

Safe Church Policy



**Prepared by Pilgrim United Church of Christ Safe Church Task
Force
to create a safe environment for our children and youth.**

**Pilgrim UCC
535 Stow Street
Fond du Lac, WI 54935
920-921-0415 • www.pilgrimuccfdl.org**



Safe Church Policy

MISSION STATEMENT: The congregation at Pilgrim United Church of Christ aspires to be a God trusting and nurturing place. Our goal is to provide a safe environment for everyone; children, youth, adults, visitors and employees who participate in our programs and use our facilities. We want our congregation to be a safe haven, free of all forms of abuse, harassment, exploitation, and intimidation.

Abuse can include:

- **Physical abuse** is when a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm.
- **Emotional abuse** is when a person exposes a child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty
- **Neglect** is a form of abuse in which a person endangers a child's health, safety, or welfare through negligence.
- **Sexual abuse** is when there is either direct sexual contact between a child and an adult or anyone older and more powerful or any interaction between a child and an adult in which the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult or another person.

If you are unsure whether or not your suspected case falls under this definition, it is strongly recommended that you err to the side of caution and report your suspicion immediately.

- **Reporting Responsibilities:** Any inappropriate conduct or relationship between an adult worker and a child or youth shall be promptly reported to the *Pastor*, the Children and Youth Religious Education Director (CYRED) or a member of the Safe Church Advisory Committee (SCAC).
- **If You Suspect a Violation of the Code:** If a suspected case of abuse has either been reported to you or is suspected by you to have occurred at a congregational-related function or program, immediately contact one of the following: the *Pastor*, the Children and Youth Religious Education Director or a member of the Safe Church Advisory Committee. In the case where none of these people can be contacted, then contact the Northeast Association of the Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ Minster. If the alleged abuser is the Pastor report the allegation to a member of the Safe Church Advisory Committee. The Safe Church Advisory Committee will contact the Northeast Association Minster.

SCREENING POLICY: Our congregation welcomes volunteers who have taken an active part of our congregation for at least six months to become involved with the Educational and Youth Programs. The Pastor and the Safe Church Advisory Committee shall be responsible to ensure all applicants are screened. There are two levels of screening: primary and secondary.

1. **PRIMARY SCREENING PROCEDURE:** Those workers such as teachers and youth group leaders who will have frequent contact with children and/or youth must undergo the primary screening procedure by reviewing this policy and completing the attached application form. Furthermore, volunteers and/or anyone with anticipated unmonitored contact with youth or children will complete a screening application and authorize a Criminal Records Background Check.

The Pastor will review the submitted forms and may conduct a personal interview. The Pastor will arrange for a Criminal Records Background Check, when applicable, and will check the references listed on the survey. Once a year, the current vice-president is responsible for verifying that background checks have been made, training has been conducted, and records are stored in a secure location.

Note: All employees shall complete the Primary Screening Procedure as listed above and will abide by the Safe Church Policy as a condition of employment. An exception is those individuals who have had background checks by the National United Church of Christ within the last 2 years.

2. **SECONDARY SCREENING PROCEDURE:** Volunteers who will have limited contact with children or youth over the course of a year, such as the occasional nursery assistant, youth group driver or confirmation parent helper are asked to review this policy, its code of behavior, and return a signed acknowledgment indicating such a review to the Pastor or his/her designee. (Limited contact is defined as 3 or less events per year)

Any person known to have committed previous acts of sexual misconduct with children or youth shall be strictly prohibited from serving our children or youth. All persons will have read and agreed to abide by all Policies and Procedures herein. Signature upon the appropriate primary or secondary application denotes a willingness to remain in compliance with current policies and procedures.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING: The Pastor or The Children and Youth Religious Education Director will be responsible for the implementation of procedures designed to educate volunteers and congregation members regarding these policies and procedures. As part of each new employee's orientation, each employee will review these policies, procedures and code of behavior. An annual training program(s) will be conducted for staff and volunteers. A Code of Behavior, Application Process and Response Plan will be appended to this Policy and are subject to annual review by Safe Church Advisory Committee.

MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS: Records of all actions required by this policy and any material pertinent to it, including reports, workers' surveys, and application and acknowledgment forms, shall be kept for a legally appropriate time (35 years) in a secure and confidential place. The Pastor and Safe Church Advisory Committee will be responsible for the secure storage of all records.

SAFE CHURCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE: In the event that a volunteer, congregation member or staff member is uncomfortable reporting an allegation of sexual misconduct to the Pastor that person may take the allegation or concern to the Safe Church Advisory Committee. The committee will also serve to support staff members charged with confirming the suitability of volunteers and carrying out the Response Plan.

“The Safe Church Advisory Committee will be comprised of the Vice-President and three members including at least one female and one male, appointed by the Church Council. Each member shall serve for three years, one being appointed each year. The ministry shall be responsible for providing policy relevant to an abuse free environment for everyone; children, youth, adults, visitors and employees who participate in our programs and use our facilities. We want our congregation to be a safe haven, free of all forms of abuse, harassment, exploitation, and intimidation.” By-Laws Adopted on 3/22/2009

The Safe Church Advisory Committee Duties will include the following:

1. A minimum of once a year the committee will meet to review the Safe Church Policy and Procedures and update as needed.
2. Provide support needed to train members of the congregation regarding the Safe Church Policy and Procedures.
3. Be available to respond to allegations of inappropriate behavior as outlined in the Safe Church Policy and Procedures Guide.
4. Maintain a strict code of confidentiality.

CODE OF BEHAVIOR

Volunteers who have taken an active part of the life of the congregation for at least **Six Months** are eligible to become involved with children's programs. Those planning to be directly involved with children's programs shall be screened, receive training and follow the safe church code of behavior. New employees, having satisfied the Primary Screening Process and training, may assume their position immediately.

- **The Two Adult Rule:**

There is no church-sanctioned event in youth ministry that permits one adult to be alone with a child. There must always be a minimum of two adults (The two adults are preferably not married to each other and one male and one female if possible.) present or one adult and two children (10 years of age or older).

The children in both the educational and youth fellowship programs of our congregation shall be under the care and supervision of two adults, one of whom may be a high school aide. An exception in the education department would exist if classes are so constructed as to provide constant visual access and frequent observation by Children and Youth Religious Education Director, or their designee. Furthermore, no teacher, advisor, aide or anyone else working with children should place themselves in a compromising situation by being alone with a child or with children out-of-sight of other teachers, advisors, aides, or parents. In the event, where an adult is alone with a child, then a note describing the situation will be completed and reported to the Children and Youth Religious Education Director the same day.

- **Specific Guidelines for Adult Supervision:**

These rules and guidelines must be followed by all leaders at all events, thereby providing appropriate supervision for the children. Adults are encouraged to remember that they will be providing both supervision and modeling adult Christian behavior for the children in their care.

- **Five Year Separation Rule:** When utilizing high school and young adults in the Educational Department, Youth Programs and Off-site Activities there shall be five year separation between these young persons and those they supervise. Every attempt will be made first to use youth who have reached the age of 18 as workers with children/youth.

- **Regarding Bathroom Supervision of Educational Department Children:**

Normally teachers, advisors, or aides who accompany a child to the bathroom, should remain outside the bathroom while the child is inside. If a child needs assistance with zipping, buttoning, buckling, clean-up, wiping, etc., two adults need to be present, one of whom may be a high school aide. If, for any reason, a teacher or aide is left alone in a classroom, the teacher in the nearest or neighboring classroom should be so informed. Diapering of infants and toddlers may be done in the Nursery if two people are present, one of whom is an adult. If anything unusual occurred during this assistance, a note describing the help given and persons present should be written and handed to the Children and Youth Religious Education Director at the close of educational program day.

- **Parental Consent Forms:** Those working with children shall have a signed, written

consent form from a parent or guardian before the child / youth can attending the programs.

- **Discipline:** The purpose of discipline with children is to maintain order in a manner consistent with the teaching of religious 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, insult or shouting. Teachers, advisors and aides and others helping in the classroom are encouraged to listen to the child, communicate expectations of appropriate behavior, use time-outs or give alternate choices. If a child is disruptive, a teacher or aide from the class or a neighboring class may be sent to locate the Children and Youth Religious Education Director or their designee.
- **Overnight Rule:** Any and all adult chaperones supervising overnight stays at our facilities or on congregational sponsored trips shall have undergone the Primary Screening Procedure. At least, one adult male will dorm with boys and one adult female with girls; and should these adults be husband and wife, a third adult advisor is to be present.
- **Youth Group Activities:** No adult leader, staff or volunteer, should initiate or encourage physical or intimate contact with children or youth. Setting boundaries is the responsibility of the adults. The Youth Group is a group ministry. All participants are expected to remain with the group throughout the times listed in congregation publications. No pairing or otherwise separating off from the group is permitted. A rule of three (i.e. three youth) is required.
- **Youth Members of the Church Council, Ministries and Committees:** No youth member of Ministry, Committee, Subcommittee, Task Force, or the Church Council shall be in attendance at a meeting with less than two adults present
- **Leaving and Locking:** The two adult rule will be followed until the last child has left. We avoid situations where one adult and one youth or child are left at the facility's door waiting to be picked up by parents at the end of an evening activity . Parents are encouraged to respect concluding times.
- **Drugs, Tobacco, Alcohol:** The use of any drugs, tobacco or alcoholic products on or in congregation facilities or at congregation sponsored youth events is not permitted.
- **Transportation:** Staff and adult leaders or teachers cannot transport children between congregation facility and home. Transportation for field trips, to activities, or for events is by groups and to/from the congregation facility. Exceptions are made with written parental permission.
- **Parental Guidelines:** We strongly encourage parents, when on the premises with their children, to know at all times where their children are, who they are with, and what they are doing. It is strongly encouraged that children 10 or under do not play in unsupervised areas.
- **Visitors On-site:** The staff or volunteers serving our congregation shall be aware of who is visiting our facilities.

Whenever questionable or inappropriate behavior is observed, it should be reported to:

1. The Pastor – **Edmond T. (Ted) Drewsen III** or
2. The Children & Youth Religious Director – **Laura Schultz** or
3. A Member of the Safe Church Committee:
Sue Schmitz
Avery Geiger
Sarah Kirchhoff

SAFE CHURCH RESPONSE PLAN

PILGRIM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Whenever questionable or inappropriate behavior is observed, it should be reported to:

1. The Pastor or
2. The Children & Youth Religious Education Director or
3. A member of the Safe Church Committee

The following documents the response plan to be used by the three entities listed above when an allegation is made.

Response Plan		
Step 1	Document Reported Incident:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Treat all allegations seriously. -Handle all allegations with respect for everyone's privacy and confidentiality -Note: Date, Time, Persons involved and content of what was allegedly done -Use Incident Response form
Step 2	Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Care and safety of complaints (& family) are first priority. -Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed. -Notify parent of complainant if appropriate -Document all actions -Use Incident Response form
Step 3	Initial Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The documented incident will be discussed by the Pastor, CYRED and SC Committee for an initial response. -Discussion should be documented -Use Incident Response form
Step 4	Report to Authorities or dismiss	<p>Report to Authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Immediately comply with all state laws -All incidents involving children will be reported to the Department of Social Services or Police -Notify the congregations attorney -Notify the NE Association of the Wisconsin Conference of United Church of Christ Minister -Notify the congregation's Insurance carrier. -Continue with steps 5 - 8 <p>Dismiss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Continue with steps 9 - 10

**SAFE CHURCH RESPONSE PLAN
PILGRIM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

Response Plan Continued		
Step 5	Cooperate with Civil Authorities with church council present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Full cooperation will be given to civil authorities under the guidance of the congregation's attorney. -The congregation's attorney must be present for any investigative questions from the police or applicable agencies. -Document all statements (not sure if attorney or agency does this)
Step 6	Determine work status of accused if a church volunteer or church employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Treat the accused with dignity and respect -Volunteer worker should be temporarily relieved of their duties until the investigation is complete and the allegations are cleared or substantiated. -Paid employee should be suspended (with pay) until the allegations are cleared or substantiated. -Document all discussions with volunteer or employee
Step 7	Select Spokesperson /Prepare Public Statement(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Select a spokesperson to deal with media inquiries -Be prepared to issue a public statement for the congregation and respond to press inquiries. -No details of the accusation will be released -Do not deny that the incident occurred; do not assign blame; do not minimize the situation -No statement will be issued until the congregation's attorney has approved it. -Retain a document of all communications
Step 8	Additional Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -When it is deemed prudent, share with the wider congregation any additional appropriate information -No statement will be issued until the congregation's attorney has approved it. -Retain a document of all communications for 35 years -Process of reporting is completed.

SAFE CHURCH RESPONSE PLAN PILGRIM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Response Plan Non-Reporting		
Step 9	Address issue	-Discuss incident with both parties -Provide input for appropriate behavior -Document all interviews
Step 10	Dismiss Complaint	-Provide a written summary of all discussions. -Retain all documentation for 35 years.

EMPLOYEE & VOLUNTEER SCREENING PROCESS PILGRIM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The **Screening Process** must be performed for all paid staff and volunteers.

Screening Process	
Step 1: Communicate congregations rational for screening process	-Provide cover letter explaining congregations rational and need for having a screening process
Step 2: Provide and explain all documents which need to be completed, reviewed and/or signed	-Provide Application Form to be completed and signed -Provide a copy of the Safe Church Policies manual to be reviewed by the applicant -Answer any questions the applicant may have regarding the documents and/or policies/procedures
Step 3: Review application, ensure all forms are signed and Safe Church Policy and Procedures have been read	-Ensure application is completed and signed. -Ensure applicant has Safe Church Policies Manual pages 1 through 9. -Schedule or conduct interview.
Step 4: Conduct Background Check	-Conduct background check -Complete background screening document -Keep completed form on file
Step 5: Follow-up	-Follow up with those applicants if issues arise when background check is conducted. -No follow up is necessary if background check does not have any issues

Safe Church Forms



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SAFE CHURCH APPLICATION FORM

Pilgrim United Church of Christ

All who seek any position that will involve the supervision or custody of children or youth should complete this application.

Name:			
	Last	First	Middle

If you have been known by another name, please note here: _____

Date of Birth: _____(mm/dd/yyyy)

Address:	
City:	
State:	
Have you lived in the state of Wisconsin for the past 10 years? Circle: Yes or No	
Zip:	
Phone Number:	

Have you ever been charged with, convicted of, or pled guilty to a crime (either a misdemeanor or a felony; including but not limited to drug-related charges, sexual misconduct, child abuse, or other crimes of violence, theft, or motor vehicle violations)? No Yes

If yes, please explain: _____

Note: Answering "Yes" to this question does not automatically deny your opportunity to volunteer.

Waiver and consent:

I, _____, hereby certify that the information I have provided on this application for a volunteer position is true and correct. I am aware that this church will be conducting a criminal records check. This information will be kept confidential unless release is required by legal process or for the defense of this church. In the event that my application is accepted, I agree to abide by and be bound by the policies of Pilgrim United Church of Christ of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and to refrain from inappropriate conduct in the performance of my duties on behalf of the church.

I have read the Safe Church policy and this application. I am fully aware of its contents and will abide by the Safe Church policy.

Signature of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

EXAMPLE LETTER FOR PAID EMPLOYEE

Dear Job Applicant:

The congregation at Pilgrim United Church of Christ aspires to be a God trusting and nurturing place. Our goal is to provide a safe environment for everyone; children, youth, adults, visitors and employees who participate in our programs and use our facilities. We want our congregation to be a safe haven, free of all forms of abuse, harassment, exploitation, and intimidations.

Therefore, Pilgrim United Church of Christ has implemented a Safe Church Policy and Screening Process. All potential employees will need to undergo a primary screening process before they can be hired to work with the Educational and Youth Programs.

The screening process includes reviewing the Safe Church Policy, completing an application form, and providing authorization for a criminal records background check.

As a condition of employment, all employees will sign an agreement to abide by the Safe Church Policy and Procedures during their employment.

All information compiled during the screening process will be kept strictly confidential.

EXAMPLE LETTER FOR VOLUNTEER

Dear Volunteer:

We are excited that you have volunteered to work with our Educational and/or Youth program. Because our goal is to provide a safe environment for everyone; children, youth, adults, visitors and employees who participate in our programs and use our facilities, Pilgrim United Church of Christ has implemented a Safe Church Policy and Screening Process.

All potential volunteers will need to undergo a screening process before they can begin to work with the Educational and Youth Programs.

The screening process includes reviewing the Safe Church Policy, completing an application form, and providing authorization for a criminal records background check and being interviewed by the Pastor or The Children and Youth Religious Education Director.

As a volunteer, you will also need to sign an agreement to abide by the Safe Church Policy and Procedures.

All information compiled during the screening process will be kept strictly confidential.

We look forward to working with you.

Thanks again for volunteering your time to work with the children and youth of our congregation.

RESOURCES TO SCREEN PAID AND VOLUNTEER APPLICANTS

Description	Website	Telephone#	Info Required	Cost
Fond du Lac Police Sex Offender Website	http://www.fdlpolice.com/	920-322-3700	Name	No
Wisconsin Sex Offender Registry Information	http://offender.doc.state.wi.us/public/	800-398-2403	Name	No
National Sex Offender Public Website	http://www.nsopw.gov/Core/OffenderSearchCriteria.aspx	608-266-5764	Name	No
Wisconsin Circuit Court Access	http://wcca.wicourts.gov/index.xml		Name DOB	No
Wisconsin Department of Justice Crime Information Bureau	http://wi-recordcheck.org/	608-266-9398	Name Sex Race DOB	\$2/request arrests without supporting finger prints are not included in search.
IntelliCorp Records, Inc.	http://www.intellicorp.net/	800-539-3717	Name Sex Race DOB SSN Address	\$3.95/request \$7.95/request includes 1 county. \$25 setup for normal account. \$50 setup if volunteer enters info. Multi-state check Reports are available as long as account remains open
Church Volunteer Central (Group Publishing)	http://www.churchvolunteercentral.com/	800-761-2095	Volunteer enters info.	\$9/request \$120/year membership

**Annual Permission Slip
Pilgrim United Church of Christ**

PERMISSION SLIP FOR MINORS INVOLVED IN CHURCH RELATED ACTIVITIES: Valid From September 1, _____ to August 31, _____

Name of Student: _____

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY :

Name of Parent/Guardian (Please Print): _____

Phone Number of Parent / Guardian: Home:(____)-____-____ Work:(____)-____-____ Cell:(____)-____

If Parent/Guardian cannot be reached please provide an alternate contact:

Name of Alternate Contact: (Please Print): _____

Phone Number of Parent / Guardian: Home:(____)-____-____ Work:(____)-____-____ Cell:(____)-____

Special Instructions: _____

MEDICAL AND INSURANCE INFORMATION PERMISSION FOR TREATMENT

_____ does hereby authorize and empower
(Parent or Guardian)

_____ to take such action as in his/her opinion, shall be
necessary for the welfare of _____;
(Name of Minor)

surgical treatment. The undersigned will pay or reimburse all costs and expenses so incurred.

NAME: _____

Address: _____

MEDICAL HISTORY

Medical Conditions, if
any _____

Any Allergies? Yes/No If Yes, list

Insurance company _____ Policy

If Group Insurance, what company or
group _____

This form is to be completed for all youth participating in youth activities associated with Pilgrim UCC. It allows your child to leave church property and ride with an adult chaperone to locations not outside Fond du Lac. It gives permission for treatment should a need arise when your child is at a youth activity. I read and understand the purpose of this form and have provided accurate and complete information. This form is valid for the program year shown at the top of the form.

Signature of _____ Date _____
Parent/Guardian _____

Event Activity Permission Form
Pilgrim United Church of Christ

We are sponsoring the following special activity/trip will be:	
The cost to the child/youth for this trip will be \$	
Your child/youth will need to bring:	
ACTIVITY OUT OF TOWN	
Our departure time is ____ AM ____ PM on:	Our return time is: ____ AM ____ PM on:
The trip will be chaperoned by:	
Adult driver(s) will be:	
Method of Transportation	
AN OVER-NIGHT ACTIVITY IN TOWN OR ONE OFF PREMISES	
The event will be begin at ____ AM ____ PM on _____	The event will end at ____ AM ____ PM on _____
The location of the event will be at:	
The event will be chaperoned by:	
Adult driver(s) will be:	
Method of Transportation:	

By signing this form, you are agreeing for your child to attend said event. You also are saying that no new information that would be vital for us to have has changed from the yearly form you filled out earlier. If information has changed (i.e. health insurance changed, new known allergy, or new medical condition) you will inform the CYRED of these changes.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Code of Behavior
Pilgrim United Church of Christ
September 1, ____ to August 31 ____

A successful event in our church is dependent upon the cooperation of all those participating in it. Please read the list of expectations which have been designed to insure a good experience for all of us.

I will:

- Not possess and/or use tobacco products, alcohol or other controlled substances nor purchase same.
- Respect the property of all other participants and advisors. This includes not touching things that are not mine.
- Attend all scheduled programs unless specific permission is given for me to be elsewhere.
- Join in group work, play, study, activities without undue complaint.
- Take my turn in the support and feeding chores of our community.
- Respect myself, God, the other members of our group, and the people we meet on our way. Conduct included in such an acts of respect would exclude:
 - a) Self or other person directed put-downs.
 - b) Abusive or vulgar language.
 - c) Inappropriate touching.
 - d) Activity which separates an individual (or couple) from the GROUP.
 - e) Placing adult advisors in uncomfortable and potentially vulnerable situations.
 - f) Any non-scheduled activity which has not received permission from an adult advisor.

Please go over these expectations with a parent or legal guardian and sign the Covenant Statement.

Covenant Statement

Pilgrim United Church of Christ

Any violation of the expectations shall result in an **immediate conclusion** of the young person's participation in the youth activity/event. Second chances would require exceptional circumstances.

Covenant Statement

I have read the information provided as to what is expected of me when I participate in any youth activity/event. I understand that failure on my part to live up to these expectations will end my participation in the youth activity/event. Blatant disregard of these expectations may result in suspension of future experiences.

Signature of **Participant**: _____ Date: _____

We have read the information provided and reviewed it with our child. We understand what is expected and accept that any violation of the stated expectations will result in immediate conclusion of my youth's participation in the activity/event. We also understand that we will assume all costs involved in our child's return home.

Signature of **Parent/Legal Guardian**: _____ Date: _____

_____ I have verbally confirmed that the child/youth and his/her parents or guardian have reviewed the information provided and that they are willing to accept the expectations stated.

Signature of Youth Adult Advisor: _____ Date: _____

Quick Reference

Rev. Art Wille

Northeast Association Minister
5765 W Grande Market Dr
Suite B
Appleton WI 54913
phone (920) 731-4781
Cellular (920) 585-0185
fax (920) 731-4255
office@neaucc.org

Insurance: Church Mutual

To report a claim:
800-554-2642 press "2" when prompted
Account # 0040093
Pilgrim United Church of Christ
Fond du Lac WI

Agent: Peter J. Tesch

Church Mutual Insurance - Regional Representative Southern Wisconsin
Website: www.churchmutual.com / Email: ptesch@churchmutual.com
Toll free: 1.800.554.2642 (English) / 1.800.241.9848 (Spanish)
Option: #1 NCSG (customer service) / #2 Claims (service & reporting) / #3 Billing (questions & assistance)
Stone Ridge II, Suite 150
N14 W23777 Stone Ridge Drive
Waukesha, WI 53188-1158

Fond du Lac County Department of Social Service is 920-929-3400 ask for the Access Unit during regular business hours. After hours call 911 ask for Police.

Attorney for Pilgrim United Church of Christ:

