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**Buckle Up!**

**On the Road to Faith**

**and Discipleship**

RCFUMC 2022-2023 Children and Youth

**Logo

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**Table of Contents**

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**Our Destination**

Philosophy, Goals and Core Beliefs Page 4

**Site Seeing –**

Children and Youth 2022-2023 Calendars Page 5

**In The Driver’s Seat**

Staff emails Page 6

Volunteer Job Descriptions Page 7-10

Volunteer Forms Page 11-12

**Routine Maintenance**

First Aid Page 14

Emergency Exit Plan Page 15-16

Discipline Policy Page 17-18

**Rules of the Road**

Safe Sanctuary Policy Page 20-26

Leader Covenant Statement Page 27

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At Rapid City First United Methodist Church it is our mission to impart the biblical truth of God’s love to our children and youth. We believe that this truth will help them create a strong foundation in faith, enabling them to build a lasting relationship with Jesus Christ and his church.

**Our Destination**

Philosophy, Goals

and

Core Beliefs

**Ministry Tools**

**The Bible**: RCFUMC presents bibles at three points in a child’s life – baptism, 3rd Grade and confirmation. We base lessons on scripture while teaching children how to use their bible.

**Fellowship**: Through social interaction and guided play, children and youth can practice love and respect for one another.

**Worship**: We guide children and youth to personally express their love for God.

**Prayer**: We help children and youth grow their relationship with Jesus by talking and listening to him through prayer.

**Service**: We provide opportunities for children and youth to serve others in the name of Christ and recognize the value of service in building a faith life.

As leaders in this ministry, we strive to reflect God’s love in all we do so that children and youth can witness love in action. We want them to know:

**God sees you.**

**God loves you.**

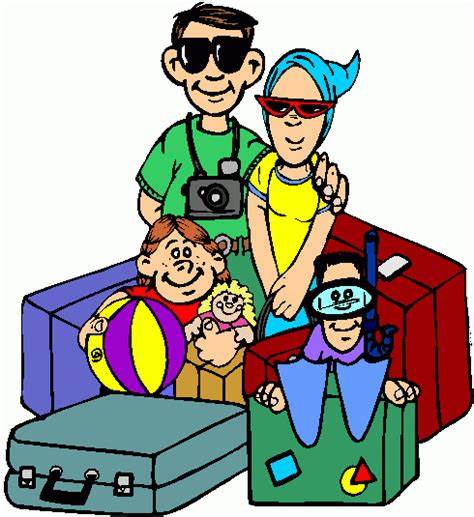
**God values you.**

As we reflect these truths, we strive to make sure all our children and youth know:

**I see you.**

**I love you.**

**I value you.**



**Site Seeing**

**Where We’ll Go and What We’ll See This Year**

**2022-2023 Children and Youth Calendars**

**Youth Ministry Calendar**

September 14 Nacho Planning Party

September 18,25 Sunday School/Youth Group

October 2,16,23,30 Sunday School/Youth Group

October 5 Intergenerational Game Night

October 12 YOLO

October 26 Fall Festival

November 6,20 Sunday School/Youth Group

December 4 Sunday School/Youth Group

December 11 Christmas Program

Youth Christmas Party

December 14 A Night in Bethlehem

January 8 Sunday School, NO YOUTH

January 18,25 YOLO

January 29 Sunday School, Youth

February 5,12,26 Sunday School/Youth Group

March 12,19,26 Sunday School/Youth Group

March 29 Glow in the Dark Easter Egg Hunt

April 2 Stations of the Cross

April 16,23 Sunday School/Youth Group

April 23 Volunteer Dinner & YAC Awards

April 30 Youth Sunday

May 7 Sunday School/Youth Group

**Children’s Ministry Calendar**

September 14 Nacho Planning Party

September 18,25 Sunday School

September 21,28 WNL

September 25 Third Grade Bibles Presented

October 2,16,23,30 Sunday School

October 5,12,19 WNL

October 26 Fall Festival

November 6,20 Sunday School

November 2,9,30 WNL

November 16 Friendsgiving

December 4 Sunday School

December 7 WNL

December 11 Christmas Program

December 14 A Night in Bethlehem

January 8,29 Sunday School

January 11 Volunteer Care and Feeding

January 18,25 WNL

February 1,8,15 WNL

February 5,12,26 Sunday School

March 1,8,15,22 WNL

March 12,19,26 Sunday School

March 29 Glow in the Dark Easter Egg Hunt

April 2 Stations of the Cross

April 12,19,26 WNL

April 16,23,30 Sunday School

April 23 Volunteer Dinner & YAC Awards

May 3,10 WNL

May 7 Sunday School

May 14 Mother’s Day Tea

**Sunday School 10:10-10:50 am**

**Children’s Church 9:20-10:00 am**

**Youth Group 4:30-6 pm**

**WNL 6-7:30 pm**

**Times will be announced for all other events.**

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**In the Driver’s Seat**

**Who is Driving the Bus?**

**2022-2023 Staff**

**Volunteer Job Descriptions**

**Volunteer Form**

Anne Torgerson, Director Christian Education [rcfumcchildrensministry@gmail.com](mailto:rcfumcchildrensministry@gmail.com)

Hannah O’Donnell, Youth Coordinator [hannahrcfirst@gmail.com](mailto:hannahrcfirst@gmail.com)

Lauren Holderfield, Children’s Coordinator [lauren@rapidcityfirst.org](mailto:lauren@rapidcityfirst.org)

**ALL OF OUR PARTNERS IN MINISTRY!!!!!**

**Names and Numbers to Remember**

**Sunday School/Children’s Church Teacher**

**Essential Duty:** Sunday School Teachers create a warm, inviting and fun environment in which children preschool through high school can hear the gospel, learn how to use the bible, ask faith questions and create supportive relationships with peers and adult leaders.

**Why:** 90% of decisions about Christ are made while children are ages 4 – 14. Providing a safe, positive environment where children and youth can hear God’s word, see it actively lived out and ask questions will have eternal impact.

**Responsibilities:**

* Be prepared to teach. Read the lesson before class. Use highlighters to mark what you feel are the most important take-aways from the lesson.
* Gather supplies before the class. Know how to do the activities and crafts.
* Always feel free to substitute your own activities and crafts. Communicate needed supplies to the Youth or Children’s Coordinator by Wednesday to ensure they are ready for you.
* Be in the Sunday School room ready to go at the start of the Sunday School session. Sunday School begins at 10:00 – but could begin slightly later depending on how long church runs.
* Before you begin to teach, ask yourself, “How can I make sure that I show those I am working with that I see them, I love them and I value them?”
* Greet each child personally. Call the children and youth by name. Endeavor to have conversations with them, finding out about their week, their hobbies, their school life.



* Take attendance on the provided roster.
* While teaching, don’t worry if you need to deviate or take detours. Remember the important take-aways that you highlighted in planning? As long as you communicate those one or two points and lead the class with love and respect, you have done a great job teaching God’s truths for His Kingdom.
* Follow the Church Discipline and Safe Sanctuary Guidelines.
* Enlist the children and youth to help clean up the classroom when the lesson is over.
* After you serve, pause and reflect. “Did I show each person I worked with that I saw them, I loved them, I valued them?”
* Communicate any difficulties to the Children or Youth Coordinator or the Direction of Christian Ed.
* Relish the positive moments of your class!

**Youth Sunday Evening Leader**



**Essential Duty:** Sunday Evening Youth Leaders create a fun, active environment for teens and preteens. They assist with lessons prepared by the Youth Coordinator and help facilitate games and service projects under the direction of the Youth Coordinator.

**Why:** The fundamental role of youth leaders is to help youth become disciples who, in turn, invite others to discipleship in Christ. The Great Commission is the key text. In Matthew 28:19 – 20, Jesus tells his disciples, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” We are building and teaching the foundation of the church.

**Responsibilities:**

* Sunday Night Youth Group will run from 4:30 – 6:00pm. Plan on arriving fifteen minutes before the beginning of group.
* Prior to arrival, ask yourself, “How can I make sure that I show those I am working with that I see them, I love them and I value them?”
* Talk with the youth. Call them by name. Find out about their lives outside of the church. Where do they go to school? What are their hobbies? How many family member do they have?
* Engage with the youth. Play the games, do the art activities, sing along with worship. Be a role model for participation.
* In conversations with the group, feel free to add in any life experiences or messages you feel God nudging you to share.
* Communicate specific duties you enjoy or talents you would like to share with the youth. Hannah is eager to incorporate them into youth plans.
* Help youth make good choices with their speech, their resources, their interactions with others. Remember – this is a testing ground for them to learn how to relate, engage, show grace just as Jesus did.
* Communicate any difficulties to the Youth Coordinator or Director of Education.
* Relish the positive moments of the evening and share them with your team!

**Wednesday Night Leader**

**Essential Duty:** Wednesday Night Leaders create a fun, hands-on environment where children practice living the faith principles they learn from Bible stories.

**Why:** By age 9, children have formed their moral foundation. Watching adult leaders live their faith and being given a safe environment to practice putting faith ideas into action at an age when hearts are most open to the gospel will have an eternal impact.

**Responsibilities:**

* Read the plan for the evening prior to arriving. Communicate any questions you might have to the Children’s Coordinator.
* Prior to arrival, ask yourself, “How can I make sure that I show those I am working with that I see them, I love them and I value them?”
* Arrive at your appointed time. There are two different times. Those who are shepherding dinner and free play will need to arrive by 5:15. Those who are shepherding lessons should arrive by 5:45.
* Talk with the children. Call them by name. Find out about their lives outside of church – where do they go to school? What are their hobbies? How many family members do they have?
* During group time, engage with the children. Play the games, do the art activities, sing along with worship. Be a role model for participation.
* Help children make good choices with their speech, their resources, their interactions with others. Remember – this is a testing ground for them to learn how to relate, engage, show grace just as Jesus did.
* Enlist the children to help clean up the rooms.
* After you serve, pause and reflect, “Did I show each person I worked with that I saw them, I loved them, I valued them?”
* Communicate any difficulties to the Children’s Coordinator or the Director of Education.
* Relish the positive moments of the evening and share them with your team!

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**Nursery Teacher**

**Essential Duty:** The Nursery Teacher creates a safe and interesting environment with age-appropriate activities, provides physical and emotional care and encourages interaction among children and adults.

**Why**: A positive nursery experience provides a model for Christian interaction and a support for families as they grow in faith.

A church nursery is often the first place the child is cared for away from home. The response of a child to the church nursery likely will affect his or her response to other new places. A church nursery may also be the first time a child is cared for in a group setting. Again, a child’s nursery experience will help shape future interaction with other children.

Nursery teachers provide support and encouragement for families and give them an opportunity to grow and connect with others in the Body of Christ. A picture containing text, outdoor, person, group

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**Responsibilities:**

* Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the service or event.
* Dress in clothing and shoes that allows you to get down on the floor and play with the children.
* Greet each family as they come into the nursery. Talk to the child and the parent. Give them your full attention.
* Ask each parent to sign the nursery enrollment roster. Ask them about special instructions for their child, if they have provided a drink or snack, if it is alright for their child to be given a snack, find out about any special diaper or potty instructions and inquire about allergies.
* Play with the children. Do not use your cell phone. Help the children find toys they are interested in and encourage them to put toys away as they move to the next toy.
* Use the posters on the wall to initiate conversations about the months bible theme.
* You may offer snacks. There are snacks in the closet and small paper cups for water.
* Prior to parents picking up their child, check diapers – changing as needed.
* Ask children who are potty training if they need to use the toilet. Keep the door opened a bit while helping them with pulling up pants, washing hands, etc.
* Greet each parent as they arrive to collect their children. Give them a brief report on what their child did in the nursery, communicating that their child has been seen, cared for and loved in their absence.
* When all children have left, put all toys back on the shelves. Spray the room with Lysol to disinfect and take dirty diaper trash out to the dumpster behind the church.
* Relish the fun and sweet moments you had with the children!

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**Children’s Ministry Volunteer Information**

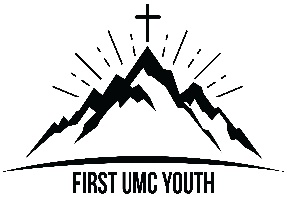
|  |
| --- |
| Name: |
| Address: |
| City: Zip Code: |
| Phone: |
| Best Way to Contact You: |
| Email: |
| Birthday: |
| Favorite Candy: |
| Favorite Treat/Snack: |
| Favorite Soda/Drink: |

I would like to volunteer in the following programs: check all that apply

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| WNL | Sunday School  Elementary Preschool | Nursery |
| Decorating  Fall Festival VBS  A Night in Bethlehem  Easter Egg Hunt  Stations of the Cross  Mother’s Day Tea | Food  Fall Festival VBS WNL  A Night in Bethlehem  Easter Egg Hunt  Stations of the Cross  Mother’s Day Tea | Music |
| Photography/Videography |

Photo Release Form: I hereby grant permission to be included in pictures, promotional materials and publications connected with Children’s Ministry at FUMC. My photo may appear in publications and promotional materials, such as newsletters, bulletin boards, slideshow, church website, brochures and flyers.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

** 2022 -2023**

**Youth Ministry Volunteer Information**

|  |
| --- |
| Name: |
| Address: |
| City: Zip Code: |
| Phone: |
| Best Way to Contact You: |
| Email: |
| Birthday: |
| Favorite Candy: |
| Favorite Treat/Snack: |
| Favorite Soda/Drink: |

I would like to volunteer in the following programs: check all that apply

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Youth Group | Sunday School | Special Events |

Photo Release Form: I hereby grant permission to be included in pictures, promotional materials and publications connected with Children’s Ministry at FUMC. My photo may appear in publications and promotional materials, such as newsletters, bulletin boards, slideshow, church website, brochures and flyers.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_



**Important Notes:**

Routine Maintenance

First Aid Stations

Fire and Emergency Evacuation

Discipline Policy

**Location of First Aid**

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**Main Floor:**

**First Aid Kits:** Nursery, Staff Workroom, Parlor

**Ice Packs:** Parlor Refrigerator

**AED:** Parlor

**Second Floor:**

**First Aid Kits:** Upper Room, Elevator Alcove

**Ice Packs:** Martha’s Kitchen

**Basement**

**First Aid Kit:** Kitchen

**Ice Packs:** Freezer in Fellowship Hall

**Emergency Exit Plan for Children and Youth Ministry**

There are several emergency exits located throughout the building. As a leader in children and youth ministry, it is wise to take a look at the room you are working in and to know your nearest exit.

If the fire alarm rings, it is protocol to gather the children, exit the building and go to the designated meeting spot. Take the clipboard with the day’s sign-in sheet with you. This will help us know if everyone is accounted for in an actual emergency.

A green sign with white text

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**Designated Meeting Spot:** The front of the public library, 610 Quincy Street.

**Nursery** The nearest exit in the nursery is the door located at the end of the hall. When leaving the room, turn left and go straight out the door. Continue down the sidewalk to the designated meeting spot in front of the public library. The playpen in the quiet room has wheels on it. If needed, this can be used to quickly evacuate young children. Remember to bring the clipboard with the daily sign-in sheet so we know that all persons have evacuated.

**Second Floor Classrooms:** There are two emergency exits located at either end of the upstairs classrooms. The first is in the Upper Room. There is a door that leads directly to an outside door and staircase. The second is at the far end of the hall. The stairs are interior and lead directly to a building exit. **Never use the elevator to evacuate in an emergency.** Remember to take the clipboard with the daily sign-in sheet so we know that all persons have evacuated.

**Basement Level Classrooms/Youth:** When exiting the youth room there are exits either to the left or the right. The exit to the left is straight down the hallway, through the exit door and up the stairs. The exit to the right is past the kitchen, turn right and use the door and stairs. If the group is meeting in the Fellowship Hall, there is an exit at the back of Fellowship Hall. Remember to take the sign-in clipboard with you and take youth to the designated meeting spot in front of the Public Library on Quincy Street. **Never use the elevator to evacuate in an emergency.**

**Basement Level Classrooms/Adult:** The nearest exit is the staircase leading to the main floor. If this is not accessible, there is an exit by the kitchen and at the back of the Fellowship Hall. **Do not use the elevator to evacuate.**

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**DISCIPLINE POLICY IN CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY**



Even-tempered discipline will give children and youth a true picture of God’s love. We will use a 3-Step Discipline Model for all age groups. Within each age level we will follow three simple rules:

1. **Be kind.**
2. **Be safe.**
3. **Take a breath.**

When one of these broad rules is violated we will follow these steps:

**First:** Remind them of the rule.

**Second:** If the rule is broken a second time, walk to the individual and speak with him or her privately and in a non-threatening manner. Remember to treat the individual with dignity.

**Third:** Apply an immediate consequence such as removing them from the activity for a cooling off period. Always allow the child or youth to return to the activity when he or she is ready. Threatening to tell their parent is NOT an immediate action.

To mitigate discipline difficulties, consider the following guidelines:

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* Set reasonable expectations based on age and ability. Consider their attention spans.
* Have the attention of all students before beginning a session.
* Remember that all humans respond better working toward positive reinforcement rather than working to avoid a negative consequence.
* Model the type of behavior you expect from your students.
* Get to know all of your students by name. Call them by name if you need help drawing them into activities.
* Clearly communicate desired behavior to the group and to individuals, focusing on positives over negatives.
* Discover what motivates your students.
* Encourage cooperation and ownership in the group by involving students in decision-making whenever possible.
* Foster an environment where all students can explore and ask questions safely and with dignity.
* Remember that students may come to you from diverse backgrounds. Communicate that the rules must be followed by all and apply them consistently and fairly.
* Consistency is key for effective discipline.
* Limit the time YOU spend talking. When you talk too much, kids tune you out.
* Never take it personally. Kids with poor discipline are not targeting you – they need you. Do not take words to heart or hold a grudge.
* Laugh. Lighten up the room by laughing with your students.
* Apologize when you are wrong.

**Rules of the Road**

**Rapid City First United Methodist Church**

**SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY**

A dirt road in a forest

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**Safe Sanctuary Policy**

**Rapid City First United Methodist Church**

**Introduction**

The general Conference of the United Methodist Church, in April 1996, adopted a resolution aimed at reducing the risk of child sexual abuse in the church. The following is a reflection on the adopted resolution *Book of Resolutions,*  2016 #384.

A central tenet of the Christian faith is the inherent value and worth of all children, youth and adults. Children, youth and other vulnerable people are least able to protect themselves in our society and are particularly vulnerable to abuse and neglect. The United Methodist Church is eager to do all it can to project the youth, children and other vulnerable people who participate in the life of this congregation

We believe implementing a policy and adopting procedures to protect our children youth and other vulnerable people recognizes that:

Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to our children, youth and other vulnerable persons. The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church state, “ . . . children must be protected from economic, physical and sexual exploitation and abuse.” The social principles also state, “all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God.”

**Selection and Screening of Church Staff and Adult Volunteers**

1. The pastor in charge or his/her designee and the staff parish relations committee are charged with the responsibility of developing, implementing and evaluating the process for recruiting, screening, selecting, training and supervising non-appointive church staff.
2. All adults who regularly work with the church’s children, youth and other vulnerable people, and each church paid staff person, including clergy, will be screened. Adults who occasionally serve as a second person in a classroom or group and those who work regularly with children/youth/other vulnerable people will be trained on child/youth protection issues prior to beginning their regular involvement with these people.
3. Each person being considered to work regularly with children, youth and or other vulnerable people, whether as a volunteer or paid staff person, shall fill out a Child/Youth Worker Screener form. This screening form is good for three years, after which time a rescreening will be necessary.
4. Screening records will be kept in a locked cabinet to protect confidentiality.

**Training**

The pastor in charge or designee and staff parish relations committee shall ensure that regularly scheduled annual training focused on foundational and current issues of child protection is available to and received by those working with children, youth and other vulnerable people. Attendance at this training shall be required prior to involvement in affected areas of ministry by all paid staff members, screened and unscreened adults, and youth helpers who work consistently with children, youth and or other vulnerable people.

The training should include:

* The definition and recognition of child abuse.
* The church’s policy and procedures on child abuse and the reasons for having them.
* The need to maintain a positive classroom environment, including appropriate discipline and age-level characteristics.
* The appropriate behavior for teachers and leaders of child/youth events as well as all events including vulnerable people.
* Abuse reporting responsibilities and procedures.
* Definition of appropriate interpersonal boundaries.

**Supervision**

**General**

1. All activities involving children, youth and other vulnerable people will be supervised by at least one screened adult and will have at least two leaders present. A designated roamer shall monitor the room when it is not possible to have two leaders present or when one leader is not screened.
2. When reasonably feasible, each room set aside for children/youth should have a door with a window. Windows should remain free from obstruction; avoid covering them. If there are no windows in the door, the door should remain open.
3. The “two-person rule” is defined as having at least two unrelated people in any classroom or setting, at least one of which must be a screened adult volunteer or staff person. When the two adults are family members, it is preferable that a third adult be present. When this is not possible, a designated roamer should visit the room regularly. If using a roamer, keep doors open.

**Classroom Activities**

1. Crib/Toddler to Preschool

At least one screened adult and a second unscreened adult will be present for all classroom activities involving infants and toddlers. When feasible, there should be two screened adults present; and when two adults are family members, it is preferable that a third adult be present. In addition, a designated roamer should check each classroom on a regular basis. Two adult leaders in the classroom is the expectation; at least one of them must be a screened adult.

1. K – Grade 4

At least one screened adult and a second adult volunteer will be present for all classroom activities. Two screened adults are preferred. In addition, a designated roamer should check each classroom on a regular basis. Children should be escorted to and from bathroom facilities or when otherwise leaving the room by either one of the adults or by a designated roamer who checks on all classrooms. Where two adults are not available, the classroom doors are to remain open and a designated roamer should visit the classroom regularly.

1. Grades 5 – 12

Classroom activities will be led by at least one screened adult with at least two leaders present. A designated roamer shall monitor the room when it is not possible to have two leaders present or if one leader is not screened.

**Open Door Policy**

Parents, volunteers or staff of the church will be permitted, as reasonableness dictates, to visit and observe all programs and classrooms at any time.

**Sign-in/Sign-out Procedure**

Adults responsible for children who are infants through fourth grade should sign their children in and indicate the names of authorized person to whom the child may be signed out.

**Supervision of Non-Classroom Activities**

At least two screened adults will be present for all non-classroom activities involving children, youth and /or other vulnerable people. Any meetings held in an individual’s home will be supervised by at least one screened adult, with two adults present who are not members of the same family. Meetings held in an individual’s home must be pre-approved by the child’s/youth’s/vulnerable persons’ parent or guardian.

**Counseling of Youth, Children and Other Vulnerable People**

In instances where circumstances dictate that counseling would be most effective on a one-on-one basis, an appropriate paid church staff person may meet individually for one-on-one conversations with the knowledge of at least one other paid staff member and with permission of a parent or guardian. During any one-on-one conversation with children, youth or other vulnerable people, the door of the rom used should remain open for the entire session, unless there is glass in the door or wall that gives a clear view into the room. If another adult is not in the building when the counseling occurs, the session should be moved to a public place, such as a restaurant or outside where other people are present.

**Time Following Group Events**

Following group events, it is inevitable that occasionally a child’s/youth’s/or other vulnerable person’s transportation arrives after all other participants have departed. Two screened leaders should be scheduled to be present until all participants have been picked up.

**Transportation**

Transporting children, youth and other vulnerable people is an important concern. Their safety can be at risk in a variety of ways. Therefore, certain discretion must be used depending upon the event attended, the locale of the event and the age group participating. This policy includes both requirements and guidelines. It is expected that the requirements will always be followed.

1. Drivers must be known to the designated screened adult leader of the event.
2. When a child/youth/other vulnerable person is transported in any vehicle, the driver must be either that person’s parent/guardian, a screened adult or a paid staff person who is at least 21 years old.
3. When a child/youth/other vulnerable person is transported in a church-owned vehicle, the driver must be at least 21 years of age.
4. Drivers must have a valid driver’s license for the vehicle being operated.
5. Drivers must require that passengers wear seat belts. The number of passengers must not exceed the number of seat belts.
6. Drivers should be advised of a designated route and should not deviate from it except in cases of emergency or road detours.
7. Drivers should not use cell phones unless required for communication with other drivers. Any use should be hands-free and in accordance with state law. Drivers should not text/message while driving.
8. When there is reason to believe it would not be safe for a youth to ride in a vehicle driven by another youth, the adults responsible would intervene and take reasonable steps to make alternative arrangements for all concerned.

**Guidelines**

1. Drivers should be accompanied by at least one other adult and more than one youth.
2. Drivers should receive training for any church-owned vehicle being operated.
3. Youth who drive their own vehicles should be reminded regularly of the importance of vehicle safety.
4. Any use of a ride-share service should be scheduled by a parent or guardian and drop-off/pickup confirmed by the parent/guardian with the adult in charge of a specific event or activity.

**Trips and Retreats**

**Requirements**

1. There will be at least two screened adults present for all trips, retreats and other events where the children, youth and other vulnerable people gather overnight at, or away from, the church campus.
2. There will be at least one screened adult for each gender present at coed overnight events. At single gender overnight events, at least one of the two screened adults present shall be of the same gender are the children/youth who are present.
3. The person of children/youth for each overnight trip and/or retreat shall carry parental permission forms, including permission for emergency medical care.

**Guidelines in a hotel type setting**

1. Separate rooms for adults and child/youth should be assigned with at least two participants per room except where specific situations dictate a different arrangement.
2. Adults should make random monitoring hall trips and room checks at night. This should be done by two adults of the same gender as those being checked.

**Online Safety**

1. The volunteer or staff person shall never initiate a connection (friending, following, etc.) on social media.
2. If a child or youth initiates a connection, that individual’s parent or guardian as well as the volunteer or staff member’s supervisor shall be notified.
3. If an adult leader receives a private text from a child, youth or other vulnerable person that seems questionable, the leader should immediately end the conversation in the virtual space and offer opportunities to have the conversation in person and in compliance with the earlier guidelines for on-on-one conversations. The ministry supervisor and /or parent/guardian should be made aware of the incident immediately.
4. Adult leaders should post photos on social network sites only with prior written permission granted by a parent/guardian. When posted, PHOTOS MUST NOT BE TAGGED with names or location indicators. All photos must be appropriate and in keeping the spirit of the ministry event.
5. All in-person protection policies apply to online platform meetings like Zoom, Skype, Messenger and so on.
6. All online activities should use the official church account, not a personal account.
7. Communication about online meetings should be shared with parents/guardians as well as with children/youth.
8. Adult leaders and participants should use their real names as usernames.
9. Attendance of online meetings should be documented.
10. All electronic communications shall be documented and retained.

**Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse**

The moral mandate to report child abuse or neglect is a requirement for all who care for and lead ministry with children, youth and other vulnerable people.

1. Immediately, yet with dignity and respect for the sacred worth of the accused, remove the accused from further involvement with the children, youth and/or other vulnerable people. Once the proper authorities have been contacted and the safety of the alleged victim is secure, the pastor in charge or other designated people should inform the accused that abuse has been reported.
2. If abuse is observed by, disclosed to, or suspected by a volunteer and/or paid staff member of the church, the observer shall report the incident immediately to the ministry supervisor and the pastor in charge. If the pastor in charge is not available or is implicated in the abuse, the matter should be immediately reported to the district superintendent and the proper authorities, as required by state and local law. The district superintendent will take responsibility, acting in accordance with the established rules of *The Book of Discipline* with respect to claims against a pastor. If the district superintendent is not available, the incident should be reported to the bishop’s office immediately.
3. Notify the parents/guardians of the victim and take whatever steps are necessary to assure the safety and wellbeing of the child, youth or other vulnerable person until the parent or guardian arrives. *Note: If one or both of the parents is the alleged abuser, follow the advice of local authorities concerning notification of others.*
4. Take all allegations seriously and reach out to the victim and the victim’s family. Show care and support to help prevent further hurt. Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed. Remember that the care and safety of the victim is the first priority. Respond in a positive and supportive manner to the victim and the victim’s family.
5. 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.
6. After having reported the suspected abuse to the proper authorities, the pastor in charge is to report the incident immediately to the district superintendent if he/she has not already done so. If the district superintendent is unavailable, the incident should be reported to the bishop’s office.
7. Keep a written report of the steps taken by the church in response to the reported abuse. The report should be brief and contain only factual information relevant to the situation. It should be kept in a secure place. The report should be written in ink or typed to prevent it from being changed.
8. Any contact with the media should be handled by the pastor in charge or a pre-determined spokesperson, selected by the pastor or the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

**Leader Covenant Statement**

The congregation of Rapid City First United Methodist Church is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, other vulnerable people, staff and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policy statement reflects our congregation’s commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others.

No adult who has been convicted of child abuse (either sexual abuse, physical abuse or emotional abuse) should work with children, youth or other vulnerable people in any church-sponsored activity.

All adults involved with children, youth or other vulnerable people of our church shall observe the Safe Sanctuary Policy at all times.

All adults involved with children, youth and/or other vulnerable people of our church shall attend regular training and educational events provided by the church to keep volunteers informed of church policies and laws regarding abuse and neglect of children, youth and other vulnerable people.

All adults involved with children, youth and/or other vulnerable people of our church shall immediately report to the supervisor any behavior that seems abusive or inappropriate.

**Please answer each of the following questions:**

1. Do you agree to observe and abide by all church policies regarding working in ministries with children, youth and other vulnerable people? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No
2. I have read this Leader Covenant, and I agree to observe and abide by the policies set forth above.

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_No

Signature Date