

# INFORMATION & PROCEEDINGS FROM THE TENNESSEE-WESTERN KENTUCKY CONFERENCE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

## TWK ORGANIZATIONAL CONFERENCE MINUTES

Saturday, December 4 @ 1 p.m.

### LOVING

Bishop Bill McAlilly officially opened the conference at 1 p.m. with a word of welcome. Bishop McAlilly shared that the first Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference would be held at Brentwood UMC on June 15-17, 2022. Annual conference in 2023 will be held in the Memphis area.

Opening worship, led by a diverse group from both conferences under the direction of David Bone, included a reading of “A Story of Light and Darkness” by worship leaders Tyler Sprouse (Communications, TWK), Myriam Cortes (Iglesia Metodista Unida Ebenezer, Nashville), Jim Capps (Mt. Carmel UMC, Benton), and Grace E. Hyde (Ebenezer UMC, Nolensville) and featuring dancer Lasonia Scantin (Gordon Memorial UMC, Nashville). Choral responses were sung by a small choir accompanied by an organ and piano. The detailed worship bulletin with all participants noted is available on the TWKUMC.org website.

An offering was collected online for the Reelfoot Rural Ministries Toy Store and The Last-Minute Toy Store. Money collected will be divided equally between the two ministries.

The video of Bishop McAlilly’s sermon “What Shall We Now Do?” is available for viewing on his blog, along with a full transcript.

### LEARNING

#### **Covenant Focus with Connectional Table**

Bishop McAlilly spoke to the process of learning in developing a working covenant alongside the New Conference Guide Team. A video was presented in which members of the Connectional Table shared the importance of forming a team covenant, how living in a shared covenant impacted them personally and professionally, and the process of developing a covenant within a team/committee. Members of the Connectional Table in the video were Toi King, Jefferson Furtado, Bethany Huffman, Rob Martin, and Melinda Britt.

New TWK Conference teams are encouraged to operate with a covenant. Tools and resources, including the video shown during the conference, are found on the TWK website for teams to use.

Covenant Sharing - Memphis Conference Lay Leader Janice McCallen, closed this portion of the conference by sharing her personal experiences with creating and applying a covenant while serving on a large team and invited all TWK ministry teams to establish covenants. She encouraged each team to use questions such as the following to help shape their covenant:

How do you describe a highly effective team?

What are the characteristics of the best leader you know?

What values are essential for your participation on this team?

## **LEADING**

### **Business of Organizational Meeting**

Voting process reviewed by David Wood, GNTV with question of “Do you like candy canes?”

**Song** - “And Are We Yet Alive” - Worship Team

**Welcome and Call to Order** - Bishop McAlilly

I call to order the organizational meeting of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference, and ask Monica Mowdy to lead us in our organizing motions and then continue with the adoption of our Standing Rules.

**Organization and Announcements** - Monica Mowdy

The following will be adopted at the opening of the 2021 Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference Organizing Meeting by majority vote:

Tennessee -Western Kentucky Conference Organizational Rules

Tennessee -Western Kentucky Conference Organizational Meeting Agenda

Roll call of legacy conference delegates

Memphis Conference - 385 clergy and 385 laity

Tennessee Conference - 643 clergy and 643 laity

I (Monica Mowdy, secretary) move that those who are authorized to participate in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Organizing Meeting agree that they consent to proceed in a virtual meeting using remote technology; and that they further consent that all decisions made in this session have the same effect and authority as decisions made by an in-person meeting; and finally that they consent that all such decisions made in this meeting are and will be legal and binding actions of the Memphis and Tennessee annual conferences.

Recording secretaries: Memphis, Rev. Dean Emerson; Tennessee, Rev. Brian Marcoulier

Head teller: Rev. Stephen Sauls

Assistant head teller: Rev. Sarah McWhirt-Toler

Personnel who are providing support may be present during the meeting: Conference Chancellor Lisa Carson; Tennessee Conference office staff; GNTV staff; Episcopal Office staff; those selected to make reports; worship participants; and guests.

The bar of the annual conference shall contain all voting members who log in to the Zoom webinar provided by the GNTV.

Members of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference Organizing Meeting are responsible for ensuring that all necessary technology on the member's side of the meeting is in proper working order prior to the meeting.

All votes taken shall be conducted in accordance with *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* and the 2021 Standing Rules of the Memphis and Tennessee conferences.

Poll logs will be maintained for all votes.

### **Organizing Motions, VOTE**

#### **Report of vote, Do you approve the Opening Motions?**

Total ballots, 600; Yes, 592; No, 8

Motion passes

### **Standing Rules**

In order for the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference to have some basic rules in place to govern the business of an Annual Conference, I (Monica Mowdy, Secretary) move approval of the proposed set of Standing Rules which have been reviewed by our Guide Team leadership and the chancellors of the legacy conferences. These rules are tailored to provide a basic framework that will undoubtedly be built upon and refined by future Standing Rules committees and annual conferences.

(See STANDING RULES)

#### **Report of vote, Do you approve the Standing Rules?**

Total ballots, 604; Yes, 593; No, 11

Motion passes

### **Consent Agenda**

Consent Agenda includes: Legacy Board of Trustees Joint Report; Charter of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference; Bylaws of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference; ENCORE Ministry Foundation f/k/a, Golden Cross Foundation Report - ENCORE Bylaws - ENCORE Charter.

#### **Report of vote, Do you approve the Consent Agenda?**

Total ballots, 601; Yes, 581; No, 20

Motion passes

**Safe Spaces Committee** - Rev. Terry Carty, chair of the Safe Spaces Committee

**Sexual Misconduct Policy and the Safe Sanctuary Policy**

Motion made by Rev. Terry Carty, chair of the Safe Space Committee:

Bishop, I move the adoption of the Safe Sanctuary Policy and the Sexual Misconduct Policy for use in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference.

(See 2022 TWK Sexual Misconduct Policy for Church Professionals and 2022 TWK Safe Sanctuary Policy)

**Report of vote, Do you approve the 2022 Sexual Misconduct Policy and the 2022 Safe Sanctuary Policy?**

Total ballots, 602; Yes, 591; No, 11

Motion passes

**Nominations Report**

The Transitional Nominating Committee worked diligently to complete this report. Both conferences were served by capable leaders and I wish to express my deep appreciation to all those who worked on a conference committee, whether it be in the Memphis Conference or the Tennessee Conference. I thank God for you and for your commitment to Christ and the Church as evidenced through your ministry and service to your conference by serving on a conference committee.

This first TWK Nominations Report was created by a new process which gathered nominations across the entire Nashville Area. Many persons participated in the process by either nominating a potential candidate or by making a self-nomination. The nominations were collected and reviewed, gifts and graces were discussed, the inclusion of legacy members and completely new members on committees was prayerfully considered and discerned until the slate of nominations were created.

The response to the nomination process was so prolific that not all of those nominated were selected in this iteration of the nomination process. With such a bounty of capable leaders, the possibility of service still remains as situations evolve and may dictate a need to return to the pool of leaders for selections.

It is with great hope and expectation that I offer this report for your adoption.

**Report of vote, Will you adopt the Nominations Report?**

Total ballots, 607; Yes, 588; No, 19

Motion passes

(See Nominations Report)

**Closing Words of Bishop**

Bishop McAlilly led his closing comments by saying “Friends, what gift you have been to us today as we’ve done this work. We’ve had a long pregnancy and a good birth. There have been thousands of hours expended on behalf of this journey.” Bishop McAlilly included in his closing comments appreciation for the work of Bishop Chamness that preceded his arrival to the Nashville Area Episcopal. He gave thanks for the defining work that developed the



mission, vision, and value statements adopted by both legacy conferences. Out of this work, more and more cross-conference team and appointments emerged. Bishop McAlilly noted special thanks to Cindy Solomon for her work as the scribe for the Guide Team. Bishop McAlilly offered a closing prayer.

### **Closing Litany**

Among the poor, among the proud, among the persecuted, among the privileged,

**ALL: (sung) Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

In the private home, in the public place, in the wedding feast, in the judgment hall,

**ALL: (sung) Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

With a gentle touch, with an angry word, with a clear conscience, with burning love,

**ALL: (sung) Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

That the kingdom might come, that the world might believe, that the powerful might stumble, that the hidden might be seen,

**ALL: (sung) Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.**

“A Wee Worship Book”, p 19. © 1999 Wild Goose Resource Group; GIA Publications, Inc., Chicago. WORDS: 9<sup>th</sup> cent. Latin. Public Domain MUSIC: 15<sup>th</sup> cent. French. Public Domain

Tennessee-Western Kentucky Organizing Conference concluded.

Minutes submitted by Rev. Brian Marcoulier & Rev. Dean Emerson

## **JOINT REPORT OF THE LEGACY BOARDS OF TRUSTEES FOR THE TENNESSEE AND MEMPHIS ANNUAL CONFERENCES**

In praise and thanksgiving, we gladly report that the boards of trustees of the two legacy conferences have worked together to accomplish the legal mechanism for the union of our two conferences. Under Tennessee state law, the boards of trustees serve as the corporate board of directors for the incorporated entities. In that capacity, they have accomplished the following work now submit to this body for affirmation.

Both boards of trustees affirmed a corporate agreement and plan of merger, which incorporates by reference the Plan of Union approved by both annual conferences at their June 2021 meetings. Both boards of trustees also approved Articles of Merger which will be filed with the secretary of state prior to the January 1, 2022 launch date for the new Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference.

The Memphis Board of Trustees further approved Articles of Termination and Articles of Dissolution for the Memphis Conference. The effective date of these documents will be January 1, 2022, after all of the following have occurred: (1) the organizational meeting of the two conferences, (2) the name change of the Tennessee Conference to the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference, (3) the approval of the corporate merger by the Tennessee Attorney General (which approval was received on October 29, 2021), and (4) all necessary steps to wrap up the business of the Memphis Conference of The United Methodist Church and transition to the new Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference.

The agreement and plan of merger, Articles of Merger, Articles of Termination and Articles of Dissolution were approved by the trustees pursuant to authority delegated by the legacy conferences in their adoption of the Plan of Union.

The Tennessee Conference Board of Trustees approved an amended and restated charter and bylaws for the new conference, which are to be effective on January 1, 2022. Because those documents effectuate the name change to Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church, they are appended herewith and the trustees request that they be affirmed by this body as part of the acceptance of the trustees' report.

Respectfully submitted,

Erv Walker, Chairperson  
Memphis Conference Trustees

Paul Gardner, Chairperson  
Tennessee Conference Trustees

## STANDING RULES OF THE TENNESSEE-WESTERN KENTUCKY CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Standing Rules of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference (also referred to herein as “TWK” or “the Conference”) represent the means by which we organize and oversee our work of making disciples for the transformation of the world. The standing rules are the organizational rules for sessions of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference, setting forth the rules by which sessions of the conference operate, in compliance with ¶604 of the *2016 United Methodist Book of Discipline*. As our *Book of Discipline* says about itself, our standing rules reflect the “...most current statement of how United Methodists [in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference] agree to live together and ‘maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.’”

The Committee on Standing Rules presents these rules for renewal and adoption by each session of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference.

### Section 1 – Authorization for the Committee on Standing Rules

- 1.1 The Committee on Standing Rules has the responsibility to:
  - a) Propose new policies and standing rules;
  - b) Propose needed amendments to existing policies and standing rules;
  - c) Provide guidance to the annual conference at any point where conference action may be at variance with a policy or standing rule.
- 1.2 The Standing Rules of the Annual Conference must be in compliance with the provisions of ¶604 of the current edition of *The United Methodist Book of Discipline*.

### Section 2 – Annual Conference Session Procedures

- 2.1 The conference shall follow the latest edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order* except where it is in conflict with these standing rules or the current *Book of Discipline*.
- 2.2 All motions and resolutions shall be supplied to the conference secretary in writing on a form provided for this purpose by the conference secretary.
- 2.3 Any entity planning to present a report at any annual conference session shall submit the report to the conference secretary or his/her designee by the date designated by the annual conference design team, but no later than 60 days prior to the opening day of annual conference for inclusion in pre-conference materials.
- 2.4 All resolutions not included in the pre-conference materials shall be submitted to the Committee on Resolutions at least 60 days prior to the first day of the annual conference session. The chair of the Committee on Resolutions shall submit to the annual conference, in their original form, all resolutions so submitted. In addition, the Committee on Resolutions may present to the annual conference for consideration a revised version of any such resolution.
- 2.5 The roll call of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference shall be taken from the list submitted by the conference secretary.
- 2.6 The agenda of the annual conference shall be that as it is corrected and distributed on the first day of annual conference with the understanding that the bishop may adjust the agenda for the good of the order.
- 2.7 All speeches other than reports shall be limited to three minutes.
- 2.8 Voting eligibility will be determined by the conference secretary, as guided by *The Book of Discipline*. The conference secretary shall determine, in consultation with the Annual Conference Design Team, the appropriate means of identifying who is eligible to vote on all issues requiring a vote.
- 2.9 The annual conference session shall meet at a location accessible to persons with disabilities. Where it is impractical or impossible to meet in person, meetings may be conducted electronically to the full extent permitted by law.

- 2.10 All annual conference reports to be included in the journal shall be e-mailed to the conference secretary 60 days prior to the opening day of annual conference. Any corrections and/or additions received after this date shall, at the discretion of the conference secretary, be included in the succeeding journal. Handwritten and typewritten reports shall not be accepted for publication in the journal. All reports should be typed, using Microsoft Word according to the specifications on the conference website. Photos must be submitted as separate JPG files and must include permissions from all persons pictured. Photos submitted will be used as space permits in the journal. Use Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference Journal Style Sheet posted on the conference website for guidance on capitalization, punctuation, and so forth to ensure that the journal has a consistent look and flow. Files that contain tables should be submitted in Microsoft Excel format. No PDF or directly scanned images will be accepted.
- 2.11 There shall be a consent agenda that will include the following:
- a) Agenda items and reports not requiring action by the annual conference other than receipt of the item for publication in the journal or acceptance of the report;
  - b) All nominations made pursuant to Section 6 below; and
  - c) Closures, mergers, charge line changes and disaffiliations of local churches.
- In order for any item or report to be eligible for placement on the consent agenda, it must have been available online with the pre-conference materials at least 72 hours prior to the opening date of the annual conference session. Any item may be removed from the consent agenda if 10 members of the conference who are eligible to vote petition for removal.
- 2.12 Equalization: Whenever it shall occur that the person serving as the director of Administrative Services or Connectional Ministry officer is a lay person, then each person so serving shall be an at-large lay member of the annual conference. The conference secretary shall determine annually the number of laypersons needed to equalize lay and clergy members of the annual conference. The at-large members are to be allocated as nearly as possible on an equal basis to the districts. When the number of members to equalize cannot be distributed evenly between the districts, the members shall be allocated to the districts in alphabetical order of districts. The at-large members are to be selected by each district conference leadership team and shall include diverse representation of leadership.

### **Section 3 -- Election of Delegates to General and Jurisdictional Conference**

- 3.1 Clergy and lay delegates to General and jurisdictional conferences shall be elected as provided in the Constitution of The United Methodist Church (paragraphs 34-36 of *The Book of Discipline*).
- 3.2 Ballots:
- a) Ballots will be provided by the office of the conference secretary
  - b) Fifty percent plus one valid ballots cast shall be necessary to elect
  - c) Ballots with more or less than the number of delegates to be elected shall be rejected as invalid
- 3.3 Candidacy of persons eligible to serve as delegates, whether clergy or lay to General and/or jurisdictional conference, may be established either by declaration or nomination:
- a) To declare candidacy for election to serve as a General or jurisdictional conference delegate, the eligible person must submit to the conference secretary, no later than 60 days prior to the opening day of annual conference, for inclusion in the pre-conference materials a statement concerning:
    - 1. His/her activities at the local church, district, and annual, jurisdictional, and general conference levels;
    - 2. An assessment of the principal needs of the general Church and how those needs should be met; and
    - 3. Any other information felt pertinent to introducing himself/herself to those members of the annual conference who may not be familiar with his/her views on issues confronting the Church.
  - b) To nominate a person for candidacy to be elected to serve as a General or jurisdictional conference delegate and have the nomination included in the pre-conference materials, the nominator(s) must:
    - 1. Determine the eligibility of the person to be nominated.

2. Secure from the person to be nominated and submit to the conference secretary the proposed nominee's written consent to accept the nomination.
3. Submit to the conference secretary, no later than 60 days prior to the opening day of annual conference, for inclusion in the pre-conference materials, a statement concerning:
  - a. The activities of the nominee at the local church, district, and annual, jurisdictional, and general conference levels,
  - b. An assessment of the views of the nominee regarding the principal needs of the church and how those needs should be met, and
  - c. Any other information (such as age and ethnicity) felt to be pertinent to introducing the nominee to those members of the annual conference who may not be familiar with that nominee's views on issues confronting the church.
- a) Statements submitted in the establishing of candidacy, whether by declaration or nomination, shall be limited to 200 words and shall be submitted to the conference secretary via e-mail.
- b) Persons do not have to declare candidacy or be nominated for candidacy in order to be eligible for election to serve as a General or jurisdictional conference delegate.
- c) The initial ballot for election to General Conference will have a ballot number assigned only to those who, by declaration or nomination, have expressed their desire to be considered as a candidate. All subsequent ballots will assign numbers to write-in candidates during the election process.
- 3.4 Reserve delegates: After the general and jurisdictional conference delegates are elected, two lay and two clergy reserve delegates shall be elected. The delegation's budget will include funding for one lay and one clergy reserve delegate to attend General and jurisdictional conferences. In the event of a tie in the election for reserves, the delegation shall be provided funding for two lay and two clergy reserves.

#### **Section 4 – Suspension, Adoption, and Amendment of Standing Rules**

- 4.1 Any standing rule, with the exception of SR 4.1 and SR 4.2, may be suspended at any session of the annual conference by a two-thirds majority vote of those present and eligible to vote.
- 4.2 Any proposal for the adoption of a standing rule, or for the amendment of an existing standing rule, shall be submitted to the Committee on Standing Rules at least 45 days prior to the first day of the annual conference session. The Committee on Standing Rules will present their recommendations to the annual conference, and their recommendations may be adopted or amended from the floor by a two-thirds majority of those present and eligible to vote.
- 4.3 Any additions or amendments to the standing rules shall take effect at the conclusion of the annual conference session in which they are adopted.

#### **Section 5 – Nominations, Boards, Commissions, Committees, and other Entities**

- 5.1 The Annual Conference Committee on Nominations shall be chaired by the bishop and elected by the annual conference.
- 5.2 The Committee on Nominations shall nominate persons in alignment with the conference ministry structure as authorized by the annual conference.
- 5.3 The Committee on Nominations shall develop a system for nominating leaders which utilizes the conference communication tools, enhances the desire to invest in young and diverse leadership, and seeks the input of leaders across the area. The system will adhere to the appropriate provisions in the current *Book of Discipline*. Particular attention will be paid to focus on the guiding values adopted for the TWK Conference.
- 5.4 No person shall serve as a member of the same conference board, council, commission or agency, or on an associated or underlying committee (such as one which has as its parent body a conference board or agency), for more than eight years in a period of 12.
- 5.5 No person shall serve as a chairperson of any conference entity or as conference secretary or conference lay leader for more than eight years in a period of 12.

- 5.6 No person shall serve as a member of any entity of the annual conference when there is real or potential conflict of interest of an ongoing and thoroughgoing nature. When such conflict arises, that person shall be replaced immediately by the appropriate nominating committee, provided, however, that when a real or potential conflict of interest arises on a single issue, the person affected shall withdraw from the meeting until the discussion of and voting on that issue is complete.

## **Section 6 – Administration**

- 6.1 The fiscal year of the annual conference shall be the calendar year.
- 6.2 All financial requests of the annual conference shall be presented to the Council on Finance and Administration for consideration and recommendation, using the format requested by the Council on Finance and Administration.
- 6.3 The authorization for the establishment of short-term committees related to the annual conference may include reimbursement for expenses incurred by committee members, in accordance with Council on Finance and Administration policies and oversight.
- 6.4 The expenses of at-large members necessary for the equalization of lay and clergy members of the annual conference shall be paid by the annual conference from the annual conference expenses line item not to exceed a per diem for lodging and food established each year by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration. In addition, reimbursement for travel shall be at the conference's current mileage rate.
- 6.5 The conference treasurer is authorized to pay all invoices clearly related to budgeted lines which they determine to be a proper conference expense, subject to available funding. In the case of requests that are not clearly related to a single budgeted line item, invoices under \$10,000 are delegated to the treasurer with the authority to approve the request. Requests between \$10,000 and \$25,000 must also be approved by the CFA executive committee. Requests above \$25,000 must be approved by a poll of a majority of CFA members. CFA will defer any requests above \$250,000 to the annual conference for its decision.
- 6.6 Personnel policies will be developed and approved by the Human Resources Committee.
- 6.7 Annual conference records are maintained by various persons representing the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, Board of Pensions, Commission on Archives and History, district boards of ministry, the conference secretary, the bishop's office, and the offices of the district superintendents. These records are the property of the annual conference and shall be maintained, disposed of, or archived according to *The Book of Discipline*, GCFA Guidelines, and/or applicable law.

# **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT POLICY FOR CHURCH PROFESSIONALS OF THE TENNESSEE-WESTERN KENTUCKY CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

## **Preamble**

The Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church does not approve of and will not tolerate sexual misconduct. The episcopal area is committed to the eradication of this conduct if it should occur and to the creation of an environment of hospitality for all persons, male or female, that is free of sexual overtones and implications, and encourages respect, equality and kinship in Christ. This policy aims to provide an avenue to report sexual misconduct while assuring that any person doing so in good faith will be protected from retaliation.

All church professionals (see definition) have positions of great trust, power, and responsibility. This provides the opportunity for unique relationships of grace and caring. While church professionals can sometimes violate the trust given them within these relationships, sexual misconduct is one of the gravest violations of this trust. This policy seeks to address the abuse of power by church professionals who engage in sexual misconduct. While this policy is binding for appointed church professionals, it is our hope that it may serve as a guide for other church professionals such as local church laity staff and volunteers.

The intent of this policy is to provide guidance to both laity and clergy of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church and the local church regarding sexual misconduct and, thereby, protect the relationship between church professionals and parishioners, staff members, colleagues, and others. It is both the ethical and legal responsibility of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church to ensure that there are mechanisms for preventing sexual misconduct and addressing allegations of the same. This policy provides guidance regarding the definition of sexual misconduct, procedures for filing and addressing allegations of sexual misconduct, and training expectations and requirements designed to prevent sexual misconduct in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church. The primary focus of this policy shall be the search for truth to assure justice for the complainant and the accused. This policy is not intended to supplant or substitute for the formal complaint process and its attendant fair process protection in the current *Book of Discipline*, which must, where applicable, be followed in addition to this policy. Failure by church authorities to use or follow any of the procedures herein is not a chargeable offense, nor can it be used as grounds for an appeal of a formal grievance, complaint, review or trial as defined in current *Book of Discipline*. We are committed to procedural accuracy and pastoral care in the pursuit of justice for victims and survivors, real accountability for abusers, and healing for all parties.

## **Theological Foundation**

We believe and affirm every person is created in the image of God. We further believe and affirm sexual misconduct within the ministerial relationship and in the Church is incompatible with biblical teachings and ethical standards. Sexual misconduct violates the sacred worth of persons who are created in the image of God. Such misconduct is particularly reprehensible in the context of the ministerial relationship that should represent the care of God. It should be understood that sexual misconduct is an abuse of power and authority. This misconduct alienates persons from the ministry of the Church. It tarnishes the Church's ministry and mission. Those guilty of sexual misconduct bring real harm to persons, congregations and the Church as a whole.

Forgiveness is a sacred teaching of the Church, but this teaching in no way protects a person guilty of sexual misconduct from the discipline of the Church. Representing the Church as a church professional is a privilege requiring the highest professional conduct. Forgiveness by God or by a person harmed by sexual misconduct does not automatically restore the privilege of serving as a church professional. It is not appropriate for church authorities to pressure persons harmed by sexual misconduct to forgive the offender as a way to restore to the offender the privilege of serving as a professional in the Church. Central to the task of church authorities is to protect the vulnerable and to eradicate sexual misconduct from the Church.

# DEFINITIONS

## A. Church Professionals

### 1. Appointed Church Professionals

Appointed church professionals shall include full, associate and provisional ministerial members of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church, as well as ordained deacons (full and provisional) and elders, diaconal ministers and local pastors, in both the effective and retired relationships, supply pastors, and other persons serving the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church or any local church under appointment of the bishop or under the supervision of a district superintendent, including persons keeping their membership in another annual conference or in another denomination and persons holding orders issued by these conferences while on honorable or administrative location. Additionally, this includes lay and clergy persons employed directly by conference agencies including but not limited to the Conference Council on Connectional Ministries.

### 2. Other Church Professionals

Other church professionals shall include anyone in a position of power, authority, or leadership employed by or serving as a volunteer in a ministry in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church.

## B. Book of Discipline

*The 2016 Book of Discipline* refers to *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016*, which sets forth the laws, plans, polity and processes by which The United Methodist Church governs itself. It contains insight and information about the distinct United Methodist understanding of the nature and mission of the Church, and about what is expected of its clergy and members as they seek to be faithful and effective disciples of Christ.

## C. Book of Resolutions

*The Book of Resolutions 2016* refers to the volume containing the text of all resolutions or pronouncements on issues approved by the General Conference and currently valid. The *Book of Resolutions* contains not only the resolutions and policy statements passed by the most recent General Conference, but also all such statements still considered to represent the position of The United Methodist Church. The text of any resolution is considered the official position of the denomination on that subject.

## D. Sexual Misconduct

Misconduct of a sexual nature is a chargeable offense, for both laity and clergy. Chargeable offenses include: child abuse, sexual abuse, sexual misconduct (including pornography), sexual harassment, gender discrimination, crime, and immorality.

**Sexual misconduct** is abuse of power and authority, and is not only an act against one person, but an act against fellow ministry professionals; members in the local congregation; the Church at large; and God.

(*Book of Resolutions 2016*, ¶2044).

Sexual misconduct includes but is not limited to:

- child or adult sexual abuse



- sexual abuse of youth or those without capacity to consent
- rape or sexual assault
- gross sexual imposition like prolonged gazing, fondling, grabbing, or stalking
- sexual harassment
- unwelcome touching and advances
- inappropriate and unwelcome contacts of a sexual nature either in person or via phone, digital media, or cyberspace
- sexualized verbal comments, gestures, or visuals
- use of sexualized materials including pornography
- sexualized behavior
- solicitation of sexual activity or other sex-related behavior by promise of rewards
- coercion of sexual activity by threat of punishment
- or misuse of pastoral or ministerial position using sexualized conduct to take advantage of the vulnerability of another (*The Book of Discipline 2012*, ¶161, *Book of Resolutions 2016*, ¶2081, ¶2082).

Each alleged occurrence of sexual misconduct requires its own unique and appropriate investigation (as described below) and response, depending on the facts and circumstances.

**Sexual harassment** is a form of sexual misconduct and is defined in *The 2016 Book of Discipline, Social Principles* ¶161(J) as, “any unwanted sexual comment, advance, or demand, either verbal or physical, that is reasonably perceived by the recipient as demeaning, intimidating or coercive. Sexual harassment must be understood as an exploitation of a power relationship rather than an exclusively sexual issue. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a hostile or abusive working environment resulting from discrimination on the basis of gender.” To clarify further, it is unwanted sexual or gender-directed behavior within a pastoral, employment, ministerial (paid or unpaid), mentor, or colleague relationship that is so severe or pervasive that it alters the conditions of employment or volunteer work or unreasonably interferes with the complainant’s performance by creating a hostile environment that can include unwanted sexual jokes, repeated advances, touching, displays, or comments that insult, degrade, or sexually exploit women, men, elders, children, or youth. “It can create a hostile, offensive environment that can include unwanted inappropriate sexual jokes, repeated advances, touching, displays, or comments that insult, degrade, or sexually exploit women, men, elders, children, or youth” (*Book of Resolutions 2016*, ¶2045). Both sexual and gender harassment are exploitations of power and are discriminatory by law (GCFA Legal Manual, <http://www.gcfa.org/gcfa-legal-manual>).

**Sexual abuse** is a form of sexual misconduct and occurs when a church professional engages in sexual contact or sexualized behavior with a congregant, client, employee, student, staff member, coworker, or volunteer (*Book of Resolutions 2016*, ¶161(I)). It can include coerced or forced sexual contact (including those unable to give informed consent), sexual interaction or contact with children or youth, and sexual exhibitionism or display of sexual visuals or pornography.

**Sexualized behavior** is behavior that communicates sexual interest and/or content. Examples include, but are not limited to displaying sexually suggestive visual materials; use of pornography in church programs on or with church property, making sexual comments or innuendo about one’s own or another person’s body; touching another person’s body; touching another person’s body/hair/clothing; touching or rubbing oneself in the presence of another person; kissing; and sexual intercourse. Sexualized behavior can be a form of sexual misconduct when this behavior is unwanted by the recipient or witness, is a violation of society’s or the Church’s law, breaks the sacred trust in the ministerial role, or violates the vows taken at membership or ordination. The judicial council asserts that dating, romantic or sexual relationships between clergy and their parishioners “are never appropriate because of imbalance of power” (Decision 1228, 2012). For the sake of maintaining healthy boundaries and preventing a betrayal of sacred trust, a clergyperson who has a genuine desire to date a parishioner must contact their district superintendent,

and in consultation with the DS, determine a reasonable course of action for discontinuing the pastor/ parishioner relationship before beginning a dating relationship.

**Pornography** is sexually explicit material that portrays violence, abuse, coercion, domination, humiliation, or degradation for the purpose of arousal. Any sexually explicit material that depicts children or adults is pornographic. “The United Methodist Church declares that the use of pornography in church programs, on church premises or with church property by persons in ministerial roles (lay and clergy) is a form of sexual misconduct, is a chargeable offense for laity and clergy in The United Methodist Church” (*Book of Resolutions 2016*, ¶2081, ¶2082).

#### **E. Complainant**

A complainant is a person who submits a written, signed, and dated statement alleging an incident of sexual or professional misconduct. A complainant may be a parent or responsible party for a minor or an adult incapable of self-reporting.

#### **F. Respondent**

A respondent is a church professional against whom a complaint has been made.

#### **G. Complainant Advocate (Response Team Member)**

A trained complainant advocate is a response team member who actively supports a complainant of church professional misconduct/sexual abuse through the denominational complaint process. The role of Advocate is one of caregiving, not investigation. (*The 2016 Book of Discipline* ¶362, 363, and 2702.1)

#### **H. Respondent Advocate (Response Team Member)**

A trained respondent advocate is a response team member who actively supports a respondent who is accused of sexual misconduct/abuse through the denomination complaint process as discussed in *The 2016 Book of Discipline* in paragraphs ¶362, 363, and 2702.1. The role of advocate is one of caregiving, not investigation.

#### **I. Conference Response Team Coordinator**

The conference response team coordinator oversees the complaint process, serves as a resource for district superintendents, bishops, complainants, and respondents and maintains the integrity of the process including documentation of complaints for the office of the bishop. This may be the assistant to the bishop, an appointed conference response team member, or appropriate Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference personnel. The role of conference response team coordinator is one of care-giving, not investigation.

#### **Making a Report**

Any concern a person has about sexual misconduct by a church professional should be promptly reported to any district superintendent or the bishop. The list of names of the current persons in these positions and their contact information may be found at [www.twkumc.org](http://www.twkumc.org) or by calling the conference office at 615-329-1177. If for any reason such person finds it difficult to report his or her concerns to a district superintendent or the bishop, the person may contact a trained advocate or the conference response team coordinator, who is available to assist any complainant with the process in making a report to either a district superintendent or the bishop. A list of the members of the conference response team along with the conference response team coordinator’s contact information can be found in each volume of the *Journal of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church* following each annual conference session or at [www.twkumc.org/safe-spaces-ministry](http://www.twkumc.org/safe-spaces-ministry). (*The 2016 Book of Discipline* ¶363)

### **Mandatory Reporting**

In no way should this policy be interpreted or applied in a manner that interferes with any licensed practitioner in fulfilling his/her mandatory reporting requirements.

All allegations of sexual misconduct with minors or vulnerable adults occurring in the State of Tennessee will be reported to the appropriate governmental agencies, as required by mandatory reporting laws of the State of Tennessee.

### **Policy Against Retaliation**

No retaliation will be tolerated on account of a good faith report of sexual misconduct. Prohibited retaliation will be considered a separate and independent violation of this policy, and appropriate action may be taken against that retaliator. Anyone who believes they have been retaliated against may also report such retaliation as detailed above in Making a Report. The person is encouraged to report retaliation immediately to a district superintendent or the bishop, or contact his or her trained advocate or the conference response team coordinator for assistance in reporting the concern to a district superintendent or the bishop.

### **Investigation**

Upon receipt by a district superintendent or the bishop of a report, a prompt and thorough investigation into the allegations of sexual misconduct against any church professional will be conducted and appropriate corrective action, if called for based upon all of the facts, shall be taken and concluded within a reasonable period of time. The scope and details of each investigation will depend on the nature of the report and the related circumstances. In circumstances involving church professionals, by doctrinal law, the procedure may be governed by *The 2016 Book of Discipline* in ¶362 and ¶2701-2719. In each instance, the investigation will be handled with as much discretion as the circumstances permit to protect the privacy of the individuals involved. All persons having reported suspected sexual misconduct should refrain from contacting the person suspected of such conduct. Likewise, the persons suspected of such conduct shall refrain from contacting the complainant or alleged victim, unless otherwise directed by the bishop or district superintendent. All persons serving as witnesses in the investigation should refrain from contacting the complainant or the respondent, unless directed by a district superintendent or bishop to do so, in order to preserve the integrity and confidentiality of the investigation and confidentiality.

All persons having received a report of sexual misconduct, including anyone specifically engaged to serve as an advocate or investigate such reports, shall keep all reports confidential, except as required by *The 2016 Book of Discipline*, where applicable, or necessary to investigate and resolve such matters, and/or to respond to any related legal or administrative proceedings.

During the course of an investigation, a trained complainant advocate may be assigned to provide ongoing support to a complainant or alleged victim. Likewise, a trained respondent advocate may be assigned to provide ongoing support to the respondent. Both advocates are bound by the confidentiality provisions of this policy.

All allegations of sexual misconduct with minors or vulnerable adults occurring in the State of Tennessee will be reported to the appropriate governmental agencies, as required by mandatory reporting laws of the State of Tennessee.

### **Training**

Appointed church professionals (see definition) serving in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church are required to attend official Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church trainings on 1) Healthy Boundaries/Sexual Ethics and 2) Safe Sanctuaries each quadrennium. All transfers and candidates for ministry are required to complete these trainings prior to commissioning or appointment,

whichever comes first. Compliance with these training requirements and a completed criminal background check are conditions of employment or ministerial appointment. A church professional failing to comply with these conditions of appointment may be cited an administrative charge by the bishop in accordance with *The 2016 Book of Discipline* ¶362.

It is strongly suggested that other church professionals (see definition) attend official Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church trainings on 1) Healthy Boundaries/Sexual Ethics and 2) Safe Sanctuaries each quadrennium.

### **Healthy Boundaries/Sexual Ethics Team**

The 2010 report of the Sexual Ethics Task Force recommended to the annual conference that a Healthy Boundaries/Sexual Ethics Team be formed to guide the portion of the Safe Spaces Ministry tasked with reviewing policies and implementing training opportunities in the best practices to create and maintain healthy boundaries for ministry. The Healthy Boundaries/Sexual Ethics Team is a sub-team of the Safe Spaces Ministry Committee. This committee is made of the three teams: 1) Healthy Boundaries/Sexual Ethics Team; 2) Safe Sanctuary Team; 3) Conference Response Team. The Safe Spaces Ministry serves to ensure that policies and procedures necessary for keeping ministry safe in order for sacred space to be created are developed, reviewed, appropriately presented and training provided for members of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church. The work of the committee is funded through apportionment giving as allocated through the Connectional Ministry's budget on an annual basis. The Connectional Ministry's Safe Spaces Team and the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry work collaboratively to guide this vital ministry.

### **Availability of Policy**

This policy shall be presented annually in the journals of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church. Further, it shall be posted at [www.twkumc.org](http://www.twkumc.org) continuously. It should be made available in at least one common area of every church in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church. It is strongly recommended that the *Sexual Misconduct is Never Okay* flyer be prominently displayed in one common area of every church in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church. This flyer is available for download at [www.twkumc.org/safe-spaces-ministry](http://www.twkumc.org/safe-spaces-ministry). Questions about the policy should be directed to the staff liaison to the Healthy Boundaries/Sexual Ethics Team through the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church. This liaison will be identified on the conference website where the policy is located.

Policy Draft Date: November 5, 2021

Sexual Misconduct Quick Response Card  
Nashville Episcopal Area UMC Safe Spaces Ministry  
PLEASE POST THIS IN A PROMINENT PLACE IN YOUR CHURCH BUILDING.

## Sexual Misconduct is Never Okay.

# RECOGNIZE REPORT PREVENT

The Nashville Episcopal Area of The United Methodist Church is committed to ministry and work environments that are free of discrimination, including sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sexual violence.



For help and resources about our policy, visit  
<http://www.tnumc.org/safe-spaces-ministry>



For emergency assistance call 911.

For non-emergency situations, report sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, or sexual violence to the District Superintendent of your district. This number can be located at <http://www.tnumc.org>. If you have difficulty contacting your District office, please call the Conference Response Team Coordinator whose number can be found at <http://www.tnumc.org/safe-spaces-ministry>.

All allegations of sexual misconduct with minors or vulnerable adults occurring in the State of Tennessee will be reported to the appropriate governmental agencies, as required by mandatory reporting laws of the State of Tennessee and Kentucky.

Safe Spaces is a ministry committee of the Tennessee Conference of The United Methodist Church. This committee is made of 3 teams: Healthy Boundaries/Sexual Ethics Team, Safe Sanctuaries Team, and the Conference Response Team.

Tennessee Conference of The United Methodist Church - 304 South Perimeter Park Drive, Suite 1, Nashville TN 37211  
615-329-1177

# **TENNESSEE-WESTERN KENTUCKY CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND VULNERABLE PERSONS**

Every congregation and agency in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church (TWK UMC) is expected to uphold this policy as its minimum standards in the establishment of its local Safe Sanctuary Policy for Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Persons.

## **Abuse and neglect of children, youth, and vulnerable persons are prohibited by the TWK UMC, its churches and its agencies.**

The TWK UMC seeks to create a safe environment for children, youth, and vulnerable persons in which opportunities for abuse are minimized by the provision of proper enlistment and supervision of those persons working with them. This document contains theological foundations, definitions of abuse and common terms, policies and procedures related to prevention, response, and reporting.

Clergy and laity are encouraged to read this policy and make it an essential part of the operations of your local church. For more information or to seek clarity visit [twkumc.org](http://twkumc.org) and go to the Safe Spaces Ministry page.

## **1. Scope**

The Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church affirms that all children, youth and vulnerable persons have the right to safety. Therefore, United Methodists of the TWK UMC are determined to provide an environment in which these persons are safe from neglect or abuse including sexual misconduct and harassment.

The scope of this policy and its provisions shall apply to all staff and volunteers, clergy or lay, who have direct or indirect contact with children, youth, and vulnerable persons in conference and/or district sponsored events. This policy should be implemented in conjunction with the Sexual Misconduct Policy for Church Professionals found at [twkumc.org](http://twkumc.org) on the Safe Spaces Ministry page.

The Safe Spaces Ministry in consultation with the appropriate governing authority shall be responsible for reviewing and revising this policy. Each conference and/or district ministry event involving children, youth, or vulnerable persons shall adopt procedures to implement this policy.

## **2. Theological Foundation**

### **Our Biblical Mandate**

“Then he [Jesus] took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, ‘Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.’” (Mark 9:36-37 NRSV) Jesus also said, “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones..., it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.” (Matthew 18:6 NRSV)

### **Our Commitment in Baptism**

The Church, above all institutions, is called to welcome and nurture the child. Our goal is to maintain a safe, secure, loving place where all children may grow and where those who care for them may administer to their needs in responsible ways.

## **Our Mandate**

The 1996 General Conference approved a resolution that called upon local churches and annual conferences to institute policies and procedures to reduce the risk of child sexual abuse in our churches and church-related activities. We, in the TWK UMC, accept the nature of this call and seek to expand it to include all forms of abuse and neglect that could be possible in these settings or that could come to our attention regarding all children, youth, and/or vulnerable persons in our care.

## **Statement of Covenant**

As caring Christians, we are also committed to protect and advocate for all children, youth, and vulnerable persons participating in the life of the Church. The Church, at all levels of its organization, is entrusted with the responsibility of providing an emotionally and physically safe, spiritually grounded, healthy environment for all children, youth, adults, and vulnerable persons in which they are protected from abuse.

We uphold the idea that to report abuse is to be a witness to the world of the love and justice of God and fully recognize that reporting abuse is a form of ministering to the needs of those crying out for help. Simply, to report abuse can help to stop existing abuse and prevent further abuse.

Additionally, we care for victims of abuse and their families by offering resources that will contribute to healing. Further, we recognize the grace that God gives in upholding Christian community; we will look for grace-filled ways of dealing with both the victim and the accused.

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

## **3. Definitions**

### **Delineation of Age**

1. **Adults** are all persons who have attained the age of majority (18 years in Tennessee except for alcoholic beverage restrictions, and in Kentucky except for purchase of alcoholic beverages and for purposes of care and treatment of children with disabilities for which it is 21).
2. **Child** is generally defined as a person who is under 18 years of age.
3. **Children** are persons 0-11 years of age. Additionally defined as all persons from infants through the fifth grade or sixth grade, as determined by each local church in order to conform with grade-level practices of its local area schools regarding classifications of elementary schools and middle or junior high schools.
4. **Youth** are 12-18 years of age. Additionally defined as all persons in the sixth-grade or seventh-grade through the twelfth-grade, as determined by each local church in order to conform with grade-level practices of its local area schools regarding classifications of middle or junior high schools and high schools.
5. **Vulnerable persons** any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of him or herself, or to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

## Definitions of Abuse

6. **Child abuse** is the harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare by a person responsible for the child's health or welfare or by a person in a position of trust, which harm occurs or is threatened through non-accidental physical or mental injury or sexual abuse.
7. **Vulnerable persons abuse** is the harm or threatened harm to a vulnerable person's health or welfare by a person responsible for the vulnerable person's health or welfare or by a person in a position of trust, which harm occurs or is threatened through non-accidental physical or mental injury or sexual abuse. A vulnerable person is any adult aged 18 or over who, by reason of mental or other disability, age, illness or other situation is permanently or for the time being unable to take care of him or herself, or to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.
8. **Physical abuse** is any deliberate act that inflicts bodily harm to a person, or failure to protect from physical harm where a duty exists to do so.
9. **Neglect** is failure to provide nutrition, medical, surgical, or any other care necessary for the well-being of the child, youth, or vulnerable persons.
10. **Sexual abuse** is any sexual contact or sexually explicit language, gestures, or images by a volunteer or staff person with, or directed to, a participant.
11. **Child sexual abuse** occurs any time a child is used for the sexual stimulation of an adult or older child. A child is powerless either to consent to or resist such sexual acts. This includes fondling, sexual intercourse, forced participation in sexual acts, incest, exploitation for the purpose of pornography or prostitution, and/or exposure to adult sexual activity.
12. **Emotional abuse** is submitting a child, youth or vulnerable adult to verbal assault or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse can include closed confinement (being shut in a small area), making racial remarks, excessive punishment, pervasive use of profanity in a denigrating or humiliating manner, knowingly permitting drug or alcohol abuse, ignoring or encouraging peer abuse.

## Definitions of Roles

13. **Participants** are children, youth, adults, or vulnerable persons who are registered, enrolled, attending or otherwise participating in an event or activity sponsored by the conference or district.
14. **Staff** includes any United Methodist clergy person, any paid employee of the conference or a district, and any paid employee of any group, committee, team or agency of the conference or a district that has the care or supervision of a participant at an event.
15. **Supervision** is the ability for a person to be in charge of a group of children, youth, or vulnerable persons giving direction, setting boundaries, disciplining appropriately, maintaining safety, and being the adult in all situations.
16. **Authority figure** is a person who is a primary leader of any children, youth, or vulnerable persons activity. Such person should be 18 years of age or older and at least five years older than the age group with which they are to work. It is strongly recommended that the second person serving in this role be at least 21 years of age or older. This role requires extensive training in safe sanctuary and risk reduction such as that offered by TWK UMC.
17. **Adult volunteer** is any non-clergy, lay worker who has the care/supervision of a participant at an event. This may include paid staff members of a local church. This role requires local church safe sanctuary training based upon the congregation's policy and procedures.
18. **Adult helper** works temporarily, infrequently, or indirectly with vulnerable people, and does not have any direct supervision role. Such person should be 18 years of age or older and at least five years older than the age group with which they are to work. This role requires situational briefing on policy and procedures related to the event.
19. **Helper under age 18** is considered a child and, therefore, can serve in no role of authority over children, youth or vulnerable persons.



## Definitions of Governance

20. **Conference** refers to the conference and/or its districts within the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference of The United Methodist Church.
21. **Governing body** refers to the local church leadership approved and elected by the annual charge conference of the local church and in compliance with *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016* (§243,244, and 247). Examples may include church council, administrative board, board of stewards, etc.
22. **Safe Spaces Ministry** consists of the Safe Sanctuary Team, the Boundaries and Sexual Ethics Team, and the Conference Response Team for the TWK UMC. The Safe Spaces Ministry serves to ensure that policies and procedures necessary for keeping ministry safe in order for sacred space to be created are developed, reviewed, appropriately presented and for training to be provided for members of the TWK UMC.

## Definitions of Policy and Program

23. **Safe Spaces Verification Form** is completed specifically for district or conference sponsored ministries because there are additional requirements for supervision at district/conference sponsored ministry events. Examples of district/conference sponsored ministry: a conference or district sponsored mission trip, a conference or district retreat, such as confirmation, or serving as a camp counselor.
24. **Sexual Misconduct Policy for Church Professionals** refers to the policy and procedures approved by the TWK UMC regarding boundaries and sexual ethics.
25. **Ministry event** is defined as local church, conference, or district sponsored activity or occasion that involves a gathering and care of children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
26. **National background screen** is the conducting of a search of publicly available websites through a third-party contractor for information about criminal convictions of the applicant and whether the applicant's name appears on the National Sex Offender list.

## 4. Adoption Of Policies And Procedures

Local churches within the conference will adopt and enforce their own abuse prevention policies for children, youth, and vulnerable persons. It is recommended that each congregation's policy be consistent with the above-stated covenant with other United Methodist congregations (see Theological Foundation in section 2 above). Furthermore, TWK UMC expects all congregational policies to be equal to or exceed in strength of protection for all children, youth, and vulnerable persons the minimum standards here stated. The TWK of UMC recommends the local church act as follows:

- A. **Responsibility for implementation.** Implementing a Safe Sanctuary Policy for Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Persons at a local church shall be the responsibility of the pastor-in-charge, the governing body, and a Safe Sanctuaries Committee (SSC) or its equivalent organized in compliance with the local church's governance process.
- B. **Safe Sanctuaries Committee or equivalent.** A Safe Sanctuaries Committee or its equivalent shall have the responsibility for developing local church safe sanctuaries policy and procedures; communicating with and educating the congregation concerning those policies and procedures; recruiting, screening, and training paid staff and volunteers; conducting site inspections and making recommendations; retaining records; and regularly reviewing conference policies and procedures, applicable state laws, and the insurance policy provisions and insurer requirements. It is recommended that this committee or its equivalent should have at least one representative each from education, age-level ministries, trustees, and the staff parish relations committees.
- C. **Training.** Such periodic training and education on the Safe Sanctuary Policy for Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Persons provided by the TWK UMC should be attended each quadrennium by the local church pastor-in-charge and SSC chairperson or other SSC designated member. Further, it is recommended that attendance at such conference-wide training include at a minimum, designees from the local church who

will be personally coordinating and conducting safe sanctuaries training for employees and staff within the local church.

- D. Annual review of policy.** The local church Safe Sanctuary Committee will conduct an annual review of the policy to facilitate implementation of best practices and compliance with current state and federal law. A report will be made to the TWK UMC as a part of their charge conference report.

## **5. SCREENING PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEERS AND PAID STAFF**

*While this section on screening applies directly to conference-sponsored events, it is recommended and encouraged as a minimum standard for local church and agencies safe sanctuary policy and procedures.*

All persons, including conference staff who intend to work with children, youth, and/or vulnerable persons at conference-sponsored events, including overnight or longer events, must also be properly screened and attend an age-appropriate orientation/training session on child protection and abuse and have current background check. A Safe Spaces Verification Form will be completed and submitted to the event leadership prior to participation.

The following procedures should be followed:

- Written job description and/or expectations provided and must be signed and dated.
- An application/personal information form shall be completed.
- A sexual offender registry check in any state where the applicant has resided during the past seven years.
- Must consent to authorizing criminal background check. A background check should be provided for anyone staying overnight or longer, i.e., weekend retreats, summer camps.
- A new background check should be performed every three years as the standard.
- If the applicant is found to have been involved in any activity in which the applicant abused or exploited children, youth, or vulnerable persons the applicant will not be approved. Any conviction of a crime against children, youth or adults from vulnerable populations shall disqualify any applicant. A person who has been convicted as a sex offender will not be certified. Affirmative responses to the following questions relating to crimes will prompt a personal review of an application:
  - crimes against children,
  - rape, sexual or physical assault
  - possession or use of drugs, and
  - suspension of a driver's license within the last five years
- Personal interviews with summary documentation will be conducted by the Safe Sanctuary Team or conference staff representative and kept in a confidential file maintained by the conference ministry for whom the applicant will serve.
- References will be checked with summary documentation in a confidential file and maintained by the conference ministry for whom the applicant will serve.

## **6. Safe Spaces Procedures**

*While this section on procedures applies directly to conference-sponsored events, it is recommended and encouraged as a minimum standard for local church and agencies safe sanctuary policy and procedures.*

- A. Appropriate boundaries:** All persons, staff and participants, will maintain boundaries appropriate to their specific roles, age, and relationship to another.
- B. Two adult rule:** During all conference events one adult will not be alone with any number of children, youth, or vulnerable persons. For small group activities where one adult supervises one group, two or more groups are to meet in sight and sound of each other. The ministry leader may also decide to combine groups to ensure the safety of all parties. Small group sizes will be determined by the size of the group but

should not exceed reasonable adult/participant ratios. Risk will be reduced even more when the adults are unrelated.

- C. **Five year older rule:** Persons supervising children and/or youth will be at least five years older than the oldest child/youth participant. It is expected that all staff or volunteers for conference sponsored events be at least 21 years of age or older and have completed a background check, interview with the ministry leader for the conference, and participated in training on the Safe Sanctuary Policy for Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Persons.
- D. **Adult/children ratio:** The adult/children ratio will be dependent upon the age of the children groups present. Refer to the following protocol:  
Children, ages 0-5 — One adult to four children or two adults to eight children  
Children, grades 1-6 — One adult to six children or two adults to 12 children  
Note: Day care/nursery programs must meet the respected codes of their state as the minimum ratio.
- E. **Adult/youth ratio:** The adult/youth ratio will be at least 2:16 at retreats/rallies/meetings with the understanding that one adult will not be alone with any number of youth. The ratio for offsite camps and mission trips will be 2:10. Some events may require smaller ratios. If so, stricter requirements will be communicated to all adults and churches prior to the event through registration confirmation packets as well as through emails and the conference youth website.
- F. **Male/female adults:** When a group from any local church consists of both genders, the accompanying adults shall also be of both genders. This also applies to small groups and mission worksite groups.
- G. **Open doors:** Doors to meeting spaces without windows must remain open when children, youth, or vulnerable adults are utilizing the space. Doors with windows may remain closed provided that sight lines to all areas of the room are clear.
- H. **Medical release/registration form:** All persons attending age-level ministry conference events shall have a completed medical release form and completed parental permission form. The medical release form will be valid for a one-year period beginning with the first event for which it is submitted. It is expected that a new form will be submitted if a change in medical status occurs. All forms will be maintained by the local church ministry leadership and will be available upon request for verification during conference event check-in.
- I. **Local ministry leader responsibility:** It is expected that the children/youth coordinator/director from the local church maintain a copy of each attendee's form at all times. These forms should be carried with the group traveling to and from events.
- J. **Check-in procedure:** The local church ministry team should develop a consistent check-in procedure during the event to meet with the church group. These should be spread throughout the event and event day.
- K. **Check-out/event pickup:** No child/youth will be released to anyone other than the parent whose signature has been provided without specific written direction by that parent and satisfactory identification of the person who will call for the child/youth.
- L. **Lodging for overnight youth events:** An adult and youth will not share a room/hotel/tent unless the adult is a parent of that youth with whom they are sharing the room/hotel/tent. No adult should share a bed with any youth.
- M. **Lodging for overnight youth events at non-hotel sites:** There will be separate sleeping areas/rooms for males and females at all conference-sponsored events. When there are several rooms/cabins of youth, there will be at least two adults of the same gender in the room/cabin.
- N. **Parent/guardian housing exemption:** An immediate family member or guardian of a young person who is chaperoning an overnight event is permitted to share a room and bed with his/her child no matter the gender as long as no other young people are sharing the room.
- O. **Six-month rule:** Any volunteer working with children must be a member or attend regularly in a local church, campus ministry, or approved extension ministry for at least six months. This shall be confirmed in writing by the pastor or ministry supervisor.

## **7. Training and Screening Reciprocity**

The Safe Spaces Ministry Team may accept training provided by other United Methodist conferences or United Methodist churches in other conferences after a review of the policies and procedures implemented in the other conference or church. Screening will be accepted provided that there has been a copy of the national screen that included a national criminal check conducted by the other conference or church submitted with the request.

## **8. Reporting Of Incidents**

*This section on reporting applies directly to local church and to conference-sponsored events, it is a minimum standard for local church and agencies safe sanctuary policy and procedures.*

Incidents may involve inappropriate behavior by staff/volunteers or other participants toward a participant and call for immediate on-site corrective action. Incidents may involve the abuse, neglect, or exploitation of participants by staff/volunteers or other participants and mandate reporting through the Tennessee Child Abuse Hotline (1-877-237-0004) or the Adult Protective Services hotline (1-888-277-8366). In Kentucky call the statewide abuse hotline, 1-877- KYSAFE1 or 1-877-597-2331. In case of an emergency, immediately call 911.

A call to the hotline is required to be made by staff/volunteers if there is reasonable cause to suspect that abuse of a participant has occurred. When the necessity of reporting occurs, the protection of children, youth, and vulnerable persons must be paramount. In Tennessee, cooperation with the Tennessee Department of Children's Services, the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability, and law enforcement is required in all such incidents. In Kentucky, cooperation with the Cabinet for Health & Family Services, Division of Protection & Permanency, and the Kentucky State Police or local law enforcement is required in all such incidents.

In case of allegations of abuse, the pastor, the district superintendent and/or bishop shall be notified immediately following notification of the appropriate state or local law enforcement authorities. The TWK UMC Safe Spaces Ministry chairperson or staff person may also be notified in order to be of assistance. Parents or legal guardians may be notified in appropriate circumstances.

## **9. Statement To The Media**

The Media Crisis Response Plan should be enacted to ensure proper protocol is followed. The bishop or alternate spokesperson shall provide conference and district ministry groups with guidelines for communications with media about the incident(s) which may have been reported.

## **10. Reminder Of Minimum Standards**

Every ministry and congregation of the TWK UMC that relates to children, youth, and vulnerable persons in its programming or oversight shall adopt or create policies and procedures to prevent the risk of abuse and harm. The policy and procedures stated herein shall be considered the minimum standards for such policy adoption or creation. Policy Draft Date: November 5, 2021

## SAFE SPACES VERIFICATION FORM

This statement is between the local church listed and the TWK UMC of The United Methodist Church:

Conference/District Event:

Church:

Address:

City:

Contact Person:

Phone:

The following adults who are accompanying our children and/or youth to this ministry event have completed the requirements for participation as an adult attendee as prescribed by the TWK UMC and enacted as a part of this local church's staff/volunteer screening process. This includes a background check, reference check, training on the local church's safe sanctuary policy and procedures, as well as a review of the TWK UMC Safe Sanctuary Policy for Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Persons.

These background checks were completed through the conference office: \_\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_\_No

If no, please indicate background company:

(List Names)

The signatures below attest that the screening procedure & background checks were performed and the results were satisfactory, that the individuals have completed the local church's safe sanctuary training, and they have reviewed the TWK UMC Safe Sanctuary Policy.

**CHURCH PASTOR (signature and date required)**

**MINISTRY LEADER (signature and date required)**

**This form should be completed and returned to the conference/district event organizer at least one week prior to the start date of the event.**

# CHAPTER 15 INDEX

## A

Administrative Review, 19, 55, 62  
 Administrative Services, 2, 11, 423  
 Adult/Older Adult Ministries, 28  
 Africa University, 191  
 Annual Conference 2020, 40–53  
 Annual Conference Officers, Leadership, 11  
 Appointments, 98–128  
     Caney Fork River District, 98  
 Apportionments, 58, 541–542, 546  
 Archives and History, 56, 135  
     Commission on Archives and History, 38, 135  
     General Commission, 56  
     Heritage Center/SEJ Commission, 15  
     John Abernathy Smith Heritage Center, 2, 12  
 Asian American Ministries Committee, 29  
 Associate Members of TN Conf., Retired, 87  
 Auditor's Report, 540–552  
 Audit Statement & Statistics, 539–603  
 Austin Peay State University, Wesley Foundation, 2, 14, 31  
 Award Announcements, 407

## B

Beersheba Springs Assembly, 2, 13  
 Belmont University, Wesley Fellowship, 2, 14, 32  
 Bishop's Office, Tennessee Annual Conference, 11  
 Bishops (retired) residing within the TN  
     Conference, 15  
 Blankenship CPA Group, 540  
 Boards, Commissions, Committees, TN  
     Conference, 16–39, 413–414  
 Boston University School of Theology, 192  
 Business of the 2020 TN Annual Conference, 54–97

## C

Cal Turner Jr. Center for Church Leadership, 13  
 Camp and Retreat Ministries, 13, 23, 129, 423  
 Candidates for Ordained or Licensed Ministry, 63–65  
 Candler School of Theology, 194  
 Caney Fork River District, 2, 12, 34, 98–102, 398–399  
 Cedar Crest Camp, 2, 13  
 Center for Church Leadership, 13  
 Charge Line Changes, 61–78  
 Children's and Family Ministry, 27  
 Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships, 24, 56, 139  
 Church and Society, 25, 55–56

Clergy Service Records, 449–538  
 Closed Local Church, 417–418  
 Cokesbury, 2  
 Commissioned Deaconesses, 394–397  
 Committee on Global Ministries, 24  
 Committee on Health and Wellness, 173  
 Communication, 11  
 Community Care Fellowship, 13  
 Comprehensive African American Strategic Team  
     (CAAST), 29  
 Conference Boards, Commissions, and  
     Committees, 16–39, 414  
 Conference Design Team, 18  
 Conference Nominations, 17–18  
 Conference Officers & Leadership, 11–15  
 Conference Photos, 6–10  
 Connectional Ministries, 11, 23–34, 422–423  
     Connectional Ministries Lead Team, 23–28  
 Cooperative Ministries/Small Membership Church, 57  
 Council on Finance and Administration, 144–148  
 Creation Care Ministry, 25  
 Crisis Management Team, 431–435  
 Crisis Response Plan, 431–435  
 Crisis Response Team, 25, 431–435  
 Cumberland River District, 2, 12, 34, 399–401

## D

Daily Proceedings, 2020 Annual Conference, 40–53  
 Deaconesses, 394–397  
 Deacons, 73–75, 78, 80, 91, 94–96  
 Delegates to General Conference, 410  
 Delegates to Jurisdictional Conference, 410  
 Delegations to General and Jurisdictional  
     Conferences, 169  
 Diaconal Ministers, 93, 394–397  
 Directory  
     Diaconal Ministers, 394–397  
     Frequently Used Telephone Numbers, 2  
     Lay Members of Annual Conference, 398–406  
 Disability Concerns Committee, 28, 56, 415–416  
 Disaster Response, 25  
 District Organizations, 34–36  
     Caney Fork River District, 2, 12, 34, 98–102, 398–399  
     Cumberland River District, 2, 12, 34, 399–401  
     Harpeth River District, 2, 12, 35, 401–404  
     Red River District, 2, 12, 35  
     Stones River District, 2, 12, 36, 404–406  
 District Superintendents, Tennessee Annual  
     Conference, 12–13

Duke University Divinity School, 195

## E

Elders, 72, 74, 78–79, 81, 91, 94–95  
Elders, Retired, 78  
Elected Delegates, 408  
Employee Standards and Evaluation, 424  
Employment Process & Policies, 421  
ENCORE Ministry, 20–21, 169  
Episcopacy Committee, 139–140  
Equitable Compensation, 17, 56, 135–136  
Ethnic Local Church Concerns, 28, 170  
Extended Cabinet, 5  
Extension Ministries, 13–14  
Extension Ministry Compensation, 602–603

## F

Feed America First, 13  
Finance and Administration, 144–172  
Finance and Administration, Council on, 21  
Fisk University, Wesley Foundation, 2, 14, 32  
Frequently Used Phone Numbers, 2

## G

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, 196  
General Conference Delegates, 408  
Golden Cross Foundation, 2, 20, 171

## H

Harpeth River District, 2, 12, 35, 401–404  
Harry Denman Evangelism Award, 407–408  
Health and Welfare (Committee), 29  
Health and Wellness Committee, 173  
Healthy Boundaries, 445  
Heritage Center, John Abernathy Smith, 2  
Heritage Center/SEJ Commission On Archives and History, 15  
Hinton Rural Life Center, 15, 174  
Hispanic/Latino Ministries, 28  
Historic Records: Sessions of Annual Conference, 349  
Home Missioners, 394–397  
Honorable Location, 76–77, 133

## I

Immediate Crisis Response Team, 431  
Investigation, Committees on, 18, 62  
Investigation (Diaconal), Committee on, 18

## J

John Abernathy Smith Heritage Center, 2, 12  
Joint Distributing Committee (JDC), 175

Journal Editorial Committee, 22

## L

Laity, Board of, 26–27, 56, 130  
Lay Disciplinary Members by Position, 397  
Lay Leaders, Tennessee Conference, 26, 58  
Lay Members, Tennessee Annual Conference, 398–406  
Lay Servant Ministries, 11, 26–27  
Leadership Formation and Development, 2, 417  
Leadership, Tennessee Annual Conference, 11–13  
Leave of Absence, 79, 91, 427  
Local Pastors, 58, 64–71, 78, 88–90, 406  
Deceased, 78  
Full-time, 65–67  
Part-time, 66–69  
Retired, 78, 88–90

## M

Martin Methodist College, 197  
McKendree Village Foundation, 178  
McKendree Village Foundation, 2, 13  
Media Crisis Management Team, 431–435  
Media Crisis Response Plan, 431–439  
Medical Leave Committee, 22  
Meharry Medical College, 13  
Members in Full Connection, Elected, 74–75, 80–86  
Memoirs, 318–348  
Memorial Clergy Roll, 318  
Memphis Theological Seminary, 198  
Methodist Theological School in Ohio, 200  
Middle Tennessee State University, Wesley Foundation, 2, 32  
Military Chaplains, 98–128  
Ministerial Service Records, 449–538  
Minutes of the 2020 Annual Conference, 40–53  
Miriam's Promise, 2, 14, 30, 179

## N

Nashville Episcopal Area Disaster Response, 180  
Native American Ministries (CONAM), 15, 29, 57, 141–143  
New Church Development, 180  
New Church Starts, 58  
New Conference Report, 182  
Next Gen Discipleship, 27–28  
Nominations Committee, 17–18

## O

Officers, Tennessee Annual Conference, 11, 16  
Older Adult Ministries, 28  
Ordained Ministry, Board of, 16–17, 62

Organization of the Tennessee Annual Conference, 54,  
412–413

## P

Parsonage Standards, 418–419  
Pastoral Records, 449–538  
Pensions and Health Benefits, Board of, 131–208  
Pensions, Board of, 16, 19  
Pensions, Board of, Supplement Report (deaths, grants &  
incapacity), 133–134  
Perkins School Of Theology — Southern Methodist  
University, 201  
Personnel Committee, 143  
Personnel Policies and Procedures (TN Annual  
Conference), 420–430  
Photo Pages, 6–10  
Project Transformation Tennessee, 2, 14, 183  
Provisional Deacons, 72  
Provisional Elders, 72

## R

Red River District, 2, 12, 35  
Religion and Race, 24, 56  
Reports, 129–227  
Resolutions, 209–317  
    2020 Resolution For Office Space Study, 217  
    Caney Fork Charge Line Resolutions, 219  
    Caney Fork Closing Resolutions, 222  
    Care for Gods Creation Resolution, 210  
    Cumberland River Closing Resolutions, 223  
    Golden Cross Date Change Resolution, 212  
    Harpeth River Charge Line Resolution, 220  
    Harpeth River Closing Resolutions, 224  
    Joint Distributing Committee Resolution, 215  
    New Conference Resolution, 213  
    Officers Boards and Agency Representatives  
        Resolution, 218  
    Red River Closing Resolutions, 225  
    Rental/Housing Allowances for Retired, Disabled, or  
        Former Clergypersons, 209  
    Stones River Charge Line Resolutions, 221  
    Stones River Closing Resolution, 228  
Resolutions Committee, 18  
Retired Deacons, 80–81  
Retired Elders, 81–86  
Retired Local Pastors, 88–90  
Retired Members of the TN Conference, 87–88  
Retirement Plans, TN Conference, 131–132

## S

Safe Sanctuary Policy for Children, Youth, and  
Vulnerable Persons, 436–440

Safe Sanctuary Procedures for Next Gen  
Discipleship, 447–448  
Safe Spaces Ministry, 25–26, 185, 436–445  
Saint Paul School of Theology, 203  
Service Records, 449–538  
Sexual Misconduct Policy for Church  
Professionals, 441–446  
Southeastern Jurisdiction Committee on  
Episcopacy, 186  
Southeastern Jurisdiction of the United Methodist  
Church Contacts, 15  
Standing Rules, Tennessee Annual Conference, 409–  
419  
Statistical Tables, 560–603  
Status and Role of Women, 24, 56  
Stones River District, 2, 12, 36, 404–406  
Surviving Spouses of Deceased Clergy, 133

## T

Tennessee Conference Extension Ministries, 13–14  
Tennessee Conference Leadership, 11–15  
Tennessee State University, Wesley Foundation, 2, 14,  
33  
Tennessee Tech University, Wesley Foundation, 2, 15,  
33  
Trustees (Conference Board), 19  
Trustees Report, 134–135  
Turner Center at Martin Methodist, 186  
Turner Center at Martin Methodist College, 13  
Turner Center for Church Leadership, 13, 187

## U

United Methodist Communications, 56  
United Methodist Development Fund for TN/KY, 2,  
14, 30  
United Methodist Foundation for the Memphis and  
Tennessee Conferences, 2, 14, 30, 188  
United Methodist Men, 12, 31, 57, 190  
United Methodist Women, 12, 31–32, 57, 191  
United Theological Seminary, 204

## V

Vanderbilt Divinity School, 205  
Vanderbilt University, Wesley Foundation, , 33, 2  
Volunteers In Mission, 15

## W

Wesley Foundations, 2, 14–15, 31–33  
    Austin Peay State University, 2, 14, 31  
    Belmont University, 2, 14, 32  
    Cumberland University, Student Movement, 32  
    Fisk University, 2, 14, 32



Middle Tennessee State University, 2, 32  
Tennessee State University, 2, 14, 33  
Tennessee Tech University, 2, 15, 33  
Vanderbilt University, , 33, 2  
Wesley Theological Seminary, 206  
When Every Minute Counts (Media Crisis Response  
Plan), 431–435

## Y

Young Adult Ministries, Committee on, 57  
Young Adult Ministries, Council on, 25  
Youth Ministries, Council on, 25, 27–28, 57