

Safety Policy

Unitarian Church of Lincoln

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Church Covenant and Safety Philosophy

Covenant of Right Relations

Within and beyond the walls of the Unitarian Church of Lincoln, we honor the principles and sources of Unitarian Universalism. We covenant to treat one another as we would wish to be treated: with respect, regard for healthy boundaries, accountability, open-mindedness, and equanimity, freely offering our tangible and sustained stewardship and engagement to realize our vision and mission.

We strive to be guided in our thoughts, words and actions by these attributes and the supporting Statements of Intent upon which we have mutually agreed. In day-to-day practice, we covenant to begin our interactions with an assumption of best intentions, to truly listen to one another rather than awaiting our turn to talk, to assure that what is true for each of us is heard and considered, and to share only our own stories, honoring the privacy of others.

Safety Philosophy

Building on the commitments of our congregational covenant of right relations, the safety policies of the Lincoln Unitarian Church are intended to promote the safety and well-being of our friends and members as well as the community at large who may use our facilities. The policies cover a wide range of safety issues including physical safety such as maintaining a safe playground and establishing an emergency evacuation plan as well as risks of a more interpersonal nature. In developing these policies we have strived to balance a confidence that the church is generally a safe place to be because each individual takes responsibility for their own (and their children's) safety and behavior with an acknowledgement that it is prudent to be prepared for infrequent, but real, risks.

These policies are based on the assumption that each member and friend of the church shares in the responsibility for a safe building, grounds and community. This is our community and we each play a role in the creating a safe and healthy space for all of us. All members and friends of the church who may be present in the church at times when there is no employee in charge should feel protective and emboldened to take prudent action if they feel anyone in the church or the church building itself are in danger. If action is taken under this policy, a report should be made as soon as feasible to any of the paid staff, the Executive Committee, or any member of the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees will review the Safety Policy every three years.

I. Incident Reporting Policy

The intent of this policy is to ensure that all significant matters that could be harmful to a congregant or the congregation at large are identified and resolved in an expeditious manner. Such matters will be referred to as "incidents" and are defined as follows:

- A. All significant accidents (whether or not anyone was injured), injuries (whether intentionally inflicted or not), illegal activity, behaviors or concern (to include but not limited to harassment, threatening and assaultive behavior), inappropriate and dangerous use of congregation property and damage of or emergencies related to congregation buildings or grounds.
- B. A separate Incident Reporting Procedure is to be developed to ensure fulfillment of the policies intent.

II. Weapons

- A. No items, concealed or not, that can be reasonably interpreted as weapons may be brought into the building, except by uniformed law enforcement personnel in the performance of their duties. Notice of this policy will be posted at the west building entrance.
- B. Hired security will not carry guns.

III. Fire

- A. Wax candles are discouraged. All candles in the building must be closely attended
- B. Fire extinguisher locations are:
 - 1. in the kitchen near the door
 - 2. in the table storage room (in the south sanctuary entry hallway);
 - 3. in the storage closet across from the kitchen (in the north sanctuary entry hallway);
 - 4. in the RGL hallway
 - 5. in the hallway outside the main restrooms
 - 6. in the basement hallway outside the music room
- C. Fire alarm locations are:
 - 1. next to the front door
 - 2. next to the preschool room door
 - 3. in the RGL hallway next to the outer door
 - 4. next to the library door
 - 5. next to the gallery door near the bookstore
 - 6. in the sanctuary next to each outside door
 - 7. in the basement hallway
- D. Locations of the fire alarms and fire extinguishers and the Church's address will be posted:
 - 1. next to the fire extinguishers;
 - 2. near the Administrative Director's office doorway;
 - 3. near the Religious Growth Director's office doorway
 - 4. next to each Fire Exit map in each classroom and in the sanctuary

E. The church's address and Instructions for use of the phone will be posted next to the telephone the Library.

F. If there is a fire anywhere in the building at any time, no one should hesitate to pull the fire alarm to alert all persons who might be present in the church.

IV. Evacuation Plan During Sunday Morning Services

A. Any person who perceives a need to evacuate the church facilities should immediately report to the Audio Visual Operator the danger's

1. nature
2. location

Sunday morning staff and volunteers should be familiar with the detailed evacuation plan, published separately.

B. The Audio Visual Operator will immediately ensure that the danger's nature and location are communicated to:

1. The Sunday Religious Growth & Learning Program Supervisor;
2. The Sunday Service Leader.

C. The Sunday Religious Growth & Learning Program Supervisor will immediately:

1. ensure that the danger's nature and location is communicated to all Classroom Teachers and Assistants.
2. ensure that the Teachers and Assistants
 - a) conduct their classes out the nearest safe and accessible exterior doorway,
 - b) gather their classes at the north side of the church parking lot.

D. The Sunday Service Leader will immediately

1. inform the Auditorium occupants of the nature and location of the danger;
2. inform the Auditorium occupants that the Classroom Teachers and Assistants are evacuating the classes to gather at the north side of the church parking lot;
3. inform the Auditorium occupants how they should divide themselves and move so as to efficiently exit the building from the nearest safe and accessible exterior doorways.

E. Audio Visual Operators will ensure that disabled persons are assisted in evacuating the building.

V. Tornado Response Plan During Sunday Morning Services

A. Any person who becomes aware of an imminent tornado danger to the church facilities should immediately report the danger to an Audio Visual Operator.

B. The Audio Visual Operator will immediately ensure that the danger is communicated to:

1. The Sunday Religious Growth & Learning Program Supervisor;
2. The Sunday Service Leader.

C. The Sunday Religious Growth & Learning Program Supervisor will immediately:

1. ensure that the danger is communicated to all Classroom Teachers and Assistants;
2. ensure that the Teachers and Assistants conduct their classes into Room 7 (the Gathering Place).

- D. The Sunday Service Leader will immediately:
1. inform the Auditorium occupants of the danger;
 2. inform the Auditorium occupants that the Classroom Teachers and Assistants are conducting their classes to gather in Room 7 (the Gathering Place);
 3. inform the Auditorium occupants how parents and guardians (if they desire to do so) may move to join their children in Room 7 (the Gathering Place);
 4. request all remaining Auditorium occupants to move toward the Auditorium's west (interior) wall.
- E. Audio Visual Operators will ensure that disabled persons are assisted in moving toward the west (interior) wall.

VI. Medical Emergency

- A. First Aid kits shall be maintained and placed in:
1. the kitchen;
 2. the men's restroom;
 3. the women's restroom
 4. The church office
 5. the preschool room
- B. Location of First Aid kits shall be posted near the entrances of:
1. next to the fire extinguishers;
 2. near the Administrative Director's office doorway;
 3. near the Room 4 (Religious Growth Director's office) doorway.
 4. next to each Fire Exit map in each classroom and in the sanctuary
- C. The church's address and Instructions for use of the phone will be posted next to the telephone in Room 2 (the Library).
- D. The AED defibrillator is located in the southwest corner of the Auditorium along with instructions for its use. The AED defibrillator is voice directed and will tell you exactly what to do in an emergency. The device is updated and checked a minimum of twice a year. The defibrillator's location will be posted near the entrances of
1. the auditorium.
 2. the kitchen
 3. the Administrative Director's Office
 4. Room 4 (The Religious Growth Director's Office)

VII. Building Access

Regular building users will be given the combination for access to the church keypad entry system. One-time building users will be allowed the temporary use of a one-time combination. The keypad combinations will be changed at least every other year. The Building Committee is charged with facilitating appropriate upgrades to building security.

VIII. Playground

Manufacture age limitations for use of all playground equipment will be visibly posted on or near the equipment.

Parents and guardians are responsible for their children on the playground, unless the children are currently in classes or childcare

IX. Personnel

- A. Before hiring a new adult paid staff person, the Administrative Director will
1. perform a search for the candidate's name on
 - a) the Federal Sex Offender Registry website at www.nspor.gov,
 - b) the Nebraska State Sex Offender Registry.
 2. require that the candidate
 - a) disclose in writing any such criminal convictions; and
 - b) enable the church to obtain records of any such convictions from (at least)
 - i) the Nebraska State Patrol, and
 - ii) the State Patrol from the state in which the candidate most recently resided.
 3. notify the Personnel Committee of any criminal record. The Personnel Committee will determine what type of candidate criminal record might appropriately be considered in a decision offering the position.
 - eg. what types of convictions (property crimes, personal injury crimes, traffic crimes);
 - what level of convictions (felony/misdemeanor, class I, II, III)

This information will not be required from or about personnel whose employment with the church began prior to April 1, 2008.

- B. Before hiring a new paid staff person aged under 19 years, the person or committee authorized to offer the position will
1. obtain at least two references from adults (who are unrelated to the candidate or to each other) attesting to the candidate's demonstrated reliability and respect for other persons' inviolability;
 2. ensure that the candidate has received appropriate training to competently fulfill the position's responsibilities;
 3. determine what type of candidate court record (juvenile or adult) might appropriately be considered in a decision to offer the position (what types of court-determined infractions: property, personal injury, traffic).
 4. require that the candidate disclose in writing any such court record(s).
- C. Before contracting for janitorial services or childcare services, the person or committee authorized to make the contract will either:
1. determine that the service is bonded, or
 2. secure the same information from and about the person providing the service that is required before hiring a new paid staff person.

X. Risk Reduction in the Religious Growth and Learning (RGL) Program for Children and Youth

As part of our covenant with our children, it is the responsibility of all church members to act responsibly and proactively to ensure the safety and well-being of all of the children in the church. The Religious Growth Director (RGD) is responsible for overseeing the well-being of children and youth in RGL activities.

A. Program Leaders

1. The Religious Growth and Learning Committee is charged with developing and maintaining procedures to ensure that volunteer leaders protect the safety and well-being of children in RGL activities. Such procedures will include conducting background checks on trained volunteer leaders.

2. To protect children and youth from exploitation and to protect leaders from false allegations, all RGL programs and activities will be conducted in the presence of either

- a) at least two unrelated adult volunteers aged 19 years or older, or
- b) at least one paid church staff person and one unrelated adult volunteer.

3. The Religious Growth Director will educate all RGL paid staff, contractors, and volunteer leaders concerning the church's safety and risk reduction policies and procedures.

B. Program Content

1. The Religious Growth and Learning Program content will empower our children and youth to protect themselves both within and outside the church.

2. The RGL Program will provide regular opportunities for volunteers, children, and youth and the congregation to learn about interpersonal safety. These will include:

- a) *Our Whole Lives* classes that address personal safety issues;
- b) Additional programming provided at least once a year by the Minister and Religious Growth Director.

C. Overnights: There will be two unrelated adult volunteers or one paid staff and one unrelated volunteer AWAKE during youth overnights.

D. Car Rides: Two unrelated adult volunteers or one paid staff and one unrelated adult volunteer are required to be in the car with youth.

E. Safety Off Church Grounds: When it is a CHURCH SPONSORED activity - two unrelated adult volunteers or one paid staff member and one unrelated adult volunteer will be with youth at all times.

XI. Risk Reduction in the General Church Program

A. The Executive Committee will ensure the publication of the Church's Safety Policy on the church website.

B. The Executive Committee will ensure that periodic training on safety policy is provided for ushers, coffee hosts, and committees, such as AV, Worship and the Membership Umbrella.

C. The Executive Committee will see that Safe Congregations/Right Relations workshop(s) is/are made available to the congregation at least once per year..

D. The Membership Umbrella will ensure that information regarding the Safety Policy is

provided in the UU101 program and the New Member packet.

E. To protect children and youth from exploitation and to protect leaders from false allegations, all church sponsored programs, including children and youth will be conducted in the presence of either

1. at least two unrelated persons aged 19 years or older, or
2. at least one paid church staff person and one unrelated person aged 19 years or older.

XII. Interpersonal Safety

A. Safety Response Team

1. A Safety Response Team will be convened when needed to handle complaints and concerns arising in relation to this policy. The Executive Committee will be familiar with the terms and procedures of the Safe Church Policy.

a) Members of the Safety Response Team will be the five members of the Executive Committee (Minister, President of the Board of Trustees, Vice President, Treasurer, Program Council Chairperson). The Safety Response Team may ask others to serve, depending on need for special competencies.

b) In the event that a complaint concerns a member of the Safety Response Team or a member of the Safety Response Team is unable to participate in ongoing proceedings, the President will appoint a member of the Board to serve. If the complaint involves the President, the Minister will appoint another Board member to serve. If the complaint involves the Minister, the matter will be referred to the Board of Trustees for appropriate action.

c) The Safety Response Team members should not be personally related to each other or to the individuals involved in a particular complaint/incident. In the event that Response Team members are related, one of the related parties shall recuse him/herself and the procedure for adding members outlined above will be followed.

d) All deliberations of the Safety Response Team will be confidential prior to the delivery of any final recommendations, should any recommendations be required. Materials related to Safety Response Team investigations will be treated with care and kept in a secure file. Confidentiality will continue except as needed to implement any recommendations.

e) A 3/5 majority of the Safety Response Team will be necessary to make any recommendation for further action.

f) The Safety Response Team is not required to meet on any regular basis in the absence of specific matters related to the Safe Church Policy.

2. Several approaches may be taken in addressing incidents involving alleged threats to interpersonal safety, including alleged sexual abuse, exploitation, harassment or intimidation:

a) The person feeling threatened can attempt to resolve the matter directly with the accused individual.

b) The individual may report the incident to the Minister or other member of the Safety Response Team, in an effort to resolve the matter informally.

c) If an informal resolution of the complaint does not seem wise, appropriate, possible, or does not succeed, the threatened person or the Executive Team member may request that the Safety Response Team be convened to institute formal proceedings. Formal proceedings shall include the following steps:

i) The Safety Response Team shall gather statements or other information from the individuals involved in the alleged abuse, exploitation, harassment or intimidation, and from others who may have pertinent information, such as qualified professional consultants.

ii) The Safety Response Team shall make determinations and take actions appropriate to resolve the matter. These may include:

a) Finding that there is no evidence that sexual abuse, exploitation, intimidation or harassment occurred.

b) Finding that sexual abuse, exploitation, harassment or intimidation has occurred, and that the appropriate body of the church is called upon to take action accordingly. Such action may include one or more of the following:

1) A formal reprimand, with defined expectations for changed behavior;

2) Recommending or requiring psychological or psychiatric assessment, counseling and/or treatment before further involvement in church activities;

3) Probationary standing, with the terms of the probation clearly defined;

4) Dismissal from employment, authorized volunteer position in the church, and/or right to attend activities in the church.

iii) The Safety Response Team may seek the advice of legal counsel or others to advise it in performing its functions.

d) The Safety Response Team may deem it necessary to request that the accused person and the accuser not participate in church activities until the matter is resolved.

3. A confidential written summary of the Safety Response Team proceedings will be maintained.

4. The person(s) toward whom the alleged inappropriate behavior is directed need not be the person(s) bringing the concern to the Response Team. Moreover, neither consent nor acquiescence will excuse or exonerate inappropriate behavior. At any time the church may initiate or proceed with the formal complaint process.

5. In determining whether alleged conduct constitutes sexual abuse, exploitation, harassment or intimidation, consideration shall be given to the record of the alleged incident(s) as a whole and to the totality of the circumstances, including the context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred.

6. Any person bringing a sexual complaint or assisting in investigating such a complaint will not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment or church membership or affiliation, or otherwise discriminated against or discharged.

7. The decisions of the Safety Response Team are final.

B. Adult Interpersonal Behavior – Appropriate Conduct Policy

1. It is the policy of the Lincoln Unitarian Church to encourage its employees and leaders to nurture safety by being attentive to self-care, education, maintaining appropriate

boundaries, and the importance of referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources. It is important that every church employee and volunteer understand the ways in which their use or misuse of authority may impact others.

2. The interpersonal nature of much of the day-to-day work of the church, including committee work, means that interpersonal disagreements and conflicts are inevitable. These are covered by the congregational covenant of right relations. However, sexual abuse, exploitation, harassment or intimidation of church members, friends or others is unethical behavior and will not be tolerated, within this congregation.

3. A number of avenues are available to resolve all types and severities of interpersonal problems.

a) Individuals are encouraged to take appropriate care of themselves, to be assertive when needing to express their point of view or ask another individual to change his or her behavior.

b) Individuals can and should draw upon their own informal social network within the church to seek advice on how to resolve interpersonal difficulties.

c) Each committee chair, board member and employee, including the minister, is available to support the work of the church, including helping to resolve interpersonal difficulties that interfere with that work. Individuals can consult with any of these church leaders on an informal basis.

d) The Executive Committee is responsible for seeing that the Program Council, committee chairs, board members and employees are familiar with the Safety Policies and know the proper procedures if concerns arise.

e) If informal resolution does not seem wise or appropriate or is ineffective, an individual can contact a member of the Safety Response Team and request advice or assistance. A formal response, as outlined in the Procedures for the Safety Response Team, may be requested.

4. If church staff or volunteers have reasonable cause to believe that a vulnerable adult has been subjected to abuse, neglect or exploitation, they are encouraged to make a report.

i). Adult Protective Services defines elder/vulnerable as "adults age 60 and older and adults with disabilities"

ii) Search online for "Mandatory Reporting Requirements: The Elderly Nebraska" for more information.

C. Children and Youth Who Present a Danger

1. As part of our covenant with our children, it is the responsibility of all church members to act responsibly and proactively to ensure the safety and well-being of all of the children in the church. The Religious Growth Director is responsible for overseeing the well-being of children and youth in Religious Growth & Learning activities.

a) The Religious Growth Director (RGD) will have an established mechanism to get feedback from each teacher each week regarding events in the classroom. The RGD may seek the assistance of Religious Growth and Learning Committee members to carry out this activity. Teachers will be informed that they should report any odd behavior, including social withdrawal, sexual behavior, inappropriate touching, acting out, bullying, aggression or any unusual or age inappropriate behavior.

b) If the RGD believes that a child or youth may be in danger, the RGD will take appropriate steps to insure the safety and well-being of that child or youth. Such steps could include removing any immediate danger (e.g., away from a bully in the classroom), speaking with the child or youth, speaking with a parent or other adult a family member, or contacting authorities. The RGD can and should consult with the Minister if significant concerns arise. The RGD and/or Minister could consult with mental health provider, being aware that mandatory reporting of child abuse may be evoked, if the mental health provider receives specific information of risk to an identifiable victim.

i). Nebraska requires a mandatory report from any person, who has reasonable cause to believe a child has been subjected to child abuse or neglect.

ii) Search online for Mandatory Reporting Requirements: Children, Nebraska for information to assist in making a report.

iii) When in doubt, report.

c) If the RGD believes that a child or youth poses a threat to other children or adults in the church, the RGD should take one or more of the following steps:

i) The child or youth should be removed from the situation immediately to ensure the safety of all involved.

ii) The RGD should talk with the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child or youth about the situation and behavior.

iii) The RGD may ask that a child or youth not participate in Religious Growth and Learning activities until a safety plan is in place.

iv) If a child or youth poses a significant danger to others such as serious or repeated bullying or physical violence, any fire-setting, or possession of a weapon on church property, the RGD should take the following steps:

a') Remove the child or youth from Religious Growth and Learning activities until a covenant of limited access is in place

b') Inform the Minister, and the Minister and RGD will jointly respond to the situation.

v) The Minister and RGD should immediately meet with parent(s) or guardian(s) of the accused child or youth and take the following steps:

a') Recommend or require that the parent(s) or guardian(s) seek consultation with a qualified mental health professional to determine how and if the child or youth can be safely involved in Religious Growth and Learning activities. Neither the Minister nor the RGD should be in direct contact with the mental health professional, unless the family requests assistance, but should work with the family based on recommendations a professional may make to the family.

b') Develop an individualized Covenant of Limited Access for the child or youth in consultation with the child or youth, and parent(s) or guardian(s) . The Covenant of Limited Access can be modeled after the adult covenant in appendix A. It should clearly specify when and how the child or youth can be involved in Religious Growth and Learning activities, what support the church can provide to facilitate safe involvement and clear criteria for a covenant to no longer be needed. Covenants should have a specific time frame for reconsideration, typically at least every six months.

c') Although the RGD has responsibility for insuring the safety of all children and youth in the Religious Growth and Learning program, the RGD and Minister should also be

mindful of the important role of the church in supporting a family who is struggling with a difficult child.

D. Sex Offender Risk Reduction

1. Sexual offenders who exploit children pose specific risks that require a specific policy because such offenders may use churches to seek victims and general professional consensus is that many sex offenders are at a high risk of re-offending, even after incarceration or treatment. Society has recognized the special nature of these crimes by establishing public sex offender registries.

2. Sex offenders are difficult to identify and the greatest risk to children comes from individuals who are not identified and may be entrusted with children. On the other hand, it is both impractical and an intrusion of privacy to conduct detailed background checks on all volunteers who will work with children. Therefore, the general policy will be one of risk reduction, by limiting opportunities where children will be alone with an adult who is not a family member.

3. It should be noted that most sexual abuse of children occurs within families, not by strangers or other adults in a setting such as a church. Therefore some of the policies of the church will be proactive in helping protect children in general via educational programs. (See Religious Growth and Learning Risk Reduction Policies)

E. Integrating an Accused, Admitted, Or Convicted Sex Offender into Congregational Activities

Religious organizations, including those of Unitarian Universalist tradition, have a long history of offering asylum to individuals, who are otherwise rejected from society. It is within this tradition that our church will be available to nurture the spiritual growth of individuals who have a known history of sexual offenses and seek to participate in our religious community. Accepting such individuals into our community is not without controversy or risk. Therefore, the following procedures were developed to protect all of our members from real risks, rather than automatically discarding individuals who seek to overcome their past behavior.

1. The procedures will apply to a situation involving either a current or prospective participant in the congregation. The situation may come to the notice of church members by public notice, private information, or an individual coming forth voluntarily.

2. No matter how the situation becomes known, the Minister or another member of the Safety Response Team will meet privately with the individual as quickly as possible to discuss the concerns.. The Minister or Safety Response Team member will check the sex offender registry before this meeting and may contact the Nebraska State Patrol or other jurisdictions for information that is available in the public record. In the instance of a domestic situation, which may involve custody issues or unsubstantiated allegations, these same procedures will be followed.

If the Minister is the one being accused, these steps do not apply. Instead, the President of the Board of Trustees should be contacted immediately. The President will immediately form a committee of no less than five people, one of whom is the chair of the Personnel Committee, to

investigate the matter and recommend a course of action to the Board of Trustees. They will also immediately contact the appropriate people at the UUA or Region as consultants in their processing of the concerns.

3. Following the meeting with the individual, the entire Safety Response Team will meet to determine if there is a reasonable cause for the concern. If there is not, the matter will end there. Otherwise, the person will then be asked to meet with the Safety Response Team and to refrain from attending church activities until the process is completed. The Safety Response Team will act in a timely fashion.

4. It is beyond the scope and expertise of Lincoln Unitarian Church, its membership and its leadership to assess the risk or probability that a person will offend or re-offend. If a person is on the Sex Offender registry and wishes to participate in the life of the church **without** a Covenant of Limited Access, they may obtain a professional assessment, at personal expense, from a generally recognized expert in sex offenders in the community, and provide that assessment to the Safety Response Team. The Safety Response Team will contact the Nebraska State Patrol or other jurisdiction to obtain its reasons why the individual remains on the registry. At its discretion, the Safety Response Team may accept the assessment, require another assessment with a professional of its choosing or not accept the assessment. The Safety Response Team may choose to commit church funds for such assessment, but is not required to do so.

5. The Minister will meet with the person to discuss the Covenant of Limited Access and to sign it, if both parties agree. If the minister wishes to involve more people on the Safety Response Team, the minister may do so. Otherwise, the minister is only obligated to notify the Safety Response Team of the particulars of the Covenant of Limited Access.

This Covenant permits the person to participate in certain aspects of congregational life, setting clear boundaries and prohibitions. Typically, a Covenant of Limited Access will specify participation in some combination of worship services, coffee hour, committee and/or Board meetings, adult education, and all-adult social events as permitted. Persons with known histories of sexual offenses against children or youth will not be allowed to chaperone or instruct any events specifically for children, including Religious Growth and Learning activities. The Covenant may require the person to avoid all contact with children on congregation property or at congregation-sponsored events. This includes not talking with children. It may require the person to remain in the presence of an adult who knows the situation at all times when children are present. It may identify specific persons who are required to be with the person on the church grounds or during sponsored activities off-grounds.

Unless it has been determined under #4 above that a covenant is not needed, all persons known to have past histories of sexual offenses will be required to sign a Covenant of Limited Access. Depending on the circumstances, the person may be asked to sign one annually.

6. Any of the following reasons will be considered sufficient to exclude a person from all congregational activities:

- a) Report by a qualified professional that the individual is at too high risk for offending to be involved in any church activities.
- b) Refusal to sign a Covenant of Limited Access.
- c) Refusal to comply with the requirements of the Covenant of Limited Access at any time after it is signed.

7. The Safety Response Team may decide at any time to select and appoint a Support Group of approximately five persons, supervised by the Minister, who will agree to offer support for the person. The group may acquaint itself with any therapeutic program the person has undergone or will continue to be part of if the person signing the Covenant so requests.

8. A person, who is denied a Covenant of Limited Access by the Safety Response Team, or who is asked to sign a Covenant of Limited Access and refuses to do so, will be informed that if they enter the congregation or its property, they will be asked to leave by a member of the Safety Response Team or the Board of Trustees. If the person further refuses, the Lincoln Police Department will be called for assistance. Employees need to be informed of such individuals since they may need to take action in the absence of a Safety Response Team or Board member.

9. The minister will meet at least yearly with any individual with whom the Lincoln Unitarian Church has a Covenant of Limited Access, and with any applicable Support Group, to review the arrangement and address any concerns.

10. Whenever members of the Safety Response Team change, the other members of the Safety Response Team must make available to the incoming persons, copies of any Covenants of Limited Access currently in effect.

11. In sharing information appropriately, it is also important to remain aware of confidentiality and privacy for all involved. Hard copies of files, related to Covenant of Limited Access information, should be treated with care, and kept in a secure file.

12. If and when legal questions arise, the Safety Response Team should contact a lawyer who can provide information and advice informed by applicable state and local statutes.

13. The identity of the individual and the specifics of the Safety Response Team investigation will remain confidential. Inquiries from someone not directly involved in a Covenant of Limited Access will be handled by the Safety Response Team. Typically the response to the inquiry will be that the safety policies are being implemented and the Safety Response Team will work to address any concerns without disclosing confidential information.

14. If the Response Team is unable to obtain a 4/5 majority, a Covenant of Limited Access will not be offered.

15. Additional information may be confidentially made available to church staff who have a need to know and the Safety Subcommittee of RGL Committee (in case the RGD is unavailable at an RGL event). It is understood that the Safety Response Team has a responsibility to keep certain information confidential except as needed to enact the Covenant of Limited Access.

16. When this policy is adopted, the Safety Response Team will seek whatever training it feels necessary to carry out its duties. This may include consultation with the Safety Task Force, other church members or relevant professionals in the community. After initial implementation, it is anticipated that continuing members of the Safety Response Team will train new members, but should seek additional training as necessary.

Appendix A

LINCOLN UNITARIAN CHURCH COVENANT OF LIMITED ACCESS

The Lincoln Unitarian Church celebrates freedom, inclusion and diversity of belief, recognizing love as the creative and supporting force in life. However, based on your background, we have concerns about your contact with children and youth in our congregation. The following guidelines are designed to reduce the risk both to you and them of an incident or accusation. Your participation will be limited in ways to ensure the safety of our church family and to assure that you will not be subject to unwarranted accusations.

You understand that you will not be allowed to interact with children or adolescents, including: volunteering or chaperoning events for children or adolescents; children's and youth religious education classes; talking with children before, during or after worship; or interacting with children during intergenerational events.

A Support Person is a person who knows about your history/situation and has been designated with our approval to accompany you to activities where children and youth may be present.

We feel that the following activities are appropriate for your participation:

Worship services:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person ()

Coffee Hour:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person ()

Adult meetings with children in the building:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person ()

Adult meetings without children in building:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person ()

Activities on the grounds of the Church

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person ()

Intergenerational church activities:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person ()

Intergenerational group outings offsite from the church campus:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person ()

Church rest rooms:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person ()

Church parking lot:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person ()

Usher: Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person ()

Alone in church building with minister or other staff:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person ()

Access to church computer:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person ()

Serve on church boards or committees:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person ()

Lincoln Unitarian Church social activities in members' homes with children present:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person ()

Entering the RGL wing for an adult activity or to enter/exit the building

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person ()

Other:

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person ()

Yes () Only if escorted by Support Person ()

I have reviewed this document and agree to abide by its provisions. I agree that if I violate this Covenant, I will be denied access to future church functions and church property.

I understand that the terms of any Covenant of Limited Access, information about the type, number and dates of convictions, general reasons for the decision to require a Covenant of Limited Access and my identity may be disclosed to paid church staff and to the Safety Subcommittee of the Religious Growth and Learning Committee on an as needed basis. I hereby consent to such limited disclosure and waive my right to take legal action against the church, its employees, and members for such disclosure authorized by this Policy.

I understand that this contract will be reviewed regularly every three months and will remain in force for an indefinite period.

Signature

Date

Minister

Date

Appendix B. The Safety Task Force

On May 5, 2007, the Safety Task Force received the following charge from the Management Team:

The Safety Task Force is charged with drafting a policy and structure proposal dealing with all aspects of church safety. This would include, but not be limited to, convicted sex offenders. The task force will determine the best way in which to collect any additional information and/or congregational input necessary to complete its task. The task force will be asked to provide updates to the Church Council.

The original members of the Safety Task Force were Deb Hope (Chair), Pat Bryan, BJ Wheeler, Tracy Schrotberger and Lori Allen. Lori Allen left her position as Director of Religious Growth and Learning and Tracy became the interim director. As those duties became too demanding, Tracy resigned from the Task Force. In the Fall, Pat moved out of town. Roger Geery joined the Task Force towards the end of our process.

The Safety Task Force met numerous times (at times weekly) through July and August 2007, then less frequently in the Fall. As individuals we gathered information from various individuals inside and outside the church. Numerous church members contacted us with their own ideas and input. We gathered and read a variety of documents, including information available from the Unitarian Universalist Association and several other churches. We are particularly indebted to the Pilgrim United Church Of Christ in San Diego for allowing us to adapt its *Safe Church Policy Concerning Abuse Prevention*. Monthly updates were provided to the Board of Trustees via Karen Heafer and the Management Team.

Many of the policies we developed are not likely to be controversial. Because the policy regarding inclusion of sex offenders in church activities may raise many questions, we will provide some background about our approach to this difficult issue. First, we started from the assumption that known sex offenders would be permitted to be involved in church activities in some fashion. Second, we did not want the church to become a proxy for mental health policy related to sex offenders or to put ourselves in the place of making judgments that are more appropriately made by mental health professionals. Rather, the good judgment and common sense of identified leaders, who seek consultation as needed, would prevail. Third, we did not want to require that individuals provide access to their mental health provider in order to be involved in the church. The cost-benefit analysis suggested that the quality of the information that would be obtained does not outweigh the extensive intrusion into a very personal sphere.

As chair of the Task Force, I would like to thank all of the members of the Task Force for their hard work and dedication. We had many hours of meetings and spent many more hours gathering information and developing documents. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Pat Bryan's tremendous contribution to the Task Force—she often kept us on our timeline and kept us grounded in reality.

Respectfully submitted,
Deb Hope, Safety Task Force Chair
(Task Force Members: Pat Bryan, BJ Wheeler, Tracy Schrotberger, Roger Geery, Lori Allen,)