

CHILD, YOUTH & VULNERABLE ADULT SAFETY POLICY BETHANY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH (AUSTIN, TX)

Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church

“Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.” (Mark 9:37 NRSV)

“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)

Call
In response to God’s call to care for the vulnerable, Bethany United Methodist Church is committed to the well-being of every person entrusted to its care. This commitment is in harmony with the Book of Resolutions (§162 Social Principles) and the baptismal covenant (United Methodist Hymnal).

Purpose
As part of the Rio Texas Conference, Bethany United Methodist Church is determined to provide an environment in which Participants (as defined herein) are safe from Neglect or Abuse. The scope of this policy and its provisions shall apply to all staff, volunteers, clergy, or lay persons of Bethany United Methodist Church who have direct or indirect¹ contact with Participants (Children, Youth, or Vulnerable Adults). This policy sets forth minimum mandatory requirements for screening and training of clergy, lay, staff, or volunteers. Implementation of mandatory ministry procedures and accountability action is required for all ministry leaders² of Bethany United Methodist Church as part of the Rio Texas Conference.³

Commitment
In accordance with the Rio Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church Policy on Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Safety, June 2018, Bethany United Methodist Church has adopted the following set of Safety Procedures. Copies of both documents can be obtained through the Bethany United Methodist Church office.

This safety policy meets or exceeds the requirements of the Rio Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church Policy on Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Safety, June 2018 and has been reviewed and approved by the Administrative Board and Trustees of Bethany United Methodist Church. Any future revisions shall as a minimum meet or exceed the requirements of the Rio Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church Policy on Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Safety, June 2018, and be reviewed and approved by the Administrative Board and Trustees of Bethany United Methodist Church before implementation.

Bethany United Methodist Church is fortunate to have persons with exceptional talent for teaching and supporting the spiritual nurture of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults. We wish to encourage them to use their spiritual gifts. These safety procedures are for the well-being of our children, youth, and vulnerable adults participating in the ministries of Bethany United Methodist Church. We recognize that safety is an issue that involves the whole church family, not just those who work directly in ministry with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Therefore, we are asking all of our church family to be aware of our safety policy and help us provide a safe environment for ministry.

¹ Indirect contact pertains to anyone who may not be acting in a supervisory role over children, youth, or vulnerable adults but would have contact with them indirectly through access to their personal information (registration forms, databases, etc) or interaction with them through Bethany core ministry-related communication via phone, text, social media, etc.

² Ministry leaders are adult leaders, including any paid employee, volunteer, clergy, or lay person in Bethany United Methodist Church who has the responsibility for the care and Supervision of a Participant at an event. Adult Leaders shall no longer be in High School. For further clarification see definition of Adult leader on page 2.B.

³ The Rio Texas Conference Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Safety Policy and TRUSTed con Confianza certification is a reflection of the Rio Texas Conference’s and the United Methodist Church’s dedication to the work of keeping all persons safe.

Definitions

- A. **Abuse:** is any deliberate act that inflicts bodily or emotional harm to a Participant.
Abuse includes: (a) the infliction of physical or emotional injury by other than accidental means; (b) the creation of a risk, or allowing the creation of risk, to a Participant by other than accidental means; (c) committing or allowing to be committed an act of Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation, or prostitution upon the Participant.⁴
- B. **Adult Leader:** is any person including any paid employee, volunteer, clergy, or lay person in the conference, district, or local church who has the responsibility for the care and Supervision of a Participant at an event. Adult Leaders shall no longer be in High School. Adult leaders must be certified for their work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.⁵
- C. **Applicant:** is any person 18 years of age or older seeking to become an Adult Leader in a local church or for a district or conference event.
- D. **Assistant Leader:** is any person 16 years of age or older who has been through the application and safety certification process⁶, but does not qualify for a background check. These are still considered to be Participants and cannot fill the role of a mandatory Adult Leader.
- E. **Day Ministry Event:** is an event, activity, or occasion sponsored by Bethany United Methodist Church that involves a gathering and care of Participants during the hours of 7:00am-10:00pm and does not occur for more than four hours per day in duration of four or more consecutive days.
- F. **Exploitation:** is obtaining or using another person's income, assets, or possessions with the intent to deprive the person of those resources.
- G. **Neglect:** is failure to provide nutrition, medical, surgical, or any other care necessary for the well-being of the Participants.⁷
- H. **Overnight/Extended Hour Ministry Event:** is an event, activity, or occasion sponsored by Bethany United Methodist Church that involves a gathering and care of Participants for more than four hours per day in duration of four consecutive days or involves an overnight stay.
- I. **Participant:** is a Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult that is registered, enrolled, attending, or otherwise participating in an event or activity sponsored by the annual conference, a district, or a local church in the Rio Texas Conference.
1. **Child:** is any person 11 years of age or younger.
 2. **Youth:** is a person 12-17 years of age.⁸
 3. **Vulnerable Adult:** persons 18 years of age or older with physical, mental, and/or developmental disabilities.⁹
- J. **Prostitution:** to engage in, to offer to engage, or to force a Participant to engage in sexual contact by either soliciting or receiving a fee or other benefit.
- K. **Rule of Three:** The presence of two unrelated Adult Leaders at all ministry events involving Participants. Any engagement with a Participant requires the presence of two unrelated Adult Leaders.
- L. **Sexual Abuse:** is any sexual contact, sexually explicit language, gestures, or images directed to a Participant.
- M. **Sexual Exploitation:** is any deliberate act that allows or encourages a Participant to engage in an act of obscene or pornographic photography, filming, or depiction of a Participant as prohibited under Texas law.

⁴ Suspected abuse as defined by the state of Texas as having cause to believe that a vulnerable person's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect.

⁵ As defined by the TRUSTed con Confianza certification, which is explained in the section of this document entitled "Implementation: Screening, Training, And Accountability," parts A and B.

⁶ As defined by the TRUSTed con Confianza certification.

⁷ This definition pertains to reporting abuse.

⁸ Persons who are 18 and still in high school are considered as youth according to this policy of the Rio Texas Conference

⁹ According to the Texas department of family and protective services, "Person with a disability" means a person with a mental, physical, or intellectual or developmental disability that substantially impairs the person's ability to provide adequately for his/her own care or protection. A "person with a disability" may be an adult or a minor.

- N. **Supervision:** is the leadership role of a person who is in charge of a group of Participants, giving direction, setting boundaries, disciplining appropriately, maintaining safety and being the leader in all situations.
- O. **Safety Policy Administrator:** The person at Bethany United Methodist Church charged with the maintenance, implementation, and enforcement of the Bethany United Methodist Church Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Safety Policy. The Safety Policy Administrator may put together a team to help with this task, but he/she retains overall responsibility. The Safety Policy Administrator reports directly to the Lead Pastor. As of the writing of this policy, the Safety Policy Administrator is the church staff person with the job title "Executive Administrator."
- P. **Church staff:** anyone employed by Bethany United Methodist Church on a full-time or part-time basis.
- Q. **Caregiver:** anyone 18 years of age or older who is responsible for the direct care of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult (ex - a parent, legal guardian, group home worker, etc).

Safe Ministry Mandates

In accordance with the Rio Texas Conference Safety Policy, Bethany United Methodist Church commits to provide adequate Supervision from Adult Leaders.

- A. All ministry events with Participants shall follow the Rule of Three with a minimum of one Adult Leader for every eight Participants.¹⁰
- B. Facilities requirements:
 - 1. Each classroom utilized for activities with children, youth and/or vulnerable adults shall have a door with a window in it, or a half door (i.e. Dutch door) that remains open.
 - 2. Offices for pastors and church staff will also have windows in the doors.
- C. Any one-to-one mentoring or consulting with children, youth or vulnerable adults shall be conducted in sight of another Adult Leader.
- D. Adult Leaders and Assistant Leaders working with children and youth must be at least five years older than the oldest Participants with whom they supervise.
- E. Assistant Leaders must work under the Supervision of two Adult Leaders.
- F. Restroom Assistance and Diaper Changing
 - 1. An Adult Leader may provide restroom assistance (when requested) to a young child, vulnerable adult, or person with special needs, only with the restroom door open and within sight of another Adult Leader. Assistant Leaders in the nursery are subject to the same requirements.
 - 2. Changing diapers should be done in designated changing areas within nursery classrooms within sight of another Adult Leader. Assistant Leaders in the nursery are subject to the same requirements.
- G. Overnight Ministry Events
 - 1. Co-ed Overnight Ministry Events require co-ed Adult Leaders.¹¹
 - 2. Sleeping accommodations shall include sleeping distance of approximately three feet (adequate walking space) between Adult Leaders, Assistant Leaders, and Participants.¹²
 - 3. Every Participant shall have a completed medical release and parental/legal guardian permission form before they will be permitted to participate at any Overnight Ministry Event.¹³
- H. Travel
 - 1. Only Adult Leaders will be permitted to drive Participants to ministry events.¹⁴
 - 2. Drivers must:

¹⁰ Following these guidelines, ministry with up to 16 participants requires 2 certified adults, 17-24 participants requires 3 certified adults, 25-32 requires 4 certified adults, etc.

¹¹ When a ministry event requires overnight accommodations, the rule of three must be followed when an Adult is sharing sleeping space with a vulnerable person. One adult must not share a room with vulnerable persons; there must be two unrelated adults. There should be separate sleeping areas for males and females.

¹² The 3ft requirement applies to the horizontal space between persons in a sleeping space. Persons should have separate sleeping spaces with sufficient/adequate walkway between each bed/mattress/sleeping bag.

¹³ An example of the Overnight Ministry Event/Transportation Permission Form is included as an appendix to this policy.

¹⁴ Travel requirements apply to drivers organized by the local church, district, or conference event staff and/or when a ministry event is utilizing vehicles owned and insured by the local church, district, or conference.

- a. be 25 years of age or older
 - b. have a valid driver's license
 - c. have proof of insurance at the state's minimum limits
 - d. not be otherwise disqualified from driving (i.e., under medication, impaired, etc.).
 - e. submit to a background check of driving records prior to driving children, youth, or vulnerable adults to an event sponsored by Bethany United Methodist Church.
2. Vehicle and driving requirements:
- a. Anyone who drives a vehicle, rented or privately-owned, to transport minors to and from Church-sponsored activities must:
 - i. submit the current date of their vehicle's registration sticker to the Church Staff member overseeing the event for which they are driving and represent to the staff that their vehicle is safe and in good driving condition.
 - ii. comply with all the Church transportation policies.¹⁵
 - b. All drivers will obey all traffic laws.
 - c. All drivers must wear seatbelts and require passengers to wear seatbelts at all times.
 - d. Use of a cellular phone while operating a motor vehicle for the Church is prohibited. The driver of the vehicle must pull safely to the side of the road to use the cellular phone. Texting while driving is strictly prohibited.
 - e. Drivers of Bethany-owned vehicles (e.g. - buses) must comply with all Church transportation policies and receive training for the particular Bethany-owned vehicle they will be driving.
 - f. Drivers of vehicles shall stop approximately every 3 hours for a break and/or to switch drivers.
 - g. When multiple vehicles are required for transportation for an event, vehicles should travel in pairs for safety purposes.
3. Written permission from a parent/legal guardian is required for events requiring transportation to and from the event location.¹⁶
- I. Phone, video, and online communication:
The internet, portable devices, and digital technology offer important tools for fruitful ministry. These electronic tools also present some inherent risks when not used with care. In order to maintain the safety of children, youth, and vulnerable adults Adult Leaders must:¹⁷
1. Notify parents/legal guardians¹⁸ before requesting access, friending, texting, contacting a Participant via social media, or using any other form of online phone/video communication.¹⁹
 2. Using the Rule of Three, all group or social media communications must include two Adult Leaders who serve as administrators/moderators. All groups must be closed, private, and shall require the site administrator's approval to join.²⁰

¹⁵ Refer to the BUMC Policy for Use of Passenger Vans and Buses. A copy of this policy is included as an appendix to this policy.

¹⁶ An example of the Overnight Ministry Event/Transportation Permission Form is included as an appendix to this policy. This is an interactive form and can be accessed in the church office. It is not necessary that a new Permission Form is signed for each trip; a Permission Form signed by the parent/legal guardian indicating permission for overnight events and transportation is sufficient until another Permission Form is due (annually).

¹⁷ Please refer to the Social Media and Digital Communication best practice resource at www.riotexas.org/saferesources for additional guidelines.

¹⁸ An example of the Social Media/Communication Release Form is included as an appendix to this policy. This is an interactive form and can be accessed in the church office.

¹⁹ It is not necessary that a parent be contacted each time a Participant is communicated with; a release form signed by the parent/legal guardian indicating the type of communication their Participant can receive is sufficient for permission, until such time that permission is changed or revoked.

²⁰ Group or social media requirements refer to any communication group set-up to communicate with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

3. Have written permission from a parent/legal guardian²¹ before photographing Participants for use on internet or in print media. Even with permission, photos that include identifying information (e.g. – name tags) shall not be used or shall be modified to remove identifying information.²²
4. Communicate appropriately with Participants via phone, text message, social media and other digital communication. Inappropriate communication may involve, but is not limited to, discussions of a sexual nature, sexting, sharing inappropriate pictures, manipulation, harassment, intimidation, or grooming behavior. Prolonged private discussions between an Adult Leader and a child, youth, or vulnerable adult are also inappropriate, much like it is inappropriate for a face to face discussion of this type to take place with no additional supervision. Conversations through social media should always be conducted by means that can be recoverable (e.g. – email, text message, voicemail, social media messaging).

Implementation: Screening, Training, And Accountability

Bethany United Methodist Church is committed to the safety of all children, youth, and vulnerable adults and will hold all church staff and volunteers accountable for their participation in the screening and training processes outlined below.

A. Screening²³

1. Adult Leaders and Assistant Leaders shall submit an application for ministry along with three (work, volunteer, or ministry) references.
2. Applicants should be active in the local church/ministry for approximately six months prior to the event or provide additional references affirming their positive leadership with Participants in another ministry setting. In the case of new staff hires, references deemed adequate by the hiring supervisor will replace the six- month waiting period. In the case of Adult Ministry Leaders or Assistant Leaders, previous ministry experience within the Rio Texas Conference may be transferred in lieu of the six-month waiting period pending approval of Rio Texas Conference office.
3. References shall be checked by conference or conference designee.
4. Adult Leaders shall:
 - a. Submit a signed authorization form for a criminal background screening to be completed by the Rio Texas Conference office every two years. This will include a signed statement that they are not aware of any allegations that would prevent them from working with Participants.²⁴
 - b. If results of the screening raise questions about fitness of the Applicant, the Rio Texas Conference office shall disapprove the application and notify the event leader and/or local church. Results of criminal background screenings shall be kept confidential. Applicants can request that the conference office share the results of their criminal background screening with another district or local church in the Rio Texas Conference via a signed request authorization form.

B. Training and Certification²⁵

²¹ An example of the Photo/Video Release Form is included as an appendix to this policy. This is an interactive form and can be accessed in the church office.

²² It is not necessary to receive a new photo/video release form for each event; a release form signed by the parent/legal guardian indicating permission to take and utilize photos/videos is sufficient for permission, until such time that permission is changed or revoked.

²³ The application and screening process is provided through a vendor selected by the Rio Texas Conference office for use by all churches in the conference.

²⁴ Background checks must include a search of the national criminal database, state and national sex registries, and a seven-year county of residence.

²⁵ TRUSTed con Confianza Certification ensures all persons have completed the following requirements.

All Adult Leaders and Assistant Leaders must be certified²⁶ for their work at conference, district, and local church events. Certification²⁷ includes:

1. Adult Leaders and Assistant Leaders shall review and sign Bethany United Methodist Church Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Safety Policy annually, submitting the signature page to the Church Staff member overseeing their primary area of ministry.²⁸
2. Completion of Abuse prevention training every year. Such training shall be provided by church staff in each ministry area and will be appropriate to the vulnerable population with which volunteers are serving (i.e. – children, special needs, etc).
3. Safety Certification²⁹ every two years. Certification³⁰ will include the following modules:
 - a. Overview of Rio Texas Conference policy.
 - b. Abuse prevention
 - c. Creating safe spaces, best practices for ministry, sexual ethics and appropriate leader behavior.
 - d. Overnight/extended hour ministry training.
 - e. The certification process will be designed by the Rio Texas Conference and will be offered by trained persons in every district.³¹

C. Accountability

1. The Safety Policy Administrator is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date list of qualified Adult Leaders showing the latest date of their qualification or recertification.
2. The Safety Policy Administrator will work with church staff to ensure that each Adult Leader reviews the provisions of this Safety Policy at least annually and is provided with proper training.
 - a. Church staff in each ministry area are responsible for communicating with their volunteer leaders about the certification process and training them on Bethany-specific policies and procedures in their ministry area.
 - b. The Safety Policy Administrator will hold church staff accountable to the above.
3. The Safety Policy Administrator is responsible for ensuring an annual review of the Safety Policy and its compliance with the current Rio Texas Conference policy (following Annual Conference each year), making revisions as needed. All revisions are subject to the approval of the Administrative Board and Trustees of Bethany United Methodist Church.
4. The Safety Policy Administrator is responsible for submitting the safety policy and a report on how Bethany United Methodist Church is in compliance with its policy annually to the District Superintendent at the charge or church conference.
5. The Safety Policy Administrator shall participate in the reporting of all allegations of abuse.

REPORTING ABUSE

- A. Texas is a mandatory reporting state. All reports of suspected Abuse³² should be documented in writing and brought immediately to the attention of the persons designated by the church or sponsored event to receive such information. Reports of Abuse shall be made within 48 hours of suspicion. Adult Leaders shall report all abuse by anyone- No Abuse should be considered trivial and not reported. Incidents that involve Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation or Sexual Exploitation of Participants mandate reporting through the Texas Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400 or www.txabusehotline.org.
- B. Any Adult Leader or Assistant Leader accused of Abuse shall be immediately relieved of duties related to any conference, district, or local church event.³³

²⁶ as provided by the Rio Texas Conference TRUSTed con Confianza certification process.

²⁷ as provided by the Rio Texas Conference TRUSTed con Confianza certification process.

²⁸ The signature page is located on p. 8 of this policy.

²⁹ TRUSTed con Confianza

³⁰ TRUSTed con Confianza

³¹ TRUSTed con Confianza Certification ensures all persons have completed the above requirements.

³² suspected abuse as defined by the Texas Department of Family and Protective services: Noted above in footnote

³³ any individual accused of abuse shall be relieved of any duties involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults pending an appropriate investigation.

- C. In the case of Abuse allegations³⁴, the Safety Policy Administrator and/or Lead Pastor shall be notified immediately.
1. Volunteers who become aware of any suspected abuse or molestation will immediately report (using the BUMC Suspected Abuse Reporting Form)³⁵ the incident or suspicions to the appropriate Church Staff/Ministry Director or Clergy. Church Staff will work with volunteers on officially reporting suspected abuse.
 2. Church Staff who become aware of any suspected abuse or molestation will immediately report (using the BUMC Suspected Abuse Reporting Form)³⁶ the incident or suspicions to the Ministry Director or Clergy overseeing their Ministry Area. Ministry Directors and Clergy are responsible for notifying the Safety Policy Administrator and/or Lead Pastor. Church staff are also responsible for ensuring that suspected abuse is officially reported within 48 hours through the Texas Abuse Hotline.
 3. Parents or legal guardians should be notified in appropriate circumstances.
- D. It shall be the goal to provide supportive care to both the victim and the accused and to restore such persons to wholeness. The church should provide a supportive atmosphere to all those who are affected, offering both objectivity and empathy as it seeks to create a climate in which healing can take place. Supportive care can include the procedures of the criminal justice system, provisions of the current Book of Discipline, appropriate counseling referrals and continued pastoral visitation.
- E. Statement to the Media:
1. The Safety Policy Administrator or Lead Pastor will designate a single organizational leader as spokesperson. This spokesperson will be the only person to convey information concerning the situation, and to avoid compromising any ongoing investigation, will convey only such information as is necessary under the circumstances
 2. The spokesperson will use the text of a prepared public statement to answer the press and to convey news to the congregation, being careful to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved. This public statement will be approved by the Lead Pastor before release.

EXCEPTION FOR FACILITIES AND INDIVIDUALS UNDER LICENSE AND THEREFORE SUBJECT TO STATE REQUIREMENTS: It is recognized that some churches operate licensed facilities or have individuals working under their licenses that come within the purview of the State of Texas. Nothing in this policy is meant to alter or change any requirements imposed by the State. This policy exempts those facilities and individuals from its requirements because the State requirements are deemed sufficient. At Bethany United Methodist Church, this exception applies to Bethany School. It also applies to licensed Caregivers (e.g. – group home workers) who bring persons with special needs and/or vulnerable adults to Bethany events and care for them during the event.

It is a privilege to work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Great responsibility is required. Those who violate this policy shall immediately be removed from contact with children, youth and vulnerable adults. Appropriate authorities shall be notified immediately.

³⁴ suspected abuse

³⁵ An example of the Suspected Abuse Reporting Form is included as an appendix to this policy This is an interactive form and can be accessed in the church office.

³⁶ An example of the Suspected Abuse Reporting Form is included as an appendix to this policy This is an interactive form and can be accessed in the church office.

After reading the policy, please sign and return this page to the staff member for the ministry area in which you are serving.

I have read, understand and will abide by the Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Safety Policy (Bethany UMC – Austin, TX).

Printed Name

Signature

Areas of ministry (check all that apply):

- Children's Ministry
- Student Ministry
- Special Needs Ministry
- Care Ministry
- Other _____

Date

APPENDIX

- A. Photo/Video Release Form**
- B. Social Media/Communication Release Form**
- C. Overnight Ministry Event/Transportation Permission Form**
- D. BUMC Suspected Abuse Reporting Form**
- E. BUMC Transportation Policy**

Photo/Video Release Form (Appendix A)

**Bethany United Methodist Church
Photo/Video Release Form**

I/We, [Click or tap here to enter text.](#), hereby grant permission/ do not grant permission to Bethany United Methodist Church to use any still and/or moving image (video footage, photographs, and/or audio footage) depicting: (select all that apply)

- [myself](#) [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) (Name)
- my spouse/significant other [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) (Name)
- my child/dependent(s) [Click or tap here to enter text.](#), date of birth: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#), [Click or tap here to enter text.](#), date of birth: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#), [Click or tap here to enter text.](#), date of birth: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#), [Click or tap here to enter text.](#), date of birth: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) (Name(s))

on the church’s website, social media groups, or other online and/or printed publications without further consideration. No photos of children’s faces (age 11 and under) will be posted on social media. I acknowledge the church has the right to alter the photograph(s) and/or video(s) at its discretion. I also understand that once an image is posted on the website or other online platform, the image can be downloaded by any computer user, anywhere in the world. The church commits to eliminating any identifying information including full names and age from the publication. I hereby release, discharge, and agree to indemnify and hold harmless Bethany United Methodist Church, its officers, agents and/or designated leadership, from all claims, demands, and causes of action that I or my child/dependent have or may have by reason of this authorization or use of photographic portraits, pictures, digital images or video of the people identified above.

THIS IS A RELEASE OF LEGAL RIGHTS. READ IT CAREFULLY AND BE CERTAIN YOU UNDERSTAND IT BEFORE SIGNING.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Click or tap to enter a date.

Signature

Date

Click or tap here to enter text.

Click or tap to enter a date.

Signature

Date

Social Media/Communication Release Form (Appendix B)

Bethany United Methodist Church Social Media/Communication Release Form

We understand that many young people use digital tools for communication. Therefore, Bethany United Methodist Church is requesting your permission to stay in contact with your child/dependent via digital communication. Staff and volunteers will only use digital forms of communication when necessary for appropriate ministry related conversation. All persons will be required to follow the safety policy at all times.

I, [Click or tap here to enter text.](#), hereby grant permission to Bethany United Methodist Church to promote and discuss ministry events with my child/dependent(s), [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) via all forms of social media used by BUMC ministries including but not limited to text message, e-mail, Facebook, Instagram, etc.

I also give permission for Bethany United Methodist Church ministry leaders to accept requests from my child to join closed, moderated ministry Facebook, Instagram, or other social media group/page, texting group apps such as Group Me, ministry related meetings utilizing Skype, Facetime, Zoom, or other video conferencing platforms.

I would like to receive a copy of all communication sent to my child Yes No

Parent's/Guardian's Name: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Parent/Guardian Phone: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Signature: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Date: [Click or tap to enter a date.](#)

Overnight Ministry Event/Transportation Permission Form (Appendix C)

I/We		as parent(s) / guardian(s) of the above named youth, give him / her permission to participate in in the activities of Bethany United Methodist Church Youth Ministry. This consent form gives permission to participate in overnight activities and for Adult leaders to transport students. It also gives permission to seek whatever emergency medical attention is deemed necessary, and releases Bethany United Methodist Church and its staff of any liability against personal losses of
		(student name). I/We understand that there are inherent risks involved in any ministry or athletic event, and I/we hereby release the church, its pastors, employees, agents, and volunteer workers from any and all liability for any injury, loss, or damage to person or property that may occur during the course of my/our youths' involvement. In the event that he/she is injured and requires the immediate attention of a doctor, I/we consent to any reasonable medical treatment as deemed necessary by a licensed physician. In the event emergency treatment is required from a physician and/or hospital personnel designated by the church, I/we agree to hold such a person free and harmless of any claims, demands, or suits for damages arising from the giving of such consent. I/We also acknowledge that we will be ultimately responsible for the cost of any medical care should the cost of that medical care not be reimbursed by the health insurance provider. Further, I/we affirm that the health insurance information provided above is accurate at this date, and will, to the best of my /our knowledge, still be in force for the student named above. I/We also agree to bring my/our youth home at my/our own expense should they become ill or if deemed necessary by the youth ministry staff.
Parent/Guardian Signature:		
Parent/Guardian Signature:		
Date:	10/14/19	

BUMC Suspected Abuse Reporting Form (Appendix D)

BETHANY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SUSPECTED ABUSE REPORTING FORM								
Individual Making report:			Reporter Phone:			Reporter Email:		
Reported Date:	10/14/19	Reported Time:	13:17					
Victim Type:								
Where did the alleged abuse occur?								
PEOPLE INVOLVED								
Name	Involvement	DOB or Approx Age:	Gender	Race	Primary Language:	Special Needs:	Contact Information (phone, email, etc if available)	
WHAT HAPPENED?								
Allegation Type:								
When did the incident happen? Approx date and time								
Describe in detail what occurred or what was observed:								
SAFETY CONCERNS								
Note any safety concerns such as domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, living conditions, weapons, gang involvement, etc. associated with this incident								

BUMC Transportation Policy (Appendix E)

Bethany UMC Policy for Use of Passenger Vans and Buses

Passenger Vans and Buses are used by Bethany for trips, outings, etc. like Mission trips. They are useful to carry passengers, luggage and equipment. However, if loaded fully their center of gravity raises and causes it to shift rearward. As a result, vans and buses have less resistance to rollover and handles differently from other commonly driven passenger vehicles. The risk of rollover crashes increases dramatically. To better protect our people, who will use the vans and buses, we are adopting the following.

1. We will comply with listed NHTSA safety recommendations.
2. Initiate specific driver training on the use of vans and buses.
3. Verify the policies on our bus and vans are up to date and consistent with this policy.

Rules for Reducing the Risk When Using Vans and Buses

1. All drivers must be approved pursuant to church policy. Drivers of Bethany buses must have the appropriate class of license and the church will annually conduct a check of each drivers driving record.
2. Drivers must be at least 25 years of age and meet the volunteer requirements per our Bethany Child, Youth & Vulnerable Adult Safety Policy.
3. Use of any sedation prescription or over-the-counter antihistamine (or other medications) by the driver is prohibited.
4. Use of cellular phones by the driver while operating the vehicle is prohibited. Others in the van may use cellular phones. It may be useful to have the designated cell phone user for emergencies.
5. Do not overload Van or Buses. No more than one person to a seat. Supplies/belongings should be set neatly next to an individual or strapped down for no movement.
6. Load occupants from the front of the van (not all in back)
7. Each occupant is required to wear a seat belt at all times. Those that don't are more likely to be ejected from the van or bus during a rollover, and those ejected tend to suffer the most serious injuries and fatalities.
8. Absolutely nothing should be loaded on the van or bus roof.
9. Drivers should not drive for more than ten hours in any twenty-four-hour period. (Unless a shorter limitation is provided under applicable law or regulation.) Van driver should be well rested. Have more than one qualified driver for trips over 6 hours. Drivers should rotate periodically.
10. The church van should not be driven after 12 o'clock midnight or before 6 AM. If the trip requires a special circumstance, the leader should request in writing an exemption for this rule including identifying steps taken to maintain a safe environment during this exception.
11. Drivers are prohibited to drive over the posted speed limit and should drive cautiously and maintain a speed that is safe under the conditions and be especially careful on rural roads and curved roads.
12. Inspect the vehicle each day (walk around, etc.) and inspect tires before each trip checking for wear and proper inflation. Many van rollovers are initiated by blowouts.
13. If the vans wheels drop off the roadway, gradually reduce speed and steer back onto the road when it is safe to do so.
14. Use only drivers who have received specific training on the use of passenger vans and buses. Driving a passenger van or bus is much different and more challenging than driving a family car or minivan. Even experienced drivers might not always be able to get these large vehicles back under control when driving at highway speeds.
15. Drivers should keep the vans gas tank as full as possible. It should never go below $\frac{1}{4}$ full.
16. Drivers will be given a list of emergency numbers in the event that something occurs during the trip.

17. The van driver is personally responsible for any and all traffic or parking citations, tickets and fines incurred while he or she is driving.
18. Vans owned or rented by the church can be used only for activities that have been authorized by the church. (Ministry Head or Lead Pastor)
19. Vans and buses should be maintained properly and inspected frequently by a competent mechanic. Bethany Facilities and Events Manager will keep a logbook of all maintenance performed on Bethany vehicles.