

- Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, 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. For example, 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.

Conclusion

We present this pamphlet for review of our church's **Safe Church Policy** as a means of raising awareness and demonstrating our heart-felt desire to maintain safety for all who participate in our life and ministry. We welcome your comment and input regarding these and other guidelines that help us be faithful to our call as Christ's Church!



The Safe Church Emblem

We post this emblem on the church website and printed documents so others may be knowledgeable concerning our church's desire to protect and preserve the safety of every person.

"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here among friends!"

A SAFE CHURCH POLICY
*Including Overview of
 Sexual Exploitation,
 Ministerial Conduct,
 and
 Youth Protection Policy*
 Adopted Nov. 27, 2007



The Orthodox
 Congregational Church
 A United Church of Christ
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A Safe Church Is An Intentional Decision

As a community of faith committed to following in the way of Jesus Christ, we strive to extend a generous welcome to all who enter our doors and to treat them with the love and dignity that God bestows upon each and every one of us. We want our church to be a safe place for everyone.

Unfortunately, we cannot simply assume that our church is a safe place. *We must take intentional and direct actions* to ensure that it is safe. The Safe Church Ministry Team wants people of all ages to be able to deepen their relationship with God and each other in an environment that is safe and secure. This includes creating an environment where the vulnerable are protected and opportunities for inappropriate behavior are eliminated.

What is Safety?

Safety means that a person's spiritual, emotional and physical self is protected from injury. For example:

- **Spiritual Safety**

- People have the freedom to express their faith appropriately.
 - People's beliefs are treated respectfully.

- **Emotional Safety**

- Kindness and civility are the norm.
 - People refrain from personal attacks and gossip.
 - Confidentiality is honored.

- **Physical Safety**

- Keyholders agree to abide by safe church policies.
 - Facilities are clean and well lit.
 - Exits are clearly marked and free of debris.
 - Fire extinguishers are clearly visible and in working order.
 - Chemicals and poisons are properly labeled and stored.
 - Food preparation areas are clean and health department guidelines for food preparation are followed.

Church: denotes the collective body of our church family (members & friends) and applies to all programs officially run by our own organization whether on or off site. Those organizations either renting or being provided space in our building will be made aware of our safe church policy.

Sexual exploitation: sexual activity or contact (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which a minister engaged in the work of the church takes advantage of the vulnerability of a participant by causing or allowing the participant to engage in sexual behavior with the minister.

Sexual harassment: repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to his or her wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person's sexuality or sexual orientation 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:

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

- Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, or invitations;
- Verbal contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits or sexual orientation, sexual propositions;
- Physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual intercourse; and,

logical, emotional, and spiritual health and that they have adequate preparation and education for helping those individuals they seek to serve in ministry. It is the policy of the Orthodox Congregational Church UCC to encourage its leaders, authorized ministers, employees, and volunteers to nurture safety within ministerial relationships by being attentive to self-care, education, and the importance of referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources. It is also expected that those engaged in providing ministry will be required to undergo a CORI background check in order to begin serving in any capacity related to children or youth. A new CORI will be required five years after the initial check. At the start of each new year, child & youth workers will complete a disclosure form noting any changes to their authorization to work with children and/or youth for review by the Safe Church Team.

C. Youth Protection Policy

The Orthodox Congregational Church UCC is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God's love. In order to ensure this, we expect that all people applying to be volunteers who work with minors will have been members for at least six months or friends of the Orthodox Congregational Church UCC for one year. It is the policy of the church to provide adequate supervision for all youth activities. We also expect all employees or volunteers who work with minors to complete and the background check and annual disclosure forms as mentioned in "Section B" above.

In addition, we abide by the American Camping Association standard which requires a 1:7 ratio of adults to youth while on retreat or events away from the church and a minimum of one male and one female advisor on all such events.

DEFINITIONS

Minister: a person engaged by the church to carry out its ministry. Minister includes elected or appointed leaders of the church, employees, and volunteers, as well as authorized ministers.

Authorized minister: a person who holds ordained ministerial standing or has been commissioned or licensed by an association of the United Church of Christ.

Ministerial relationship: the relationship between one who carries out the ministry of the church and the one being served by that ministry.

Protection Guidelines

Sexual abuse can occur anywhere and removing the opportunity for abuse is a key step in prevention.

Training

All church employees and all adults working with children will be trained in abuse prevention, first aid, and fire safety. In addition, background checks (CORI) will be conducted on all adults working in leadership and teaching positions prior to their involvement with children/youth. These checks are reviewed by the Safe Church Team to provide screening of all prospective child and youth workers.

For those serving in our child & youth ministry program continuously, each person must authorize a new CORI every five (5) years. They will sign disclosure forms annually to testify that no changes in their child/youth worker status has taken place.

The "Two Adult" Rule

Meetings and classes should be planned so that there are always two adults in attendance. No adult should ever be alone with a child who is not their own nor out of sight of other adults and children.

Five-Year Older Rule

Youth leaders must be at least five years older than the oldest participant in the class, group or activity. Junior Youth Assistants may be older students, but they are not figured in the "adult leadership count" described below.

Meeting Spaces

Meetings with children shall be held in well-lit public spaces. Doors should be unlocked and have windows. If there is a need for a private conversation, the door should be open and the participants visible to others. Children up to grade three will not be released to anyone other than a parent without signed permission.

Overnight Events & Retreats

When a function involves an overnight stay, there shall be at least two adults, one for each gender. Privacy will be provided for washing and dressing. In addition, we abide by "American Association of Camping Guidelines" that require a minimum of 1 adult to 7 students and that at least two adults, one for each gender, be present for all retreats/field trips.

Language and behavior

Adults should avoid sexual references, jokes and innuendo. Children and teenagers shall be encouraged to refrain from sexual talk.

Discipline

Discipline policies appropriate to each age group may be found in the Christian Education Handbook.

Parental Involvement

Parents are always welcome in their child's classroom. Trips and over-night meetings require written permission and insurance information from parent or guardian for emergency medical treatment.

Nursery/Toddler Program

Nursery care is available during our worship services for children up to three years old. We are in the process of bringing on staff a nursery caregiver who is a minimum of 18 years of age and who will provide consistent care for our youngest attendees. To augment and satisfy our safe-church policy, parents will be asked to volunteer in the nursery on a rotating basis to ensure two adults are present in the nursery at all times.

Parents are asked to fill out a nursery registration form that is kept on file in the nursery/toddler room. Safety of our children is our top priority and we have strict check-in and dismissal procedures.



Reporting Abuse

Abuse is a crime that will be reported to the appropriate authorities. Church leaders, teachers and laypersons with any suspicion of abuse occurring at the Orthodox Congregational Church UCC in Mansfield or its ministries should contact one of the Safe Church Ministry Team listed below. The Safe Church Team is available for consultation and to assist in filing appropriate documentation.

Questions may be directed to any member of the Safe Church Ministry Team:

<i>Rev. Ted Newcomb, Pastor</i>	774.266.3389 (cell)
<i>Eric Greenberg, C.S. Superintendent</i>	508.339.2603
<i>Kirsten Holmes, Christian Ed. Rep.</i>	508.397.7754
<i>Laurie Geminiani, Christian Ed. Rep.</i>	508.339.0401

Clarifying Definitions & Expectations for those working with Children, Youth & Adults at the Orthodox Congregational Church UCC

STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. Prohibition of Sexual Exploitation and Harassment (See definitions)

The Orthodox Congregational Church UCC of Mansfield is committed to creating and maintaining a community in which members, friends, staff, and volunteers can worship and work together in an atmosphere free of all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Specifically, all persons associated with the Orthodox Congregational Church UCC of Mansfield should be aware that the church is strongly opposed to sexual exploitation and harassment and that such behavior is prohibited by church policy. It is the intention and responsibility of the church to take whatever action may be needed to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and, if necessary, to discipline those persons who violate this policy.

B. Ministerial Conduct (See definitions)

All persons engaged in the ministry of the Orthodox Congregational Church UCC (including elected or appointed leaders, employees, volunteers, and authorized ministers) are responsible for knowing the possible impact of their words and actions in ministering to the emotional, mental, and spiritual needs of persons who come to them for help or over whom they have any kind of authority. Sexual harassment or sexual exploitation of parishioner(s) or other individual(s) by anyone engaged in the ministry of the Orthodox Congregational Church UCC is unethical and unprofessional behavior and will not be tolerated within this congregation.

Because ministers (*including elected or appointed leaders, employees, volunteers, and authorized ministers*) often deal with individuals who are emotionally and psychologically fragile or otherwise personally vulnerable, it is imperative that those engaged in the ministry of this church maintain their own psycho-