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**Children and Youth Safety Policy**

**First Methodist Church of Crestview**

**INTRODUCTION**

The congregation of the First Methodist Church of Crestview, Florida is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following Child and Youth Safety Protection Policy reflects our congregation's commitment to ensure that this church is a place of safety and protection for all who enter and a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

The Global Methodist Church is “a church committed to making disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly. The Global Methodist Church is filled with warm-hearted, Jesus loving, and Holy Spirit inspired people. They are grounded in Scripture and the life -giving confessions of the Christian faith found in the Apostles’ and the Nicene Creeds.”

It is the Core Belief of the Global Methodist Church, “That the one God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – has created all things; that Jesus Christ, through the power of his cross and Resurrection, is the Lord and Savior of all the world; and that the Holy Spirit empowers the people of his church to worship and praise God and to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world in word and deed. .“

As a Global Methodist Church, “Holy Baptism is administered among a gathered congregation. Those present vow on behalf of Christ’s Holy Church to receive the baptized into the Church universal, to grow together in grace, and to remember the profession made and benefits received in Holy Baptism”. This congregation is committed to demonstrating our commitment to providing a safe and nurturing environment to all of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults and taking every precaution to educate and equip those who work and volunteer in our ministries.

**GENERAL OVERVIEW**

In support of the above commitment to our children, youth, and vulnerable adults and our covenant with the congregation of First Methodist Church of Crestview to provide a safe environment; our Children’s Ministry team has adopted the contained policy. We have amended our past “Safe Sanctuaries” Policy secondary to our transition to the Global Methodist Church. We have made every attempt to make this policy our own but acknowledge that we have kept several key components from our Safe Sanctuaries policy as we feel they are essential to understanding the scope of why we do what we do and how important safety is for our congregation volunteers, and staff.

Jesus said, “Whoever welcomes [a] child welcomes me” (Matthew 18:5). Children are our present and our future, our hope, our teachers, our inspiration. They are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God.

Jesus also said, “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck, and you were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18:6). Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the children.

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse, exploitation, and ritual abuse [“ritual abuse” refers to abusive acts committed as part of ceremonies or rites; ritual abusers are often related to cults, or pretend to be] occur in churches, large and small, urban and rural. The problem cuts across all economic, cultural, and racial lines. It is real, and it appears to be increasing. Most congregations can cite specific incidents of child sexual abuse and exploitation within churches. Virtually every congregation has among its member’s adult survivors of early sexual trauma.

Such incidents are devastating to all who are involved: the child, the family, the local church and its leaders. Increasingly, churches are torn apart by the legal, emotional, and monetary consequences of litigation following allegations of abuse.

Thus, we adopt this policy for the prevention of abuse in our church.

**PURPOSE**

Our congregation’s purpose for establishing this Child and Youth Safety Policy and accompanying procedures is to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the physical and emotional safety and spiritual growth for our children, youth, senior citizens, and vulnerable adults. In addition, this policy strives to reflect, the *Global Methodist Church Transitional Book of Doctrines and Discipline* belief and governance calling us to be a witness to the world. It is our goal to put into action our belief that children, whether through birth or adoption, are a sacred gift to us from God, and we accept our responsibility to both protect and nurture the youngest among us, particularly against such abuses as enforced child labor, involuntary conscription, human trafficking, and other such practices in the world (Deuteronomy 4:9-10, Psalm 127:3-5, 1 Timothy 5:4,8,16

**STATEMENT OF COVENANT**

In all our ministries with children, youth and adults, we pledge to conduct the ministry of the gospel in ways that assure the safety and spiritual growth of all our children and youth as well as all the workers with children and youth. We will follow reasonable safety measures in the selection and recruitment of workers; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all programs and events; we will educate all of our workers with children and youth regarding the use of all appropriate policies and methods (including first aid and methods of discipline); we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse that conforms to the requirements of state law; and we will be prepared to respond to media inquiries if an incident occurs.

**Definitions of Abuse**

* **Physical Abuse:** abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a child, youth or vulnerable adults.
* **Emotional Abuse:** abuse in which a person exposes a child, youth or vulnerable adult to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty.
* **Neglect:** abuse in which a person endangers the health, safety, or welfare of a child, youth or vulnerable adult through negligence.
* **Sexual Abuse:** abuse in which sexual contact occurs between a child, youth, or vulnerable adult and an adult (or another older and more powerful youth).
* **Ritual Abuse:** abuse in which physical, sexual or psychological violations are inflicted on a child, youth, or vulnerable adult regularly, intentionally, and in a stylized way by a person or persons responsible for the safety and welfare of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult.
* **Vulnerable Adult:** an adult with physical, mental and/or developmental disabilities

**The church at risk**: Any organization involved with young people is a place where abuse could occur. Several factors make local congregations, districts, and annual conferences more susceptible to risk:

* Churches behave as relatively trusting organizations, relying upon their members and their leaders to conduct themselves appropriately. Sometimes this trusting attitude persists even in the face of questions or reports of misconduct.
* Churches are notoriously inactive when it comes to screening its volunteers and/or employees who work with children and youth. Often, no investigation is done at all before total strangers are welcomed aboard.
* Churches routinely provide opportunities for close contact and for close personal relationships with children. Indeed, these are nurtured and encouraged as we try to live out the gospel message.

**Consequences of Abuse**

* When one child is abused within a church or Christian program, many victims are created, including the child, the congregation, the child’s family, and often the family of the abuser.
* The congregation becomes a victim after abuse is revealed and relationships are fractured. It may also suffer for a long time when civil or criminal litigation ensues as a result of the abuse.
* Of foremost importance is the child who has been harmed and for whom care must be provided.
* The Global Methodist Church has Judicial Administration rules and governance for judicial complaints involving allegations of misconduct as enumerated in the chargeable offenses listed in their Transitional Book of Doctrine. Such complaints may be filed by any layperson or clergy person, a presiding elder (district superintendent), or a bishop.

**STATEMENT OF POLICY**

It shall be the policy and covenant of the First Methodist Church of Crestview to do everything in our power to prevent physical, emotional, or sexual abuse against children, youth, and adults with developmental disabilities involved in any ministry sponsored by our local congregation.

Further, we are called to minister to those persons who are experiencing abuse and to those who have been victims of abuse in the past. To that end we covenant to be aware of our legal responsibilities and to comply with those responsibilities and go beyond those responsibilities when necessary to act justly in the best interest of those who have been abused or those who are most vulnerable to abuse.

Careful screening is the best way to reduce the risk of abuse of children, youth and vulnerable adults. It can be time consuming and expensive, but well worth the effort and peace of mind that comes with having the most reliable, committed and experienced staff and volunteer in place for every program that involves children, youth and vulnerable adults.

Although it is our fervent hope and prayer that child sexual abuse does not occur in our programs, we must put into place sufficient mechanisms to reduce the risk of abuse of children, youth, and those who work with them. For that purpose, our ministries shall implement the following procedures in all our ministry programs and events.

**STANDARDS, CRITERIA, and RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Minimum age**

The following standards for authority figures (whether volunteers or staff) are designed to separate authority figures from the group they are serving by age or enough years to reinforce recognition of the authority figure’s role.

1. **Authority figures** – defined as the primary leaders of youth and children’s activities

a. To work with youth (grades six and above), or children, (infants –fifth grade) the authority figure must be a minimum of age 21 and it is recommended they are at least four years older than the youth involved.

b. To work with children (infants-fifth grade), the authority figure must be a minimum of age 18.

2. **Assistants** – defined as persons who lend aid to the authority figure and act at the direction of the authority figure, including volunteers, interns, and camp counselors. Whether working with youth or children, assistants must be:

a. A minimum of 12 years of age and four years older than the participants, and

b. In the judgment of a staff member, competent to assist in the activity.

c. An assistant less than 18 years of age may not be counted as an adult in the child/adult ratios.

d. An assistant less than 18 years of age may not lend aid unless two authority figures are present.

**Two adult rule:** A minimum of two non-related adults is to be utilized in all programming with children, youth, and at-risk adults. When it is impossible to staff with two non-related adults, there must be an additional adult serving as a floater with visual and physical access to all areas.

**Open-door policy:** Classrooms or childcare rooms should be open to visitation at any time without prior notice by staff, parents, or other volunteers.

**Sign-in and Sign-out Procedures:** Sign-in and sign-out procedures should be in place for all ministries for and with children in the local church.

**Six-month rule:**  A six-month rule is required for volunteers wishing to give service in the areas of children and youth ministry. This means that all volunteers demonstrate an active relationship in good standing in a local congregation or campus religious organization for a minimum of six months. Persons not meeting this minimum requirement may serve only in an assistant capacity with two other non-related adults.

**Adult/Child ratios:** All ratios must be understood considering first having two adults present at all times. Adults and authority figures should never be alone with a child or youth. This can include but is not limited to an automobile while taking a young person home, a classroom with windowless or locked doors, or a cabin at camp.

State codes are required for day care centers and school-based programs and are a strong standard for all programs to follow. This includes Sunday school, mid-week, and summer programs.

**Florida State Codes for childcare:**

• Birth to 1 year – 1 Adult to 4 Children

• 1 to 2 years of age – 1 Adult to 6 Children

• 2 to 3 years of age – 1 Adult to 11 Children

• 3 to 4 years of age – 1 Adult to 15 Children

• 4 to 5 years of age – 1 Adult to 20 Children

• 5 years and older – 1 Adult to 25 Children

Mixed Age Groups:

* When children 2 years of age and older are in care, the staff-to-children ratio shall be based on the age group with the largest number of children within the group.
* In groups of mixed age ranges, where children under 1 year of age are included, one staff member shall be responsible for no more than 4 children of any age group.
* In groups of mixed age ranges, where children 1 year of age but under 2 years of age are included, one staff member shall be responsible for no more than 6 children of any age group.

Note: For additional information contact the Florida Department of Children and Families.

**Participants who are physically or mentally impaired:**

* Those needing constant and individual assistance or supervision – 1 leader to 1 participant
* Those needing close, but not constant, assistance or supervision – 1 leader to 2 participants
* Those needing occasional assistance – 1 leader to 4 participants
* Those needing minimal assistance – 1 leader to 5 participants

**Overnight programs**: Overnight events include summer camps, retreats, mission trips, lock-ins, or any event that extends through the evening. The adults staying with the young people must always be the same gender as the young people. The adults must never share a bed with a young person and should not be alone in the room with a young person at any time.

* Grades 1-3 – 1 adult to 8 young people
* Grades 4-8 – 1 adult to 10 young people
* Grades 9-12 – 1 adult to 12 young people

**Motel/hotel settings**

* A hotel should be selected that has rooms opening to the interior (i.e. closed hallway) of the building. Where possible, select adjoining rooms on a single hallway.
* When two adults cannot be assigned to a room housing youth, the youth should be roomed separately from the adults. If adjoining rooms are available with doors that can be left in the open position, a single adult in each of the adjoining rooms is acceptable.
* An adult should not share a bed with a young person.
* Where adults need to be assigned to separate rooms, it is recommended that one adult room be located between every two youth rooms on the hall.
* Adults should develop a rotating schedule allowing for the hallways to be monitored throughout the night.
* If room checks are needed, they should involve two adults of the same gender as the room residents.

**Transportation**

* All drivers should be screened in the same manner as other leadership for an event including a review of their motor vehicle record.
* When private vehicles are used to transport young people for programmed church-related events, leaders should ensure that both the church and the private driver are maintaining appropriate insurance.
* All drivers must be 21 years of age or older.
* Where possible, it is recommended that two adults be placed in each vehicle or the vehicles teamed in minimum groups of two that stay together at all times.
* Safety policies and guidelines established by the board of trustees for the operation of church-owned vehicles must be strictly followed at all times.

**Transportation**

* On all planned trips, a signed, permission slip with medical authorization should be on file. In the absence of such a form, the adult should call a parent or relative to pick up the child.

**Mentoring:** Mentoring programs or other efforts to pair young people with caring adults are often credited with being the key to a young person’s success in life. Therefore, mentoring programs should follow these guidelines:

* Provide basic screening and background checks for all adults who will be working with children and youth.
* Establish clear written guidelines for settings, boundaries, and the environment where the mentoring will occur.
* Providing training for all adults (or youth, if they will be working with children) who are interested in being mentors.
* Make it clear that all persons are expected to following congregation and conference guidelines for reducing the risk of abuse.
* Outings should be in public places with routes and time frames agreed upon in advance and know to all. Outings with several mentors and young people are preferred.
* One-to-one mentoring or tutoring should take place in a group setting, such as one large room rather than individual rooms spread throughout the church building.

**Counseling:** At any counseling session with children, youth, or adults of the opposite gender, any non-windowed door of the room used should remain open for the entire session. Ideally, the session will be conducted at a time when others are nearby, even if they are not within listening distance. A counseling session should never be held in secret, even if the person being counseled makes that request.

Whenever someone seeks counseling, it is important to determine in the initial meeting if the counselor is actually qualified to address the needs effectively. If not, the person should be referred to another counselor.

**Interpersonal boundaries:** Adult workers with youth and children must be attentive to:

* Appropriate dress codes
* Appropriate use of language
* Appropriate demonstrations of affection and encouragement. (i.e. an adult leader should never initiate a hug and should always be the one to end the hug.)

**Home visitation:** When visiting a young person in their home, the two non-related adult rule still applies. If a young person drops by the home of an adult volunteer or staff person, the visit should be conducted in the front yard or moved to a local restaurant. Educating young people of these requirements before they visit is most beneficial.

**Cyber issues:**

* Firewalls on computer systems at churches need to be put in place and kept up to date.
* Volunteers and employees should maintain Christian principles when using social network sites.
* Those in authority and assistants are to be accountable for cyber communications.
* When utilizing pictures and events from church functions no names are to be posted for those under 18 years of age.

**DEFINITIONS**

* **Children:** Persons Birth – 5th grade
* **Youth:** Persons 6-12th grade
* **Adult:** Persons over 18 years of age who has completed high school or equivalent schooling
* **Intern/Assistant:** Persons employed temporarily to assist with special ministry areas.
* **Staff:** Persons employed by First Methodist Church of Crestview
* **Volunteers:** Members of First Methodist Church of Crestview who assist with special ministry areas involving children, youth and vulnerable adults but are not employed by First Methodist Church of Crestview.

**RECRUITING, SCREENING, AND TRAINING**

**Recruiting and screening volunteer and paid staff**

1. All persons employed or volunteering as an authority figure for children/youth shall:

1. Complete Application/Commitment Form.

2. Provide three character references. It is recommended that the three references be contacted on all applicants having access to children, youth and vulnerable adults. One of the references should be the applicant’s pastor and the other two must be non-relatives.

3. Be interviewed by the director of the ministry or program.

4. Consent to the following background checks:

a. Multi-state criminal and sexual offender check based on social security number

b. Motor vehicle records (for those who will be transporting children, youth, or at-risk adults)

A background check is valid for two years. If the individual changes physical addresses, the background check~~s~~ must be run again. Details about running background checks are found in the appendix.

5. Demonstrate an active relationship with the local church for at least 6 months.

6. Have the experience and qualifications for the position.

7. Attend training by the church and/or conference in maintaining compliance with all children, youth, and vulnerable adults policies and procedures.

1. All persons employed or volunteering as an assistant for children/youth shall:

1. Complete an Application/Commitment Form.

2. Be interviewed by the director of the ministry or program.

3. Provide three character references.

4. Consent to the following background checks:

a. Multi-state criminal and sexual offender check based on social security number

b. Motor vehicle records (for those who will be transporting children, youth or at-risk adults)

5. Attend training as required.

1. In the event a substitute worker needs to be brought in under last minute circumstances, that person must:

1. Complete an Application/Commitment form.

2. Provide a character reference who can be contacted immediately by the director.

3. Complete a basic orientation/training provided by the director or other supervisor before working.

4. Consent to the following background check:

a. Multi-state criminal and sexual offender check based on social security number.

1. Unfavorable background checks or a refusal to complete the screening procedures:
2. Volunteers or Staff (other than clergy):

a. The person shall be notified with a “Notice of unfavorable background check” form.

b. If the unfavorable report is a volunteer, the Pastor, and director of the related program designee shall meet with the person to discuss the report.

c. If the unfavorable report is a staff person, the Pastor and local church designee shall meet with the person to discuss the report, and a letter shall be placed in the person’s file.

d. Review process may consider the following factors:

1) The nature and seriousness of the crime

2) The relationship of the crime to the purpose of the congregation

3) The age of the person at the time of the commission of the crime

4) The time elapsed since the person’s crime

5) Any charge that deals with sexual abuse or child abuse shall prevent the person from working with children and/or youth.

d. Documentation of action taken should be placed in the personnel file.

**Training staff and volunteers:** The church should ensure that regularly scheduled (i.e., at least annual) and online availability) training focused on current issues of child protection is available to and received by those working with children and youth. Attendance at this training should be required of all paid staff members and adult volunteers who work with children and/or youth. Documentation of attendance should be kept from year to year so that if an incident occurs, the church has proof that they followed the policy.

The training should include:

1. The definitions and signs of child abuse.

2. The church’s policy and procedures on child abuse and the reasons for having them.

3. The need to maintain a positive classroom environment, including appropriate discipline and age-level characteristics.

4. The appropriate behavior for teachers and leaders of child/youth events.

5. Child abuse reporting responsibilities and procedures.

6. Definitions of appropriate interpersonal boundaries (ways of touching students, appropriate language, etc.)

7. All forms used by the church for application, background checks, reporting, and teacher files.

**GENERAL PROCEDURES**

1) First Methodist Church of Crestview Children and Youth Safety Policy will be approved annual by the respected Ministry Teams and governing bodies. The approved policy will be made available to all church members. The Policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure currency and will be amended whenever circumstances exist that require revision. Upon revision, the above named will review and approve the Policy.

a. Staff and Volunteers will receive a copy of First Methodist Church of Crestview Children and Youth Safety Policy as changes are made and on request.

b. Any member of First Methodist Church of Crestview may request a copy of the Policy.

c. The Policy will be included in Children’s Ministries and Youth Ministries materials and be made available to all parents of children and youth, and will be available online on our local website.

d. The Policy will be reviewed each year and updated as required by our local church and Global Methodist Church.

e. Any church member who is interested in participating in the review process is welcome to give feedback to the task force.

2) Volunteers who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults must complete a background check, sign a Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Participation Covenant and attend initial and periodic training on related policy and procedures as required.

a. Background checks for First Methodist Church Staff members and volunteers will be conducted through Mobilize My Ministry or approved by the local church and Global Methodist Church. Costs for these background checks will be paid for as specified in any governing policies and, unless otherwise instructed, will be planned for in our local budget.

b. All background checks will be kept confidential. Files containing background checks will be kept in a locked file with other personnel files in the Pastoral Assistant’s office.

c. Only the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, Children or Youth Director, Ministry Assistant or Administrator Assistant will see the results of background checks. Other Staff members will receive a list of persons who have been approved for service with children, youth and vulnerable adults.

d. Background checks must be renewed every two years.

e. Persons who have a negative background check will not be allowed to serve as volunteers with children, youth or vulnerable adults. This includes serving as teachers, group leaders, and helpers.

3) Prior to being assigned as a volunteer in any ministry program involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults, volunteers will be interviewed by the Staff member in charge of the program. Volunteers who have not been attending First Methodist Church of Crestview for at least 6 months shall begin as assistant leaders, rather than leaders in ministry programs.

4) Programs that are primarily sponsored by another organization (i.e. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.) but are being hosted at First Methodist Church of Crestview will be required to submit proof that all volunteers of that program have had a background check that is equivalent to the background check performed by the approved background screening program. If volunteers have not had sufficient background checks, the organization must pay to have their volunteers screened before those volunteers can serve in the programs hosted at First Methodist Church of Crestview.

5) The Wesleyan Childcare Center of First Methodist Church of Crestview will operate background checks and credentialing activities required by the Florida statutes.

6) Children/youth attending a church-sponsored event may not leave prior to the ending of that event without previous contact between the parents and the staff person in charge.

a) Children will only be released to persons other than parents or legal guardians if the prior contact has occurred between the parents and the staff person in charge.

b) Students who are old enough to drive to attend Youth Group activities will only be allowed to transport other students when prior contact has been made between the staff person in charge and the parents of the driving student and the passenger student.

7) Permission forms will be required for off-campus events involving children and youth. Blanket permission forms for on-going events are allowable and will be kept with the staff person in charge of such events.

8) Windows may not be covered when adults, children, or youth are in room[s].

9) At any counseling session with children, youth or vulnerable adults, any non- windowed door of the room used should remain open for the entire session. Counseling sessions should never be held in secret, even if the person being counseled makes that request. Ideally, the session will be conducted at a time when others are nearby, even if they are not within listening distance.

10) Staff and volunteers who work with children, youth and vulnerable adults must be attentive to appropriate dress code, appropriate use of language, and appropriate demonstrations of affection and encouragement. Additionally, volunteers and staff should be aware of appropriate cyber conduct:

a) Maintain Christian principles when using social networking sites, especially when referencing First Methodist Church of Crestview events or communicating on social networking sites with children, youth or vulnerable adults.

b) When utilizing pictures and videos from First Methodist Church of Crestview events, no names should be posted for those under 18 years of age.

11) Two non-related adults should conduct any home visit unless the parents of the child or youth will be present during the visit. If a student drops by the home of an adult volunteer or staff member without a parent present, the visit should be conducted in the front yard, or moved to a public location. Two non-related adults should conduct any home visit of a vulnerable adult whenever reasonably practical to do so, if the adult lives alone and no family members or other caregivers will be present for the visit.

12) All drivers involved in programs for children, youth or vulnerable adults should be screened in the same manner as other volunteers. Wherever possible, two adults should be placed in each vehicle when transporting children, youth and vulnerable adults. Any staff member or volunteer transporting children, youth or vulnerable adults in his/her private vehicle must maintain appropriate insurance to cover any losses that may occur while he/she is transporting children, youth or vulnerable adults.

13) Sign-in/sign-out procedures are required for all ministries involving children. The Children and Youth Ministry Teams will develop written procedures for handling sign-in and sign-out for the various activities involving children.

14) Children not signed into a children’s program are the responsibility of their parents and must be attended by their parents. Children must be supervised at all times while on church property.

15) Parents who leave the church grounds while their children are signed into a children’s ministry program must leave emergency contact information with the staff person or volunteer in charge of the program.

**PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS OF ABUSE**

1) If a volunteer suspects that a child, youth, or vulnerable adult is the victim of abuse, that volunteer should report such suspicions to the staff member in charge of the program or to the Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor. All cases of suspected abuse must be reported to the Florida Abuse Hotline. Initial reports should NOT be made to the county/local branch of the Florida Department of Children and Families. The Florida Abuse Hotline may be reached at **1-800-96-ABUSE.** Reports may be faxed in, however, the preferred option for the FL Department of Children and Families is for persons to call the Florida Abuse Hotline and talk to a Hotline counselor.

2) The person reporting the suspected abuse will document, in writing, all known facts and circumstances. The Senior Pastor or his/her designee will also make a written report that documents all steps taken while handling the reported incident.

3) The confidentiality of all persons involved will be safeguarded.

**RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

1) Every allegation will be taken seriously. Adequate care and respect must be offered to the alleged victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s) while the allegation is investigated.

2) The safety and security of the alleged victim must be safeguarded before the person accused of abuse is confronted.

3) The parents/guardians of the suspected victim will be notified immediately, unless competent authorities (such as law enforcement/FL Department of Children and Families) direct otherwise.

4) All procedures listed in the previous section on Reporting will be strictly followed.

5) All records relating to the matter will be carefully documented and maintained in confidential files.

6) The Senior Pastor or his/her designee will notify the liability insurer and the legal counsel for the Church about the alleged incident and will be the sole spokesperson for First Methodist Church of Crestview. He or her designee will be the sole spokesperson as media inquiries are concerned.

7) Any person accused must be treated with dignity and support. The person accused will be immediately relieved of further responsibilities, as circumstances dictate, until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.