

CALVARY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SAFE CHURCH and SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY

PREAMBLE

Calvary Presbyterian Church celebrates freedom, inclusion and diversity of belief, recognizing God's Love as the creative and supporting force in all Life. As a community of Christian faith, the mission of Calvary Presbyterian Church depends on a sense of trust and civility, which is made manifest when each member of the community recognizes and respects the worth and dignity of every other person. [Lev. 19:18; Matt. 5:43-48] The responsibility for showing the love of Christ and caring for all of his children rests with each and every member of the Congregation, and not exclusively with the pastors or lay leadership of the Church. The Church expects members of the Christian community to demonstrate a basic generosity of spirit that precludes expressions of sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct is a breach of trust and a violation of the roles and vows made by the clergy, ordained elders and deacons, commissioned individuals and those entrusted with the care of others. Sexual misconduct calls into question the integrity, sensitivity and fitness for office of any person who engages in such misconduct. Such misconduct is contrary to the principles set forth in the Gospels and the call to work as God's servant in the struggle to bring wholeness to a broken world. [A Brief Statement of Faith, PC (USA), 1983]. The purpose of this policy is to insure that the church campus continues to represent a holy place of safety and sanctuary for both children and adults, and to protect the emotional well-being of the congregation. The scope of this policy is not limited to the physical location of the Church and relationships with other members and staff at that location; it includes contacts anywhere in connection with carrying out Church work or responsibilities elsewhere in the wider community. Violation of this policy not only damages the victim of the misdeeds, but also is likely to damage the Church as a whole.

I. SAFE CHURCH POLICY STATEMENT

Calvary Presbyterian Church is opposed to any form of child abuse, sexual abuse or sexual harassment. These behaviors are antithetical to Christian Love, constitute the misuse of power and authority among Christian people, and will not be tolerated within the congregation. Children, in particular, are gifts from God to the entire Christian Community; therefore, when a child suffers, the entire community suffers. When Jesus invited the children to "come to me" [Matt. 19:14], he was indicating that the most vulnerable among us are to be surrounded by Christian Love and protected. In a broken world, the entire Congregation is challenged to engage in behaviors which assure this Church and its activities are places of safety and nurture.

II. ACCOUNTABILITY

The Session shall be responsible for the implementation and ongoing maintenance of this policy, and annually shall report to the congregation the manner of its implementation and any changes or amendments thereto. Pursuant to the Book of Order, the Clerk of Session is the Custodian of Records with respect to all materials relating to this policy.

III. RECRUITMENT & SCREENING

- A.** Annually, all staff, employees, church officers, and volunteers working in any Christian Education or youth related programs will submit an Application and Disclosure Declaration, acknowledging review and acceptance of this policy, and authorizing a criminal records check and search of local, state and federal sex offender databases. Such background checks may involve fingerprinting or other identification methods, at Church expense and pursuant to formal procedures established by the Personnel Committee [for staff, employees and church officers] and the Christian Education Commission [for church school teachers, adult youth program leaders and volunteers]. The Pastor/Head of Staff and the church's Business Administrator, with oversight by the Chair of the Christian Education Committee and/or the Personnel Committee, will be responsible for the administration and completion of the background checks. All members of staff and lay leadership will act to ensure the personal privacy of all individuals, and all information obtained through the screening process shall remain confidential to the extent possible and practical.
1. If the background checks provide no negative results, convictions or conflicting information, the applicant is to be designated as "clear" and the recruitment or review process may continue.
 2. If the background checks provide negative results, convictions or conflicting information, the Pastor and Personnel Committee and/or the Director of Christian Education/Chair of the Christian Education Commission will determine whether to proceed with the recruitment [new staff, employees or volunteers]/review [church officers, continuing staff and volunteers] process; and shall take the following factors into consideration:
 - a) The age of the offenses or conviction(s) and the circumstances surrounding it/them.
 - b) The nature and seriousness of the offenses or conviction(s).
 - c) The age of the individual when the offense(s) occurred.
 - d) The existence of multiple incidents of misconduct.
 - e) Disclosure of the information on the Application Form or in the personal interview.
 - f) The individual's participation in counseling and treatment.

3. If the Pastor, Personnel Committee or Director of Christian Education determine to proceed with the recruitment of an individual whose background checks have produced negative results or convictions, 1) a signed waiver of privacy permitting disclosure of personal information to Session, and 2) a signed and witnessed Covenant of Behavior will be executed by the individual, and will be maintained in a confidential file by the Clerk of Session. An employee or volunteer who is required to register pursuant to California Penal Code §§ 290 et seq. must have a signed Covenant of Behavior on file with the church's Business Administrator. Covenants of Behavior may be periodically amended, and will be reviewed annually by the Pastor.
- B.** Before commencing to work in any Christian Education or youth related program, including, but not limited to, Vacation Bible School, all staff, employees and volunteers may be requested to submit to a personal interview with the pastoral staff or the Director of Christian Education/Chair of the Christian Education Commission, which will be memorialized in writing. The interview will be used to clarify questions arising from the Application and Disclosure Declaration or the criminal records check, and to assess the competencies and fitness of the applicant/volunteer. Insofar as they contain sensitive information, the Application form and personal interview are considered confidential.
 - C.** Before commencing to work in any Christian Education or youth related program, any volunteer must be a member of Calvary Presbyterian Church and known to its pastoral staff for a period of not less than six months.
 - D.** The Application and Disclosure Declaration, Covenant of Behavior and all supporting documentation generated throughout the recruitment and screening process shall be maintained by the Clerk of Session and Business Administrator, and may not be purged or destroyed for a period of seven years following the termination of employment or termination of church membership, whichever is longer. Such information may be transmitted by the Pastor/Head of Staff to other faith-based organizations upon requests for employment references.

IV. TRAINING & SUPERVISION

- A.** Annually all members of the pastoral staff, the chairpersons of the Christian Education and Personnel Committees and the Clerk of Session shall participate in training designed to combat sexual misconduct and/or child abuse, conducted by a presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Primary Leaders in Calvary's Youth Programs should receive similar training annually, from an individual or agency approved by the Personnel Committee. Other employees and volunteers are to be notified of such training and encouraged to attend. Certificates of such training are to be maintained by the Clerk of Session and the Personnel Committee.

- B. All Christian Education teachers and adult leaders in Calvary's Youth Programs, under the direction of the Christian Education Committee, are required to annually execute a Covenant Statement acknowledging and agreeing to abide by this policy.
- C. Annual training and recertification of Christian Education teachers and adult leaders in Calvary's Youth Programs may be less stringent under written procedures maintained by the Christian Education Committee.
- D. At all church-sponsored events involving minors there will be a minimum of two (2) adults present. At least one such adult should be a member of staff or a Primary Leader. For overnight activities, two adults of the same/each gender as the participating minors must be present. Two unrelated adults should be present when counseling or reprimanding a minor.
 - 1. **Minor or child** is a person under the age of 18 years.
 - 2. **Primary Leader** is an adult over the age of 21 years and at least five years older than participants, who has successfully completed the full screening process described in this policy. Primary Leaders must be either a member of Calvary Presbyterian Church or approved by its Session.
 - 3. **Support Leader** is a volunteer adult who temporarily assists the pastoral staff and Primary Leaders, but who has not completed the full screening process or participated in sexual misconduct/child abuse training.
- E. Classrooms and meeting places within the Church should have adequate visibility through windows and doors to provide an inviting atmosphere and a sense of security to the participants. Christian educational instruction during Sunday School or otherwise should be conducted by adult teachers, and occur in open classrooms, with doors open whenever practical, or with visitation of the class/activity by another supervising adult.
- F. When necessary for an adult to assist a young child in changing clothes, attending the restroom, or checking under clothing for an injury, the adult will notify the Primary Leader of the need and intention – if practical, before the assistance is rendered; or later, the same day.
- G. Private meetings occasionally may occur when needed for pastoral counseling, etc. In general, private meetings should be avoided. When necessary, the meeting time and place shall be reported to another Primary Leader or member of the pastoral staff prior to the meeting and appropriate precautions should be taken during the meeting, such as leaving the door open or meeting in a public location in the presence of other individuals, where visual observation of the activity will be unobstructed.
- H. Responsibility for minors at church-sponsored events ends only when the event is over and all minors have left the adult's care and control. Minors under the age of 16 are to be released only to an adult known to be authorized to receive and care for the minor. A written permission slip, signed by a parent or adult guardian, and describing the location and nature of the activity, is required for all events taking

place off of church property. Two adults should be occupants in any motor vehicle used to transport minors to/from/during any church sponsored event.

V. REPORTING

- A. Any person who experiences, has personal knowledge of or observes, or reasonably suspects an instance of child abuse or sexual misconduct on the part of a person covered by this policy should report the incident to the Pastor/Head of Staff. If not available, or if the incident involves the Pastor/Head of Staff, the report should be made to another member of the pastoral staff or the Clerk of Session. The pastors and Clerk of Session have the responsibility of reporting such occurrences to the Presbytery of Riverside.
- B. Pursuant to California Penal Code §§ 11164 et seq. certain individuals, including, but not limited to, teachers, clergy, administrators of private organizations whose duties require direct contact and supervision of children [Chair or Director of Christian Education], and any custodian of records of a clergy member [Clerk of Session], are **mandated reporters**, required to report to State authorities whenever he or she has knowledge of or observes a child whom the mandated reporter knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse or neglect, including sexual misconduct.
- C. All mandated reporters who are employed by, work for, or volunteer in activities sponsored by, Calvary Presbyterian shall faithfully abide by their reporting requirements in response to incidents of suspected child abuse and neglect, cooperating fully with investigative and law enforcement agencies, maintaining the confidentiality of those involved and providing appropriate pastoral care.

VI. INTEGRATING SEXUAL OFFENDERS AT CHURCH

- A. A **sexual offender** is an individual who has been convicted of, or who has come within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, for a crime that involves any lewd or lascivious activity with a child or any forcible or coerced sexual activity against an adult victim, as set forth more particularly in California Penal Code §290(a)(2).
- B. The Pastor, in consultation with Session, has the primary responsibility to determine when, how and in what manner a sexual offender may be integrated into the life of the church.
 - 1. If a member of the congregation has personal knowledge that a sexual offender is regularly participating in the activities of the church, including, but not limited to, the music program, mission/outreach or fellowship groups, or is seeking to be enrolled as a member of Calvary Presbyterian Church, he or she should report the situation to the Pastor. Once receiving such information, the Pastor has the responsibility to verify the accusation by examining the local, state and federal sex offender databases. The Pastor may discuss the report with the accused sexual offender.
 - a) If the information confirms that the individual is currently on probation or parole, the Pastor shall contact the individual's

supervising parole/probation officer and determine any specific restrictions which might affect the individual's participation in church related activities.

- b) The Pastor shall prepare and execute a signed Covenant of Behavior with the individual, which shall be maintained in a confidential file by the Clerk of Session. The Pastor shall report this action to the Personnel Committee, and may report the existence of the Covenant of Behavior to the original reporting member of the congregation.

Provisionally adopted by the Session of Calvary Presbyterian Church, the 18th day of May 2011, to remain in effect until January 1, 2012, unless earlier amended.

Dr. Jeanela Vennekotter,
Clerk of Session