

St. Stephen United Methodist Church

Photography Policy

St. Stephen United Methodist Church (SSUMC) values the inherent worth, dignity, and value of all our members, and recognizes our responsibility to protect the privacy and safety of our members, guests, and friends. This responsibility is especially important when protecting our children and youth. Because many of the church's ministries and events focus around the family, children, and youth, we have adopted this policy to guide the protection and privacy of minors, as well as all other members and guests. For the purpose of this policy statement, the words "children," "youth," and "minor" refer to any person under the age of 18 and anyone 18 years old or older who is still attending high school.

The purpose of this policy statement is to:

- Protect children and youth — and, more generally, the privacy and safety of all people — who take part in SSUMC services, events and activities, specifically those events where photographs and videos may be taken
- Set out the overarching principles that guide our approach to photographs or videos being taken of children and youth during our events and activities
- Ensure that we operate in line with our values and within the law when creating, using, and sharing images of children and youth

Requirements for recording still images or videos of minors:

- All minors featured in recordings/photographs must be appropriately dressed, with outer clothing garments covering the area from their chests and to their thighs (i.e., a minimum of shorts and shirt or modest tank top, string-top blouse/shirt/dress, etc.). No recordings or photographs can be taken of minors in swimwear or in any other state of undress.
- Photographs should ideally focus on the activity being recorded, not on individual minors. Where possible, images of minors should be recorded in small or large groups; the group may be comprised of any combination of adults and children.
- Unsupervised or one-on-one photography or video sessions are prohibited.

Privacy and safety requirements for all photography and video:

- No photographs or videos should be taken of any person, especially children, if a court order, law, or regulation prohibits this (e.g., photographs of foster children).
- No photographs or videos should be taken of any person who has specifically asked not to be photographed.
- Care should be taken while photographing or filming in large group settings (e.g., at events in the sanctuary or gym); attempts will be made to exclude or otherwise partially or completely obscure the identity and/or face of persons, including minors, who do not wish to or cannot be photographed. SSUMC cannot and does not guarantee that a person's image will not be captured in large-group settings or events where there is little-to-no expectation of privacy.

- In general, it is not always necessary to identify individual people by name when posting photos or videos. If identification is necessary, only first names should be used for children with consent from a parent/guardian, unless a parent/guardian has otherwise given explicit permission for additional identifying information to be shared (e.g., high school graduate highlights on social media).

Parental Consent

Parents/guardians will be asked at least once annually to complete a photography/video waiver. A similar waiver will be included in any registration forms for children's and youth events. A list of children who have been opted out of photos and videos will be compiled and delivered to all staff and appropriate leaders.

Photo Permissions Identification

At events where children will be wearing nametags, a special symbol will be devised and placed or printed on the nametags of those children who cannot appear in photos or videos. This symbol and its meaning will be communicated to all staff and appropriate leaders.

Photo/Video Waiver Text

The following text should be consistently used on all event registration forms, child information and consent forms, or other forms in which SSUMC collects annual or event-based information for minors:

I give permission for photographs and videos of my child to be taken and used by St. Stephen United Methodist Church on the church's website, official social media profiles, and in other promotional materials, whether printed or electronic. (Please Note: While attempts will be made to exclude or otherwise partially or completely obscure the identities/faces of persons who opt out of photos and videos, St. Stephen cannot and does not guarantee that a person's image will not be captured in large-group settings or events where there is little-to-no expectation of privacy. Click [\[here\]](#) to view the full SSUMC Photography Policy.)

☐ Yes

☐ No

Photo/Video Storage and Publication

All photographs and videos must be submitted to the SSUMC Communications Director for approval and publication. Photos and videos cannot be posted, published, or stored on personal websites, social media networks, or personal devices or platforms, except for one's own personal photos/videos of oneself, family and close friends, or those of a more general nature (e.g., large group settings or events).