

First Congregational Church United Church of Christ of Phoenix, Arizona

Safe Church Policy

1. Policy Prohibiting Abuse, Exploitation and Harassment

As a community of Christian faith, First Congregational United Church of Christ of Phoenix, Arizona (hereafter referred to as First Church) is committed to being a Safe Church. That means First Church seeks to create and maintain programs, facilities and a community in which members, friends, staff and volunteers can worship, learn, and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation or intimidation, whether on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, immigration status, age, or different ability. Therefore, First Church has **zero tolerance** for abuse, mistreatment, harassment, sexual harassment, or sexual exploitation of any member or between members of the First Church family and ministry community. Any mistreatment or abuse by an employee or volunteer or among church family members will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, volunteer service, or participation in First Church ministries and activities. Further, First Church will fully cooperate with law enforcement and child protective services throughout the investigation and resolution of mistreatment or abuse incidents.

In addition, First Church will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, First Church will take the necessary steps to eliminate such behavior.

First Church has this Safe Church Policy posted prominently on its webpage to make public First Church's commitment to establishing and maintaining a culture of inclusion and safety for each and every member of the First Church family and community. This policy statement is also distributed in written and verbal forms to all employees and volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults.

In a broader sense, being a Safe Church is part of being fully welcoming and inclusive of all God's children. Those broader principles and commitments are reflected in First Church's Open and Affirming Statement, Immigrant Welcome and Welcoming, Inclusive, Support, Engaged) WISE Covenant, and Worship Values.

No policy can capture every possible circumstance to which it may be applied. Whenever applicable, questions of civil, criminal, and/or church discipline and employment offenses will be addressed with the relevant authorities immediately including the Phoenix Police Department and the Southwest Conference Minister for consultation and resources as needed. Recognizing the importance of maintaining a safe church, abuse prevention policies will be reviewed on an annual basis. Policies that are amended and adopted by Leadership Council will be duly distributed to employees and volunteers.

2. Definitions of Terms

An Authorized Minister is a person who holds ordained ministerial standing or has been commissioned or licensed by an Association or Conference of the United Church of Christ.

A Minister is a person authorized by the church to carry out its ministry. Ministers include elected or appointed leaders of the church, employees, and volunteers.

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

Employees are paid staff of First Church. Employees are responsible for ensuring policies and procedures are followed as they relate particularly to youth and vulnerable adult protection as well as more generally among all members of the First Church family.

High-Access Volunteers typically interact often or over an extended period with youth or vulnerable adults. Such volunteers may be readily known to members of the First Church family under their supervision and to other First Church volunteers and employees. High-Access Volunteers may carry a substantial amount of responsibility in a ministry serving First Church family members and may have opportunities to develop relationships with these community members over time.

Minor Volunteers are under the age of 18. These volunteers can, with another adult present, assist with many types of church activities.

Vulnerable Adults can include differently-abled adults with physical, emotional, or intellectual challenges. Elders, defined as those over the age of 60 by NIH, are also vulnerable. Risks with vulnerable adults extend beyond physical or sexual abuse and may include financial abuse.

Youth encompass children from birth to age 18 that are served in First Church programs. This includes not only very young children, but also adolescents and teens. While older children and teens can assist in their own safety, adults including employees, volunteers, and parents/guardians are primarily responsible for abuse prevention.

Church Family Members is an all-encompassing term referring to people who participate in church ministry activities. Church Family Members includes, but is not limited to, official members of the church, visitors, friends of the church, and neighbors and community members surrounding the church. Church Family Members includes employees, volunteers, children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Abuse exists when there is endangerment of a person's physical or mental health due to injury by act or omission. Abuse and neglect include the following:

- **Neglect** includes failure, refusal, or inability on the part of a caregiver, for reasons other than poverty, to provide necessary care, food, water, clothing, medical or dental care or shelter to seriously endanger the physical health of a person.
- **Physical Abuse** includes physical injury inflicted on a person by other than accidental means. Physical injury includes but is not limited to, lacerations, fractured bones, burns, internal injuries, severe or frequent bruising, or great bodily harm. Conduct qualifying as Physical Abuse may include, but is not limited to, hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints, pushing, or forceful physical contact.
- **Verbal Abuse** includes language that is degrading or threatening, and includes verbal interactions such as name calling, insults, cursing, derogatory remarks, belittling, and shaming.
- **Sexual Abuse** includes a wide spectrum of interactions with persons including rape, certain physical assault, sexual battery, physical sexual contact, sexually explicit or offensive verbal communication, verbal sexual harassment, voyeurism, sexually oriented conversations, sexual intercourse or sexual touching of a person, sexual exploitation, exposing genitalia, viewing activity, or permitting, allowing or encouraging a person to engage in prostitution.
- **Emotional Abuse** includes conduct that reasonably causes harm to a person's psychological or intellectual functioning, which is exhibited by emotional damage such as severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or aggression. Emotional damage may be demonstrated by substantial and observable changes in behavior, emotional response, or learning, which are incompatible with the person's age or stage of development. Emotional Abuse includes the following: shaming, humiliation, and cruelty.
- **Financial Abuse** includes misuse, mismanagement, or exploitation of property, belongings, or assets. This form of abuse includes using an older adult's assets without consent, under false pretenses, or through intimidation or manipulation.

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including:

- **Physical Bullying** occurs when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.
- **Verbal Bullying** occurs when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another a hurtful name.
- **Nonverbal or Relational Bullying** occurs when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.
- **Cyberbullying** is the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website or social media postings (including blogs). Cyberbullying can involve:
 - Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images.
 - Posting sensitive, private information about another person.
 - Pretending to be someone else to make that person look bad, or creation or use of AI generated images or content.
 - Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.

- **Hazing** is an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person's willingness to participate.
- **Sexualized Bullying** occurs when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples include sexting, bullying involves exposure of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.

Harassment is behavior directed at a person with the intent of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing that person on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, immigration status, age, or disability.

Sexual Harassment: repeated or coercive sexual advances toward another person contrary to that person's wishes. It includes behavior directed at another person with the intent of intimidating, humiliating, or embarrassing the other person, or subjecting the person to public discrimination. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition or circumstance of instruction, employment, or participation in any church activity;
- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for evaluation in making personnel or church-related decisions affecting an individual; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or participation in church activities or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or church environment.

Prohibited sexual harassment includes unsolicited and unwelcome contact that has sexual overtones, particularly:

- Written contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene letters, notes, e-mails, or invitations;
- Verbal contact, such as sexually suggestive or obscene comments, threats, slurs, epithets, jokes about gender-specific traits, sexual propositions;
- Physical contact, such as intentional touching, pinching, brushing against another's body, impeding or blocking movement, assault, coercing sexual intercourse; and
- Visual contact, such as leering or staring at another's body, gesturing, displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, cartoons, posters, or magazines.

Sexual harassment also includes continuing to express sexual interest after being informed directly that the interest is unwelcome, and using sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, salary, work, learning, or worship environment of another. It is impermissible to suggest, threaten, or imply that failure to accept a request for a date or sexual intimacy will affect a person's job prospects, church leadership, or comfortable participation in the life of the church. It is forbidden either to imply or actually withhold support for an appointment, promotion, or change of assignment; to suggest that a poor performance report will be given because a person has declined a personal proposition; or to hint

that benefits, such as promotions, favorable performance evaluations, favorable assigned duties or shifts, recommendations or reclassifications, will be forthcoming in exchange for sexual favors.

Sexual Exploitation: sexual activity or contact (not limited to sexual intercourse) in which a Minister engaged in a ministerial relationship with another First Church family member takes advantage of the vulnerability of the person being served by causing or allowing that person to engage in sexual behavior with the Minister.

3. Ministerial Conduct

Consistent with our understanding of the priesthood of all believers, the Pastor, staff of the church, elected and appointed lay leaders, and authorized volunteers are Ministers to the congregation.

It is important that every Minister to the congregation be adequately prepared and educated for the ministry in which they serve others, and to understand the ways in which their use or misuse of authority may impact others.

It is the policy of First Church to encourage its Ministers to nurture safety within Ministerial Relationships by being attentive to self-care, education, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and the importance of referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources.

Sexual Exploitation or Sexual Harassment of congregants or others by anyone engaged in ministry on behalf of First Church is unethical behavior and will not be tolerated within this congregation.

4. Requirements for Commencing and Continuing Ministry

- Before beginning their duties, all Ministers will submit a disclosure form substantially similar to Form A, attached. Additionally, references will be contacted and background checks for criminal history will be completed, and the sex offender registry will be searched. The resulting data will be analyzed for abuse risk before any Minister begins service at First Church.

5. Policy Prohibiting the Abuse or Mistreatment of One Church Family Member with another Member

First Church has zero tolerance for abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity among members of our church family. This church is committed to providing our whole community with a safe environment and will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one church community member by another church community member. Conduct by our church community members that arises to the level of abuse, mistreatment, or sexual activity will result in intervention or disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from church participation. In addition, First Church will not tolerate any bullying behavior between members of its church family.

6. Appropriate and Inappropriate Physical Contact

First Church physical contact policy promotes a positive, nurturing environment while protecting church family members, employees, and volunteers. Our church encourages appropriate physical contact and prohibits inappropriate physical contact. Any inappropriate physical contact by employees or volunteers towards members of the church family will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Appropriate Physical Interactions	Inappropriate Physical Interactions
<p>These are examples of appropriate contact initiated by a church family member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Side hugs ● Shoulder-to-shoulder hugs ● Pats on the shoulder or back ● Handshakes ● High-fives and fist bumps ● Pats on the head when culturally appropriate ● Touching hands, shoulders, and arms ● Arms around shoulders ● Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations) ● Asking permission before touching or guiding in how to do an activity (eg. fastening safety equipment) 	<p>These are examples of inappropriate contact initiated by a church family member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Any form of affection that is unwanted by the church family member, employee, or volunteer ● Unwanted full-frontal hugs ● Kisses ● Lap sitting ● Wrestling ● Piggyback rides ● Tickling ● Giving gifts or money where there is a possible expectation for gain (e.g. gift to a supervisor) ● Clinging to a church family member's leg ● Allowing a church family member, older than kindergarten, to sit on an employee or volunteer's lap ● Any type of massage given by or to a church family member outside of accepted and documented medical treatment ● Touching bottom, chest, or genital areas that is outside authorized and documented personal care assistance

7. Appropriate and Inappropriate Verbal Interactions

Employees and volunteers are prohibited from speaking to church family members in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Employees and volunteers must not initiate sexually oriented conversations with consumers. Employees and volunteers are not permitted to discuss their own sexual activities with church family members.

Appropriate Verbal Interactions	Inappropriate Verbal Interactions
<p>Verbal interactions initiated by the church family member such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Positive reinforcement ● Appropriate jokes ● Encouragement ● Praise ● Strength-based conversations ● Self-disclosure as a supervised therapeutic tool by licensed clinicians, medical professionals, and pastoral counseling 	<p>Verbal interactions initiated by the church family member such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Name-calling ● Discussing sexual encounters or showing sexual materials ● Involving church family members in personal problems or issues of employees and volunteers ● Flirting ● Secrets ● Cursing ● Off-color or sexual jokes ● Shaming or belittling ● Oversharing personal history ● Derogatory or discriminatory remarks ● Harsh language that may frighten, threaten, or humiliate church family members ● Derogatory remarks about the consumer or their family ● Compliments relating to physique or body development

8. Electronic Communication and Social Media Policy

First Church strongly encourages employees and volunteers and church family members to communicate with each other thoughtfully, respectfully, and responsibly. First Church monitors its social media pages and removes any posts that violate the church’s policies for appropriate behavior.

Appropriate Electronic Interactions	Inappropriate Electronic Interactions
<p>These types of electronic interactions initiated by employees, volunteers, and/or church family members are encouraged. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Positive reinforcement ● Encouragement ● Praise ● Information about upcoming First Church events and encouragement to participate ● Strength-based conversations 	<p>These types of electronic interactions initiated by First Church employees, volunteers, and/or church family members are prohibited. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Comments that are or could be construed by any observer to be harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, discriminatory, demeaning, or humiliating. ● Sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities. ● Inappropriate pictures or inappropriate comments on pictures or posts. ● Pornography

9. Additional Requirements for Child and Youth Ministry and Ministry with Vulnerable Adults

First Church is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all members of our church family including vulnerable adults and young people. We want young people to have a safe space where they can learn about and experience God’s love.

In order to promote this, we have established the following guidelines in addition to the general requirements for ministry to the church.

- All employees and volunteers who regularly work with children and youth and/or vulnerable adults will complete and submit a disclosure form substantially similar to Form A and an acknowledgment form substantially similar to Form B, attached.
- Before beginning their duties, all prospective employees and volunteers who regularly work with children and youth and/or vulnerable adults will undergo an extensive background check, including but not necessarily limited to inquiries of references, a criminal history verification by a third-party vendor, a Social Security trace for aliases, and a search of the Sex Offender Registry. Prospective employees will be provided with appropriate notices under the Fair Credit Reporting Act. Background checks will be completed every two years for continuously employed employees and volunteers and at the time of rehire for returning or

seasonal employees and volunteers. Any convictions discovered through criminal background checks will be referred to the Personnel Committee to review if the candidate or employee or volunteer is suitable for the position.

- All volunteers and employees who regularly work with children and youth and/or vulnerable adults will receive orientation regarding abuse prevention policy and procedures, must acknowledge receipt and understanding of the Safe Church Policy annually, and must complete required trainings on abuse prevention prior to beginning any ministry work. Abuse prevention training must be renewed annually. Records of acknowledgement and course completion will be retained on file for all volunteers and employees.
- It is the policy of this church to provide adequate supervision and safeguards for youth activities. The ratio of children or youth to adult employees or volunteers must not exceed 10:1. In situations where participants are not readily visible to each other, there will be no fewer than two unrelated adults present with children. No fewer than two unrelated adults shall be present with children except under authorized circumstances. Authorized circumstances include emergency situations where health and/or safety are at risk, activities in open, visible, public spaces, or if all other employees and volunteers are unavailable. In these circumstances, employees and volunteers are strongly encouraged to take risk mitigation actions including, but not limited to, including a second unrelated adult volunteer virtually (video or cellular call), remaining in areas readily accessible to the public, or documenting the activity including who, what and where details. This policy also applies to work with vulnerable adults.
- All church members (adult and youth) follow best practices for safe digital interaction with all members of the First Church family members, especially its children and youth and vulnerable adults. All digital interactions with First Church youth and interactions outside of normal church activities must include their parent/guardian or another adult.
- Content that is purely pornographic shall not be accessed, displayed, produced, possessed, or distributed on church property or equipment or during any church sponsored activities.
- Written consent of one parent or guardian of a minor will be required for all activities off the church property, and any overnight activities. In some cases, participating youth may be asked to sign covenants outlining expected behavior during the trip. Adult volunteers, including parents, accompanying minors on trips will be asked to read and sign this policy and any covenant documents, and, where appropriate, to view the relevant sexual abuse prevention training modules. All potential drivers on youth trips will be asked to disclose if they have had their licenses suspended or revoked within the last five years due to reckless driving or driving while intoxicated and/or under the influence of a controlled substance. For extended trips, a group meeting before departure of all participants to go over expectations is recommended.

- Employees and volunteers have a legal and ethical duty to report suspected abuse to the proper authorities. Employees and volunteers are also required to cooperate with any investigations.
- Any violations of these additional requirements for Children’s and Youth Ministry and ministries with vulnerable adults may result in termination or dismissal. Violations should be reported as soon as possible to the Moderator and/or the Moderator Elect. If, after preliminary investigation, the complaint appears to warrant further investigation or action, the Moderator and the Moderator Elect may call upon representatives of the Leadership Council, the Personnel Committee, and the Pastor to take part in a further inquiry. If this larger group concludes that additional actions are required, the matter will be referred to the appropriate body of the church for resolution (Pastoral Relations Committee and Personnel Committee for conduct by the Pastor; the Pastor and Personnel Committee for conduct by staff; and Leadership Council for conduct by a member or volunteer).

10. Monitor for Safety

In order to maintain a Safe Church for all members of First Church, random campus walk-throughs will be conducted by the Pastor, the Moderator, the Moderator Elect. These walk-throughs will focus on monitoring adult-to-adult interactions as well as adult-child interactions for red-flag or inappropriate physical and verbal behaviors. Should inappropriate behaviors be discovered, the behaviors will be stopped or re-directed, reported, and then followed-up.

In order to maintain a Safe Church, the gated entry points will either be closely monitored or remain closed and locked at all times to prevent unexpected entry. Specifically, all groups meeting on the First Church campus including Sunday Morning worship participants must do the following:

- a) Monitor the gate entry onto the church campus. Post a member at the gate to welcome all of your group members. When your group has assembled, close and make sure the gate is locked.
- b) Implement a protocol to allow access to any latecomer to your session. For example, latecomers could call or text you, as the group leader to open the gate. One member would then go to the gate to welcome the latecomer and then re-lock the gate after the latecomer enters. An alternative is to purchase a portable door bell that the latecomer rings to be let in. Again, one member would welcome the latecomer, open the gate, and then re-lock after the latecomer enters.
- c) At the end of your group’s meeting or session, make sure all members safely exit the campus, lock your meeting room door, and again, lock the gate.

Adherence to this requirement will be monitored through random campus walk-throughs conducted by a member of the Greeting team and/or the Church Moderator. Violations will be reported and followed up. Multiple violations will lead to suspension of contract to rent space at First Church.

11. Procedures for Handling Complaints of Sexual Exploitation or Harassment

EVERY suspicion or allegation of abuse or mistreatment or sexual harassment will be taken seriously and investigated. Where the allegation involves children and/or vulnerable adults, the situation will be reported to law enforcement and child protective services.

Generally

- A. Individuals who believe they are being or have been harassed or who observe or become aware of harassment within this church should immediately report the perceived harassment to one of the following: Pastor, Moderator, or Moderator Elect. If the complaint alleges harassment by or of church staff, the Pastor, Moderator, or Moderator Elect shall inform the Personnel Committee Chair.
- B. The Leadership Council shall appoint a Response Team with no less than two members of two different genders, to respond to complaints under this policy. The subcommittee, hereinafter referred to as “the Response Team,” will be familiar with the terms of this policy, the established procedures of the church for dealing with a complaint and must have completed abuse prevention and response training.
- C. Several approaches may be taken in addressing incidents of alleged sexual exploitation or harassment:
 1. The complainant can attempt to resolve the matter directly with the respondent, the individual accused of sexual exploitation or harassment.
 2. The Pastor, Moderator, Moderator Elect, or Personnel Committee Chair can attempt to resolve the matter informally.
 3. If an informal resolution of the complaint does not seem wise, appropriate, possible, or does not succeed, the complainant may request that the Response Team institute formal proceedings which shall include the following steps:
 - The Response Team shall advise the Pastor and Moderator of the receipt of all complaints and shall keep them apprised of ongoing steps and actions taken. If either the Pastor or Moderator is the subject of the complaint, this notice requirement shall not apply as to that person.
 - The Response Team shall gather statements or other information from the individuals involved in the alleged exploitation or harassment and from others who may have pertinent information, such as qualified professional consultants,

and present such information to the Leadership Council or an appropriate subcommittee thereof.

- The Leadership Council, or an appropriate subcommittee thereof, shall make determinations and take appropriate actions to resolve the matter. These may include:
 - a. Finding that sexual exploitation or harassment has occurred and directing the appropriate body of the church to take action. The Leadership Council may recommend an action, but the final choice shall be made by the appropriate body, and may include one or more of the following:
 - a formal reprimand, with defined expectations for changed behavior;
 - recommending or requiring psychological or psychiatric assessment, counseling and/or treatment;
 - probationary standing, with the terms of the probation clearly defined;
 - dismissal from employment or authorized volunteer position by, affiliation with, or membership in, the church.

For disciplining staff, the appropriate body is the Pastor and the Personnel Committee. For disciplining the Pastor, the appropriate body is the Leadership Council. For disciplining members, the appropriate body is the Leadership Council itself.

- b. Finding that sexual exploitation or harassment did not occur.
 - The Response Team may seek the advice of legal counsel or others to advise it in performing its functions.
- D. The Clerk shall maintain a written summary of the Leadership Council's proceedings in such cases. The response team will follow up with the person who raised the complaint or report. If the complaint or report was made anonymously, will distribute the appropriate facts from the investigation through typical church communication channels.
- E. The person(s) toward whom the inappropriate behavior is directed need not be the complainant. Moreover, neither consent nor acquiescence will excuse or exonerate inappropriate behavior. At any time, the church may initiate or proceed with the formal complaint process.

- F. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual harassment or exploitation, consideration shall be given to the record of the alleged incident(s) as a whole and to the totality of the circumstances, including the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred.
- G. Any person bringing a sexual harassment or exploitation complaint in good faith or assisting in investigating such a complaint will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment or church membership or affiliation or otherwise discriminated against or discharged. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained to the extent possible for all parties involved in a complaint or investigation.

Child Abuse

Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) section 13-3620(A) requires certain persons who suspect that a child has received a non-accidental injury or has been neglected to report their concerns to DCS or local law enforcement. A person may report suspected abuse by calling the toll-free Arizona Child Abuse Hotline at 1-888-SOS-CHILD (1-888-767-2445).

In addition to meeting any legal requirements, First Church will make a report to appropriate authorities if at any time the church has reasonable cause to believe that a minor may be an abused or neglected child. Any Minister of the church who becomes aware of facts or circumstances that suggest child abuse or neglect has occurred or that there exists a substantial risk that child abuse or neglect may occur in the reasonably foreseeable future shall immediately report the matter to the Pastor, Moderator, or Moderator Elect so that the church may take appropriate action in a timely manner.

Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults

Some adults experiencing emerging or ongoing constraints on their physical or intellectual capacities may be especially vulnerable to abuse, neglect, or exploitation. The state and federal statutory framework for protecting vulnerable adults is not as well developed as the framework for protecting children, but NC General Statutes §108Aa-102 mandates that “[a]ny person having reasonable cause to believe that a disabled adult is in need of protective services shall report such information to the [county] director [of social services].” Beyond the limited requirements of the law, it is the hope of First Church to love and watch out for adults in our community as well as the children.

Thus, First Church will make a report to appropriate authorities if at any time the church has reasonable cause to believe that an adult of diminished physical or intellectual capacity is being abused, neglected, or exploited. Any Minister of the church who becomes aware of facts or circumstances that suggest such abuse, neglect, or exploitation has occurred or that there exists a substantial risk that abuse, neglect, or exploitation may occur in the reasonably foreseeable future shall immediately report the matter to the Pastor, Moderator, or Deacons Ministry Chair so that the church may take appropriate action in a timely manner.

A person can report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of vulnerable adults online 24-hours per day, seven days a week by following the link at <https://des.az.gov/services/basic-needs/adult-protective-services/report-adult-abuse>. Alternatively, a person can also report by phone during certain hours depending on the day of the week and holiday by calling (877) SOS-ADULT / (877) 767-2385. Additional useful information on prevention and responses to abuse of vulnerable adults is available from the Arizona Department of Economic security, <https://des.az.gov/services/basic-needs/adult-protective-services/report-adult-abuse>.

Clergy

Apart from any disposition of the matter by the church, all allegations of behavior which call into question the fitness for ministry of any Authorized Minister will promptly be forwarded to the Church and Ministry Committee of the Southwest Conference of the United Church of Christ. The Southwest Conference may be contacted at: 602.468.3830 and/or www.uccswc.org for current emails and contacts.

Code of Conduct

First Church is committed to creating an environment that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes growth and success. The Code of Conduct outlines specific expectations of employees and volunteers as we strive to accomplish our mission together.

1. All members of the First Church family will be treated with respect.
2. All members of the First Church family will be treated fairly, regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, age, gender, gender identity, immigration status, or religious preference.
3. Employees and volunteers will adhere to appropriate boundaries governing physical affection and verbal interactions as outlined by the church.
4. Employees and volunteers will not stare at or comment on church family members' bodies.
5. Employees and volunteers will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of our church family members, or provide family members with alcohol, cigarettes, or illegal drugs.
6. Employees and volunteers will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on our church's property, or show any sexually oriented materials.
7. Employees and volunteers will not keep secrets with church family members and will only give gifts when there is no perceived expectation for gain or favor.
8. Employees and volunteers will comply with our church's policies regarding interactions with church family members outside of official church programs.
9. Employees and volunteers will adhere to church policies regarding electronic communication and social media with church family members.
10. Employees and volunteers will adhere to church policies regarding working one-on-one with church family members in a private setting.
11. Employees and volunteers will not abuse any church family member in any way including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. Physical abuse: hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints.
 - b. Emotional abuse: degrading, threatening, cursing, shaming, humiliating, cruelty.
 - c. Sexual abuse: inappropriate touch, exposing oneself, sexually oriented conversations, or coercing a church family member to expose themselves.
 - d. Neglect: withholding food, water, shelter, appropriate care, appropriate supervision.
12. First Church will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one church family member by another church family member. In addition, our church will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and we will take steps to eliminate such behavior.
13. Employees and volunteers will report all concerns or complaints to a supervisor or anonymously at (602)258-6891
14. Employees and volunteers will report allegations or incidents of abuse to the proper state authority.
15. Employees and volunteers may not engage in or have previously been accused or convicted of consumer abuse, indecency with a person or injury to a person.

**First Church UCC
Employment and Authorized Volunteer
Application and Disclosure**

Name: Last	First	Middle
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Address: Street	City/State	Zip Code
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Daytime Phone	Evening Phone	Email
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References: Provide 3 references, one reference who is related to you and two others who are not.

Name #1

Address	City/State	Zip Code
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Telephone	Email
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Name #2

Address	City/State	Zip Code
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Telephone	Email
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Name #3

Address	City/State	Zip Code
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Telephone	Email
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Form A

I have been a member of this church since _____

I have been a friend of this church since _____

I have never been convicted of, nor pled guilty or no contest to, a crime. (Exclude convictions that have been sealed, expunged or legally eradicated, misdemeanor convictions for which probation was completed and the case was dismissed, or offenses about which inquiry is not permissible in this state.)

TRUE _____ FALSE _____

If not true, please briefly describe the nature of the crime(s), the date and place of conviction and the legal disposition of the case. The church will not deny a position to any applicant solely because the person has been convicted of a crime. The church, however, may consider the nature, date and circumstances of the offense, as well as whether the offense is relevant to the duties of the position applied for.

No civil lawsuit alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct has ever resulted in a judgment being entered against me, been settled out of court, or been dismissed because the statute of limitations has expired.

TRUE _____ FALSE _____

If not true, give a short explanation of the lawsuit on a separate sheet, which shall be attached to this application and become part of it. (Please indicate the date, nature, and place of the incident leading to the lawsuit; where the lawsuit was filed; and the precise disposition of the lawsuit.)

I have never terminated my employment, professional credentials, or service in a volunteer position or had my employment, professional credentials, or authorization to hold a volunteer position terminated for reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct.

TRUE _____ FALSE _____

If not true, give a short explanation on a separate sheet, which shall be attached to this application and become part of it. (Please indicate the date of termination; name, address, and telephone number of employer or volunteer supervisor; and nature of the incident(s) leading to your termination.)

Do you have a valid drivers' license?

YES _____ NO _____

Form A

With respect to my driving record, I have not had my license suspended or revoked within the last five years due to reckless driving or driving while intoxicated and/or under the influence of a controlled substance.

TRUE _____ FALSE _____

Is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the responsibilities of the position for which you are applying?

YES _____ NO _____

If yes, please provide a brief explanation on a separate sheet, which shall be attached to this application and become part of it.

The covenants between persons seeking authorized volunteer positions in the church require honesty, integrity, and truthfulness for the health of the church. To that end, I attest that the information set forth in this application is true and complete. I understand that any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of consideration for, or termination of, the position I am seeking to fill. I acknowledge that it is my duty in a timely fashion to amend the responses and information I have provided if I come to know that the response or information was incorrect when given or, though accurate when given, the response or information is no longer accurate.

Beginning such relationships with an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for a continuing and healthy covenant between volunteers and the church they seek to serve. To that end, I authorize First Church and/or its agents to make inquiries regarding my character and qualifications, including all statements I have set forth above. I also authorize all entities, persons, former employers, supervisors, courts, law enforcement, and other public agencies to respond to inquiries concerning me, to supply verification of the statements I have made, and to comment on and state opinions regarding my background, character, and qualifications. To encourage such persons and entities to speak openly and responsibly, I hereby release them from all liability arising from their responses, comments, and statements.

First Church's authorized volunteer and employee recruitment process involves the sharing of information regarding applicants with those persons in a position to recruit, secure, and supervise both the position I am seeking to fill and the program I am seeking to participate in. To that end, I authorize First Church and its agents to circulate, distribute, and otherwise share information gathered in connection with this application to such persons for these purposes. I understand that First Church will share with me information it has gathered about me, if I request it to do so.

Form A

My work experience for the past 7 years:

Please include the name of the company for which you worked, the name and contact information for your immediate supervisor.

My volunteer experience for the past 7 years:

Please list any volunteer work that you have done for the past 7 years. Briefly describe your responsibilities and the name and contact information for your supervisor.

Education:

What is the last grade you completed in school? What is the name and location of the school?

Form B – Acknowledgements

I acknowledge my receipt and understanding of the FIRST CHURCH Abuse Prevention Policy.

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE
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I acknowledge my receipt, understanding, and agreement to adhere to the First Church Code of Conduct.

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE
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I acknowledge and understand that I have the legal and ethical duty to report all suspected and reported abuse, mistreatment, and/or sexual harassment to the First Church Moderator or to the Pastor.

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE
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I will cooperate fully with First Church officials, law enforcement, and child protective services in the investigation of all suspected and reported abuse, mistreatment, and/or sexual harassment.

PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE
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(PRINTED NAME & SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN FOR APPLICANTS UNDER 18)	DATE
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Form B – Acknowledgements

To be completed by First Church Personnel Committee Representative:

The following interview and background checks have been completed:

- Personal interview conducted by staff on _____
- Reference inquiries completed on _____
- Criminal History Verification
 - Multi-state criminal record completed on _____
 - National Sex Offender Registry (www.nsopw.gov) review completed on _____
 - Social Security Trace and Alias Search completed on _____
- Abuse prevention awareness and reporting training (Safe Church Training) performed on _____
- Safe Church Policy orientation completed on _____
- Record of all reference and background checks are filed.

Printed Name of First Church Personnel Member	Signature	Date of Completion
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