

Policies of the Annual Conference

MINISTERIAL EDUCATION FUND POLICY BOARD OF ORDAINED MINISTRY OREGON-IDAHO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

WHY USE THE MEF?

Continuing education for pastoral leaders is a key component for fruitful ministry and for congregational vitality. The Ministerial Education Fund (MEF) provides grants and financial aid for pastoral leaders who pursue educational and growth opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills to meet the evolving needs of the leadership and ministry in The United Methodist Church. The quadrennial limit for each pastoral leader is \$3,600. The MEF also provides scholarship support for ministerial candidates in the UMC candidacy process, in addition to other scholarship opportunities specific to Oregon-Idaho.

The Book of Discipline outlines expectations and requirements for all United Methodist clergy to "... engage in continuing education for ministry, professional development, and spiritual formation and growth in order to lead the church in fulfilling the mission of making disciples for Jesus Christ." (§350.1) Clergy are encouraged to [read the Discipline paragraph](#) in its entirety when making plans for continuing education and spiritual growth.

The Discipline describes three types of professional formation/spiritual growth leaves:

- Required: at least one week every year (§350.2)
- Recommended: at least one month per quadrennium (§350.2)
- Available for clergy members who have held full-time appointments for at least six years: up to six months (§350.3)

These leaves are not to be considered part of vacation, and none of these leaves requires approval by the Board of Ordained Ministry. However, the Board may approve MEF grants to help support these leaves through one-time event grants for retreats or workshops.

A Sabbatical Leave is also available in certain circumstances; this type of leave requires BOM recommendation, Clergy Session approval, and appointment to sabbatical by the bishop (§351).

WHAT CAN THE MEF SUPPORT?

The Ministerial Education Fund can support professional development and continuing education through:

- [One-time events](#) such as workshops, conferences, and webinars
- [Ongoing supports](#) such as multi-session trainings and clergy coaching
- Block grants approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry
 - The BOM may approve special "block grants" for certain educational opportunities that seem particularly useful. These grants may be made to the attendees or sponsors/hosts. Grants shall be limited to \$500 per attendee or \$2500 per host/sponsor but may not exceed 50% of total cost.

The Ministerial Education Fund can support spiritual growth and formation through:

- [One-time events](#) such as the Five-Day Academy for Spiritual Formation, and retreats, including personal retreats
- [Ongoing supports](#) such as spiritual direction and the Two-Year Academy for Spiritual Formation

Available funding (up to the quadrennial limit of \$3,600) for professional development, continuing education, spiritual growth, and formation:

For one-time events, applicants can apply for:

- Up to \$500 for events that are 1-4 days in duration
- Up to \$750 for educational opportunities that are in session for more than 5 days
- Additionally, \$350 may be given if one-way travel exceeds 300 miles

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For ongoing supports, applicants can apply for:

- Up to \$1,500 per year, up to the quadrennial cap of \$3,600.

The Ministerial Education Fund can support theological study through:

- [Full-time coursework](#) at a United Methodist University Senate-approved seminary or university
- [Part-time coursework](#) at a United Methodist University Senate-approved seminary or university
- [Course of Study](#) through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) or through a regional COS school

To qualify for scholarships for full-time or part-time seminary enrollment:

- The student must be a certified candidate for ministry in Oregon-Idaho.
- The student must provide a written recommendation from the student's District Superintendent.
- The student must provide three other recommendations that include:
 - o At least one from a higher education faculty member knowledgeable about the student's academic performance
 - o At least one from a person knowledgeable about the student's church leadership abilities
- Seminary study MEF recipients must agree to the following:
 - o Carry a full-time academic load as defined by the seminary while in a traditional seminary setting
 - o Complete no less than three units per year while taking courses in a part-time program
 - o Upon completion of the academic training, the recipient shall serve under appointment in an annual conference of The United Methodist Church for a minimum of two years.

If the candidate fails to meet the above conditions, any amount advanced shall be considered a loan, unless repaid within five years. This loan shall be repayable with an interest rate and on such terms as the Board of Ordained Ministry shall determine.

Scholarship grants shall be paid directly to the seminary.

Available funding for MEF scholarships for seminary students is not restricted by the quadrennial limit:

For scholarships for full-time study, applicants can apply for:

- No more than \$1,500 per year, with a maximum eligibility of \$4,500

For scholarships for part-time study, applicants can apply for:

- Up to \$500 per semester unit, with a maximum eligibility of \$3,000

To qualify for scholarships for Course of Study or Licensing School, applicants must:

- Be a certified candidate in OR-ID and recommended for licensing
- Contact the Board of Ordained Ministry Local Pastor Coordinator *before* enrolling in the course
- Submit all receipts and confirmations to the BOM Local Pastor Coordinator
 - Meal receipts must be itemized (showing the food/beverage ordered)

Available funding for MEF scholarships for Course of Study (COS) or Licensing School students:

For COS or Licensing School scholarships, applicants can apply for assistance for tuition, meals, and travel:

- Up to \$1,000 for Licensing School
- Up to \$500 per class for COS, with a maximum eligibility of \$1,500 per year

The Ministerial Education Fund can support post-graduate or intensive graduate work through:

- Pastoral leaders who participate in **intensive coursework equivalent** to or higher than university-level accredited work may receive up to \$500 with the approval of the district superintendent
- Pastoral leaders who engage in **advanced seminary degree work** (beyond a master of divinity degree or equivalent) may receive up to \$1,500 per year if returning to an approved appointment upon completion of the degree.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR MEF MONIES?

- **Provisional and full members** of the Oregon-Idaho Conference
- **Clergy from other denominations** appointed to OR-ID under ¶346.2, in order to complete United Methodist History, Doctrine, and Polity
- **Clergy from other Methodist denominations** appointed to OR-ID under ¶346.1, seeking educational equivalency for membership in OR-ID
- **Certified candidates** attending Licensing School who have been recommended for licensing in OR-ID by the District Committee on Ordained Ministry
- **Licensed Local Pastors** appointed in OR-ID:
 - May apply for scholarship support for Course of Study (COS)
 - May apply for any MEF monies after completion of COS or a master's degree in divinity (MDiv)
- **Laiity assigned by the District Superintendent** to a pastoral role may apply for MEF support; the BOM will direct that funds be taken from the interest earned on the funds rather than from the MEF directly.
- Laiity working on educational requirements for **Certified Lay Ministry** may apply for MEF support; the BOM will direct that funds be taken from the interest earned on the funds rather than from the MEF directly.

HOW DOES ONE APPLY FOR MEF MONIES?

All MEF grants and scholarships are accessed through a single application form, managed by the MEF Coordinator for the Board of Ordained Ministry. Each application is processed by the Coordinator, who will either approve the request if it meets the guidelines of this MEF policy or pass it on to the BOM or the BOM Executive Committee for action.

- For one-time events, the application must be submitted within 90 days of the conclusion of the event.
- For ongoing supports (such as coaching or spiritual direction), the applicant can apply for funding for one year at a time. Questions can be emailed to bom@umoi.org.

The application can be found on the [BOM's webpage](#), or through this link: [MEF Application](#).

Grant recipients will be required to complete a brief report no later than 90 days following completion of the event for which they have received funding (for ongoing supports, the report should be submitted at the conclusion of the time period which has been funded). A link to the report form will be supplied when the recipient is notified of the grant approval. Subsequent grant requests will not be considered until the report has been submitted.

POLICY CHANGES

The Board of Ordained Ministry is authorized to make annual changes to the dollar amounts in this policy, as the BOM deems necessary to respond to current economic realities, in order to balance the needs of pastoral leaders with the financial health of the Ministerial Education Fund itself. These changes do not require a vote of the annual conference. The updated policy will be published annually in the Conference Journal and on the [BOM's webpage](#).

OTHER ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS

A variety of other scholarships outside of the Ministerial Education Fund are also available to theology students. A [list with more information](#) can be found on the conference website.

Adopted June 2022

**SAFE SANCTUARIES
ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY
For Conference & District Events
of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference
of The United Methodist Church**

INTRODUCTION

Our hope and belief today is that the church is a place where all people will find the unconditional love and care they so desperately need to grow and thrive. But, we know that abuse occurs in churches, large and small, urban and rural. It is a problem, which cuts across all economic, cultural, and racial lines. In April 1996, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable adults in the church. It was renewed by the 2004 General Conference (Resolution 65, "Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Churches, pg. 201, 2004 Book of Resolutions). As Christians we must take our responsibilities to our children, youth, and vulnerable adults very seriously. While we may not be able to completely prevent abuse in every situation, it is possible for us to greatly reduce the risk by following a policy of prevention. We are responsible to create an environment of safe sanctuary for children, youth and vulnerable adults, and those who work with them. Thus we establish this Abuse Prevention Policy to demonstrate our absolute and unwavering commitment to the safety of all our children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this policy to 1) protect from abuse the children, youth, and vulnerable adults that participate in church activities, and 2) protect our staff, both paid and volunteer, from unfounded and/or malicious allegations of abuse through a comprehensive plan that includes: screening, training, supervision, reporting procedures, and a response plan.

SCOPE

This policy shall be applicable to all Conference and District activities or events involving children, youth, and vulnerable adults within ministry settings of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference.

DEFINITIONS

- **Abuse:** Intentional negligent or reckless treatment by a volunteer or staff person that is harmful, injurious, or offensive.
 - Child Abuse – an act committed by a parent, care giver or person in a position of trust which is not accidental and which harms or threatens a child's physical or mental health or a child's welfare.
 - Physical Abuse – When an adult injures a child other by accident, including, assault, shaking, slapping, burning, scalding, kicking, and strangling.
 - Sexual Abuse – Sexual contact between an adult or other significantly older, more powerful person and a child, youth, and vulnerable adult. Includes behavior such as inappropriate verbal stimulation, taking or showing sexually explicit photos of or to a child, or exposing a child to pornography or adult sexual activity.
 - Emotional Abuse – verbal assault or emotional cruelty that effects a child's self esteem.
- **Adult:** a person 18 years old or older.
- **Activities:** any activity or programs in which children, youth, or vulnerable adults are under supervision of staff persons or volunteers.
- **Background Checks:** Researching references and records for indications of past or potential abusive and/or criminal activity.
- **Child:** person from birth until they turn 12 years old.
- **Conference:** The Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.
- **District:** The level of church organization between the Conference and the local church. There are four Districts in the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference; Cascadia, Columbia, Crater Lake, and Sage.

- **Ministry setting:** (To be defined)
- **Person-in-Charge (PIC):** Staff person or volunteer who is the person responsible for the event or activity.
- **Staff person:** any person employed by the Conference or District that is responsible for activities involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- **Volunteer:** a person who assists in conducting activities under the supervision of person(s) in charge.
- **Vulnerable Adults:** any person 18 years of age or older with diminished physical, mental, or emotional capacities.
- **We:** The Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference.
- **Youth:** any person 12 years old to his/her 18th birthday.

SCREENING PROCEDURES

Careful screening can be important to the prevention of abuse. It provides some assurance that the most reliable, committed and experienced staff and volunteers are in place for every program that involves children, youth, and vulnerable adults. The following are the MINIMUM standards:

1. All adults, volunteer or staff persons, who have regular and direct contact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults shall be required to complete the "Voluntary Disclosure" form.
2. Minimum background screenings shall include:
 - a) Reference checks from Voluntary Disclosure form.
 - b) Review of the Oregon and Idaho lists of sexual offenders or State or National criminal background checks.
3. The policy shall be implemented in the following manner:
 - a) All staff persons and volunteers, who have regular and direct contact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults will submit to the screening procedures.
 - b) The screening procedure shall be repeated every five years.
 - c) The person in charge of the event and/or their designee is responsible for review and approving each application before a person's service begins.
 - d) All records are confidential and will be maintained for a period of at least five years.

SUPERVISION

Competent and trained staff and volunteers are important to any event. The procedures described below are designed to reduce the possibility of abuse to children, youth and vulnerable adults, and to protect staff persons and volunteers from unfounded accusations.

The following are MINIMUM standards and each event may adopt more stringent requirements if necessary.

1. Training is required for all persons having direct contact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Training shall include an annual orientation that includes information about this Policy, supervision of children, youth, and vulnerable adults, and identification and reporting of abuse.
2. All children, youth, and vulnerable adults will be supervised by adults. No adult will be alone with any one child, youth or vulnerable adult out of sight of others.
3. No person shall supervise any group of children or youth unless he/she is AT LEAST 5 years older than the children or youth.

REPORTING

Once an incident of abuse is recognized, it is crucial that it be dealt with speedily and in a clearly outlined manner. The adult who observes or hears of an alleged abuse shall:

1. Assure the safety of the victim. Take whatever the victim says very seriously. Make sure that the victim is in a safe place and watched over. Do not confront the accused abuser with anger or hostility but immediately remove him/ her from further involvement with children and youth until the matter can be investigated. Notify the proper authorities.

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2. If there is a situation of immediate risk call the police at 911, otherwise follow the procedure as listed below:
 - a) Report the incident immediately to the Person-in-Charge (PIC) of the event or activity in which the incident occurred.
 - b) The PIC shall:
 - i) Ascertain the details needed to make an accurate report. This report must be made within 24 hours. The report should include the following information if obtainable:
 - The name, address, age and sex of the alleged victim;
 - The name and address of the alleged victim's parents or other person responsible for his/her care;
 - The nature and extent of the alleged abuse or neglect;
 - Any evidence of previously known or suspected abuse or neglect of the alleged victim or their siblings;
 - The name, address and relationship, if known, of the person who is alleged to have perpetrated the abuse or neglect; and
 - Any other information known to the person making the report that would be helpful to the investigation of the alleged abuse.
 - ii) Contact the appropriate State or law enforcement agency as soon as possible to file the abuse report and provide the aforementioned information and follow the instructions of the agency.
 - iii) Notify one of those trained and designated by the Conference to respond to reports of abuse as listed in the Crisis Communications Plan.

The alleged perpetrators of the abuse will be required to refrain from all events involving children, youth and vulnerable adults until the incident report is resolved. In any removal of a person from any activities, care must be taken to handle this in a discreet manner, recognizing that an investigation is being conducted.

RESPONSE PLAN

- A quick, compassionate and unified response to an alleged incident of abuse is expected. All allegations will be taken seriously. In all cases of reported or observed abuse in an activity, the entire staff of that activity shall be at the service of all official investigating agencies.
- Follow the procedures outlined in the Crisis Communications Plan, *When a Crisis Strikes...Are You Ready?*
- Pastoral support shall be available and offered to all persons involved with the incident.

TRAINING

The Conference shall develop and implement training and orientation procedures for persons in leadership who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults in local ministry settings within the Annual Conference. Training shall include but is not limited to this policy and its related procedures.

POLICY REVIEW

All abuse prevention policies will be reviewed annually.

CONCLUSION

In all of our ministries we are committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each child, youth, and vulnerable adult is "surrounded by steadfast love...established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal" (Baptismal Covenant II, *United Methodist Hymnal*, pg 44). This policy and associated procedures are effective as of July 1, 2008. The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in a manner determined by the Conference Leadership Team. Modifications will be made subject to the approval of the Conference Leadership Team. All such modifications will be promptly conveyed in writing to all persons affected by the modification.

Adopted June 2008

SAFE SANCTUARIES ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

Minimum Standards for Abuse Prevention Policies of Local Ministry Settings

All local ministry settings of the annual conference shall have an Abuse Prevention (aka “Safe Sanctuaries”) Policy.

All ministry settings that report annually to any District Superintendent will be required to complete the Template form provided on the Oregon/Idaho Annual Conference website as the local ministry’s official Safe Sanctuaries policy, unless approval for an alternative policy is received by application to the ministry’s District Superintendent’s office. Such application for approval will require:

1. a request via email to an address provided by the District Superintendent’s office,
2. a copy of the ministry setting’s proposed policy [in Word format], and
3. the name and contact information for the person who makes this request on behalf of the ministry setting.

The District Superintendent or their designee will contact the local ministry setting with either approval of the policy submitted or instructions to complete the Template form provided on the Oregon/Idaho Annual Conference website as the local ministry’s official Safe Sanctuaries policy.

Ministry settings are already required to provide their Safe Sanctuaries policy to the District Superintendent. The District Superintendents or their designees with support through the Safe Sanctuaries Coordinator will continue to review Safe Sanctuaries policies. If the policy submitted does not comply with minimum standards of legal requirements, the ministry will be contacted to either update their policy or to use the Template, whichever would more simply help reach the goals of compliance and coherence.

All ministry settings that report annually to any District Superintendent will be required to use the following forms provided on the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference website:

1. Voluntary Disclosure Form,
2. Waiver and Release, and
3. Incident Report;

unless approval for use of alternative forms is received by application to the ministry’s District Superintendent’s office. Such application for approval will require:

1. a request via email to an address provided by the District Superintendent’s office,
2. a copy of the ministry setting’s proposed form [in Word format], and
3. the name and contact information for the person who makes this request on behalf of the ministry setting.

The District Superintendent or their designee will contact the local ministry setting with either approval of the form submitted or instructions to use the form provided on the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference website.

Adopted June 2008

Template for Local Ministry Setting Abuse Prevention Policies

Adopted June 2014

SAFE SANCTUARIES ABUSE RISK REDUCTION AND PREVENTION POLICY

[Name of Ministry]

INTRODUCTION

DO NOT COPY ITALICIZED WORDS IN THIS DOCUMENT. FOR EXAMPLE DO NOT COPY THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE: This section is an opportunity to contain opening comments about concerns for and commitment to, the safety of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults.¹

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Our hope and belief today is that the church is a place where all people will find the unconditional love and care they so desperately need to grow and thrive. But, we know that abuse occurs in churches, large and small, urban and rural. It is a reality which cuts across all economic, cultural, and racial lines. In April 1996, the General Conference of The United Methodist Church adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable adults in the church. It was renewed by the 2004 General Conference (Resolution 65, "Reducing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Churches, pg. 201, 2004 Book of Resolutions).

As Christians we must take our responsibilities to our children, youth, and vulnerable adults very seriously. While policies alone may not be able to completely prevent all harm, sexual abuse can be prevented. We as the people of [Name of Ministry] are dedicated to preventing child abuse within our ministry and within our community.

DEFINITIONS

- **Abuse:** intentional, negligent, or reckless behavior by a volunteer or staff person that is harmful, injurious, or offensive. Abuse takes many forms and includes, but is not limited to: physical abuse, neglect, self-neglect, abandonment, verbal and emotional abuse, financial exploitation, sexual abuse, involuntary seclusion, and wrongful restraint.²
- **Child Abuse:** an act committed by a stranger, a parent, a caregiver, or a person in a position of trust, which is not accidental and which harms or threatens a child's physical or mental health or a child's welfare.³
- **Physical Abuse:** when an adult infures a child other than by accident; including, but not limited to: assault, battery, shaking, slapping, burning, scalding, kicking and strangling.
- **Sexual Abuse:**⁴

1 We encourage congregations to share in a process that seeks scriptural and/or denominational context in recognizing that: God cares for all, and God suffers when children youth, and vulnerable adults suffer. The United Methodist Church was founded by John Wesley who taught: First, do no harm. Do all the good you can. Stay in love with God.

As a congregation, [we] recognize that staying in love with God requires safe sanctuary for the vulnerable and support for survivors of sexual violence.

This SAFE SANCTUARIES: ABUSE RISK REDUCTION AND PREVENTION POLICY is a core missional statement of this congregation.

This section is an opportunity to highlight the above statements or similar ones coming out of this process.

2 Wrongful restraint means the use of physical (i.e. tying, holding) or chemical (i.e. sedation) means to limit the movement of an adult for the convenience or discipline of a caregiver.

3 Harm includes taking a child into a dangerous place. In OR, for example, abuse is present when permitting a child to enter or remain in a place where methamphetamines are being manufactured. See ORS 163.537

4 Generally, in sexual abuse, a significantly older, more powerful person initiates the behavior. However please note that prevention also includes preventing peer abuse, including behavior such as inappropriate words or gestures, taking or showing sexually explicit photos of or to a child or youth, or exposing a child or youth to pornography or adult sexual activity. Abuse also occurs in similar situations regarding vulnerable adults where meaningful consent is unlikely.

1. any sexual contact or sexually explicit behavior initiated by an adult, youth or child toward a child;
2. any sexual contact or sexually explicit sexual behavior initiated by an adult toward a youth;
3. any nonconsensual sexual contact or nonconsensual sexually explicit behavior initiated by a youth toward another youth including, but not limited to sexual harassment and any sexual behavior by a youth toward another youth younger than 14 and where the initiating youth is three years older;
4. any sexual contact by anyone toward a vulnerable adult, or sexually explicit behavior by anyone toward a vulnerable adult where the vulnerable adult is unable to provide meaningful consent.

- **Emotional Abuse:** verbal assault or emotional cruelty.
- **Adult:** a person 18 years old or older.
- **Activities:** any activity or programs in which children, youth, or vulnerable adults are under supervision of staff persons or volunteers.
- **Background Checks:** researching references and records for indications of past or potential abusive and/or criminal activity.
- **Child:** person from birth until they turn 12 years old.
- **Conference:** The Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church.
- **Person-in-Charge [hereinafter, PIC]:** staff person or volunteer who is the person responsible for the event or activity.
- **Prevention and Risk Reduction:** Risk Reduction are those actions taken to lessen opportunity for sexual assault. Most policies focus exclusively on risk reduction, and do very little to prevent sexual abuse in the broader community. [Name of Ministry] is committed not only to lessening risk within congregational facilities and the activities, but [Name of Ministry] is also committed to Prevention of abuse by transformational ministry to survivors, justice and equity ministry, and social change.⁵ [Name of Ministry] recognizes that understanding the difference between Prevention and Risk Reduction is an important step in developing effective Prevention strategy.⁶
- **Sexual Contact:** means any touching of the sexual or other intimate parts of a person or causing such person to touch the sexual or other intimate parts of the actor for the purpose of arousing or gratifying the sexual desire of either party. Regarding children, youth, and vulnerable adults, **Sexual Contact** herein includes, but is not limited to kissing, hugging, massaging, rubbing, blowing on or breathing on, and other touching with any intent by anyone to sexually arouse any person. [Name of Ministry] reserves the right to evaluate such behaviors and provide guidelines to prevent abuse and protect persons.
- **Sexually Explicit Behavior:** means actual or simulated behavior and remains a common form of harassment and abuse. It includes but is not limited to: words, gestures, sexting and media representations of sexual activity, jokes, nudity or partial nudity, and other behaviors.

⁵ Many professionals who work in the field understand Prevention as applied in three phases: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Prevention of Sexual Abuse/Assault. Primary prevention engages everyone to keep sexual violence from happening. See the Center for Disease Control, Sexual Violence Prevention: Beginning the Dialogue, page 3 or link at <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/svprevention-a.pdf>

⁶ Primary prevention work is cultural change consistent with the Gospel: God loves each person as God's own. Often referred to as "moving upstream," primary prevention directs us "upstream" to locate the place where the potential for victimization is created through social inequity. This concept is captured in the "Three Sisters" story, as told by Lisa Brunner from the Sacred Spirits First Nations Coalition's "Three Sisters" story, recorded by Oregon Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence in 2012 and located at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iIyvmXQ3JI>

Each sister represents a stage of prevention: Primary (preventing the violence before it occurs), Secondary (responding in the crisis including bystander intervention); and Tertiary (addressing the longer term impacts of the violence and supporting survivors through trauma). [Adapted from "Primary Prevention," a "paper" of the Oregon Sexual Assault task Force, 2014].

- **Staff person:** any person employed by the local ministry setting that is responsible for activities involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- **Volunteer:** a person who assists in conducting activities under the supervision of person(s) in charge.
- **Vulnerable Adults:** any persons over the age of 18 who possesses a physical or mental disability or dysfunction that impairs the individual's ability to provide adequately for the individual's own care without assistance, including but not limited to: a) the inability to independently or effectively communicate, and/or b) the ability to independently remove oneself from a situation, location or another's presence, and/or c) the inability to comprehend initiation or perpetration of abusive sexual behavior or physical mistreatment upon the individual's person by another, and/or d) because of the dysfunction or infirmity, the individual has an impaired ability to protect the individual's self from maltreatment.
- **We:** [Name of Ministry]
- **Youth:** any person 12 years old to his/her 18th birthday.

PROHIBITION OF ABUSE AT [Name of Ministry]

[Name of Ministry] prohibits abuse as defined herein in all forms by anyone who is:

1. within the facilities of [Name of Ministry];
2. at any and all events sponsored by [Name of Ministry];
3. a staff member of [Name of Ministry]
4. a member of [Name of Ministry];
5. a contractor working on behalf of [Name of Ministry];
6. a member of a group which leases or uses the name, facility, or the ministries of [Name of Ministry].

[Name of Ministry] supports all persons connected to the ministry and the surrounding community in seeking to engage in healthy relationships, including healthy parent-child and healthy intimate partner relationships. Further, [Name of Ministry] is committed to equipping all persons connected to the ministry and the surrounding community to be aware of, to prevent, and to resist abusive behavior in all forms through prayer, spiritual growth, words, and action.

ABUSE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION AT [Name of Ministry]

1. [Name of Ministry] shall annually designate one Sunday on which abuse awareness and abuse prevention are incorporated into the worship experience. The District Superintendent's office shall be notified as to when this service has taken place.
2. [Name of Ministry] shall annually offer an educational opportunity on abuse prevention.⁷
3. [Name of Ministry] shall offer opportunities for survivors of sexual abuse to find healing and support in the context of [Name of Ministry]'s ministry.⁸ [Name of Ministry] will provide local listings of available, competent community resources for survivors when needed.

RISK REDUCTION: SCREENING PROCEDURES

1. All adults, volunteer or staff persons of [Name of Ministry] who have regular and direct contact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults and/or act to lead worship or represent the church in an ongoing, official capacity shall be required to complete an application including disclosure of information including legal name and other names previously used, date of birth, and voluntary disclosure of any convictions of abusive behavior.

⁷ Events will be planned so that issues covered will include diverse and pertinent topics to equip [Name of Ministry] to address challenges in prevention strategy. Topics may include: physical plant issues, issues related to various age groups, issues concerning abuse prevention and disabled persons, changes in laws, and other issues.

⁸ Such opportunities may take the form of an event or events in [Name of Ministry], or combined with other churches, or on through the District or Annual Conference.

2. All adults, volunteer or staff persons of [Name of Ministry] who have regular and direct contact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults and/or act to lead worship or represent [Name of Ministry] in an ongoing, official capacity⁹ shall be required to:

- a) Furnish two references (from persons unrelated to applicant) on an application form, and
- b) Complete a State and/or National criminal background check.

3. The reviewing body responsible for overseeing the screening process is [Name of Ministry's reviewing group].

- a) [Name of Ministry's reviewing group] is responsible for review and approval of each application before a person's service begins.
- b) The screening procedure for each individual shall be repeated every five years.
- c) All records are confidential and will be maintained in a safe, secure place to ensure confidentiality. The records should be maintained for a period of 50 years. [Name of Ministry] will not knowingly hire anyone with a history of committing sexual abuse on any child, youth, or vulnerable adult.
- d) [Name of Ministry] will communicate this abuse prevention policy to outside groups/ organizations using the facilities and receive written receipt signed by the key contact with the outside group acknowledging the policy and accepting responsibility to comply with the screening, supervision, and reporting/response requirements of this policy.
- e) [Name of Ministry] will require outside groups using the facilities to sign a waiver and release stating [Name of Ministry] accepts no civil or criminal liability resulting from any incident of child abuse or sexual misconduct/sexual abuse which takes place under the auspices of an outside organization/group using the local ministry setting facilities.

RISK REDUCTION: TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

1. [Name of Ministry] requires training for all persons having direct contact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Training shall include an annual orientation that includes information about the local ministry setting abuse prevention policy. Paid staff who are required to attend these trainings should be compensated for their time.¹⁰

2. Our standard practice is that all children, youth, and vulnerable adults will be supervised by at least 2 unrelated adults and that no adult will be alone with children, youth, or vulnerable adult(s) out of sight of other adults.¹¹ The minimum standard is an open space (open door, window, etc) such that activities can be observed and an adult who is assigned to periodically observe the activities.

3. No person shall supervise any age group of children or youth unless he/she is AT LEAST 5 years older than the children or youth.

4. The PIC [see Definitions] will be responsible for adherence to the Supervision requirements herein.

REPORTING AND RESPONSE TO INCIDENT/ALLEGATION

1. [Name of Ministry] requires immediate and specific response to allegations of abuse:

- a) within the facilities of [Name of Ministry]; or
- b) at any and all events sponsored by [Name of Ministry]; or

⁹ Representation of [Name of Ministry] includes speaking or writing on behalf of the ministry to media sources; it may also include serving as chairperson for some committees or projects.

¹⁰ This training may be incorporated in the educational opportunity set forth in the section above, entitled, "STANDARDS FOR ABUSE AWAREMENS AND PREVENTION," under section #2, but must include some Primary Prevention training and a review of this policy.

¹¹ Bathroom breaks with children old enough to manage on their own, youth, and vulnerable adults are to be coordinated in such a way that an adult checks the bathroom, then leaves and stands outside as children, youth or vulnerable adults of the same sex use the facility. No adult is to enter during the time the facility is in use unless there are clear indications of an emergency. For babies and younger children, two unrelated adults need to be present when diapers are being changed or at anytime a child needs to have clothes changed.

- c) if the adult who observed the abuse is a current staff member of [Name of Ministry].
- 2. Any adult who observes or hears of alleged abuse which falls under conditions described herein [see number 1, a, b, or c, immediately above] shall:¹²
 - a) Assure the safety of the victim.
 - i) Whatever the victim says is to be taken very seriously.
 - ii) Make sure that the victim is in a safe place and watched over.
 - iii) Do not confront the accused abuser with anger or hostility but immediately remove him/her from further involvement with children and youth until the matter can be investigated.
 - b) Call the police at 911, if there is a situation of immediate risk.
 - c) Report the incident immediately to the pastor (unless implicated in the allegation or unavailable) and/or the Person in Charge (unless implicated in the allegation). Contact the appropriate authorities (if the adult witness is designated as a “mandated or mandatory reporter” by state or federal law).¹³
- 3. The pastor or designee shall:

12 Falsely filed, malicious reports are illegal. However, unless the report is known beyond any doubt to be false, the process of reporting is required by [Name of Ministry]. Idaho law offers protection for good faith reporters of child abuse: “Any person who has reason to believe that a child has been abused, abandoned, or neglected and, acting upon that belief, makes a report of abuse, abandonment, or neglect as required by the reporting laws, shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed. Any such participant shall have the same immunity with respect to participation in any judicial proceeding resulting from such report. Any person who reports in bad faith or with malice shall not be protected by this section.” Idaho Code § 16-1606

Similarly, Oregon Law states: “Anyone participating in good faith in making a report of child abuse and who has reasonable grounds for the making thereof shall have immunity from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed with respect to the making or content of such report. Any such participant shall have the same immunity with respect to participating in any judicial proceeding resulting from such report.” Or. Rev. Stat. Ann. §419B.025

13 Each state has a class of individuals who must report child abuse to the authorities if they are aware of it. Here, [Name of Ministry] is reminding those responsible for reporting to follow state law. If you are unsure, please find your state requirements at <https://www.rainn.org/public-policy/laws-in-your-state>. This website is provided by RAINN, the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network.

At the time of this writing, **Oregon** law includes:

Medical personnel: Physicians, psychiatrists, surgeons, residents, interns, dentists, dentist hygienists, medical examiners, pathologists, osteopaths, coroners, Christian Science practitioners, chiropractors, podiatrists, optometrists, naturopathic physicians, registered and licensed practical nurses, emergency medical technicians, substance abuse treatment personnel, hospital administrators, physical, speech and occupational therapists, and other personnel involved in the examination, care or treatment of patients.

School and child care personnel: Teachers, school personnel, educational advocates assigned to a child pursuant to the School Code, truant officers, directors and staff assistants of day care centers and nursery schools.

Public employees: Members of the Legislative Assembly, employees of the State Commission on Children and Families, the Child Care Division of the Employment Department, the Oregon Youth Authority, a county health department, a community mental health and developmental disabilities program, a county juvenile department, and all DHS employees.

Law Enforcement: Truant officers, probation officers, law enforcement officers, and field personnel of the Department of Corrections.

Others: Psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, licensed professional counselors, licensed marriage and family therapists, members of the clergy, attorneys, firefighters, court appointed special advocates, registered or certified child care providers, and foster care providers and their employees. http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/abuse/pages/mandatory_report.aspx

Idaho state law is broader and requires: “Idaho is one of many states which has mandatory reporting requirements, Idaho Code § 16-1619, when child abuse, abandonment or neglect is suspected. This law applies to everyone. Anyone who suspects child abuse, neglect, or abandonment should make a child protection report. A report should be made if you see evidence of physical abuse or neglect of a child.” <http://211.idaho.gov/elibrary/childabuse.html>

- a) Ascertain the general details needed to make an accurate report.
 - b) Within 24 hours, write an incident report. The report should include the following information, if obtainable:¹⁴
 - (1) The name, address, age and sex of the alleged victim;
 - (2) The name and address of the alleged victim's parents or other person responsible for his/her care;
 - (3) The nature and extent of the alleged abuse or neglect;
 - (4) Any evidence of previously known or suspected abuse or neglect of the alleged victim or their siblings;
 - (5) The name, address and relationship, if known, of the person who is alleged to have perpetrated the abuse or neglect; and
 - (6) Any other information known to the person making the report that would be helpful to the investigation of the alleged abuse.
 - c) Contact the appropriate State or law enforcement agency as soon as possible to file the abuse report and provide the aforementioned information and follow the instructions of the agency.
 - d) Report the suspected child abuse to the child's family (unless implicated in the allegation) and any agencies required by law.
 - e) Report the suspected abuse to a District Superintendent of the Annual Conference within 24 hours of the initial report.
4. The alleged perpetrators of the abuse are to be excluded from future events involving children, youth and vulnerable adults until the incident report is resolved. In any removal of a person from any activities, care must be taken to handle this in a discreet manner, recognizing that an investigation is being conducted.

POLICY REVIEW AND DISTRICT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

This abuse prevention policy will be reviewed annually at the charge or church conference. The reviewing body will include [Name of Ministry's Reviewing Body]. An electronic copy or written copy of the policy will be provided each year to the District office.

CONCLUSION

In all of our ministries we are committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each child, youth, and vulnerable adult is "surrounded by steadfast love...established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal" (Baptismal Covenant II, United Methodist Hymnal, pg 44).

DO NOT COPY THESE ITALICIZED WORDS:

Other thoughts may be added. The section may also include the reviewing agency if not noted in the "Policy Review" section. If you choose not to include this section and related information, you still must include the signatures and policy date within the document.

The policy will be signed and dated with the policy effective date. Signatures should include the pastor, and chairs of the SPRC, Admin Council, and Trustees.

¹⁴ [Name of Ministry] will file the appropriate report. However, under no circumstances will staff or volunteers will take it upon themselves to launch an investigation outside of the general inquiry needed to write an incident report. If facts or unobtainable or someone resists, the person filing the report should note these facts without making demands or confronting the person who refused to answer.

Sexual Ethics Policy For Clergy and Lay Pastoral Leaders¹ of the Oregon Idaho Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church

Statement of Policy:

Clergy and employees of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church shall not engage in sexual misconduct, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment.

Theological Foundation²

The 2004 Book of Discipline states in ¶161(G) the following. “We recognize that sexuality is God’s good gift to all persons. We believe persons may be fully human only when that gift is acknowledged and affirmed by themselves, the church, and society. We call all persons to the disciplined, responsible fulfillment of themselves, others, and society in the stewardship of this gift. We reject all sexual expressions that damage or destroy the humanity God has given us as birthright, and we affirm only that sexual expression that enhances that same humanity. We believe that sexual relations where one or both partners are exploitive, abusive, or promiscuous are beyond the parameters of acceptable Christian behavior and are ultimately destructive to individuals, families, and the social order.”

Sexual misconduct involves a misuse of the gift of sexuality. Acts that should signify the intimacy of a committed relationship between equal partners instead are tainted with ambivalence, confusion, guilt and sometimes fear. Secrecy, which often accompanies such acts, only reinforces these feelings and further signals that there is something “wrong” with the relationship. Sexual misconduct within a ministerial relationship leaves the victim bearing a burden of trauma attached to their expression of sexuality. Victims are thus robbed of the joyous celebration of the sacredness and dignity of their sexuality.

God entrusts the workers in the church with the responsibilities of sharing both Holy love and the Divine Word. Our sexual behavior, like any of our behaviors, must comply with the highest standards of a Christ-like life. We in the church are expected to live in covenant with each other and hold each other to those standards. By being speakers of the Truth, persons are offered freedom and redemption and God’s Grace can be employed for restoration of right relationships and alternative paths.

Definitions

Clergy: Clergy membership of the Oregon Idaho Annual Conference consists of Deacons and Elders in full connection, probationary members, associate members, affiliate members, local pastors and retired members within the meaning of ¶602.1 of the *2004 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*.

Clergy Relationship - A clergy relationship exists between a clergy person and any other person

- (i) when the other person is a parishioner of a congregation to which that clergy person was previously or is currently appointed,
- (ii) when the other person is supervised by, is a colleague with or receives ministry from a clergy person serving in any function for which he or she was ordained, licensed, hired or approved by the Annual Conference or its representatives,
- (iii) when a clergy person uses the authority of the clergy office or role in establishing a relationship with the other person, and
- (iv) when the other person is a member of a community which recognizes the authority of the clergy person as a person in ministry (i.e. appointments beyond the local church and honorable location, retirement, leaves of absence and other situations in which a clergy person serves a community other than a local congregation).

Clergy Sexual Misconduct: Clergy sexual misconduct occurs whenever a clergy person initiates or allows any sexual contact or behavior with a person with whom he or she has a clergy relationship and includes, but is not limited to, sexual abuse and sexual harassment. This includes the chargeable offenses listed in ¶2702 of the *2004 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*.

Clergy sexual misconduct must be understood primarily as an issue of the abuse of the power, trust, and status inherently present in any clergy relationship rather than an issue of the sexual morality of an individual clergy person. An inherent imbalance of power exists in any clergy relationship simply through the clergy role and totally separate from the clergy person's character, personality and style of ministry. A similar imbalance of power can also exist when one clergy supervises another clergy. The same sacred trust inherent in ordination, consecration and licensing that makes effective ministry possible leaves persons in clergy relationships open and vulnerable. This predisposes those persons to believe that clergy shall act only in ways that will contribute to their well-being. The only appropriate and acceptable clergy response to the trust and power given to clergy through their role is ministry to the emotional, spiritual and temporal needs of those who come to them for help.

A single clergy person may be involved in a romantic relationship within the parameters discussed in the following section.

Clergy Sexual Misconduct In Context of Single Clergy Romantic Relationship- A single clergy person engaging in a romantic relationship with a single person with whom he or she has a clergy relationship does not necessarily commit sexual misconduct. The clergy person must be aware of the inherent imbalance of power that he or she has in this type of clergy relationship and take full responsibility for the related potential for harm. A single clergy person entering into this type of relationship bears the burden of demonstrating that there has been no exploitation in the relationship, in light of all relevant factors, including the personal history and mental status of the other person and the likelihood of an adverse impact on the person or on others. A clergy person should refrain from entering into a romantic relationship with a person with whom he or she currently has a pastoral counseling relationship. Should a pastoral counseling need arise for a person with whom the clergy person is romantically involved, that clergy person would make recommendations of two or three choices for pastoral or other professional counselors. Neither shall a single clergy person enter into a romantic relationship with a person whom he or she has had a pastoral counseling relationship for at least two years after cessation or termination of the pastoral counseling (consistent with the American Psychological Association Code of Ethics of 1992). The clergy person who engages in such activity after the two years following cessation or termination of the pastoral counseling relationship bears the burden of demonstration that there has been no exploitation, in light of all relevant factors, including the amount of time that has passed since the pastoral counseling relationship terminated, the nature and duration of the pastoral counseling, the circumstances of termination, the personal history of the counselee and others and any statements or actions made by the clergy person during the course of the pastoral counseling suggesting or inviting the possibility of a post-termination romantic relationship with the counselee.

Sexual Abuse: The laws of both the States of Idaho and Oregon contain definitions of Sexual Abuse. These legal descriptions constitute the primary definitions of Sexual Abuse used in this policy. (See ORS 163 & Idaho Statutes 18-1506). In Summary, Sexual Abuse is an actual or attempted sexual invasion of the body by force and without full consent. Sexual abuse is any of, but not limited to, the following: rape, sexual assault (a forced sexual act against one's will), incest, indecent exposure, statutory rape, involuntary, voluntary, or deviant sexual intercourse with a child, promotion of prostitution, pornography with children, indecent assault, and aggravated indecent assault. "Sexual abuse" as used in this policy is not limited to those matters that are defined as crimes by the states of Idaho and Oregon, nor are any of the specific elements that make certain activities crimes under the criminal codes of the states of Idaho and Oregon necessary to prove sexual abuse for the purposes of this policy.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment is any sexually related behavior that is unwanted, offensive or which fails to respect the rights of others. This behavior includes any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favor or relationship and other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment and/or which is based on gender discrimination and/or perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating or coercive.

Sexual harassment can consist of a single intense or severe act or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts. There are many possible scenarios in sexual harassment situations. Each situation must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Types of unwanted conduct that constitute sexual harassment as listed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission include (but are not limited to):

1. Unsolicited and unnecessary touching, pinching, patting or closeness.
2. Sexist remarks about a person's body or clothing.
3. Sexually degrading words to describe a person.
4. Repeated propositions or explicit demands for sexual activity.
5. Sexually suggestive pictures or objects in the work place or gathering place for the group or activity.
6. Judging a person by looks or body instead of ability.
7. Unsolicited suggestive looks or leers.
8. Unsolicited attempt to fondle or kiss.
9. Unsolicited sexual comments, teasing or telling of jokes with sexual context.
10. Unsolicited letters, calls or materials of a sexual nature.
11. Offer to use influence in return for sexual favor.

Pastoral Counseling - Pastoral counseling is the special dimension of ministry in which a clergy person utilizes a variety of counseling perspectives and techniques to help people handle their problems and crises and thus work toward healing. A pastoral counseling relationship begins at the point that the clergy person and the person or persons seeking pastoral counseling explicitly agree to enter into a relationship wherein it is understood that the clergy person shall apply special skills to assist the other person or persons in resolution of problems or crises.

NOTE:

The above definitions are provided solely for the purpose of this **Sexual Ethics Policy**. The definitions do not create any chargeable offenses pursuant to *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*. This policy does not sanction any conduct, which may constitute a chargeable offense pursuant to *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*.

Implementation Of Policy [This section updated June 2021 and June 2022]

The Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference commits itself to fast and expedient investigation of any charge of sexual misconduct within its churches and act in compliance with the current Book of Discipline.

The Clergy Sexual Ethics policy is to be made available for all Clergy, church employees, and local churches of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference by annual publication in the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference Journal.

District Superintendents are responsible for informing the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee members and members of the conference personnel committees of the Clergy Sexual Ethics policy.

These persons are expected to know and abide by this policy:

- All clergy members (as defined by the current Book of Discipline) of the Oregon-Idaho Conference
- All Honorably Located clergy listed on Oregon-Idaho's current Business of the Annual Conference Report under Questions 39 and 40.
- Any non-member clergyperson currently serving under appointment by the Oregon-Idaho bishop
- All Certified Lay Ministers
- All Oregon-Idaho Diaconal Ministers and Deaconesses/Home Missioners
- Any layperson assigned by the district superintendent to a pastoral role.

If a person residing in Oregon-Idaho is in a ministerial leadership role but is not covered in any category above, at the discretion of the district superintendent, that person may be included in these requirements.

The persons named above must complete each of these three requirements biannually, during the odd-number years, between May 1 and May 31:

- Undergo a criminal background and records check as determined by the Board of Ordained Ministry, with costs being covered by their local church or charge conference. If payment is burdensome to the local church, the pastor/clergy should discuss financial assistance with their district superintendent.
- Sign and submit a disclosure form, including a certification that the sexual ethics policy has been read.
- Complete half of the quadrennial Healthy Boundaries training. (Note that the Healthy Boundaries training will include abuse prevention practices that are applicable to the Safe Sanctuaries certification process during the odd-numbered years, but the Safe Sanctuaries training will still need to be done separately in the even-numbered years, for those persons participating in that certification.)

Applications for exemption from these three requirements shall be made in writing to the District Superintendent. Letters of approval for exemption shall be kept on file in the District Superintendent's office.

Clergy members who do not meet the above requirements shall have a letter of non-compliance placed in their permanent file. Noncompliance may result in disciplinary action initiated by the District Superintendent.

Knowledge or information about clergy sexual misconduct should be reported to a district superintendent or the bishop. When allegations of clergy sexual misconduct are made, every attempt shall be made to have two District Superintendents (preferably one male and one female) investigate the matter by meeting first with the accusing party, then with the accused. Where required, further information shall be gathered and a full report made to the Cabinet. The Bishop and the Cabinet shall make every effort to resolve allegations, complaints or charges in a timely manner and within the requirements of the current Book of Discipline. Further procedural recommendations are found in the appendix of this policy.

Making a Complaint

A complaint about any clergy person in violation of this policy may be made to any District Superintendent, or the Bishop. A complaint against a clergy person that involves a child may also need to be reported to the proper authorities, but there are also laws that may prevent disclosure of information obtained during a confidential discussion between a clergy person and another person seeking spiritual guidance from the clergy person. All complaints shall be dealt with promptly and in confidence according to ¶362 of the *2004 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*. Persons who report misconduct or file a complaint must not be subject to retaliation. Persons who have knowledge of alleged misconduct are expected to come forward. Persons who knowingly give false information or reports shall be disciplined. All investigations of clergy shall be conducted according to ¶¶2701-2706 of the *2004 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*.

Appendices to Sexual Ethics Policy for Clergy of the Oregon Idaho Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church

Suggested Methods of Dealing with Allegations of a Clergy Sexual Misconduct

I. Incidents Involving Children under 18 Years Old

(For the purposes of this section, sexual misconduct includes all forms of sexual misconduct except sexual harassment.)

- A. If any incident of sexual misconduct is known or suspected to have occurred involving clergy and a person under the age of 18, the nearest agency or authority charged with child protection must be contacted immediately and a report given. This report is mandatory as outlined by the Idaho Code § 16-1619(a), (c) (Supp. 1998) and Or. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 419B.010(1) & Or. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 419B.005(3)(h). However, there are also laws that may

prevent disclosure of information obtained during a confidential discussion between a clergy person and another person seeking spiritual guidance from the clergy person.

B. Do not confront or discuss the incident with the alleged perpetrator.

C. Contact the District Superintendent or other church authority to inform them of the report that you have made.

II. Clergy Sexual Misconduct Against Persons 18 Years Old or Older

(For the purposes of this section, sexual misconduct includes all forms of sexual misconduct except sexual harassment.)

A. If a clergy commits an act of sexual misconduct against you:

1. Contact the Bishop or a district superintendent who shall act according to his/her responsibility as outlined in ¶362.1 of the *2004 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*. In addition, the bishop or district superintendent may include third parties for mediation and consultation.

2. It is advisable to keep a journal which documents all incidents in question, including conversation and contacts with the person, dates, times, witnesses and descriptions of the incidents.

3. When the alleged conduct constitutes a criminal act, report it to the police.

B. If you are accused of sexual misconduct:

1. Listen objectively when confronted with behaviors that have caused discomfort or harm to another, whether intended or not, and be open to ways that your behavior can change.

2. It is advisable to keep a journal which documents all incidents in question, including conversations and contacts with the person, dates, times, witnesses and descriptions of all incidents.

C. If sexual misconduct is reported by complainant to you as Clergy, Christian Education Director, Diaconal Minister, Staff-Parish Relations Committee Chairperson:

1. Listen objectively and take it seriously with due consideration and sensitivity given to the safety and emotional needs of the complainant.

2. Make certain the complainant is aware of the Oregon Idaho Annual Conference's Sexual Ethics Policy and his or her option to report the incident. Affirm with the complainant the decision to participate in reporting the incident(s) is in the hands of the complainant. The person hearing the report should resist making decisions for or attempting to influence the complainant.

3. Alleged sexual misconduct is reported to the district superintendent. If the alleged perpetrator is the district superintendent, contact the bishop. If it is the bishop, contact the Council of Bishops.

III. Sexual Harassment

A. If you are sexually harassed by a clergy:

1. It is advisable to keep a journal which documents all incidents of sexual or gender harassment including dates, times, witnesses and descriptions of the incidents. If you receive any written letters, cards, or memos of a suggestive nature from the harasser, it is advisable to keep them, noting the date received and how received (mailed to your home, left on your desk, etc.)

2. If you choose, confront the alleged harasser before taking official action.

a. Tell the alleged harasser firmly and clearly what behavior is not acceptable to you. If you choose, take another person with you for support. Be as specific as possible. This action, in many cases, will be sufficient or

b. Contact the alleged harasser in writing. Clearly state what behavior(s) and action(s) are not acceptable to you, or

c. Contact another pastor or supervisor and ask them to talk with the alleged harasser. Clearly state what behavior(s) and action(s) are not acceptable to you.

3. If you choose not to confront the alleged harasser, contact a district superintendent.

B. If you are accused of sexual harassment:

1. Listen objectively when confronted with behaviors that have caused discomfort or harm to another, whether intended or not, and be open to ways your behavior can change.

2. It is advisable to keep a journal which documents all incidents in question, including conversations and contacts with the person who confronts your behavior, dates, times, witnesses and descriptions of the incidents.

3. If there is no one-on-one resolution you may contact a district superintendent.

C. If acts of sexual harassment are reported by complainant to you as Pastor, Deacon, Christian Education Director, Diaconal Minister, Staff-Parish Relations Committee Chairperson:

1. Listen objectively and take it seriously with due consideration given to the safely and emotional needs of the complainant.

2. Give complainant the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference's Sexual Ethics Policy and review with her or him the option to report the incident to the district superintendent.

Statute of Limitations: Limitations of claims for sexual misconduct apply only to the extent that the behavior in question was one listed in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* in effect at the time the behavior took place. A person may be charged with an offense only if it was a chargeable offense in *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* in effect at the time the action was committed. The applicable limitation periods for sexual misconduct and sexual or gender harassment may be found in ¶ 362.1.d, 2702.4, and 2704 of the 2004 *Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*.

Endnotes:

¹ The basic format of this document, along with portions of the content, was originally developed by the East Ohio Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church

² This Theological Reflection is found in the 2006 Sexual Misconduct Policy presented by the Board of Ordained Ministry of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

adopted June 2008; updated June 2012; updated June 2014; updated June 2021; updated June 2022

CLERGY HOUSING STANDARDS AND POLICY

I. Defines the implementation of the responsibility for housing to be used by clergy of the Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference.

This Policy provides guidance for OR-ID Conference churches in the implementation of housing for clergy appointed to their church or churches. The requirement for providing clergy housing are noted in paragraphs 247.19, 258.2g(16), and 627 of the 2016 Discipline plus in the Commission on Equitable Compensation Report on page 113.

A. The primary responsibility for clergy housing resides with the Administrative Board, Church Council or other governing body. One of the responsibilities as defined by 2016 Discipline, Paragraph 252.4e), is: "review the recommendation of the committee on pastor-parish relations regarding provisions of adequate housing for the pastor(s), and report the same to the charge conference for approval." Therefore, it is the responsibility of the church governing body to provide adequate housing for the pastor(s) and report this to the Charge Conference. A part of this is the annual parsonage inspection referred to in

Section ID of this policy. This annual parsonage inspection report must also be provided to the District Superintendent(s). See II below for church-owned parsonage standards and III below for housing allowance standards.

- B. The church governing body may delegate administrative responsibility for clergy housing to the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee or to a Parsonage Committee. However, it is understood that ultimate responsibility resides with the church governing body.
- C. When church-owned property is used as clergy housing, it is referred to as a parsonage. Church-owned housing not used as clergy housing is not a parsonage but remains subject to this policy. Property not used as housing (by clergy or others) is not subject to this policy.
- D. If a Parsonage Committee is established, membership is to be nominated by Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development and elected by the Charge Conference, or appointed by the church governing body. It is suggested that its membership include the following: One trustee elected by the Board of Trustees, one member of the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, three members at large, the minister, and one other member of the minister's household. This Committee shall direct and oversee the parsonage upkeep and maintenance. If there is a single governing body, this body may also serve as the Parsonage Committee with strong input by the pastor and spouse.

The Parsonage Committee or the church governing body must inspect the parsonage annually, preferably in April, to determine if these housing recommendations are being maintained and refer to the Board of Trustees any recommendations for improvement. The Parsonage Committee should meet at least annually, and should report to the Charge Conference (Discipline Paragraph 2533.4). The "Local Church Parsonage Annual Report" provided by the district office for charge conference or year-end reports should be used for this annual inspection. Even if the parsonage is occupied by someone other than the pastor or is not occupied, this annual inspection must be done. If a local church does not perform an adequate annual inspection for two years, the District Superintendent(s), may direct an inspection of the parsonage. The local church may be charged for this inspection.

E. When more than one church share a pastor, all the churches shall support the pastor's housing in proportional amount agreed upon by the churches and the District Superintendent(s). A suggested method is for the churches to support the pastor's housing in proportion to their support of the pastor's salary. If a parsonage is provided, then all the churches shall share the cost of parsonage maintenance in the agreed upon proportion. These funds shall be used by the parsonage provider to maintain the parsonage in the appropriate manner as directed by the Parsonage Committee and this Policy. This is true, even if all or several churches have a parsonage since the expense for the parsonage chosen to house the pastor must be supported by all the churches in the agreed upon proportion. Also, a Parsonage Committee shall be set up that includes members from all the sharing churches with their voting on the Parsonage Committee in proportion to their agreed upon parsonage support. (Note: the minister and the minister's household member do not count in this proportionality.)

F. Parsonage recommendations and the definition of an adequate housing allowance (See IIIA) should apply to all ministers under appointment to a local church regardless of marital status or family size.

G. If a church or charge does not have a parsonage, and no provision has been made to provide for a housing allowance, the church shall either:

1. Develop a plan to acquire a suitable parsonage with sufficient funding for the purchase, or
2. Provide for an adequate housing allowance for the minister(s). (See IIIA and Commission on Equitable Compensation Report.)

H. During the annual Charge Conference, the District Superintendent(s) may ask if the housing allowance provided by the local church is in compliance with Conference standards. Each local church is to be provided with a copy of the Clergy Housing Standards and Policy.

POLICY

II. Church-owned Parsonage

A. The House

1. **Ownership and Privacy.** It should be recognized that a minister occupying a church-owned parsonage is in a relationship similar to that of a renter, with the church being understood as the landlord. The *Discipline*, ¶258.2g(16) says, “The parsonage is to be mutually respected by the pastor’s family as the property of the church and by the church as a place of privacy for the pastor’s family.”
2. **Minimum number of rooms:** 3 bedrooms, dining area, kitchen, one and one-half (preferably two) baths, with adequate closet space in each, linen storage, garage and/or carport for a minimum of two automobiles, and storage for lawn equipment.
3. **Additional desirable features:** family room, extra bedroom or study space, bookshelves, fireplace with glass door and tools (alternative: modern wood-burning stove and accessories).
4. **Energy Efficiency:** adequate heating plant with annual maintenance and modifications for current technology. Insulated windows and adequate insulation in walls and ceiling are essential. Air conditioning should be provided in any locality where the climate requires it. An energy audit should be made, and recommendations referred to the Board of Trustees.
5. **Additional Essential Features**
 - a. All church-owned furnishings and equipment should be in good condition with regard to appearance and useability
 - b. Adequate electrical outlets should be provided, including those for refrigerator-freezer facilities, air conditioning, television, and other devices.
 - c. All windows should have blinds and/or draperies in good condition.
 - d. Windows should provide adequate ventilation, and those which open should have accompanying screens.
 - e. Floor covering in all areas should be in good condition and up-to-date. Consideration should be given to ease of maintenance.
 - f. Fencing should be installed and maintained where necessary to provide protection, containment, and ample area for activities for small children.
 - g. Dead-bolt locks, television antenna or cable installation, smoke alarm(s), and working doorbells should be provided.
 - h. Parsonage shall have upgraded electrical service to meet present-day electrical needs.

B. Furnishings and Equipment to be Provided

1. **Kitchen,** electric or gas range, refrigerator with minimum of 17 to 21 cubic feet of space, with a freezing compartment or a separate freezer; adequate cupboard space; adequate counter space with good finish. A dishwasher and disposal are highly recommended. Outlet and space for a microwave oven should be provided.
2. **Laundry Area:** current models of automatic washer and dry, in good operating condition.
3. **Yard Care:** power lawn mower, garden hoses and sprinklers, garden tools and equipment.
4. **Telephone:** two telephones should be provided. The telephone deposit and connection should be maintained by the church to prevent interruption between pastorates.
5. Consideration should be given to providing floor lamps in parsonages that have no overhead lights.
6. **Condition:** when furnishings and equipment are no longer in good condition with regard to appearance and usability, then should be removed and replaced as soon as practical. Out-of-date items or the discards of others should not be placed in the parsonage. Decisions in this regard should reside with the Parsonage Committee and pastor.
7. **Inventory:** an up-to-date list of all parsonage furnishings, including dates of purchase, serial numbers, and related data should be kept, with copies to be filed with the Parsonage Committee, church office, and the District Superintendent.

C. Care of Property

1. **Insurance:** coverage is normally provided by the church for all fire and casualty losses, including public liability, including the replacement cost of the parsonage and church-owned furnishings and equipment. Clergy are responsible for insuring personal property, including furniture. The pastor shall purchase renters insurance.

2. Repairs: an amount shall be provided in the local church budget for repairs and maintenance of the parsonage. (An amount equivalent to two percent [2%] of the value of the parsonage is recommended. This can be achieved by paying one-twelfth [1/12th] of the yearly amount each month into a special reserve, which should be cumulative.)

3. Interior and exterior painting should be provided as required to keep the house in good condition and appearance.

4. Operating Procedures:

a. A formal agreement between the pastor and the church shall be instituted. The agreement shall clarify the expectations of both the church and the pastor with regard to the matters listed in this policy statement. A review upon the arrival of the incoming pastor and two weeks before the departure of the outgoing pastor is in order to conform to the agreement. (see revised sample form below) The clergy shall make a security/cleaning deposit to cover damage and cleaning costs for the parsonage. The deposit will be obtained via payroll deduction during the first 6 months of the clergy use of the parsonage. The church will place the deposit in trust to be refunded at the end of the clergy appointment if the parsonage is in reasonable condition considering normal wear and tear. Any cleaning and damage costs incurred by the church for the parsonage would be deducted from the deposit.

b. The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee/Parsonage Committee in cooperation with the Board of Trustees shall be responsible for seeing that all necessary work is done to keep the parsonage up to these recommendations.

c. An annual review should be made of the agreement, involving the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee/Parsonage Committee and Board of Trustees, with the pastor's family.

d. The parsonage family should be consulted in the selection of applicances and furnishings, and their taste considered in determining color and plans for interior decorating. Neutral colors for drapes and carpets are recommended so as to fit with whatever color décor of furnishings the parsonage family may bring into the parsonage.

e. A parsonage history should be kept in the church files, providing age of the building, its assessed evaluation, dates and types of improvement, including purchases of appliances and a list of church-owned furnishings. Photos are desirable.

f. The following information should be supplied to the minister by the Parsonage Committee in the form of a regular Parsonage Reference Manual containing:

(1) Location of water shut-off valves and outside faucets including instructions on "winterizing" outside plumbing.

(2) Locations and drawing for all electrical disconnect panels with appropriate labels on breakers/fuses.

(3) Instructions on all appliances including lighting pilot lights in furnaces, water heaters and stoves.

(4) Directions on the use of all power equipment including lawn mowers and other power tools belonging to the parsonage.

(5) Instruction booklets for appliances.

(6) Suggested list for service personnel and service providers (volunteers) within the church.

(7) Schedule of regular maintenance to be carried out with the parsonage committee.

(8) Any other information specific to the parsonage and grounds.

5. Prior to moving out of a parsonage, the parsonage family shall clean, or arrange and pay for the cleaning of the house, including carpets and rugs. If this is not done, the Parsonage Committee shall have the option of hiring the work done and deducting the expenses from the security/cleaning deposit before refunding the deposit to the outgoing pastor.

D. General Suggestions

1. Ministers are encouraged to live in the parsonage(s) provided by the local church where the parsonage(s) is adequate according to these guidelines. Consultation between the church, District Superintendent, and the pastor should occur if the parsonage is not appropriate.

2. The parsonage is the home of the pastor and family and their rights and privacy should always be respected by members of the congregation. With rights comes responsibilities for

the appearance and condition of the parsonage. The minister's family and the Parsonage Committee should work together to exercise good care of all parsonage property. (See IIA and IIC4 above.)

3. When the pastor moves, the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee/Parsonage Committee should see that the lights, telephone, and water are left connected. The deposit for public utilities should be provided by the church.

4. If a gift of furniture or furnishings is made, the donor should designate specifically if it is to remain in the parsonage or is a personal gift to the pastor.

III. Housing Allowance Standards

A. An adequate housing allowance may be defined as an amount sufficient to rent a house in the community that would meet the standards of a church-owned parsonage and its furnishings and equipment (as defined by IIB).

B. Churches are encouraged to be attentive and responsive to the individual needs of minister with regard to housing.

C. In the event that a church and its pastor are considering a change from a parsonage to a housing allowance, this is to be done in consultation with the District Superintendent and the District Committee on Church Location and Building. Thorough attention should be given to the advantages and disadvantages of such a change. A church should be prepared, through careful preservation of adequate assets, giving attention to market values and trends, to provide future housing which meet Conference standards. (*Discipline*, par. 2544 and Conference Rule 12.061)

D. Where the housing allowance is provided and in order to allow the minister maximum benefits allowed by the Internal Revenue Service, the following guidelines are suggested:

1. For churches reporting to the Charge Conference and the District Superintendent, the amount designated for Housing Allowance should be the amount required to rent a house in the community that would meet the standards for a church-owned parsonage. Other amounts designated for housing allowance may be mutually agreed upon between the pastor and the church with the consent of the District Superintendent. Consideration should be given to costs of maintenance and repair that would otherwise be paid by the church to maintain a parsonage. The housing allowance is in addition to any amount designated for utilities.

2. For Federal Income Tax purposes, it is recommended that the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee make a separate allocation of total compensation including housing allowance as established by the Charge Conference in order to reflect the actual cost of providing a home.

This designation should be made in a letter to the pastor in advance of the effective date.

IV. Cabinet Policy Regarding the Sale of Parsonage

See Conference Rule 12.062

PASTOR-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE/PARSONAGE COMMITTEE AGREEMENT
(Sample Form for Optional Use)

1. It is the responsibility of the incoming pastor to note the condition and cleanliness of the parsonage. A written inventory is recommended.
2. It is the responsibility of the pastor to maintain the parsonage ground—keeping it presentable at all times: e.g., mowing and watering lawn, trimming and maintaining shrubs, removing leaves, shoveling snow in winter, etc.
3. The pastor will be responsible to replace or pay for broken and/or misused items.
4. It is the responsibility of the local church to maintain and replace for normal wear and usage all parsonage furnishings and equipment.
5. The costs of damage to the parsonage resulting from the activity of pets should be the responsibility of the parsonage family.
6. A meeting of the pastor and Pastor-Parish Relations Committee/Parsonage Committee should be held annually for review of the condition of the parsonage. It is the responsibility of the out-going pastor to see that the parsonage is thoroughly cleaned for his/her successor.

Signatures:

Pastor

PPR/PC

Date

Date

Policy adopted June 1986; revised June 1996, revised June 2011, revised June 2022.



On January 15, a volcanic eruption on the island nation of Tonga created a tsunami that caused widespread destruction and devastation, uprooting people from their homes, access to food and clean water and much more.

Our own Lents Tongan Fellowship led efforts to provide relief for the suffering of the Tongan people. Our offerings during the annual conference session were focused on Tongan relief. In fact, it's very likely that you can still donate to the fund, which not only goes toward supplies to be shipped to Tonga, but also supports long-term recovery efforts. Check with your district office to get connected with the online donation page.

**photo credit: Japan Meteorology Agency via AP*