

The Benton Church

Policy and Procedures Manual



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FACILITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PROCEDURE: Facility Use Form _____ Elder Board 09/20/2021

This is found in: "[\\TBCSVR01\\TBCCCommon\005 OTHER\Forms\Facility Use Form.pdf](#)"

POLICY: Notice of Video Surveillance _____ Elder Board 08/20/2025

TBC spaces are equipped with security cameras for the purpose of enhancing church safety, maintaining a secure learning environment, and supporting church policies. At present, the cameras record video footage only.

Privacy and Compliance

- All surveillance is conducted in accordance with applicable federal laws (including FERPA) and state privacy regulations.
- Cameras are installed in visible locations and do not monitor areas where a reasonable expectation of privacy exists (e.g., restrooms, counseling offices).
- No footage will be shared publicly. Access is restricted to authorized church personnel and, when necessary, law enforcement.
- Parents and guardians may request access to footage involving their child, subject to privacy protections for other students.
- Authorized personnel is deemed as follows:
 - Access to all live cameras: Security Leader, Police Contact, Fire Contact, Facilities Leader, Lead Pastor, IT Leader, Security Member on duty.
 - Access to live door entry camera: Onsite church staff.
 - Recorded footage: Security Leader and Lead Pastor. Recorded footage will not be shown to a requestor.

Consent and Notification

By entering TBC all acknowledge and accept the presence of video surveillance. The church has notified all stakeholders and obtained necessary consents as required by law.

Additional Notations:

FERPA: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a U.S. federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. It grants parents and eligible students certain rights regarding those records, including access, amendment, and control over disclosure of personally identifiable information.

In Kansas, video recording laws generally follow a one-party consent model for audio, meaning only one person involved in the conversation needs to consent to the recording. However, video recording without audio is generally permissible in public spaces or places where individuals have a limited expectation of privacy. There are specific laws regarding hidden cameras and recording in private spaces, with penalties for violations.

POLICY: Use of Facilities by the Partnership _____ Elder Board 09/20/2023

If there are no specific predetermined costs for the partnership regarding facility use, members of the partnership shall be able to use the facilities free of charge. All statements in the Facility Use Form Rental Agreement shall apply. If, after the event, the facilities are deemed to need cleaning, the church has permission to charge the partner whose name is on the Facility Use Form for custodial care.

POLICY: Use of TBC Property During Inclement Weather _____ Elder Board 07/20/2022

TBC's facilities are not designed, engineered, or built to adhere to standards necessary to be an official storm shelter and are not approved storm shelter locations. No one is authorized to characterize any TBC structure as a storm shelter. This policy also prohibits anyone from making posts to social media or other message platforms inviting partners or public to take refuge within TBC structures. Violating this policy could expose one to personal liability in certain circumstances.

In the event a partner or employee of TBC is at the church property for other purposes, and they observe individuals who seek refuge from inclement weather, those partners or employees may, at their own discretion, invite the visitors in, where it seems safe to do so. However, as previously stated, this is not without risk.

While hospitality is always in fashion at TBC, unfortunately anytime you invite someone unknown to you into the building, you must remain alert to their whereabouts and conduct. Such an invitation should never be extended while you are alone in the building, and you must take responsibility to ask visitors to leave if that seems warranted by their behavior.

FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

POLICY: Accountable Reimbursement _____ Church Board 10/28/2018

The following resolution is hereby adopted by the Church Council of The Benton Church. It will be effective for the calendar year 2018 and all future years unless specifically revoked or superseded.

The church pastor (or other employee[s]) will be reimbursed for ordinary and necessary business expenses incurred in the performance of his or her responsibilities when he/she substantiates the amount, business purpose, date, and place of the expense.

This substantiation must be provided to the chair of the pastor parish relations committee (or church treasurer) within sixty (60) days of incurring the expense. The individual must return to the church any amounts received in excess of the substantiated expenses within one hundred twenty (120) days of receipt.

The church will not report any properly substantiated reimbursement payments as income on any Form W-2.

POLICY: Budget and Budgeted Expenditures _____ Elder Board 10/01/20

Each ministry will have an allotted amount of funds budgeted each fiscal year (Jan-Dec). Expenditures are planned through a budget-based system. Budget requests are submitted annually (currently in August) and are reviewed by the Elder Board prior to final approval at an Annual Partnership meeting (currently in December).

Approved budgeted expenses or invoices are submitted as paid or requested to be paid through the church office by the leader of the ministry team. (Ministry leaders are encouraged to confirm the amount of budget availability with the church office.) Expenses are to be submitted via invoices or receipts no later than one month after (preferably within two weeks) of purchase and are to be indicated with approval by the ministry team leader (although discussions with their Elder Board liaison are encouraged). Receipts and invoices are required for all expenditures.

Finally, any request beyond budget requires approval of the Elder Board prior to funds being spent.

POLICY: Designated Giving _____ Church Board [date not found]

Designated giving has the real effect of limiting both the Finance Committee and the Elder Board from meeting obligations and from determining the best course of action to fund ministry goals. It is The Benton Church's policy to deny designated giving into the General Fund. Offerings made into the General Fund with designated instructions will be offered back to the donor with explanation of this policy. Alternatively, a request can be made to the donor to eliminate the designation.

The Finance Committee may approve certain areas of designation that best fit the vision of the church.

POLICY: Disaster Relief Fund _____ Elder Board 05/18/2022

A "Disaster Relief Fund" is an approved designated giving fund, but it will not be promoted outside of a need for disaster relief, which will only be determined by the Elder Board. At that time, monies may be received into the fund to be used on a case-by-case basis. The Elder Board will determine both who and how to give relief. Attempts will be made to utilize all monies received for each determined crisis.

POLICY: Emergency Fund _____ Elder Board 10/01/2023

The church will maintain an Emergency Fund that equals the estimated amount of three months of the budget for the current year. If, at any time, the church begins utilizing the Emergency Fund to pay for expenditures, all non-

contracted, salaried, or operational requests will need be approved by the Finance Chair, whose responsibility is to determine if funds are available, in relation to other church operations spending. It is also understood that the Elder Board may impose a "spending freeze" on portions or all of the annual budget.

POLICY: Non-Cash Gifts and Stock Donations _____ Elder Board ??/??/??

The Benton Church welcomes non-cash donations as an expression of generosity and support for ministry. To maintain financial clarity and reduce market risk, all stock and market-based securities received by the church shall be liquidated as soon as reasonably possible upon receipt. The proceeds from liquidation will be deposited into the general operating account unless otherwise designated by the donor and approved by church leadership.

This policy applies to, but is not limited to stocks and publicly traded securities, mutual funds, bonds, other marketable or non-cash assets donated to the church

Gifts with restricted use shall be honored only when the restriction is accepted by church leadership prior to liquidation. If a restriction cannot be honored, the church may respectfully decline the donation or request donor release of restrictions.

Processing and Liquidation of Stock & Securities:

1. Upon receipt of stock or other securities, the Office Administrator (or delegated financial officer) will arrange transfer into an approved brokerage account.
2. Assets will be liquidated immediately (no later than reasonably practical).
3. Sale proceeds will be recorded and allocated as follows:
 - o If unrestricted, to the general operating account.
 - o If designated, according to the donor's written designation and accepted restrictions.
4. Consideration may be given to transferring proceeds into interest-bearing accounts in alignment with the *Stewardship of Financial Assets Policy*, subject to approved authorization.

Other Non-Cash Gifts (Property/Material Goods):

Non-cash gifts such as vehicles or equipment will be evaluated based on ministry usefulness. The church may:

- Use the item directly for ministry
- Donate it to another ministry partner
- Liquidate it and use proceeds for ministry
- Decline the gift if maintaining it would create financial or logistical burden

A written receipt will be provided describing the donated item, without stating a valuation (for tax purposes, valuation is the donor's responsibility).

Authorization & Oversight:

Acceptance and liquidation of non-cash gifts shall be approved by at least two of the following: Finance Chair, Office Administrator, Pastor.

All actions shall be documented and retained in the church's financial records.

POLICY: Stewardship of Financial Assets _____ Elder Board 10/01/2023

To ensure faithful stewardship of church funds by authorizing the movement of monies into interest-bearing accounts and increasing the church's financial capacity for ministry, The Benton Church authorizes the transfer of available funds into approved interest-bearing accounts for the purpose of maximizing financial growth and supporting ongoing ministry.

All interest earned from these investments shall be deposited back into their respective accounts. If, for any reason, it is deemed unnecessary to do so by the Elder Board, the interest earned will be transferred into the Futures Fund to support long-term ministry development, facility needs, and strategic initiatives.

The movement of funds into interest-bearing accounts requires the approval of all three of the following: Finance Chair, Office Administrator, and Pastor.

All transfers shall be documented and retained in the church's financial records.

PROCEDURE: Large Contribution Follow-Up _____ Elder Board 09/20/2021

The Benton Church will send personal thank you's to anyone who gives a "generous" gift above their regular giving (\$1,000.00 or more) or any gift over \$500.00 from someone who doesn't regularly give. This will be written by the pastor or someone requested by the pastor. In the event that someone else is writing the thank you, they will not be made aware of the amount of the donation; it will remain private.

Thank You Template:

Thank you for your [specific donation] to The Benton Church. It really [short statement of impact.] Thanks to you, [tell the donor more about the impact, who is being helped, what is being accomplished].

[Insert a story or quote from a person served from your organization. Or, educate for about your cause/project.]

Thanks again for your support!
(Name of person sending letter)

PROCEDURE: Non-Church Sponsored Fundraising _____ Elder Board 02/21/2024

TBC acknowledges the importance of fundraising activities for various causes and organizations. However, the church must prioritize its own mission and activities and protect those present from a sense of obligation to give to causes outside the purview of the church. In light of this, TBC will not provide space for non-sponsored fundraising events, including the use of facilities, equipment, or resources.

In exceptional circumstances, TBC may consider providing space or support for fundraising activities not sponsored by the church. Such requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and require approval from the Elder Board.

POLICY: Recusal from Compensation Discussions _____ Elder Board 11/30/2023

All staff members are required to remove themselves from any discussion or decision-making process that directly involves or pertains to their individual compensation, including salary, bonuses, incentives, raises, promotions, or any related matters.

Implementation:

1. The concerned individual must excuse themselves promptly and avoid any involvement, influence, or contribution to the discussion or decision-making process regarding their compensation.
2. Recusal extends to both formal and informal discussions, meetings, or any communication where the staff member's compensation is a topic of discussion.

LEADERSHIP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

POLICY: Conflict of Interest

Elder Board 08/31/2021

Article I: Purpose

The purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to protect this tax-exempt organization's (Organization) interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the Organization or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

Article II: Definitions

1. Interested Person - Any director, principal officer, or member of a committee with governing board delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person. If a person is an interested person with respect to any entity in the health care system of which the organization is a part, he or she is an interested person with respect to all entities in the health care system.
2. Financial Interest - A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
 - a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Organization has a transaction or arrangement,
 - b. A compensation arrangement with the Organization or with any entity or individual with which the Organization has a transaction or arrangement, or
 - c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Organization is negotiating a transaction or arrangement. Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. Under Article III, Section 2, a person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

Article III: Procedures

1. Duty to Disclose - In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
2. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists - After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the governing board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.
3. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest
 - a. An interested person may make a presentation at the governing board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
 - b. The chairperson of the governing board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
 - c. After exercising due diligence, the governing board or committee shall determine whether the Organization can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.

- d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Organization's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.
4. Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy
 - a. If the governing board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
 - b. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

Article IV: Records of Proceedings

The minutes of the governing board and all committees with board delegated powers shall contain:

1. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the governing board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
2. The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

Article V: Compensation

1. A voting member of the governing board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Organization for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
2. A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Organization for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
3. No voting member of the governing board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Organization, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

Article VI: Annual Statements

Each director, principal officer and member of a committee with governing board delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person:

1. Has received a copy of the conflicts of interest policy,
2. Has read and understands the policy,
3. Has agreed to comply with the policy, and
4. Understands the Organization is charitable and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

Article VII: Periodic Reviews

To ensure the Organization operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

1. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arm's length bargaining.

2. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the Organization's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

Article VIII: Use of Outside Experts

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in Article VII, the Organization may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the governing board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

POLICY: Conflict of Interest for Elders _____ Elder Board 03/11/2022

I. General Statement of Policy.

This policy is applicable to all members of the Board of Elders ("Board") of The Benton Church ("Church"). Members of the Board have a clear fiduciary obligation to the Church in connection with their service in such capacities. At all times, they shall act in a manner consistent with such fiduciary obligations and shall exercise particular care that no detriment to the interests of the Church (or appearance of such detriment) may result from a conflict between the Church's interests and any personal interests which the individual Elder may have.

A conflict of interest can arise whenever an Elder or a member of his family: (1) has an existing or potential interest which impairs or might appear to impair his independent judgment in the discharge of the Elder's responsibilities to the Church, or (2) may receive a material benefit from knowledge of information which is confidential to the Church. The family of an individual includes a person's spouse, parents, siblings, children, and any other persons living in the same household.

It is sometimes difficult to define what might be considered a potential conflict, and persons who are covered by this Policy are encouraged to err on the side of disclosure. However, the persons covered by this policy should consider the following examples of potential conflicts of interest:

1. Official relationships with any suppliers of any goods or services to the Church.
2. Official relationships with any purchasers of any goods or services from the Church.
3. Family relationships with employees of the Church.
4. Any situation where a person covered by this Policy, or his family member, could receive any material economic benefit directly or indirectly on account of a business transaction with the Church.

Procedure for Disclosing and Resolving Potential Conflicts.

If an Elder believes that he may have a conflict of interest with respect to any particular transaction, he shall promptly and fully disclose the potential conflict to the Chairman of the Church. If the Chairman of the Church determines that there is no conflict of interest with respect to a particular transaction involving an Elder, the Chairman of the Church need not notify the Board, but the Chairman of the Church shall keep a record of the decision which shall be available to Board members upon request.

If the Chairman of the Church determines that there is a potential conflict with respect to an Elder, the conflict shall be reported to the full Board, and the affected Elder shall answer any questions about the matter that other Board members may have. If the particular transaction requires a vote of the Board, or of one of its committees, the affected Elder shall be counted for purposes of a quorum, but he shall not vote on the matter, and shall not be present for the discussion or vote on the matter. The minutes shall reflect the fact that the Elder did not vote on the matter and was not present for the discussion or vote on the matter.

In any case in which the potential conflict with respect to a particular transaction involves the Chairman of the Church, the Chairman of the Church shall notify one of the other corporate officers, the conflict shall then be reported to the full Board, and the Chairman of the Church shall answer any questions about the matter that other Board members may have. If the particular transaction requires a vote of the Board, or one of its committees, the Chairman of the Church shall be counted for purposes of a quorum, but he shall not vote on the matter and shall not be present for

the discussion or vote on the matter. The Minutes shall reflect the fact that the Chairman of the Church did not vote on the matter and was not present for the discussion or vote on the matter.

MINISTRY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PROCEDURE: Summer Camp Financial Support for Families _____ Elder Board 02/11/2026

In order to make TBC-sponsored summer camps more accessible for TBC families (partners and attenders), TBC will offer a \$100 discount for each additional child after the first one has signed up. This will be taken care of by having the families contact the church office in order to deal with their reduced payment.

PROCEDURE: Ministry Communication Plan _____ Elder Board 11/19/2025

TBC Elders will continue to meet twice a month. Generally, one of those meetings will focus on policy and other church-related decisions, the other on Bible Study and prayer. Meetings can be expected to last two hours. These are closed meetings, open only to Elders. From time to time, specific individuals may be invited to join for a particular discussion, such as physical facilities, finances, or other matters requiring input from a subject matter expert.

Once per quarter, the Ministry Leadership Team (MLT) will meet in an open venue which may be attended by anyone with interest in TBC. Elders, Deacons, and other Partners charged with specific responsibilities are expected to attend. These meetings will be announced ahead of time by email, bulletin insert, and/or worship service announcement.

The purpose of the MLT meeting is to facilitate communication about ministries and plans in a way that honors the Lord and contributes to the mission of Disciples Making Disciples.

The fourth quarter MLT meeting may, at the discretion of the Elders, be supplanted by the required Partnership Meeting.

Content of MLT meetings:

- The MLT meeting is chaired by the Chair of Elders.
- Each Deacon, and a representative of Elders, shall prepare in advance a brief list of current activities in their area of responsibility. These lists should be in bullet point form, be kept as short as possible, and forwarded to the church office at least one week before the MLT meeting. Merged into a master list, this shall form the agenda for the MLT meeting; it is to be forwarded to Elders and Deacons prior to the meeting.
- At the meeting, the Chair shall call on each Deacon to offer a brief report (5 minutes or less) for the entire area of ministry for which they are part (i.e. LOVE, LEARN, or LIVE). Following each Deacon's report, full group participation is anticipated; discussion is encouraged.
- Anyone attending the meeting is invited to make input. For the sake of time, the Chair may limit discussion on certain topics and/or appoint an ad hoc committee to take up an issue for further study. An Elder or Deacon shall be assigned by the Chair to coordinate with any such committee.
- Minutes shall be kept of each MLT meeting.
- Meetings can be expected to last two hours.

After the MLT meeting, a list of key topics discussed, without detail, shall be published in the church bulletin.

Procedure: Missionary Partnership and Support _____ Elder Board 02/04/2026

[This procedure replaces the Missionary Partnership and Support Policy (02/22/2023)]

Purpose

This procedure establishes a revised approach for The Benton Church's financial support of missions. The purpose is to promote prayerful discernment, faithful stewardship, theological alignment, and flexibility in responding to ministry opportunities. Beginning in 2026, TBC will distribute its annual missions budget exclusively through one-time mission grants rather than ongoing monthly or multi-year commitments.

Scope

This procedure applies to all mission-related financial support distributed by TBC through its annual missions budget, including local, regional, national, and international mission efforts.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for support under this procedure, recipients must meet all of the following criteria:

1. **Organizational Status**

Recipients must be either:

- a) A recognized not-for-profit organization, or
- b) An individual missionary operating under the oversight of a recognized church or not-for-profit organization.

2. **Theological Alignment**

Recipients must be holding beliefs consistent with the doctrinal positions of The Benton Church.

3. **Ministry Focus**

Supported ministries must demonstrate a primary focus on one or more of the following:

- a) Evangelism
- b) Discipleship
- c) Humanitarian aid carried out in a manner consistent with Christian witness

Grant-Based Support Model

1. **One-Time Grants**

All missions funding will be distributed as one-time financial gifts. No ongoing monthly or multi-year funding commitments will be made.

2. **Repeat Consideration**

Recipients of a grant may be considered for future grants in subsequent years. All requests require fresh review and approval and carry no expectation of repeat funding.

3. **No Continuing Obligation**

Approval of a grant does not create a financial obligation or implied commitment for future support by TBC.

Committee Meetings and Grant Decisions

1. **Meeting Schedule**

The Missions Committee will meet at least twice annually to pray, review ministry needs, and determine grant distributions.

2. **Identification of Recipients**

Committee members are encouraged to actively propose missionaries or mission organizations for consideration.

3. **Decision Process**

Grant decisions will be made through prayerful discussion and consensus or voting, in coordination with church leadership as appropriate.

Budget Framework

1. **Annual Distribution**

The Missions Committee will distribute 100% of the approved annual missions budget each calendar year.

2. **Budget Amount**

The Missions Committee will submit an annual budget recommendation to the Elder Board, which will determine the final amount to be included in the proposed annual budget approved by the Partnership.

3. **Allocation Flexibility**

Funds may be distributed among multiple recipients and in varying amounts, provided the full annual budget is allocated.

Transition from Prior Policy

1. **Existing Missionary Support**
Missionaries currently receiving ongoing financial support under the prior policy will continue according to the terms and timeline previously approved.
2. **No New Monthly Commitments**
No new missionaries will be added under the former monthly-support model.
3. **Continued Relationship**
Missionaries aging off support may continue to receive prayer and relational support and may be considered for one-time grants under this procedure.

Oversight and Review

The Missions Committee is responsible for administering this procedure. The Elder Board retains final oversight authority and may amend this procedure as needed to reflect ministry direction and financial capacity.

POLICY: Partner Care Fund Use _____ Elder Board 09/20/2023

When funds are available, the *Partner Care Fund* may be used to assist partners when they find themselves in short-term financial difficulty. As the Elder Board becomes aware of serious short-term financial needs among the partnership, funds may be extended. The partner(s) who receive a financial gift will be informed that repayment is not required but encouraged so the ministry is able to help others in need. While gifts are solely at the discretion of the Elders, the intent of the gift is to care for the physical and spiritual needs of the recipient and intended to lift the recipient past the temporary need. Thus, repetitive gifts are discouraged, and repeat requests are likely to be denied.

PROCEDURE: Partnership General Activities _____ Elder Board 03/01/2022

TBC will allow ages 12 and up to become partners but we will maintain the formal relationship of those 14 and older.

This means that students ages 12 and 13 are able to attend partnership classes.

TBC will annually review the partnership list to see who is still involved. Anyone who is not involved or deemed questionable will send to Elder Board to a final decision.

After a person attends the Partnership classes and signs a covenant card, the Partnership Card be documented, signed by the pastor, and returned to the signatory as a reminder of their commitment.

POLICY: Protection of Children, Youth, and Adults from Vulnerable Populations _____ Elder Board 11/14/2017

Introduction

"Let the children come to me, and do not stop them: for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs" (Matthew 19:14, NRSV). Scripture and our United Methodist tradition inform us in our belief that God values all of human life - perhaps children most of all.

Our Commitment

Therefore, it shall be the policy and covenant of The Benton Church to do everything in our power to prevent physical, emotional or sexual abuse against children, youth, and adults from vulnerable populations involved in any ministry sponsored by our local church. Further, we are called to minister to those persons who are experiencing abuse and to those who have been victims of abuse in the past. To that end, we covenant to be aware of our legal responsibilities and to comply with those responsibilities and go beyond those responsibilities when necessary to act justly in the best interest of those who have been abused or those who are most vulnerable to abuse.

The Benton Church will participate in orientations and training seminars for clergy and others in a role of leadership with children, youth, and adults from vulnerable populations through the Safe Gatherings program, which will help to screen clergy and others in a role of leadership. Each church will be responsible to report instances of abuse as stated in Reporting Section.

The guidelines of the Safe Gatherings program and the procedures set forth the status of certification for persons within The Benton Church. Persons thus certified are entrusted with the title "Certified Worker with Children, Youth, and Adults from Vulnerable Populations."

Scope

This policy and its provisions shall apply to all staff persons, volunteer or paid, lay or clergy, who have any direct contact with children and/or youth and/or adults from vulnerable populations in any activities or events sponsored by The Benton Church.

Definitions

1. Physical Abuse: Any act of omission or an act that endangers a person's physical or mental health. This definition includes any non-accidental physical injury caused by a caretaker. Physical abuse may result from punishment that is overly punitive or inappropriate to the individual's age or condition. In addition, physical abuse may result from purposeful acts that pose serious danger to the physical health of a child, youth, or adults from vulnerable populations.
2. Direct Contact: with children, youth or adults from vulnerable populations is defined as the care, supervision, guidance, transportation or control of such persons or routine interaction with children, youth, or adults from vulnerable populations.
3. Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse means unwanted physical conduct of a sexual nature, sexual contact or sexualized behavior and may include, by example, touching, fondling, other physical contact and sexual relations.
4. Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment is 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 as 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.
5. Sexual Misconduct: Sexual misconduct will be treated as a chargeable offense.
6. Persons in a ministerial role of leadership with children, youth, and adults from vulnerable populations: shall include all paid and unpaid staff, whether lay or clergy, who have a direct or indirect contact with same who participate in any activities or events sponsored by The Benton Church.

Screening and Training for Volunteers or Staff

The Benton Church utilizes the "Safe Gatherings" program for all individuals who work with children, youth, and adults from vulnerable populations. No such worker individual shall have any direct contact with children, youth, or adults from vulnerable populations until they have completed this training program.

1. Prior to employment or acceptance as a volunteer or paid staff person, the event coordinator or administrator in charge of an event or program shall direct each prospective worker to complete the Safe Gatherings program. By registering for Safe Gatherings, the applicant will The Benton Church and Safe Gatherings permission to contact references and perform the necessary investigation to complete the review of the application.
2. Upon receipt of the application, a screening check with appropriate agencies. All persons applying for Certification or Recertification must register for online training through Safe Gatherings and pay the required fee toward the cost of background checks.
3. The Safe Gatherings program will facilitate reference requests from all applicants, who must have one clergy and one lay person as references. The clergy reference must be an Elder Board member if the applicant is a professional minister.

4. If any of the completed forms or reports raises questions about the fitness of the applicant, Safe Gatherings should disapprove the application and notify the applicant. The Benton Church reserves the right to turn away any persons for volunteer or paid service.
5. If the applicant, clergy or lay, volunteer or paid, is found to have been involved in any activity in which the applicant abused or exploited children, youth, or adults from vulnerable populations, the applicant will not be hired/approved. Any conviction of a crime against children, youth or adults from vulnerable populations shall disqualify any applicant.
6. Results of screenings shall be kept confidential within the limits of the law.
7. No person shall, after the term of certification concludes, have primary responsibility for working with children, youth, or adults from vulnerable populations until they have completed this training program, except for persons already holding valid certification.

Supervision

Whenever possible, a team approach to ministry with children, youth, and adults from vulnerable populations is most appropriate. Ordinarily there will be two workers present during each event. Workers are to be encouraged to warn each other when questionable behavior is displayed.

At the completion of the event or program, the administrator or supervisor in charge shall file a report with a count of persons in attendance and a comment that there were or were not any reportable incidents. This document will be retained on file in the church office.

Reporting of Incidents

Kansas: Kansas Statutes Annotated 38-2223 lists those who are mandated reporters in the State of Kansas. If you do not know whether you are in the mandated reporter category, go to the Kansas DCF (Department for Children and Families) website, www.dcf.ks.gov to find out. Certification does not automatically make you a mandatory reporter. All clergy serving United Methodist churches in Kansas will be mandated to report incidences of child abuse.

Reporting Child Abuse - Anyone has the right to report suspected abuse directly to the State of Kansas at 800-722-5330. When the DCF is not open for business, suspected abuse may be reported to a law enforcement agency. Under Kansas law, anyone who, without malice, participates in the making of a report of abuse is immune from civil liability. The Guide to Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect in Kansas is an excellent resource and is found on the DCF website, www.dcf.ks.gov. ChildLine and Abuse Registry Intake Unit, Call 800-932-0313 (TTD: 866-872-1677)

Failure to report is a misdemeanor. Anyone making a report in good faith is immune from any civil or criminal liability.

Implementation

Management of all provisions of this Policy is the sole responsibility of The Benton Church. In carrying out the duties and responsibilities of this policy, The Benton Church may utilize and rely on certain policies, procedures, and/or training courses recommended or endorsed by Safe Gatherings. The Benton Church, in relying upon any such assistance, acknowledges that Safe Gatherings provides the assistance for informational purposes only and does not assume any responsibility for the actions of The Benton Church with respect to the implementation and/or enforcement of this policy.

PROCEDURE: TBC's Political Involvement _____ Elder Board 06/22/2022

Should TBC display voting signs on its property? Referring to our Bylaws, Art. I, Sec. 5, Par. C: TBC's role should be spreading the gospel and creating disciples of Jesus Christ. Political signs don't have that as their purpose and could create unnecessary barriers for new people attending.

Would there ever be a time where TBC would become political? Likely, yes. An example would be if and when the government started restricting or compelling speech or actions of churches. At this point, our concern would go before the Elders and they would develop a recommendation to present to the Partnership for approval. As always,

the Partnership is able to call a special meeting without the approval of the Elder Board. This process is explained in TBC's Bylaws, Art. III, Sec. 3.

PROCEDURE: Safety Working with Children and Youth _____ Elder Board 06/22/2022

Ministry Expectations

A youth/children's ministry worker's main goal is to be a model. Jesus said, "*Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven*" (Matthew 5:16). Leaders influence young people, which is a high calling. James 3:1 states, "Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly." Anyone working with young people in any capacity is teaching them. A leader's purpose is to model Jesus Christ through the following:

- Guide young people in discovering an exciting relationship with Jesus Christ through His redemptive plan found in the Bible.
- Attend and support church worship services and programs. Participate in *Family Pastor* child meetings and training programs when possible and affordable.
- Assist the *Family Pastor* in coordinating with other programs regarding space, equipment, and materials. Follow up with visitors when appropriate and update the *Family Pastor* on any prayer concerns or needs.
- Maintain a personal relationship with God through regular devotional times. Strive to live a life "above reproach," setting a high moral and spiritual standard for students.
- Go beyond the call of duty – pray for your class weekly, visit or contact absentees and visitors when possible, and serve with joy and intentionality. Be a friend and encouragement to young people and other workers. Serve young people as if serving Jesus Himself.

Volunteer Requirements

- Volunteers working with children/youth must:
 - o Have attended TBC for at least three months before serving (except hired staff members).
 - o Be interviewed by a TBC leadership member.
 - o Have their references checked through *SafeGatherings* and approved by the Lead Pastor.
 - o Undergo a *SafeGatherings* background check.

Two-Adult Rule

- At all times during children's or youth ministry programming, a child or youth should never be left alone with an adult, nor should an adult be alone with a child or youth.
- The goal of The Benton Church is to always maintain having a minimum of two unrelated adults (over 18) to supervise children and youth.
- We recognize that rare and unavoidable circumstances may arise where two unrelated adults are not immediately available. In such cases, the following safeguards will be implemented :
 1. Leadership at the service or event must be notified.
 2. The group of children or youth must be in front of a security camera.
 3. There must be at least two children or youth present.

Driving Procedure

- Volunteers serving in TBC children's and youth ministries should never transport a child or youth without another adult in the car (other than their own child or youth).
- Exceptions to the above Procedure will be: 1) parental permission was obtained beforehand, 2) in unforeseen circumstances, the single adult driving a student will keep an adult on the phone for the duration of the drive (recommended to call the parent, a TBC staff member, or a TBC elder.)

- All drivers must have a valid driver's license and, if using their own vehicle, current automobile insurance as required by state law.
- Individuals who operate personal vehicles for church-sponsored activities or events acknowledge and understand that their personal automobile insurance shall serve as the primary coverage in the event of an accident or incident. The Benton Church's insurance policy does not provide coverage for personal vehicles. Accordingly, the driver and the driver's personal insurance carrier shall be responsible for any liability, damages, or claims arising from such use.
- All drivers must be approved by church leadership prior to transporting children or youth and may be subject to a driving record review.

Physical Touch Guidelines

- Physical contact with children or youth should be appropriate and handled with care.
- While physical affirmation or reinforcement may be necessary, volunteers should consider the child's or youth's needs and desires.
- Appropriate hugging and touching for care are allowed but should not be excessive.
- It is preferred that children or youth initiate physical contact. Volunteers must ask for consent before initiating physical touch for care purposes. If a child or youth says no, volunteers must respect their wishes.
- Physical touch should occur in the presence of other adults in an open setting.
- Extra caution should be taken when interacting with children or youth of the opposite sex above kindergarten age.
- Tickling and rough play are strictly prohibited.

Youth Volunteers

- Youth volunteers assisting with children's or youth programs must:
 - o Be at least 12 years old.
 - o Be at least three years older than the children or youth in the program with which they are volunteering.

Health & Safety Procedures

- Children or youth exhibiting symptoms such as fever, diarrhea, vomiting, or contagious infections should not be dropped off.
- TBC will provide volunteers with annual training in emergency procedures, including building evacuation, emergency contacts, and first aid kit locations.
- TBC will strive to accommodate children or youth with special needs in inclusive environments. If a child's or youth's needs cannot be met despite all reasonable efforts, alternative arrangements will be discussed with parents.

Medication Procedure

- Volunteers will not administer medications (prescription or non-prescription) without receiving parental consent and keeping a recorded log of medications received and administered.
- Exceptions may be made for life-threatening conditions.

Behavior Management

- Effective leaders model respect and provide structured, age-appropriate activities to foster a positive learning environment.
- Behavioral management techniques include:
 1. REMIND: Address the behavior with a verbal reminder.
 2. RELOCATE: If the behavior continues, consider moving the child or youth to a new situation or taking them out of the class for a more direct reminder then return them to the classroom.
 3. REMOVE: If the behavior persists, parents will be contacted. In severe cases (e.g., violent behavior), parents may be called immediately.

Volunteer-to-Child/Youth Ratios

- Birth–12 months: 1:3
- 1–3 years: 1:4
- 3–5 years: 1:6
- Grade School: 1:10
- If ratios exceed limits, additional children or youth must stay with parents, and leadership must be notified.

Restroom & Diaper-Changing Procedure

- TBC volunteers will always exercise caution when assisting children or youth in the restroom. Under no circumstances should a volunteer ever be alone in a bathroom with a child or youth. Volunteers should ensure that another approved adult is present and able to observe the interaction at all times.
- When assisting young children or youth, a “foot in the door” Procedure should be used, meaning that the volunteer remains outside the restroom with the door propped open while providing verbal guidance as needed. If a child or youth requires hands-on assistance (e.g., help with clothing, reaching facilities, or hygiene), another adult must be present and aware of the situation.
- If at any time a volunteer feels unable to safely assist a child or youth in using the restroom, the child’s or youth’s parent or guardian will be contacted to provide assistance. Volunteers should always prioritize the child’s or youth’s dignity and privacy while ensuring their safety and maintaining accountability.
- Only approved volunteers may change diapers, in designated areas, with parental consent.

Accidental Injuries

- Minor injuries will be treated with basic first aid.
- Incident reports must be filed for any accident requiring more than basic first aid.
- Serious injuries require immediate parental notification and, if needed, emergency medical assistance.
- When a parent has been informed of an accident, an incident report must be completed, reviewed by church leadership, and a copy is to be submitted to the church office.

Emergency Procedures

- Volunteers must handle bodily fluids with caution and dispose of them properly.
- Annual parental consent forms should be collected for medical emergencies.
- In case of a serious medical emergency, volunteers must follow specific protocols to ensure child or youth safety.
- Incident reports must be filed for any emergency.

Off-Site Event Procedures

- All off-site events require approval, including supervision, travel arrangements, and parental consent forms. These provided forms will include emergency contacts, medical authorizations, and activity details.

Training Requirements

- Volunteers must complete *SafeGatherings* certification and sign an acknowledgment form.
- Annual training sessions are mandatory.

Security During Weekly Programming and/or On-site Events

- TBC will provide approved security personnel monitoring the cameras located throughout the buildings as an added layer of protection.

Procedure Review & Revisions

- This Procedure will be reviewed every three years or earlier if deemed necessary by leadership.
- The next scheduled review will be by Spring 2029

On-site Check-In/Check-Out Procedures

- Any child or youth at a TBC ministry or event where the parent is not present in the room will be checked in by our official check-in system. This provides volunteers with all necessary contact information in case of emergency.
- All children and students will be asked to keep their tag on during the entirety of the ministry or event.

Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Abuse

Any volunteer or staff member who suspects abuse or neglect of a child or youth must immediately report their concerns to church leadership. In accordance with Kansas law, individuals who are mandated reporters must also report directly to the appropriate state authorities. Volunteers should not attempt to investigate allegations but must report concerns promptly and accurately.

Acknowledgement Requirement

The Benton Church will ensure that the safety procedures are shared with people at the beginning of their time as a volunteer and at the beginning of each school year.

PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PROCEDURE: Job Application Form _____ Elder Board 09/20/2021

This is found in: "[\\TBCSVR01\\TBCCCommon\005 OTHER\Elders\Personnel\HR - Job Application.pdf](#)"

POLICY: Staff Pension _____ Elder Board 10/01/2021

The Benton Church offers paid staff members who are at least 21 years of age and meet specified eligibility requirements the opportunity to participate in a pension plan that will help them plan for their future financial needs. The plan is a non-matching 403(b)9 program offered through GuideStone.

Pastor

Beginning the first day of employment, The Benton Church will make an employer contribution of 15.2% of the Pastor's salary whether the pastor contributes or not. Contributions made by The Benton Church are fully vested upon deposit into the employee's account.

The Pastor may elect to also personally participate in the plan beginning the first day of the next calendar month after the date of hire.

Office Administrator

The employee may elect to participate in the plan beginning the first day of the next calendar month after the date of hire. After 12 months of employment, The Benton Church will begin contributing a minimum of 3% of the employee's wages to the plan whether the employee contributes or not. Contributions made by The Benton Church are fully vested upon deposit into the employee's account.

Other W-2 Employees

The Benton Church will offer to any employee who receives a W-2 the opportunity to contribute to the GuideStone pension plan. The Benton Church will not make an employer contribution.