

Winnebago Presbytery
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Office of the Stated Clerk

*Committee on Ministry Recommended Policy for the Churches of Presbytery regarding
Protection from and Restriction of Sexual Offenders*

1. **Mandatory Background Checks.** No church shall hire, engage or otherwise permit any person to participate as a leader or staff (professional or voluntary) in the programs or ministry of the church unless and until a background check has been performed, and the results received, by the church. A written record of the results of each such background check shall be kept by the church in a confidential, secure location.
2. **Sex Offender Registries.** Background checks shall include review of federal, state and/or local governmental databases and sex offender registries, including the Wisconsin Department of Corrections "Sex Offender Registry" (see: <http://offender.doc.state.wi.us/public/>).
3. **Written Policies.** Each church shall develop, maintain, implement and periodically review (at least annually) a written policy regarding the hiring, engagement or other participation in the programs or ministry of the church, upon the initiative and supervision of the Session. Sample copies of such policies shall be provided to the churches of Presbytery.
4. **Confidentiality.** As reasonably as possible, the church shall protect the confidentiality and privacy of persons regarding whom the church obtains information in the exercise and implementation of these policies. However, the church shall not be prohibited from disclosing information, at its discretion, which is (i) generally available from public sources, or (ii) required to be disclosed under applicable federal, state and/or local laws and regulations, or (iii) required to be disclosed under applicable church law and employment practice.
5. **Minors/Reduced Capacity Adults.** No person known by the church to have been (i) convicted of a sexual offense in civil, criminal or church court, or (ii) to be identified in any sex offender registry, shall be permitted to serve the church in any program or ministry whatsoever if there is any possibility that the person will come into contact whatsoever with minors of any age less than 18, or adults with reduced physical or mental capacity.
6. **Continuous Supervision.** Any member of the church or other person active in the life of this church who has been (i) convicted of a sexual offense in civil, criminal or church court, or (ii) to be identified in any sex offender registry, shall not, under any circumstances, be permitted to perform or conduct ministry tasks, or be left in the

physical presence of another person, on behalf of the church, except with the continuous, direct and immediate physical presence of a person (which person is not subject to this policy and constraints herein) expressly authorized by the Session.

7. **Discretion**. The Presbytery promulgates the foregoing policy as a general guide for its churches, with the understanding that the Presbytery and any particular church within Presbytery, in reference to the policy and practice herein stated, reserve the right to evaluate and determine exceptions to any matter subject to this policy on a case-by-case basis, but only by the expressed authorization of the governing body.