



## SAFETY AND SECURITY PRACTICES CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Bethel Lutheran Church is a community of believers with a mission called by God to commit ourselves to proclaim the Gospel, prepare our members for outreach and service, and to minister to human needs.

Ministering to families, children and youth\* is a vital part of this mission. Our community, which includes Bethel staff, volunteers who support this ministry, and Bethel Lutheran Church members, is deeply committed to minister to these human needs.

The safety and security practices described in this document are an important part of this ministry.

**We provide these safety and security practices to:**

### **Affirm and protect families, children, and youth.**

Creating a secure, safe environment is part of our call as stewards. Our safety and security practices are designed to protect children and youth from harmful situations and inappropriate behavior. We seek to affirm families, children, and youth in their call to participate in this body of Christ.

### **Affirm and protect volunteers and staff.**

Good practices involving safety and security can help church staff and volunteers avoid awkward or difficult circumstances, help prevent misunderstandings, and protect staff and volunteers from meritless allegations of improper behavior. These measures support our staff and volunteers in the roles they serve.

### **Affirm and protect Bethel Lutheran Church.**

These safety and security practices are intended to protect Bethel Lutheran Church from liability that may arise in the larger context of our social environment. As the body of Christ, commitment to continual monitoring of policy and safety practices is necessary for the mission we share in Jesus Christ.

### **Raise awareness.**

These safety and security practices are intended to cultivate a culture of awareness and education. These practices will be implemented by those serving as volunteers and Bethel staff, be utilized as a training tool, and serve as a reference point for how we will care for and protect those who serve and those who are being served.

**\*Defining Language:** References to *children/youth* in this document refers to those under the age of eighteen.

*Updated: 9/15/2022*

## **SAFETY & SECURITY PRACTICES**

### ***Volunteer Application Process***

Volunteers age 18 or older and staff working with children and youth on a regular weekly basis will complete the volunteer application process. This process includes:

1. Being a member of Bethel Lutheran Church, or involved in the life of the congregation, for at least three (3) months.
2. Completing a written application.
3. Completing a volunteer background check. Information needed to complete the background check includes:
  - a. Social Security Number
  - b. Address History
  - c. Driver's License Information

*Individuals whose background check identifies a felony criminal conviction or a conviction for any crime involving child abuse or molestation will be prohibited from working with children and youth.*

4. Confirming one's intent to serve in a volunteer position and understanding the associated tasks intended to be fulfilled, with an appropriate staff member, as it pertains to children and youth.
5. Participating in ongoing volunteer training which consists of:
  - a. Yearly review of *Safety & Security Practices and Guidelines* for working with children & youth.
  - b. Participation in regular training sessions.

### ***Leadership Expectations***

These *Safety and Security Practices* are intended to foster a safe, loving, and nurturing community. Therefore, it is expected that leaders, whether youth or adults, will follow safety and security practices and encourage others to do so as well. If a volunteer presents a potential threat to the safety of children/youth at Bethel, the volunteer will be denied the opportunity to work with children and youth.

### ***Parental Responsibility***

All parents/guardians are responsible for their children and should not assume the church-sponsored activity or presence on the church premises is a guarantee of the child's safety. Children should not be left unattended in the church building or on its property and should be picked up in a timely manner.

### ***Policy Regarding People with Disabilities***

All people are welcomed and included in the ministries of Bethel Lutheran Church. However, most church-sponsored events are not staffed to care for special health or physical needs of others, e.g., self-care, toileting, monitoring medications, feeding, etc. For this reason, and in order to promote the health and safety of participants/staff and volunteers, those requiring assistance with physical needs are asked to invite a friend, family member or attendant to assist them.

