of CORI forms.
- All individuals have the right to read the CORI report in their name that is received by First Church.
- CORI reports will be downloaded from the web and paper hard copies printed. The reports are not to be stored electronically. The paper copies will be kept in a locked file cabinet in a location maintained by the CORI supervisor(s). Copies are to be kept a minimum of three years after a person has completed his/her employment term at First Church. Copies of Volunteer CORIES will be kept until at least three years after being active participant in First Church.
- Selection of designated CORI supervisor(s) will be determined by Cabinet and staff.

Church Program, Classroom, and Youth Program Guidelines

Youth Members of Church Programs

- No youth member of a church program shall be in attendance at a meeting with less than two adult members unless the youth's parent is also present.

Teachers and Leaders (RAs)

- First Church Sunday School teachers and Youth Resource Adults (RAs) should be active participants in our church for at least six months before undertaking ministry with youth or children.
- Leaders and chaperones must be at least 18 years of age and at least three years older than the oldest eligible youth participant.
- There should be two or more adult leaders, at least one adult for every ten youth.
- *First Church Sunday School teachers and RAs must either have already been CORIED at First Church or have completed a CORI request form and returned it to the Director of Christian Education prior to teaching.*
- No adult leader should initiate or encourage inappropriate physical or intimate contact with or between youth.
- Adult leaders should have knowledge at all times of the whereabouts of all young people in attendance at church-sponsored events.
- Adult leaders are to be sure that all participants in youth group remain with the group throughout the event. No pairing or otherwise separating from the group to other parts of the building, grounds, or project area is permitted, except with permission of group leaders. Participants must remain in groups of at least three people at all times.
- Children and youth MUST remain in their Sunday School classroom until a parent or previously agreed-upon designee picks them up. Two adult leaders should remain in the classroom until all children have been picked up. Adult leaders at Youth Group should remain at the church and verify that youth have been picked up by parents or the driver who has been authorized by parents to pick them up.
- Parents are responsible for their child(ren)'s actions and behaviors while in church or at a First Church-sponsored function, except while under the care/supervision of First Church staff or volunteers.
- A child should NEVER be in the elevator unless under the supervision of adults.
- The Director of Christian Education (and the Board of Christian Nurture or designee) must periodically inspect classrooms, offices, work areas and other areas where children and adults are together. Parents are welcome to visit the classroom at any time, as well as to volunteer to assist the teacher(s).
- Members of First Church must pay close attention to adults who spend

- considerable “off duty” time with the same child or children. If such practices are observed, this should be brought to the attention of the First Church pastoral staff who should consider discussing the matter with the adult and, if necessary, with the child. Any inappropriate conduct or relationship(s) MUST be reported to Pastoral Staff, who will make the determination regarding reporting such behavior.
- All employees and volunteers should limit their physical contact with children to appropriate boundaries (shoulders and above, holding hands for a limited time, etc.).
 - First Church has a policy for conducting a fair and discreet investigation of all alleged incidents of sexual abuse. All allegations will be investigated in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 119, and the Department of Social Services regulations.

Classroom Safety

- If a classroom door has no window, the door shall remain open while class is in session.
- We will follow the Two-Adult Rule, as stated below.

Two-Adult Rule

- To be a legal adult, a person must be 18 years of age or older and at least 3 years older than the oldest participant.
- Two adults (or one adult and one responsible high school aide) shall be present with children in all classrooms or childcare settings. Two adults should be present at youth group settings. At no time should an adult be in the church alone with a child or youth who is not their own. When one adult needs to leave a classroom, adults in the nearest classroom should be notified AND the doors should remain open.
- When one-on-one interactions are appropriate and/or necessary, care shall be taken that they are conducted in an environment that provides visibility to others. Another adult should have knowledge of their whereabouts and who is meeting.
- Staff members or adult volunteer leaders who meet with a youth alone, should leave the door open, and make another adult aware of the meeting.
- Teams of husband/wife or other same interest couples will not satisfy the two-adult rule in situations other than Sunday School. (Same interest couples include those living together, in a dating relationship, or of close family relationship.) In instances when such a team exists, a third adult will be needed to meet the two adult requirement.

Classroom Management and Discipline

The approach to classroom management and discipline at First Church is guided by the objective of showing the children how to work together in Christian community, supporting and respecting each other in their quest for God and for meaning.

Teachers should expect the children or youth in their classes to:

- Be respectful of others in class, both peers and leaders; bullying or harassment will not be tolerated.
- Speak in turn so that only one person talks at a time, and listens when others speak.
- Participate fully in class.
- Keep members of group physically and emotionally safe.
- Be respectful of classroom and materials.

Under the supervision of the Director of Christian Education, teachers and RAs will seek to assist their classes and programs in meeting these expectations by:

- Preparing the lesson /program carefully.
- Making use of class covenants, gathering rituals or activities and other items, which help the children and youth to be ready for their class or group meeting.
- Maintaining close communication within teaching and RA teams so that children/youth can feel consistency from the adults working with them.

Unless under the direct supervision of First Church staff or volunteers, discipline is the responsibility of the parent or guardian. The purpose of discipline is to maintain order in a manner consistent with the teaching of Christian responsibility, respect and cooperation.

- No child shall be disciplined by the use of spanking, hitting, slapping, or any form of physical punishment.
- Verbal reprimands shall not include destructive criticism, insults, shouting, ridicule or humiliation.
- Adults (teachers, caregivers, staff) are encouraged to listen to the child, communicate expectations of appropriate behavior, give alternative choices, or in some cases use a time-out.
- Teachers and parents are encouraged early in the year to establish relationship with each other so that each may be supportive in helping prevent or manage possible difficult situations.
- If a child is continually disruptive and does not respond to the discipline employed by the Sunday School teacher, an adult should be sent to locate the Supe du jour or Director of Christian Education. If this person is not available, the parent should be contacted and brought to the room. The teacher should inform the Director of Christian Education and/or the Pastor of the situation and seek supportive advice concerning his/her role in any communication that may be sought by the parents.
- Parents are responsible for their children before the worship service begins, and after the worship service and Sunday School session ends.
- During worship service, children must have a parent or another responsible adult on the premises.

Bathroom Supervision

- Parents should escort their children to the bathroom before Sunday School begins.
- After Sunday School begins, a teacher/aide will escort any children (pre-school through first grade) who need to go to the bathroom. The teacher/aide will wait outside the bathroom. With an adult present in the hall, older children should go to the bathroom, returning within a reasonable timeframe.
- If a child needs assistance, two adults should be present—when only one adult is available, the adult will leave the door to the bathroom open.
- If anything unusual occurs, the Sunday School teacher should write a note and give it to the Director of Christian Education or Pastoral by the end of the morning. Any possible further communication with parents should be at the discretion of the Pastor and/or Director of Christian Education..
- Children will wash their hands with soap after toileting. If necessary, the teacher may help them wash their hands.
- Ideally, parents of infants should check their child’s diaper before leaving the nursery, changing it if necessary. Otherwise, a Childcare Adult will change the diaper with another adult present. See Appendix: *How to Change a Diaper*.

Field Trips

- Field Trips and Special Events are planned and led under the supervision of the Director of Christian Education.
- First Church staff members or volunteer adults supervising an activity or “field trip” away from the Church must have written permission from every child attending the activity (*Parental Consent/Medical Treatment Form, Youth Permission Form for Overnight and One-Day Activities/Events/Trips Sponsored by First Church*). The permission also gives consent to transport, both between church and home AND on “field trips.”
- The Director of Christian Education or the Pastor must clear any and all adults supervising overnight stays of Church youth.
- Two adult males should dorm with the boys and two adult females should dorm with the girls.
- All outside doors will be locked and will remain locked until parents arrive for pick-up in the morning or until authorized volunteers transport the youth home.
- All activities and programs should be conducted in an open area or room.
- Should an injury or mishap take place during a church program or event, an authorized volunteer should complete an *Incident Report Form* and submit it to the Pastor and Director of Christian Education and the parent should be informed.
- Authorized volunteers are to report to Pastor and Director of Christian Education about any allegation of serious physical or emotional injury or neglect. The Pastor and Director of Education report to the Department of Social Services (1-617-748-2000 or 1-800-792-5200) by oral communication. A *Mandated Report Form* (see Appendix) must be completed within 48 hours of the oral report.

Driving Policies and Guidelines

- Drivers are to be CORIED. Drivers are to be provided with an accurate list of participants with addresses, phone and cell numbers and any specific emergency information needed.
- Nobody under the age of 21 is allowed to drive in an official capacity on behalf of First Church.
- The safety of the occupants of the vehicle must be the main priority for the driver at all times.
- Seat belts must be worn at all times by all occupants.
- A charged and turned-on cell phone should be in the car at all times for emergency situations. The driver must not use cell phone when driving. (The emergency kit is to have a list of everyone attending and their emergency information).
- When a rental vehicle is procured on behalf of the church, all available insurance options offered by the rental company should be taken.
- In case of a driving accident or incident, the driver will immediately contact First Church staff, who will work with the driver to ensure all appropriate steps are taken—contacting insurance companies, calling parents/family, etc.
- First Church will follow all state laws concerning the operation of trucks, cars, and/or vans.
- First Church Driving Policies and Guidelines apply to official church-sponsored programs only and not to casual member-to-member rides home, etc.
- Our preference is to have two approved adult volunteers drive youth to and from events, per vehicle.
- In the event it is not possible to provide two adults in each vehicle, the minimum will be one adult driver and two or more youths grade six or older.
- An emergency first-aid kit and emergency identification cards, which include emergency information for the travelers, will be taken on each field trip or overnight program. Keep a copy of the *Incident/Accident Report Form*, one pen and one pencil in the kit. This kit, when not in use, will be stored in the office of the Director of Christian Education.
- Parents will be informed of the purpose and destination of the trip, names of the adults attending, and mode of transportation. Parent permission for attending is required. Permission forms can be obtained from the Director of Christian Education.

Building Safety Guidelines

Fire Drills (for adults and children) at The First Church of Christ, Congregational, in Bedford

At the conclusion of worship a repeated bell will gather attention. The pastor will give verbal directions – it will be most helpful if everyone stays quiet for directions. Exit guidelines are posted on the backs of the middle range of pews – indicating whether to go

forward or to the rear to exit. These will be in effect unless the location of a fire would not allow exit through doors by pulpit or lectern.

Our deacons have been alerted to be ready to stand near the exit doors to guide people out. Please take note if there is someone seated near you who may need assistance in walking to an exit. When the signal is given, please stand and be ready to walk – not run – to the nearest exit. People in the back half of the sanctuary exit through the three doorways behind them. Go to the three external doorways, down stone steps out front and **ALL THE WAY TO THE SIDEWALK.**

PLEASE GIVE PREFERENCE TO WHEELCHAIRS FOR FRONT DOOR CLOSEST TO THE POLICE STATION SIDE – it has a small ramp.

Please move down the sidewalk toward the police station. DO NOT BLOCK THE DRIVEWAY, AS FIRE TRUCKS WOULD NEED TO TURN INTO IT IN EVENT OF A REAL FIRE.

People in the left front quarter of the sanctuary (pulpit/driveway side) exit through white door next to pulpit. Then turn left down the three steps; exit to the driveway. Cross all the way over to the little walkway next to the manse, **then down to the sidewalk in front of the manse.** DO NOT BLOCK THE DRIVEWAY, AS FIRE TRUCKS WOULD NEED ACCESS TO IT IN A REAL FIRE.

People in the right front quarter of the sanctuary (lectern/police station side) exit through white door next to lectern. **Go straight ahead past the rest room; turn right to the external door.** There are five steps down from the outside porch. This exit is approximately halfway along the building, therefore: the location of a fire may determine whether you would walk to the front sidewalk or walk to the rear of the property, beyond the stone wall.

Please note that at present as you turn to go toward Great Road. There will be steps up from the ground to the walkway that parallels the police station property. If you have difficulty with climbing stairs or stepping up, you may want to head to the area beyond the stone wall at the rear of the property. If there were a fire blocking that direction, you would want assistance from someone near you to help you up that step.

SOUNDING THE ALL CLEAR:

At the all-clear signal – repeated ringing of a bell -- you may return to the building for coffee hour. Parents: please pick up children from their Sunday School classes, to which they will have returned after the all-clear.

SPECIAL NOTE TO ALL PARENTS WITH CHILDREN/YOUTH IN CHILD CARE OR SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Our Sunday School has been conducting such walk-throughs for a few years. Their teachers and helpers will guide your children to the area beyond the stone wall to the rear of the property.

In the event of a real emergency, parents would need to go around the Mudge Way side of the police station to retrieve their children. Sunday School teachers and staff would stay with children until parents picked them up.

During a drill no child will be left unattended. Church School adults will remain with children until every child is accounted for.

Do not use elevators.

Fire Evacuation Procedure For Infants through Middle School

Basic Evacuation Procedures should be explained appropriately for each age level within each class at the beginning of the year, and reviewed periodically throughout the year. The difference between Fire/Evacuation DRILL procedures and REAL Fire/Evacuation procedures should be emphasized in class orientation.

Every week as soon as the class has gathered:

- Take attendance of both children/youth and adults.
- Note number in attendance.
- Put attendance folder where you can quickly pick it up and take it with you.

For a Fire DRILL:

When you hear the fire signal

- Explain to the class what it is to do.
- Line up quickly with one teacher in front, the other in back.
- Make Sure all children are there.
- Take your attendance folder and move quickly and orderly out of the room. (Let the door close behind you. Do not leave the door open.)
- Infants and Toddlers: Carry children
- Age 3 and 4: Line up, Hold hands. Walk.
- Do not use elevators.

EXITS:

GROUPS IN NEW WING EXIT AT THE END OF THE BUILDING:

- Walk quickly and orderly to the back of the church building.
- Gather at the area where the benches and flowers are. **DO NOT CROSS THE STREET TO THE PARKING LOT.**
- Keep the class together. Count and check to see that all are there.
- Stay put until told to what to do. If it is a fire drill you will be told to return to the building and to your classroom. If it is a real emergency, you stay put or be directed as a group to a safer location.

GROUPS IN LOWER FELLOWSHIP HALL EXIT THROUGH THE BULKHEAD DOOR AT THE REAR CORNER OF THE CHURCH.

- Walk quickly and orderly to the back of the church building.

- Gather at the area where the benches and flowers are. DO NOT CROSS THE STREET TO THE PARKING LOT.
- Keep the class together. Count and check to see that all are there.
- Stay put until told what to do. If it is a fire drill you will be told to return to the building and to your classroom. *If it is a real emergency, you will stay put or be directed as a group to a safer location.*

GROUPS IN UPPER FELLOWSHIP HALL EXIT THROUGH THE BACK PORCH DOOR AT THE REAT CORNER OF THE CHURCH

- Walk quickly and orderly to the back of the church building.
- Gather at the area where the benches and flowers are. DO NOT CROSS THE STREET TO THE PARKING LOT.
- Keep the class together. Count and check to see that all are there.
- Stay put until told to what to do. If it is a fire drill you will be told to return to the building and to your classroom. *If it is a real emergency, you will be told to stay put or be directed as a group to a safer location.*

Emergencies and First Aid

First Church adheres to the Red Cross Guidelines for creating a healthy environment.

- Signage regarding hand washing, toileting, first aid and dealing with bodily fluids are to be posted in classrooms and children's bathrooms. Instructions for changing diapers are also to be posted in infant room near the changing table.
- Keep a fire escape ladder in the reception area near the church office.
- Keep a wheelchair near the exit door by the Vestry chair lift, and another one inside the Fellowship Hall entrance near the elevator door.
- AED equipment is available next door at the police station, and also at the fire station. We are close enough we do not need our own.
- One volunteer will maintain First Aid kits, including gloves, (in accordance with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) standards in each of the rooms (including the kitchen, Narthex, and Lower Fellowship Hall) and clearly mark the location of each kit. (See *Appendix* for list of supplies in the kits.)
- The Director of Christian Education, the Board of Christian Nurture, and the Board of Deacons will practice emergency evacuations/fire drills one time over the course of the church school year. (See pages 8 to 10 for *Fire Evacuation Procedures*.)
- Emergency evacuation routes will be posted in all classrooms.
- Teachers are instructed in teacher training at the start of the church school year how to handle such events.
- A phone with emergency numbers will be available to all teachers. Its location will be posted in each classroom.
- An emergency information card will be posted by phones in the Narthex, kitchen, secretary's desk, reception area, workroom, and the Infant/Toddler Room.
- To keep the fire lane in the driveway clear, specific set-up procedures for outdoor events such as Homecoming Sunday, Nurture Sunday, and Strawberry Festival

will be followed. (See *Appendix* for map).

Keys

The Church Secretary will maintain a list of the staff and First Church members having in their possession a key or set of keys to the church and its buildings/rooms (*Key Log Sheet*—see Appendix). In addition, the secretary will maintain a log of persons who have a key for a short duration. The log will have the dates on which each key was issued and returned, and the reason it was needed. The First Church staff have final authorization as to who may hold a key, either for a short or long-term basis. Determination will be made at weekly staff meetings.

ALL persons having a key in their possession for any length of time MUST sign a written statement of agreement as to their responsibilities to the church and its membership (*Employment/Authorized Volunteer Application and Disclosure Form* and a *Key Receipt Form*).

Building Safety

The First Church Pastoral Staff, working with the Board of Stewardship, will

- Ensure that first aid supplies and fire extinguishers are on all levels of the building. First aid kits will be located on the right closet shelf in the Narthex, facing Great Road, the kitchen, and in the kitchenette cupboards in the lower level across from the Infant/Toddler Room. The kits are to be in accordance with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) standards.
- Maintain maps with floor plans on bulletin boards indicating where exits, fire extinguishers, telephones, emergency numbers, first aid kits, and fire pull stations are located. (See map in *Appendix*.)
- Ensure that all rooms have appropriate emergency exit signage.
- Provide diapering stations that have flat, sturdy surfaces installed at adult height, and ideally equipped with railings. The surface will be waterproof, free of cracks, tape, and crevices. (See *How to Change a Diaper* in the Appendix.)
- In the Sanctuary, check the attachable pew candleholders and candles to be sure they are secure before lighting.
- Keep exits clear of containers and trash (landing outside kitchen door).
- Keep interior halls and exits clear for traffic during all church programs and events.

Equipment Maintenance

- The Church Secretary, working with the Board of Stewardship, will ensure that a schedule of regular maintenance is performed on all safety equipment (smoke alarms, fire detectors, fire extinguishers, etc.).
- The kitchen crew under the direction of the Stewardship Board is to clean the filters above the stove on a regular basis, or the Stewardship Board should hire someone to do so.

Education

- First Church staff, Cabinet members, board members, committee members, Sunday School teachers, Supe du jours (Sunday superintendent of the day), and other volunteers will receive a copy of these *Safe Church Policies and Procedures*. An article in one of the church newsletters will inform all those associated with First Church about the *Safe Church Policies and Procedures*. Copies will be available in the church library and in the church office for anyone requesting them.
- The chairs or a designee of The Board of Christian Nurture, The Board of Deacons, The Board of Stewardship, The Outreach Board, as well as The Church Staff, and the Church Moderator (Individually or together) will review the *Safe Church Policies and Procedures* every spring , and request Cabinet to revise them if necessary by September of that year. Cabinet will provide Boards and the Congregation with appropriate notices and announcements concerning any changes or special issues.

Ordained Clergy

Ordained clergy of The First Church of Christ, Congregational, in Bedford will:

1. Comply with all policies and procedures as described in the Manual for the Ministry of the UCC found in section 1 pp.14-15 as well as the Policies and Procedures for a Safe Church.
2. Complete and pass a CORI evaluation.
3. Sign a statement of compliance (*Individual Agreement of Nondisclosure and Statement of CORI Certification Compliance*—see Appendix).
4. Attend a training session on *Safe Church Policies and Procedures*.
5. Complete a *Key Receipt Form*.
6. Will not be alone in any First Church building and/or property with a youth other than his/her own child at unscheduled times.
7. Will be certified CORI officers and mandated reporters. This information should be on file with the Criminal History Systems Board.
8. Will establish and maintain healthy spiritual, professional, physical, social, and emotional boundaries – recognizing that these may vary according to situations. When in doubt, clergy should consult with colleagues.

Allegation Procedures for Ordained Clergy

If an allegation of misconduct occurs regarding ordained clergy, a staff member, in conjunction with the Moderator, will report it to the Metropolitan Boston Association (MBA) office and the current Area Minister. Upon determination that there is credible evidence, the area minister notifies the Committee on Ministry of such allegations. After further investigation, notification, and pastoral interventions into the situation, the matter will be referred to the Committee on Ministerial Standing. At this point, response teams in pairs are sent to gather information from all concerned parties willing to issue statements. Following that, all parties present their information to the Ministerial Standing Board, which rules on the incident for the Association.

Further information can be gained from:

1. Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ (MACUCC) – *Guidelines for the Review of Ethical Misconduct by Ordained, Commissioned, and Licensed Church Professionals*, May 1989.
2. *Nurturing Safety Within Ministerial Relationships*, 1986 – UCC.

Statement of Cabinet

The best insurance we can have for protecting the children, youth, and adults of our congregation is to follow the *Safe Church Policies and Procedures*, and to involve as many church members as possible in training them about building safety issues, and about child sexual abuse and adult sexual misconduct. We must follow up on complaints, incidents or disclosures with integrity; pursue our intuitive hunches; and act upon the facts when they are before us. However, these policies and procedures are not a guarantee that our employees or volunteers will behave properly.

Before September of each year, the First Church staff and the chair or a designee of each board, shall review these *Safe Church Policies and Procedures*, including the *Appendix* and forms. They are to make recommended changes and/or additions to the Cabinet. After Cabinet approves updated revised version. It is the responsibility of each Board to distribute updated copies of *Safe Church Policies and Procedures* and/or to direct attention to the specific content applicable to all individuals who are responsible for events, programs, and activities sponsored by their Board. The policies and procedures are subject to amendment by the Cabinet at any time.

The Cabinet of the First Church of Christ, Congregational in Bedford, UCC adopts the *Safe Church Policies and Procedures* effective this _____ day of _____, 200_.

Church Moderator _____