

Children of God

We consider our church to be a **holy place of sanctuary** for the **children of God**.

Holy Place - a place where people are able to worship God, study the traditions of our faith and serve one another in the name of Christ.

Sanctuary - a place where people feel assured they are safe and secure.

Children of God - all people, but especially those among us who are vulnerable.

As Christians, we believe ourselves to be in a covenant relationship with God and with the whole community of faith. This community is comprised of our immediate and extended family, all those who worship alongside us, as well as our brothers and sisters in Christ across the globe.

At FUMC LaGrange, we believe all people should be able to find unconditional love and care so we can grow and thrive as faithful people of God.

Information for this brochure was compiled primarily from *Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church for Children and Youth*, by Joy Thornburg Melton, and adapted for use at First United Methodist Church of La Grange, IL by Hattie Stahl Koher.
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**Policies for
Everyone's
Safety**



**First United
Methodist Church**
*Exploring our faith,
extending Christ's reach*



Safe Sanctuaries

Safe Sanctuaries Overview

United Methodist churches have historically worked to assure that children were provided food, clothing, education and an affirmation of value and self-worth.

Today, allegations of child and sexual abuse are in the news far too often. When allegations are made, whether they are eventually proven true or false, everyone in the church suffers.

The 1996 General Conference of the United Methodist Church adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child sexual abuse in the church.

The policies and procedures established in this resolution and re-affirmed every four years at General Conference are essential for the protection and safety of all the children and youth who walk through our doors, *as well as* all volunteers and employed workers.



Procedures at FUMC LaGrange

The “Two Adult Rule”

- We require two adults, preferably unrelated, be present in each classroom/gathering of children or youth.
- When a child or youth is being counseled and/or when a teacher is alone with a group of students for a brief period of time, we require doors be left open unless there is an uncovered window in the door.

Screening

- We screen and check references for all paid employees, including clergy, who have significant contact with children and youth.
- We screen all volunteer workers for any position involving work with children and youth, including authorized criminal record/background checks.
- A volunteer must be associated with our church for at least six months before being considered for Sunday School work with children and youth.

Sunday School Teacher Training

- We train all volunteer and paid workers annually to understand the nature of child abuse.
- We offer CPR training annually at no cost to all Sunday School teachers and youth workers, as well as to paid employees of our children's programs.

Procedures at FUMC LaGrange

Childcare:

- Children in our childcare room will always be supervised by at least two trained childcare workers.
- Parents will be notified whenever workers are younger than 18.

Sunday School Policies

- We require all classroom doors be locked from the outside when classes are held and two teachers are present to prevent entrance by an intruder.
- We require registration forms for each child in Sunday School to be kept in a binder in each classroom for teacher access. These forms indicate where parents can be found in case of emergency during Sunday School times and also list any health issues or allergies.
- A parent, legal guardian or authorized adult must sign out children (4th grade and younger) from all church-related programs (including Sunday School, choir rehearsals and childcare). Infants and toddlers must be signed *in* as well.
- Youth 5th grade and older are dismissed from Sunday School and youth events to find their parents at a pre-determined location.