

The Church of the Covenant
Personnel Policy Manual
Modified April 2017

WELCOME

Welcome to the Church of the Covenant! We look forward to working with you.

The Church of the Covenant encourages the full use of the gifts and talents of each employee with the goal of participation in a shared ministry. We value each person's worth and recognize the work of each as a part of the ministry of the church. Our staff strives to work together as a team, as part of our witness to the love and justice of Christ in the world.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The Church as the employer is guided by the *Book of Order* (Part II, Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)), state and federal law. Within that framework the Church will establish basic work goals consistent with the purpose of the Church of the Covenant and an overall structure designed to accomplish the basic work goals. In order to fulfill the Church's mission, some employment policies are set forth in this manual; others will be implemented from time to time. (In the case of staff members who are ordained clergy or Certified Christian Educators, the *Book of Order* may cite specific rights, responsibilities, or regulations. Unless provisions are specified in terms of call for such staff members, the guidelines in this manual apply.) This personnel policy manual applies to all employees of the church and is intended to provide guidelines and summary information about the church's personnel policies and benefits. Similarly, an employee's rights and responsibilities are also set forth in this manual. It is important that all employees read, understand, and become familiar with this manual and comply with the standards that have been established. The supervisor is available to discuss its contents. These policies, however, may be revised, eliminated or supplemented from time to time, with or without notice.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) states its faith and bears witness to God's grace in Jesus Christ in the creeds and confessions in the *Book of Confessions* (Part I, Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)). In these confessional statements the church declares to its members and to the world who and what it is, what it believes, and what it resolves to do. These statements identify the church as a community of people known by its convictions as well as by its actions. They guide the church in its study and interpretation of the Scriptures; they summarize the essence of Christian tradition; they direct the church in maintaining sound doctrines; they equip the church for its work of proclamation. (from the *Book of Order*, F-2.01).

Interested employees are encouraged to read the current *Book of Order*, which includes principles and procedures governing Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) entities, including presbyteries.

THE CHURCH OF THE COVENANT OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

Church leaders are elected by the members. Criteria from the Book of Order include faithful attendance, growth in personal faith, and a commitment to minister through the office of elder, deacon, trustee, or officer. The church's professional staff includes persons who have been trained in seminary and ordained as Presbyterian teaching elders, as well as program, administrative, office, and custodial staff. Covenant views all of its members as ministers to one another and to the

community.

A Nominating Committee of the congregation is responsible for presenting a slate of elders, deacons, trustees, officers, and Nominating Committee members for consideration by the congregation at the annual meeting of the congregation. The Nominating Committee includes five members elected from the congregation, two appointees from Session, one appointee from the Board of Deacons, and one appointee from the Trustees.

The church is governed by 12-18 ruling elders serving on the Session. A ruling elder is an ordained position. Elders serve on Session. Every elder also serves on and may serve as moderator of one of three Ministries: Faith Formation, Finance, and Service. An elder is ordained for life. Service on Session is in three-year terms, two of which may be consecutive.

Deacon is an ordained position. The Board of Deacons seeks to express God's inclusive love within Covenant and to the community. This includes support for members and participants who are inactive or who may be experiencing a life event, and support for groups/programs, such as Covenant Callers, Stephen Ministries, flower arrangement and delivery, Christmas gifts for the homebound, the Giving Trees, Covenant Classics, Goodrich Gannett Christmas luncheon, and weekly receptions following worship. A deacon is ordained for life. Service on the Board of Deacons is in three-year terms, two of which may be consecutive.

The church's fiscal and physical assets are held by The Church of the Covenant Society, an Ohio nonprofit corporation. The members of the Society are the members of the church. The Trustees and Officers of the Society are legally responsible for the property and assets of the church, including oversight of investments, building and grounds, and all related responsibilities for financial oversight, including all funds. Trustees serve in three-year terms, two of which may be consecutive. The president, secretary, and treasurer of the Society are elected for one-year terms, six of which may be consecutive.

Many members who may or may not be actively serving on church boards volunteer to fill critical roles and perform a variety of tasks to further the work of the church.

Role of the Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee is a committee of the Session comprised of representatives from the congregation, Session, Deacons, and the Board of Trustees. A Session member serves as moderator. The committee is staffed by the Pastor/Head of Staff as an ex-officio member.

The Personnel Committee is responsible for the following major activities, subject to the review and approval of the Session:

- Development and annual review of the personnel policies pertaining to (but not limited to): a) Job descriptions: new, revised, or reclassified; b) Compensation and salary ranges for each job description; c) Employee benefits; Employee performance evaluations; and d) Discipline and grievances.
- Development of annual personnel budget.

- Oversight of the recruitment of office and building employees.
- Participation in the performance evaluation of the Pastor/Head of Staff.
- Participation in grievance procedures by special appeal, if requested.
- The Personnel Committee maintains confidentiality of sensitive matters relating to individual employees of the church.

SECTION I: Employment

BACKGROUND CHECK

The Church of the Covenant requires a criminal background check prior to employment.

EMPLOYMENT AT WILL

The Church of the Covenant (“employer”) has the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause or advance notice, except for those employees whose employment relationship is defined by the *Book of Order*. The employee has the right to terminate the employment relationship at any time with or without cause or advance notice, except for those employees whose employment relationship is defined by the *Book of Order*. This employment at will relationship will remain in effect throughout the employee's employment with the church unless it is specifically modified by an express written agreement.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The church is committed to equal opportunity for all qualified persons, without regard to race, color, national origin, veteran status, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, age, or any other basis protected by law. This applies to all employment practices, including hiring, promotions, training, disciplinary action, termination, and benefits. We expect all employees to show respect and sensitivity toward all other employees, and to demonstrate a commitment to the church's equal opportunity objectives. Employees who experience or observe a violation of this policy should report it immediately to their supervisor or the Personnel Committee.

SUPERVISOR

Each employee’s supervisor will be identified by name and title in documentation provided to the employee.

EMPLOYMENT OF MINORS

Employees who are not at least 18 years old may be required to provide a valid work permit before being allowed to work. The employment of minors is restricted by the terms and conditions of the work permit, as well as by the provisions of state and federal law.

EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES

Relatives of employees will receive the same consideration as any other applicant for a job opening as long as there is no conflict of interest or management problem of supervision that cannot be resolved. Relatives will not be accorded preferential treatment in employment matters.

VOLUNTEER TIME

Employees who wish to volunteer assistance to church-related groups or community activities must do so on personal time. To avoid conflicts of interest, the Nominating Committee may choose not to nominate employees as elected members of committees or councils.

SECTION II: Personnel Status

EMPLOYMENT DEFINITIONS

Exempt Employees—exempt employees are exempt (by virtue of job content and compensation) from the minimum wage and the overtime provisions of state and federal law and are therefore not eligible for overtime pay. To qualify as an exempt employee, an employee must meet all of the qualifications required by [state](#) and [federal](#) law.

Nonexempt Employees—nonexempt employees are eligible to receive overtime pay, if applicable, subject to the minimum wage and overtime requirements in accordance with the provisions of state and federal law.

Full-Time Employment—40 hours per week.

Part-Time Employment—employees are considered to be regular part-time employees when their terms of employment hours of work each work week are less than the definition of full-time employment stated above.

Temporary Employment—a temporary employee works under a contract defining terms and duties of his or her assignment.

Interim Employment—interim employees may be either exempt or non-exempt and fulfill certain defined roles as contracted until a regular replacement is found.

INTRODUCTORY PERIOD

The first ninety (90) days of employment is an introductory period giving the employee and employer an opportunity to evaluate interest and qualifications for the position under actual working conditions. At the end of the first ninety (90) days, the Supervisor (in partnership with the Personnel Committee) shall conduct a written performance review with the employee. Satisfactorily completing the Introductory Period is not a guarantee of continuing employment for any length of time.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Employees are expected to work their planned schedules. However, the church understands that because of illness or emergency an employee may be unable to come to work. Employees who are unable to report to work for any reason must notify their supervisor directly as soon as possible but not more than ninety minutes after the work day was scheduled to begin. It is the responsibility of the employee to keep his or her supervisor informed on a daily basis during a short-term absence and **may be asked** to provide medical verification if absence exceeds three days. The church values punctuality and regular attendance. Employees who show a pattern of unreliable attendance will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. An employee absent from work for two consecutive workdays without authorization by the supervisor shall be presumed to have voluntarily resigned.

WORK SCHEDULES

The full-time workday is an 8-hour day. Office hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The office is covered by support staff during those hours. Employees may have different hours as defined in their job description or other written document. Non-exempt and part-time employees will not work overtime hours without the express written approval of their supervisor. The daily schedule includes a 30-minute break for lunch.

WORK RECORDS

Employees shall keep accurate time records of all time worked; this includes time worked during lunch or off premises. For payroll and personnel records every employee shall submit to their supervisor, on a regular basis as defined by the supervisor and not less than monthly, a record of hours worked and time off. Employees who fail to complete and submit such records will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

Fairness to the Church and to other employees may occasionally require discipline to be imposed, as determined by the supervisor and/or Personnel Committee. The following are set forth only as examples of reasons for disciplinary action:

Job Performance—employees may be disciplined, up to and including termination, for poor job performance, as determined by the supervisor. Examples of poor job performance include (but are not limited to):

- unacceptable work quality or quantity;
- excessive absenteeism, tardiness, or abuse of meal privileges;
- failure to follow instructions or to adhere to church policies and procedures;
- rudeness, or lack of cooperation.

Misconduct—employees may also be disciplined, up to and including possible termination, for misconduct. Examples of misconduct include (but are not limited to):

- insubordination: refusal to carry out assigned tasks;
- abuse, misuse, theft, or the unauthorized possession or removal of church property or the personal property of others.
- falsifying or making a material omission on church records, reports, or other documents, including payroll, personnel, and employment records;
- divulging confidential information to unauthorized persons;
- disorderly conduct on church property or while serving the church off-site in an official capacity, including fighting or attempted bodily injury, the use of profane, abusive or threatening language or possession of a weapon;
- violation of any law adversely affecting the church, or conviction in court of any crime which may cause the employee to be regarded as unsuitable for continued employment;
- violation of the church's policies on firearms and alcohol, drugs, and controlled substances;
- falsifying one's own time record or the time record of another employee.

TERMINATION

All conditions for termination of employment shall be compatible with the applicable provisions of the Form of Government and the Rules of Discipline of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Termination procedures shall be implemented without discrimination based on race, color, gender, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, marital status, ordination status or any other basis protected by law.

Voluntary Resignation— a termination that is initiated by the employee. In the case of voluntary resignation, it is encouraged that two weeks' written notice (or as otherwise required) will be given to the supervisor, with copies to the Personnel Committee.

Immediate Discharge for Cause—an involuntary termination that is initiated by the employer due to reasons of performance or conduct. The decision for immediate discharge shall be made as

determined by the supervisor. The staff person shall have the opportunity to appeal the discharge and be heard by designees of the Personnel Committee, which will support or overturn the action of the supervisor regarding immediate discharge.

Involuntary Termination—termination that is initiated by the employer for reasons other than a reduction of work force or immediate discharge for cause. All decisions in matters regarding staff termination shall be made in writing by the supervisor, with copies to the Personnel Committee. If termination is immediate, one-half month's pay shall be provided by the church.

Reduction of Work Force—termination because of reduction in the personnel budget is at the discretion of the Session. Written notice of such separation will come from the Session after consultation with the Personnel Committee. One month's notice shall be given to the employee when reasonably possible. When notice is given, Separation Allowance will be given as determined by the Personnel Committee on a prorated basis for full and partial years of continuous service to the Church as follows:

Separation Allowance for Continuous Employment:

Years of Service Months of Separation Allowance

0-4 years ½ month's salary and 1 month medical & pension benefits

5-9 years 1 month's salary and 1 month medical & pension benefits

10+ years 2 month's salary and 2 months medical & pension benefits

Compensation will be provided for unused vacation time in the current year. No compensation will be provided for unused continuing education time, unused continuing education allowance or unused sick pay benefit.

PERSONNEL RECORDS

It is important that the Church always has current information on all employees. The supervisor is to be informed immediately of any changes in personal information maintained on an employee's data form. Upon written request to the supervisor, the employee will be allowed to review his or her own personnel records that have been used to determine qualifications for employment, promotion, compensation, termination, or other disciplinary action. Employees may request the supervisor to add information to their files.

SECTION III: COMPENSATION

PAY PERIOD

Employees generally are paid on the fifteenth and last day of each month through a third-party payroll provider. Employees will be required to have their pay directly deposited into a bank account.

WAGE AND SALARY REVIEWS

Position compensation shall be reviewed annually by the Personnel Committee based upon information on job performance, cost-of-living changes, adjustment of schedules, changes in duties and responsibilities, and may include salary information on comparable positions in the Presbytery of the Western Reserve and possibly other Presbyteries or not-for-profit organizations in the city where the employee works. A compensation review does not imply an automatic change in wages for the current position holder.

PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

Any deduction from an employee's paycheck other than a deduction required by law must be authorized in writing by the employee. Paycheck records itemize amounts that have been withheld. Questions about deductions are to be directed to the supervisor. The church complies with applicable state and federal laws regarding the garnishment and assignment of wages. Adjustments to an employee's pay will be made as quickly as possible after verification with deductions required by law being deferred until the next pay period.

SECTION IV: BENEFITS

VACATION

Exempt employees receive vacation per year as stated in their job description or other written document. Non-exempt full-time employees receive vacation per year as follows:

500 Hours or more in the 1st calendar years ~~6-12 months~~ – 5 business days/year

1-5 years – 10 business days/year

6-10 years – 15 business days/year

11+ years – 20 business days/year

Any year in which an employee works less than 500 hours is not counted as year of service

For the purpose of calculating vacation for part-time, non-exempt employees, vacation time will be prorated according to hours worked. ~~An employee's service anniversary corresponds to the month and day the employee was hired.~~ Vacation requests must be made in writing to the supervisor at least ten business days before the date requested. Requests will be evaluated on an equal basis, giving consideration to overall staffing needs of the Church. Supervisors will coordinate with employees to provide for necessary coverage during the employee's absence.

Vacation days are not cumulative. Earned vacation days **not used by the end of the calendar year** ~~employee's service anniversary~~ will be forfeited unless special permission has been requested and granted in writing by the Personnel Committee Moderator or supervisor. Vacation will not be considered as hours worked for the calculation of overtime. Employees who are terminated for any reason will be compensated for unused vacation as prorated to length of service at their current rate

of pay.

Personal Days: Full-time employees except clergy receive two personal days per year. Personal days must be requested in writing and approved by the supervisor. Personal days are earned from anniversary date to anniversary date and may not be taken until the employee has completed six (6) months of consecutive employment. These days may not be carried forward but must be used within the anniversary year earned. There is no pay in lieu of Personal Days or for days not used.

PAID HOLIDAYS

The Church observes the following paid holidays:

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Monday after Easter
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day
Friday after Thanksgiving
Christmas Day
Day after Christmas

General provisions applicable to holiday pay:

- Holidays will be observed on the calendar day designated and published in advance by the Manager of Finance and Operations.
- If a holiday falls during a full-time employee's approved vacation period, the employee will receive holiday pay, and will not be charged for a vacation day on the day the holiday is observed.
- Employees on leave of absence for any reason are not eligible for holiday pay on holidays that are observed during the period they are on leave.
- Holidays will not count as hours worked for the calculation of overtime.
- Part-time employees are eligible for holiday pay only when the holiday falls on their regularly scheduled workday.
- Other than when using approved vacation time, employees must work the scheduled work day preceding and following the holiday in order to receive holiday pay unless the employee receives permission from his/her supervisor to be absent.
- If a holiday falls on a Sunday, the Monday following shall be observed as the paid holiday. If Christmas Day falls on a Sunday, the Monday and Tuesday following shall be observed as paid holidays.

PAID SICK LEAVE

Paid sick leave benefits may be used in the case of personal illness or injury, to reduce unpaid time during leave of absence per provisions below, or to attend to illness or injury of parent, spouse, child, or domestic partner. Sick leave to care for ill family members is subject to all policies that apply to employee sick leave, **including medical documentation.**

Years of Service Completed – Sick Days Allotted

~~0-6 months – No sick days earned~~

500 Hours or more in the 1st calendar years

7-12 months – 5 business days

2+ years – 10 business days/year

For the purpose of calculating time allowances for paid sick days for part-time, non-exempt employees, beginning with the fourth month after their hire paid sick days will be earned and accumulated based on the hours normally worked during a week by that employee.

Sick leave days are cumulative up to 30 days. Unused sick pay benefits may not be used for additional vacation, and employees will not be paid for unused sick pay benefits upon termination of employment. In addition, sick pay will not be considered as hours worked for the calculation of overtime.

Employees who receive sick pay benefits ~~may~~ **will** be asked to provide medical verification ~~when absences exceed three days~~, and absences of more than 3 working days may be subject to the Church's leave of absence policy (described below).

LEAVES OF ABSENCE WITH PAY

Bereavement Leave—Following consultation with the supervisor, all full-time and regular part-time employees will be eligible for three days, with pay, to arrange and/or attend the funeral of an immediate family member (examples include spouse, parent/guardian, parent-in-law, grandparent, child by marriage or adoption, domestic partner, sibling, grandchild).

Employees who desire more than three days away from work may request earned sick leave and/or vacation time, or a personal leave of absence, subject to the provisions of the Church's leave of absence policy.

Jury Duty—A leave of absence shall be granted for jury duty. The supervisor should be notified as far as possible in advance of the start of jury duty, such as at a time a summons is received. If an employee has been summoned to jury duty and is not required to report for jury duty on any given day or not required to remain at the court house for a complete business day, he or she is expected to report to work. The employee serving jury duty will be paid for up to the first five days of jury service. While an employee is on paid jury duty leave, any compensation from the court (for up to the first five days of jury duty) is to be submitted in full to the Church. If an employee is called to jury duty at a time that would unreasonably interfere with normal business operations, the supervisor may direct the employee to request that the required service be rescheduled for a later date that would be more convenient for the Church.

Maternity/Paternity Leave—Employees may receive up to ten weeks of leave at their current salary and benefits for the birth or adoption of a child. Leave must be taken within the first three months following the birth or adoption and cannot be taken intermittently.

Study Leave/Training Leave—Study leave is granted to eligible employees according to the terms of their job description or other documentation given to the employee. Requests to use study leave shall be submitted to the supervisor at least thirty days prior to the beginning of the proposed leave.

LEAVES OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY

Medical Leave—a leave of absence, without pay, for an employee's illness, disability, medical conditions or for pregnancy and childbirth. A request for Medical Leave will be considered by the supervisor in consultation with the Personnel Committee. Approval will be based on the facts and circumstances surrounding each individual request. Employees shall present a health care provider's written statement that certifies the need for a leave and estimates the length of time the employee will be unable to work due to the disability. At any time during a Medical Leave of absence, an employee may be asked to provide medical evidence of disability.

A request for Medical Leave for more than five days to care for a seriously ill child, parent, spouse or domestic partner must be accompanied by a physician's written statement that certifies the need for the relative's care and estimates the length of time the employee will be unable to work due to the disability of the child, parent, spouse or domestic partner.

Although the Church is not able to guarantee reinstatement in all cases, ordinarily an employee on Medical Leave who returns to work immediately following the end of an approved leave with a health care provider's written release verifying that the employee is able to safely perform the assigned duties will be returned to the former job classification if an opening exists or, if there is no such opening, the employee will be considered for a comparable position if one is available.

All accrued paid sick leave benefits or vacation days must be used prior to unpaid Medical Leave.

Personal Leave—a leave of absence, without pay, for a compelling personal reason that is not medically related including a leave for a family-related emergency. An employee who has completed at least one year of continuous service may submit a written request for a Personal Leave, without pay, for any length of time up to a maximum of four months in any 12-month period.

A request for Personal Leave will be considered by the supervisor in consultation with the Personnel Committee. Approval will be based on the facts and circumstances surrounding each individual request.

All accrued paid sick leave benefits or vacation days must be used prior to unpaid Personal Leave.

Although the Church is not able to guarantee reinstatement in all cases, ordinarily an employee on Personal Leave who returns to work immediately following the end of an approved leave will be returned to the former job classification if an opening exists or, if there is no such opening, the employee will be considered for a comparable position if one is available.

Military Leave of Absence—a leave of absence shall be granted to employees who are ordered to active military service as a member of the Reserves or National Guard for a periodic training or service.

General Provisions for Leaves of Absence

1. All leaves of absence must be approved in advance, in writing, by the supervisor and Pastor/Head of Staff. Requests for leaves of absence of 30 days or more shall also be subject to approval by the Personnel Committee.
2. Failure to return to work on the first work day following the expiration of an approved leave of absence may be considered a voluntary termination.
3. Coverage under the Church's group insurance plan will be continued on the following basis: a) for

the first 60 days of an approved unpaid leave of absence, the Church will continue to contribute to premiums as if the employee were actively at work; b) after 60 days the Church's group insurance plan will determine eligibility for coverage. *(Subject to change if our benefits structure changes.)*

4. Employees will not accrue length of continuous service while on leave.

5. Employees on leave of absence will be subject to lay off on the same basis as employees who are actively at work.

6. Employees on leave of absence must communicate with their supervisor on a regular basis, at least once a month, regarding their status and anticipated return to work date.

7. Employees who falsify the reason for their leave of absence will be subject to termination.

8. A request for an extension of a leave of absence must be made in writing prior to the expiration date of the original leave and, when appropriate, must be accompanied by a health care provider's written statement that certifies the need for the extension.

SOCIAL SECURITY

All non-clergy employees are covered by Social Security and the employee's share of the tax is withheld from the wages.

MEDICAL and PENSION BENEFITS

Employees may be enrolled in the Presbyterian Pension and Medical Plan, provided they meet Board of Pensions qualifications.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE

Non-ordained employees are automatically covered by Workers' Compensation Insurance at the time they are hired. The Church pays 100% of the premiums for this valuable coverage. The injured employee must report any work-related injury or illness to the supervisor **immediately** ~~as soon as possible~~, regardless of how minor it may be. **The supervisor will fill out the personal injury report and submit it to the Manager of Financial Operations (MFO).**

The Church of the Covenant reserves the right to change benefits at any time as permitted by law. Notice shall be provided to the employee of any changes in benefits prior to the change.

SECTION V: TERMINATION POLICY

Upon termination of employment, the employee shall surrender to their supervisor all access and property in their possession, such as keys, access codes, parking tags, books, documents, files, and the like. The supervisor shall change any access codes, such as building access codes, computer access codes, and the like. Personal property shall be removed from the employee workspace. Upon termination, all expense reports shall be filed such that a final accounting can be determined.

The Personnel Committee shall be notified as soon as reasonably possible in the event of a termination, voluntary or involuntary, and in no situation less than the next business day.

In the event of an involuntary termination where safety may be an issue, the supervisor is encouraged to notify and may request presence of a University Circle Police Officer.

SECTION VI: Training and Development

POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Each employee will receive a position description prior to hire or if reassigned indicating areas of responsibility. Position descriptions will be reviewed with employees at least annually and amended as needed. Each employee will be given a position description. This description will include:

- a) position title
- b) purpose
- c) responsibilities
- d) accountability
- e) declaration of part-time or full-time status
- f) declaration of exempt or non-exempt status

The Church of the Covenant Personnel Committee reserves the right to revise and update an employee's job description as it deems necessary and appropriate, and with the knowledge and participation of the employee.

Each employee will sign an acknowledgement of receipt of a position description.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Letter of Hire: The Pastor/Head of Staff shall issue a letter of hire. Such letter shall include the employee's position, rate of compensation, starting date, hours of work, assigned supervisor, benefits (e.g. vacation, sick pay, medical), and orientation period. Copies of the letter are sent to the Personnel Committee, and included in the employee file.

Orientation: The MFO, in collaboration with the Pastor/Head of Staff meets with new employees to welcome them to the Church of the Covenant, review the Church of the Covenant mission statement which is to be a guide as they complete their job responsibilities, and share the expectation that the employee will act in a manner which fosters positive relationships with other staff, members, participants, and guests of the Church of the Covenant.

The MFO, Pastor/Head of Staff, or appropriate supervisor will introduce the new employee to fellow staff and review the *Personnel Manual* with the employee. The employee will then be under the direction of a supervisor who will orient the employee and provide ongoing supervision.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

All employees shall undergo written performance evaluations annually according to a process determined by the Personnel Committee. New employees will receive a written performance evaluation after ninety (90) days of service. Employees are expected to complete the staff performance self-evaluation form in preparation for meeting with the supervisor and/or members of the Personnel Committee. A satisfactory performance evaluation does not guarantee a salary increase nor does it alter, modify, or amend the at-will employment relationship between the employee and the Church. Prior to ninety (90) days of service, employees may request additional input or training from their supervisor.

SECTION VII: GRIEVANCE GUIDELINES

It is expected that problems arising from the work place will be discussed directly with the employee's supervisor. In the event an employee feels the problem is not resolved, the employee has the right to file a grievance with the Pastor/Head of Staff. If a workable solution cannot be reached, the employee may appeal to the Personnel Committee.

The Church of the Covenant will not knowingly permit any retaliation against any employee filing a grievance in good faith.

SECTION VIII: EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

DILIGENCE

Employees are required to read and abide by the Church's Policy Statement on Sensitivity and Gender Issues and Child Protection Policy. These are available as an addendum to this manual.

Employees must perform personal tasks for themselves and others on personal time. Church resources and equipment are for Church uses exclusively.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Employees are expected to devote their best efforts and attention to the performance of their jobs. Employees are expected to use good judgment, to adhere to high ethical standards, and to avoid situations that create an apparent or potential conflict between the employee's personal interests and the interests of the Church of the Covenant. A conflict of interest exists when the employee's loyalties or actions are divided between the Church of the Covenant's interests and those of another, such as another church member, supplier, client, or other institution or organization. Both the fact and the appearance of a conflict of interest should be avoided. Employees unsure as to whether a certain transaction, activity, gift or relationship constitutes a conflict of interest should discuss it with the supervisor and/or the Personnel Committee. *Church members who are also employees need to be sensitive to potential conflicts of interest in church-related discussions, such as serving in both staffing and moderating roles, voting in Covenant meetings where the vote has staffing considerations, and similar situations.*

ALCOHOL, DRUGS, AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

The use, sale, transfer, possession, or being under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs when on duty, on Church property, or in Church vehicles is prohibited. Employees who are on medications, whether prescribed or over the counter, that may impact their ability to perform their duties shall inform their supervisor. "Under the influence" for the purpose of this policy, is defined as being unable to perform work in a safe or productive manner, and/or being in a physical or mental

condition which creates a risk to the safety and well-being of the affected employee, other co-workers, the public, or Church property.

Employees who violate these policies are subject to termination of employment.

FIREARMS

Firearms are prohibited in the church building or in any church contracted vehicle.

ACCESS TO CHURCH PROPERTY

The supervisor is to have access at all times to Church property, as well as to records, documents, and files. The supervisor reserves the right to access employee offices, work stations, filing cabinets, desks, e-mail, computer files, and any other Church property at his or her discretion, with or without advance notice or consent, except for files on sexual misconduct currently under investigation.

COMPUTER AND INTERNET ACCESS, USE, AND SECURITY

All information technology equipment (“computer/s” or “device/s”), as well as information temporarily or permanently stored or transmitted with the aid of computers, remain the sole and exclusive property of the Church of the Covenant and are subject to access, copying, and use by the Church of the Covenant in any manner it deems appropriate. Employees should not assume any privacy right or interest in any information that is temporarily or permanently stored on the computer, nor should employees anticipate receiving a proprietary interest in any such information.

In some cases, confidential and proprietary information of the Church of the Covenant may be accessible on or from the computer. Employees are expected to take all steps necessary to protect the Church of the Covenant’s proprietary and confidential interests in such information and not allow or cause the dissemination, improper use, or exploitation of such information. Employees should not allow or facilitate access to computers of the Church of the Covenant by outside individuals or unauthorized individuals. In addition, no data stored on a computer of the Church of the Covenant may be removed, downloaded or transferred without the approval of the supervisor.

In addition, employees shall not add or load any software to a computer without the proper approval of the supervisor or named designee nor should they use a computer for any improper or unauthorized purpose. Inappropriate purposes include, without limitation, downloading proprietary information of others, engaging in inappropriate disclosures or defamatory communications, or engaging in or facilitating competitive activities or activities that are tortious because they violate or may tend to violate the rights of third parties, the Church of the Covenant, or co-workers.

- Use of the Internet and its services must demonstrate genuine business needs. Personal and non-business use of the Internet with Church equipment is permitted only with the approval of the supervisor. Employees may not post on social media on behalf of the Church unless authorized to do so.
- Sending or receiving sexually-oriented material or images, or other inappropriate content

using church electronic resources and/or while on church premises is strictly prohibited and is grounds for immediate termination. Unsolicited inappropriate material should be blocked and deleted.

- Employees shall not publicly disclose internal Church information via the Internet or otherwise if that information might adversely affect public or member relations, or the Church's public image. No employee shall publicly disclose internal Church information unless authorized to do so. Internal Church information shall include but not be limited to all password protected information or otherwise secured information. If you are unsure, then ask your supervisor.
- To properly maintain and manage information assets in support of Church business, the supervisor and/or Personnel Committee reserves the right to examine all data stored in or transmitted by the Church's computers and related facilities. Therefore, users should not have expectations of privacy in the use of Church-provided electronic services.

TELEPHONE / CELL PHONE USE

Employees are expected to exhibit good judgment and common sense when placing or receiving personal calls during business hours, whether using Church or personal telephones. Personal calls, texts or similar communications should be made on personal time. Long-distance calls that are not a function of Church business shall not be placed on Church phones or charged to Church accounts.

BUSINESS EXPENSE REPORTING

Approved credit-charged expenses shall be charged on Church-issued charge cards. Employees will be reimbursed for all business-related expenses, approved by the supervisor within budgetary limits, upon submission of accurate and receipted expense reports to the MFO. Employees are required to submit these reports within 15 days to ensure proper accounting and prompt reimbursement. The MFO will instruct staff on proper reporting of expenses and submission of reimbursement requests.

SECTION IX: GENERAL INFORMATION

PARKING

Employees will be issued a parking tag for one vehicle and are entitled to park in designated spaces in the front or back lots of the Church. Employees park personal vehicles at their own risk and the Church will not be responsible for theft or damage to any vehicles. The Church will not be responsible for personal property left in vehicles that is lost, damaged, stolen, or destroyed.

~~INCLEMENT WEATHER CHURCH CLOSINGS~~

~~The Church of the Covenant will determine correlate weather-related closings or cancellations on a case by case basis. -according to the Cleveland Municipal School District.~~ All announcements of ~~weather-related~~ cancellations will be posted prominently on the Church's website home page. A notice of cancellation means that all Church-related meetings and activities are postponed and the office is not open for business.

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS

Memos to explain or announce Church policy and procedures, changes in relevant state and federal laws, as well as information that will enhance the function of the staff, will be circulated through staff meeting announcements, e-mail, **text** and/or inter-office mail to all employees in a timely fashion. Employees are required regularly to review communications.

Employees who violate any Church employment policy may be subject to termination.

EMPLOYEE STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Church of the Covenant's Personnel Policy Manual. I understand that it provides guidelines and summary information about the Church's personnel policies, procedures, benefits, and rules of conduct. I also understand that it is my responsibility to read, understand, become familiar with, and comply with the standards that have been established. I further understand that the Church reserves the right to modify, supplement, rescind, or revise any provision, benefit, or policy from time to time.

I also acknowledge that the Church has the right to terminate the employment relationship for employees at any time, with or without cause or advance notice, and that this employment-at-will relationship will remain in effect throughout my employment with the Church unless otherwise specified by the *Book of Order* or in an express written agreement signed by me and the Church of the Covenant and that the statements in this manual do not constitute a contract or representation of employment.

I further acknowledge that this employment-at-will relationship may not be modified by any oral or implied agreement.

I have read and will abide by the Church's Policy Statement on Sensitivity and Gender Issues (Addendum A) and Child Protection Policy (Addendum B).

Employee's Name (*Please Print*)

Employee's Signature

Date

Addendum A

POLICY STATEMENT ON SENSITIVITY AND GENDER ISSUES

It is the policy of the Church of The Covenant that all employees and attendees should be sensitive to the needs and boundaries of others. Toward that end, all employees and attendees should be able to attend Church or Church related activities in an environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and abuse. Consistent with this policy, the Church supports the policies of the Presbytery of the Western Reserve with regard to Equal Employment opportunity and prohibition against harassment and abuse.

Church of the Covenant prohibits unlawful discrimination in hiring, firing and employment, and prohibits unlawful harassment of employees because of race, color, age, national origin, disability, gender, and sexual orientation. This includes discrimination and all forms of harassment by co-workers, supervisors, staff members, guests, parishioners, teachers, volunteers, and other third parties.

Unlawful harassment includes such conduct as slurs, jokes, or any other verbal or physical contact that:

1. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or attendance;
3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's opportunities or participation in the Church environment.

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, demeaning remarks, sexual jokes, sexual gestures, and sexual conduct of a verbal or physical nature including unwelcome touching, propositions or advances;
2. Submission to such conduct is an explicit or implicit term or condition of an individual's employment or participation in a Church related activity;
3. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting the individual.

Church of The Covenant policy prohibits conditions which create or contribute to a hostile work environment. In addition to that already mentioned above, examples of offending material include pornographic material, suggestive calendars, magazines and visual jokes. Similarly, offensive or derogatory references to race, lifestyle choices, age, or ethnic origin are prohibited.

Church of The Covenant policy prohibits the abuse of a child. This policy includes abuse involving sexual activity, unwelcome touching, and endangering of children. The policy also includes

physical or mental injury which is not accidental, and which threatens a child's health and welfare.

Anyone with concerns arising under this policy is invited and welcomed to discuss those concerns with the Head of Staff, Church Administrator, or the Personnel Committee. To the greatest extent possible, any concerns will be treated in a confidential manner. Limited disclosure and a written statement may be necessary in order to complete a thorough investigation of the situation.

If, after appropriate investigation, the Head of Staff, Church Administrator, or Personnel Committee concludes there has been a violation of this policy, prompt corrective and/or disciplinary action will be taken. Note: If the investigation results in a finding of an intentionally false accusation, appropriate action will be also be taken.

During an investigation the Church may suspend employees with or without pay.

These are referenced documents that are available in the Church Administrator's office:

Presbytery of the Western Reserve – Policy and Procedures for Ethical Conduct by
Persons in Positions of Religious Leadership

Presbytery of the Western Reserve – Procedure and Preventive Measures Regarding
Sexual Misconduct by persons in Positions of Religious Leadership

Addendum B

Church of the Covenant Child Protection Policy

I. Introduction

“People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the children come to me; do not stop them; for it is such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it. And he took them up in his arms, and laid his hands on them, and blessed them.” Mark 10:13-16

It is clear that Jesus is highlighting role of the faith and openness of children in the church. He also points out their vulnerability and dependence on God. In the way Jesus *takes them up in his arms* he illustrates the call of the church to protect children in their vulnerability. As followers of Christ, the members of the Church of the Covenant regard children as a gift from God and believe firmly the kingdom of God belongs to them. We resolve to protect children in their vulnerability and also to learn from them as we all grow in faith.

Tragically, churches have not always been safe places for children. Child sexual abuse and exploitation occur in churches, both large and small, urban and rural. The problem cuts across all economic, cultural, and racial lines. It is real, and as much as we do not like to think about abusive and hurtful things happening in the church, it is clear that it is out duty as the church to guard and protect the children, youth, church staff and volunteers who participate in our ministries.

II. Purpose

The purpose of the Child Protection Policy of the Church of the Covenant is to:

- A. Safeguard the children and youth if our church from abuse and neglect;
- B. Respond to all allegations in a fair and compassionate manner;
- C. Protect church staff and volunteers from potential false allegations of abuse;
- D. Limit the extent of our church’s legal risk and liability; and
- E. Strengthen our Christian educational children and youth programs and ministries.

When referring to children and youth, “children” includes infants through eighth grade, and “youth” includes young people in grades nine through twelve.

The policy covers all events and activities sponsored by the Church of the Covenant, both on and off-site. The policy does not apply to activities on church premises sponsored by groups not related to the church. The church expects the sponsoring group to implement guidelines and rules for their event.

III. Selection and Screening of Church Staff and Volunteers

In an effort to create a safe environment that is free of child and youth abuse, each staff and volunteer person will be screened and trained on child protection policies and procedures.

- A. Each person considered for church staff positions working with children should:
 - a. Be 18 years of age possessing outstanding skills and maturity
 - b. Complete reference background checks, including a criminal background check
 - c. Complete a thorough application process including an interview by a member CYF ministries committee.

- B. Each person considered to work with children and youth as a volunteer should:
 - a. Be 18 years of age possessing outstanding skills and maturity. Younger volunteers, while acceptable, should not take the place of an adult volunteer or staff.
 - b. Have been a member of the Covenant, or have been actively involved in church activities for a minimum of six months. This allows time for the pastoral staff and CYF committee to appropriately evaluate suitability for participation in children and youth ministries.
 - c. Complete a volunteer application.

Before beginning work with either children or youth, each staff member and volunteer will sign a statement that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the Child Protection Policy. The Church will keep confidential all information in the application selection process.

IV. Supervision

To ensure a safe environment for children and youth, and limit the potential for false allegations of abuse, the Church will implement the following practices for supervision:

- A. With regard to Sunday School classroom, and related, activities:
 - a. At least two adults should be present at all times. When two adults are not available, classes will be combined.
 - b. Persons younger than 18 may not count as a second adult.
 - c. Bathrooms should be supervised by visual and sound observation as appropriate. A second adult must be present in the event a child or youth requires assistance.
 - d. Diaper changing shall occur in open areas in the presence of others.
 - e. Doors and windows shall be clear and free of material that obstructs a clear view of a classroom space.

- f. Parents should be discouraged from allowing children to travel freely and unsupervised throughout the church.
 - g. The Living Room shall be designated as the pick-up location for children in grades Kindergarten through eighth at the conclusion of Sunday School activities. At least two adults shall be present.
 - h. Children and youth shall never be left unattended.
- B. With regard to specific non-classroom activities:
- a. At least two adults should be present for all non-classroom activities, including trips, retreats, lock-ins, and all other activities away from the church building. When two adults are not possible, activities shall be canceled.
 - b. There should be at least two adults of each gender present for co-ed overnight activities. At single gender overnight night events at least two adults should be present.
 - c. In cases where two adults are not present for each sleeping room, no adults shall stay alone in a room with children and youth.
 - d. Overnight activities should include precautions such as hall monitoring, periodic room checks, etc.
 - e. Rules for providing transportation shall include at minimum:
 - i. Drivers shall be at least 21 years of age.
 - ii. Drivers shall possess a valid state driver's license.
 - iii. Drivers shall provide proof of valid insurance.
 - iv. All drivers shall be accompanied by at least two children.

V. Response to Allegations of Abuse

As caring Christians we are committed to protect and advocate for children and youth participating in the life of the church. The church is entrusted to an emotionally safe, spiritually grounded, healthy environment for children, youth and adults in which they are protected from abuse. It is our legal and moral responsibility to report suspected abuse whenever it comes to our attention regardless of where that abuse takes place. We shall report suspected abuse, to stop potentially existing abuse and to prevent further abuse. To report abuse is to witness to the world of the love and justice of God. Reporting abuse is a form of ministering to the needs of those crying out for help. If abuse occurs, it is our intention to act as an advocate for all affected persons, providing support, information, assistance, and intervention. We seek to provide a supportive atmosphere, offering both objective and empathy as we seek to create a climate in which healing can take place.

If abuse is suspected by, observed by or disclosed to a volunteer and or church staff member that person shall report the incident immediately to the pastor. If the accused is the pastor, see information below.

- A. Immediately notify the proper authorities depending on the location of the suspected abuse, usually Cuyahoga County Children and Family Services, (216) 696-KIDS. This is a requirement of law. Do not attempt an investigation. Do not ask questions beyond those necessary to determine reasonable cause to believe the abuse has occurred. This should be left to the professional who are familiar with these cases.
- B. Notify the parents of the victim and take whatever steps necessary to assure safety of the child or youth until the parents arrive. It is necessary to emphasize that the proper authorities must be notified even if the parent does not want the incident to be reported.
- C. If one or both parents is the alleged abuser, consult with Cuyahoga County Children and Family Services. Follow their advice about notification of parents.
- D. If the alleged abuser is the pastor, contact the clerk of session and the Executive Presbyterian of the Presbytery of the Western Reserve. The associate pastor should be notified.
- E. Take any allegations seriously and reach out to the victim and the victim's family. Showing care and support help to prevent further hurt. Extend whatever pastoral resources are needed. Remember that the care and safety of the victim is the first priority.
- F. After having reported the suspected abuse to the proper authorities the incident is to be reported immediately to the church's insurance company.
- G. A written report of the basic information shall be kept to ensure continued ministry to, and advocacy for victims and others involved. A form for this purpose shall be available in the church office. The report shall be brief and contain only factual information relevant to the situation. It shall be filed in a secure place in order to ensure confidentiality. It shall be written in ink or typed to prevent it from being changed.
- H. Immediately, yet with dignity and respect for the sacred worth of the accused, remove the accused from further involvement with children and youth.
- I. Once the proper authorities have been contacted and the safety of the child or youth is secured, the pastor or other designated person may tell the accused that a report has been made. If the accused is a volunteer or paid staff of the church that person shall be relieved temporarily of his or her duties until the investigation is finished. If the accused is a paid staff person of the church, arrangements should be made to either maintain or suspend his or her income, depending on all circumstances, until the allegations are cleared or substantiated.
- J. Any contact with the media should be handled by a predetermined spokesperson. Care will be taken to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of all involved. The spokesperson should generally convey that the matter is under investigation and any comments would be inappropriate.