



# Personnel Policies

for FLC Personnel and Volunteers

Revised and Effective August 13, 2025

Rev E

## **PREFACE**

The Personnel Committee shall recommend to the Congregation Council personnel policies, including salaries, fair practices and staff position descriptions, evaluations and training. This committee shall be responsible for annual review of the personnel policies and recommendations for revisions to the Congregation Council.

It is the policy that all staff shall be treated fairly and equitably and shall be able to perform their duties in a safe environment.

These personnel policies do not create, imply, or express a promise of continued employment of any employee by First Lutheran Church of Bothell, Washington (hereinafter also referred to as FLC or the or this Congregation).

These personnel policies have been prepared in order that every employee may know the terms of employment that will govern their relationship with this congregation. It is the responsibility of the Congregation, through the work of the Congregation Council and the Personnel Committee, to administer these policies, with respect to persons in its employ.

These policies have been approved by the FLC Congregation Council and take precedence over any written policies expressed by the greater church (Northwest Washington Synod and the ELCA). Questions regarding the application or interpretation of these policies should be directed to the FLC Personnel Committee.

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## **1.0 GENERAL**

### **1.1 Authority**

Adoption and implementation of these personnel policies by the Congregation Council is granted by the general authority in the constitution and bylaws of this Congregation.

### **1.2 Scope**

These personnel policies apply to all persons, paid or volunteer, in this Congregation.

### **1.3 Exceptions**

Exceptions to these personnel policies may be granted by the Congregation Council, in consultation with the Personnel Committee, when it is decided that such exceptions are in the best interest of this congregation and the employees and/or volunteers concerned. No exception will be valid unless it is a recorded action of the Congregation Council. If an exception is subsequently determined to be permanent, then these policies must be modified within 60 days of the date the Congregation Council deems the exception to be a permanent policy change.

### **1.4 Amendments**

The Congregation Council may adopt amendments, corrections, additions or deletions to these personnel policies. Any such changes shall apply both to persons employed at the time the change is adopted and to persons employed thereafter, unless the Congregation Council's action specifically provides to the contrary.

### **1.5 Personnel Committee Liaisons to Staff**

Except for the committee's chairperson, each member of the Personnel Committee will be aligned with a specific FLC staff position. This facilitates an enhanced level of communication and cooperation of the functions of each (staff and the Personnel Committee) and provides the staff with a direct conduit into the Committee. In addition, the Committee liaisons are charged with specific responsibilities as outlined in these policies.

### **1.6 Distribution of Personnel Policies**

New employees will receive a copy of this Congregation's Personnel Policies at the time of employment. In addition, any and all changes to these personnel policies will be communicated in a joint face-to-face meeting with all persons employed no less than 1 calendar week prior to the effective date of the amended policies. If one or more employed persons are not available to attend the meeting, their absence will not prohibit the modifications from going into effect. In such cases, policy updates will be reviewed individually with the employee by the employee's respective Personnel Committee liaison. As part of the review process, all employed persons will complete a form acknowledging the review and receipt of the policies at the time of employment and whenever amendments have been adopted. The acknowledgement form is located in the Forms section at the end of these policies. Signed acknowledgements will be kept in the employees' personnel files.

This congregation's personnel policies shall be available in the church office for review by any member of the congregation.

## **2.0 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

### **2.1 Employee**

As used herein, the term "employee" shall apply to any person in the employ of this Congregation on an established salary basis. The term "employee" does not include a person employed temporarily through employment agencies or serving under a contract which specifies that the person is an independent contractor. Such a person is not eligible for employee benefits and, with the exception of Sections 14.0 Harrassment and 15.0 Sexual Abuse, these personnel policies do not apply.

### **2.2 Work Week**

Schedules will be coordinated by the Pastor(s), based on each employee's job description, the needs of the Congregation and in collaboration with the Personnel Committee and the Congregation Council.

### **3.0 EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS**

All employees are considered the staff of this Congregation, and the underlying organizational principle shall be that of a unified work force. Where it is required by law, distinctions will be made between those positions considered exempt or nonexempt, based on the then-current Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the then-current Washington Minimum Wage Requirements and Labor Standards (RCW 49.46). The term "exempt employee" shall mean an employee who meets the conditions to be exempt from coverage by these laws. The term "nonexempt employee" shall mean an employee who is covered by the then-current FLSA and covered by the then-current Washington Minimum Wage Requirements and Labor Standards.

The Personnel Committee is responsible to: 1) review the FLSA and Washington Minimum Wage Requirement and Labor Standards and any other pertinent laws no later than December 1<sup>st</sup>, annually, and identify changes to any staff position's classification for the coming year; 2) notify the Finance Committee and the Congregation Council; 3) revise the applicable policies and employee job description of any affected classifications; 4) submit any and all changes to the Congregation Council for approval at the Council's December meeting, with an effective date of January 1<sup>st</sup> of the coming year; and 5) notify the impacted employee(s) of the applicable change, its ramifications and garner acknowledgement of the updated job description(s)/job offer(s).

#### **3.1 Full-Time Employment**

Full-time employment means employment on a regular schedule for at least 40 hours per week, unless otherwise approved, in writing, by the Congregation Council. In general, regular full-time employees are eligible for the benefits outlined in these policies, subject to other eligibility rules described in the ELCA's Portico benefit policies and plans.

#### **3.2 Part-Time Employment**

Part-time employment means employment on a regular schedule of less than 40 hours per week, other than employment classified as temporary employment. Part-time employees regularly scheduled to work fewer than 30 hours per week are not eligible for benefits provided in sections 9.2 and 9.3 of these policies.

#### **3.3 Temporary Employment**

Temporary employment includes any employment classified as such by this Congregation, including, but not limited to, summer, irregular part-time, or vacation relief workers. Temporary employees are not eligible for any of the benefits provided in sections 9.2 and 9.3 of these policies. However, temporary employees are subject to Social Security (FICA) contributions on their wages.

#### **3.4 Volunteers**

Persons who volunteer in the office or in other areas on a regular or occasional basis are subject to the direction and supervision of an appropriate staff member. It is understood that volunteers will be treated with the same care and respect as that accorded to paid staff.

#### **3.5 Letter of Call or Contract**

Those rostered ministers serving the Congregation under a Letter of Call or Contract are subject to the terms and conditions of the Letter of Call or Contract. Employees under a Letter of Call or Contract are subject to these policies, except where they conflict with the terms and conditions of the Letter of Call or Contract in which case the Letter shall control.

## **4.0 RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT**

### **4.1 Inclusiveness in Employment**

This Congregation is committed to both the spirit and the applicable legal requirements of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. Consistent with this commitment, the continuing policy of this Congregation is to afford equal employment opportunity to qualified persons in all aspects of the employment relationship, including hiring, compensation, transfer, selection for training opportunities, layoffs, discharges, and retirement.

When the Personnel Committee, in consultation with the Pastor(s), determines that a particular position necessitates a Lutheran background, preference will be given to persons with that qualification.

### **4.2 Position Posting**

Staff position vacancies will be posted in the church office and such positions will be requested to be posted at other congregation-related offices as well as the Northwest Washington Synod's website. Such postings will include the position description, salary range and a description of how to apply for the position. Positions will also be announced through this Congregation's official media.

Exceptional situations may require filling positions without posting. The appropriateness of this action will be determined by the Personnel Committee in consultation with the Pastor(s) and the Congregation Council.

### **4.3 Hiring Procedures**

Positions requiring individuals on the roster of the ELCA – a minister of Word and Sacrament or a minister of Word and Service - will be filled in accordance with the guiding policies of the Northwest Washington Synod, ELCA, and will be processed through a Congregation Council-appointed Call Committee. This committee shall work closely with the Bishop (or the Bishop's representative) in filling the position.

For all other positions, the Personnel Committee, in consultation with the pastor(s), will conduct the hiring process. Working together, they will select candidates to be interviewed. The Personnel Committee will include members of the congregation staff and Council Committees when it deems it appropriate to do so. When dealing with a full-time Program Staff position, the Personnel Committee will choose one candidate to be presented to the Congregation Council for ratification. Support Staff positions (office, maintenance, etc.) will be chosen by the Personnel Committee in consultation with the Pastor(s). All letters of offer to potential employees are to be signed and sent by the President of the Congregation Council.

No promises, commitments or representations which are inconsistent with or override these hiring procedures may be made to an employee or prospective employee without the prior written approval of the Congregation Council. Any such promise, commitment or representation shall be void unless it is in writing and signed by the President of the Congregation Council. This policy also applies when a change of status or responsibility is being considered for a current employee.

### **4.4 Employment and Call Procedures**

After the selection of an employee has been acted on by the Congregation Council, a Letter of Employment is sent by the Congregation Council to both Pastors and lay individuals. In addition, Letters of Call are issued for those rostered ministers of the ELCA.

Term Letters of Call, which set specific start and end dates of employment, may be issued for rostered persons in conjunction with Letters of Employment.

Letters of Employment and Letters of Call are subject to all of the provisions of these personnel policies.



#### **4.5 Nature of Employment**

Washington State is an at-will employment state. Therefore, employment with this Congregation is voluntarily entered in to, and, unless a specific written contract containing different terms has been agreed upon, the employment relationship is “at will.” This means that, subject to applicable legal provisions and governing document requirements, the employment relationship can be terminated at any time by either party for any reason, with or without cause or notice. The employee is free to resign at any time. Similarly, this Congregation may terminate the employment relationship at any time.

#### **4.6 Personnel Records**

The Personnel Committee will maintain and update, on an annual basis, an individual file for each employee, containing their employment application form, payroll authorizations, salary information, attendance records, performance appraisals, and other pertinent documents (e.g., sabbatical leaves, continuing education requests, etc.). Employee records are confidential and will be kept in a locked file with access only by persons authorized by the Personnel Committee. Employees have the right to review their individual personnel file and all documents contained therein at a time mutually convenient to the employee and the Personnel Committee.

## **5.0 ANNUAL EVALUATION**

A formal written evaluation process for all staff will be conducted annually. Evaluations are intended to provide support for the employee, to provide constructive assessment of their performance, to assist in the development and fulfillment of the individual's career or vocational goals, and to provide information for the subsequent salary recommendation process.

The Personnel Committee is responsible for developing and implementing evaluation procedures and criteria, and reporting the completion of the evaluation process to the Congregation Council. Evaluations for the staff will be written in a collaborative effort by their immediate supervisor (Pastor) and each staff member's assigned liaison to the Personnel Committee. Once reviewed by the Personnel Committee, the Pastor and respective Personnel Committee liaison will meet with each staff member to discuss the evaluation and identify any continuing education opportunities for the coming year. Evaluations for the pastor(s) will be done annually by the Personnel Committee and submitted to the Congregation Council for review prior to conveying the results to the pastor(s). At least once every three years, evaluations for the pastor(s) will include a review of the total congregational ministry.

Completed evaluation documents and recommendations will be maintained in each employee's personnel file. Disputed evaluations will be handled according to the grievance procedures outlined in Section 13 of these policies.

## **6.0 COMPENSATION PROGRAM**

The purpose of the compensation program is to provide adequate pay for services rendered and to ensure equity in basic compensation regardless of race, sex, rostered or lay status. Every effort will be made to ensure that rostered ministers' compensation packages are consistent with the guidelines of the Northwest Washington Synod.

### **6.1 Compensation Process**

The annual compensation process will take into consideration an employee's annual evaluation. (See 5.0)

### **6.2 Salary Recommendation**

The Personnel Committee will provide an annual compensation recommendation for each employee of this Congregation to the Finance Committee, as part of the overall congregation budget process. The Congregation's budget, including the incorporated salary recommendations, are subject to the review and approval of this Congregation at its annual meeting.

### **6.3 Overtime**

- A. Overtime, when properly authorized and documented, will be paid to all nonexempt employees. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime pay or equivalent time off.
- B. Nonexempt employees will be granted overtime pay at the rate of one and one-half times their regular hourly rate for any time worked in excess of 40 hours during their normally-scheduled work week. Sick leave, personal leave, vacation, holidays or any other time spent off the job, whether paid or unpaid, will not be considered as "time worked."
- C. A nonexempt employee may request time off in lieu of overtime pay for any additional hours worked in excess of 40 hours in their normally-scheduled work week. The time off may be granted as long as the amount of time off is equal to the amount of compensation that would be paid should the employee have been paid overtime hours worked. The request for time off in lieu of overtime pay and its approval must be documented, retained as a payroll record and scheduled with the approval of the employee's supervisor. The employee must use the accrued time off by the end of the 26<sup>th</sup> pay period after the pay period in which the overtime occurred; otherwise, the time off will be relinquished by the employee. Should the employee's employment terminate, for any reason, prior to using the accrued time off, the employee will be compensated at the overtime rate of pay in effect at the time the overtime work was performed.

Under no circumstances may the employer offer or suggest that an employee take time off in lieu of overtime payment; the employee must initiate the request. Reference: WAC 296-128-560.

### **6.4 Housing Allowance**

Any rostered minister of this Congregation may request that a portion of their annual salary be designated as a housing allowance, in keeping with Internal Revenue Service regulations. The employee assumes full responsibility for compliance with IRS definitions of "costs to provide a home." Housing allowances will be recorded in the minutes of the Congregation Council at its first meeting of the year in which the allowance is to be effective, and must be acted on annually.

### **6.5 Pay Periods**

Pay periods for all employees will be twice a month, and payment will be made on the 15th and the last day of the month. If a normal payday falls on a nonworking day, paychecks will be issued on the last working day preceding the nonworking day.

## **6.6 Garnishments and Wage Assignments**

This Congregation will honor garnishments and wage assignments as specified in the provisions of the Consumer Credit Protection Act's Title III (CCPA), as they represent a legal order to withhold and pay out a quantifiable amount of employee earnings. If wages are attached, the employee will be notified, and must seek a release from the court in order to terminate the deductions.

## **7.0 REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES**

### **7.1 General Principle**

Employees of this Congregation who are authorized to make purchases or travel in connection with the performance of their duties will be reimbursed for expenditures, transportation, food and lodging expenses in accordance with the First Lutheran Church Financial Policies.

### **7.2 Use of Personal Automobile**

Monthly reimbursement will be made for the use of an employee's personal automobile, paid at the then-current allowable IRS mileage rate.

### **7.3 Excessive Expenditures**

Reimbursement of expenses in excess of the approved budget amounts requires prior approval by the Congregation Council.

## **8.0 WORKING HOURS AND HOLIDAYS**

### **8.1 Working Hours**

Employees are to organize their time schedules within the limits of effective performance of their duties and the needs of this Congregation. Work schedules for full-time employees will normally be based on forty hours per week. Work schedules for part-time employees will be defined by a specific number of hours for each day of their work week. Exceptions may be negotiated with the Pastor(s) and the Personnel Committee. Provisions for breaks and time off for lunch will be negotiated among the staff and will comply with any applicable laws governing rest and meal breaks (WAC 296-126-092, WAC 296-126-130, and ES.C.6.1). Employees' standard work schedules will be made known to the Congregation.

### **8.2 Attendance Records**

Adequate attendance records suitable for payroll purposes and for meeting appropriate wage and hour requirements will be submitted by the employee to the Congregation Bookkeeper to maintain attendance records.

### **8.3 Holidays**

The church office will be closed on the official holidays listed below. Employees who are eligible for overtime and who are required or requested to work on these holidays will be compensated at double their regular rate of pay.

New Year's Day (January 1)  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Third Monday in January)  
Presidents' Day (Third Monday in February)  
Monday after Easter  
Memorial Day (Last Monday in May)  
Juneteenth  
Fourth of July (July 4)  
Labor Day (First Monday in September)  
Indigenous Peoples' Day (Second Monday in October)  
Veterans Day (November 11)  
Thanksgiving Day  
Day after Thanksgiving  
Christmas Day (December 25)  
1 Personal Day (day must be requested and approved in advance)

Full-time regular employees will receive their regular rate of pay for each paid holiday. Part-time regular employees will receive their regular rate of pay for the number of hours they are regularly scheduled to work on the day of week on which the holiday falls. If a part-time employee does not have a set number of hours scheduled per day, then the hours of work for which they will be paid for the holiday will be calculated based on the percentage of their regularly-scheduled hours to a 40-hour week.

A rostered minister required to conduct worship services on a holiday specified above will be allowed a day off during the week immediately following the holiday.

When a holiday as listed in 8.3 above falls on a Friday or Saturday, the church office will normally be closed on the preceding Thursday. If any of above-listed holiday falls on Sunday, the office will normally be closed on the following Monday.

If the Personal Day provided is not taken during the current year, it may not be carried over to the following year. In addition, persons leaving the employ of this Congregation will not be paid for an unused Personal Day.

## **9.0 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

### **9.1 Social Security, Workers' Compensation, Washington State Family Leave Act**

This Congregation will make contributions for its lay employees only, as required of employers under the Social Security Act. No payment will be made on behalf of rostered minister(s) who are employees of this Congregation. Any reimbursement to rostered minister(s) in lieu thereof shall be made directly to the employee and will be taxable income according to IRS regulations.

As required by state law, this Congregation provides Workers' Compensation Insurance coverage for all employees, at no cost to the employee. FLC will also cover employee premiums paid into Washington State's Paid Family & Medical Leave Program (Washington State Family Leave Act). This applies to all employees, whether classified as full-time, part-time or temporary employees.

### **9.2 Pension Plan and Other Benefit Plans**

This Congregation provides a pension plan for the benefit of its full-time employees and other employees in accordance with the requirements of the ELCA's Portico Benefit Services. In addition, there are plans which provide for disability, survivor, medical and dental benefits.

Detailed information regarding benefits provided are contained in brochures published by Portico Benefit Services. These brochures are available to all employees. Further inquiries or questions should be directed to Portico Benefit Services ([www.porticobenefits.org](http://www.porticobenefits.org) and 1-800-352-2876) or the Personnel Committee.

### **9.3 Survivor Benefit**

In the event of death of an employee, their salary will be paid to their surviving spouse or the designated beneficiary of their pension plan, through the month in which death occurs plus one additional month. Where there is no surviving spouse or designated beneficiary, a decision concerning payment to surviving dependents will be made by the Congregation Council, in consultation with the Personnel Committee.

## **10.0 ABSENCE FROM WORK**

### **10.1 Sick Leave**

Washington State law requires that an employer provide one hour of paid sick leave for every 40 hours worked by an employee, regardless of full-time, part-time, temporary, or seasonal status. In addition, paid sick leave must be made available to new employees no more than 90 days after their employment begins. The law only applies to non-exempt employees.

It is the policy of this Congregation that Washington State Law be followed, thus sick leave will be granted in increments of 1 hour for every 40 hours worked, for non-exempt employees and full-time, exempt employees will accrue 4 hours of sick leave for each calendar month worked. Part-time, temporary and seasonal employees will accrue a prorated portion of the number of hours granted under Washington State Law, based on the number of hours worked. Likewise, when sick leave is taken for a full workday, part-time, temporary and seasonal staff will only be charged the number of hours of sick leave for a given day that is less than or equal to their regularly-scheduled hours of work for that day.

There is no limit to the number of sick leave hours an employee can carry over to the following year. An employee's accrued sick leave will not be compensated for upon resignation, termination or retirement or any other manner of separation of employment from this Congregation (refer to Section 12.0).

Employees absent from work due to illness or any other unplanned event must notify the Pastor(s) as soon as possible. Rostered ministers who are absent from work due to illness or any other unplanned event must notify the Congregation president. The person receiving the notification from an employee, i.e., the Pastor(s) or the president, must report the occurrence to the Congregation Bookkeeper on the same day the report was received. The Pastor(s) is responsible to redistribute the office work load or find a volunteer to provide support in an effort to maintain the work of the church. As per the constitution for this Congregation, the Congregation Council is responsible to arrange for pastoral service during the sickness or unplanned absence of the Pastor(s).

Sick leave can be used as a supplemental benefit when an employee has been approved of, and is utilizing, WA PFML.

This policy relating to time off from work is included as a part of this Congregation's concern for the welfare of the employee, and entails a mutual respect and trust relationship between this Congregation and the employee. Should extended and/or recurring health problems prevent an employee from satisfactory work performance, that employee should notify the Personnel Committee. Sick leave is not to be interpreted as a benefit accruing to the employee.

### **10.2 Vacations**

Full-time employees will be granted vacation time based on years of service in accordance with the schedule below, unless otherwise specified in an employee's Letter of Call or Letter of Employment. Part-time employees will be granted vacation time based on years of service, as per the below table, but on a pro-rated basis, based on their ratio of regularly-scheduled hours of work as compared to a full-time, 40-hour-per-week position. Similarly, the maximum number of vacation hours part-time staff will be charged for any vacation day taken can be no greater than their regularly-scheduled hours for that day.

<b>Years of Service</b>	<b>Annual Vacation Hours Earned</b>
One to Two Years	80 hours (10 days)
Three to Five Years	120 hours (15 days)
Six to Ten Years	160 hours (20 days)
Eleven or More Years	200 hours (25 days)



Employees shall accrue vacation time, on a prorated basis, during their first calendar year of service with this Congregation, in accordance with the schedule above. (A calendar year is defined as January 1 through December 31). Following the first calendar year of service, vacation time will be awarded on January 1 of each year.

An employee may not take vacation beyond that which the employee has earned, year-to-date. Any requests for an exception to this policy shall be requested in writing by the employee and be given due consideration jointly by the Pastor(s) and the Personnel Committee.

Vacations should be scheduled in a manner that is sensitive to the flow of the Congregation Calendar and that permits continuous work coverage to be maintained. Vacation days are to be requested in advance and approved by the Pastor(s), except for vacations for rostered ministers. Vacation requests from rostered minister(s) are to be submitted in advance and approved by the Congregation Council president. In addition, the rostered minister(s) is responsible to arrange for pastoral service during their vacation. All vacation requests should be submitted for approval as far in advance of payroll close as possible.

The equivalent of up to one work week of vacation, in terms of hours, may be carried forward to the next year. The number of hours for a work week is defined by the regular weekly work schedules for full-time or part-time employees.

Vacation time can be used as a supplemental benefit when an employee has been approved of, and is utilizing, WA PFML.

At the time of separation from this Congregation, an employee will be paid for unused, earned vacation. Conversely, an employee will reimburse the Congregation for any vacation time taken but not yet earned.

### **10.3 Bereavement and Emergency Leave**

In the event of a death in the immediate family (spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchildren, housemate or legal guardian) any employee (full-time, part-time or temporary) will be allowed leave with pay, not to exceed three (3) working days per occurrence, per employee.

### **10.4 Jury Duty**

An employee who is required to serve on a jury shall be entitled to full pay during the period of such service and may retain payments made by the court associated with such service. The notice of service will be given to the employee's immediate supervisor prior to the start of jury duty and will be placed in the employee's personal file. When a rostered minister is required to serve on jury duty, such notice of service shall be given to the Congregation president prior to the start of jury duty. The president will notify the Congregation Council and the congregation and will place the notice of service in the rostered minister's personnel file.

While serving jury duty, an employee or rostered minister is required to update their immediate supervisor or the Congregation president, whichever is applicable, of the status of service, i.e., if the term of service has been shortened or lengthened. Jury duty will not preclude an employee whose regular work week includes Sunday, from working on any Sunday. Overtime payment may be applicable, but only for nonexempt employees.

### **10.5 Congregation Activities**

An employee who is a delegate to an ELCA national convention or a member of an ELCA national committee may be granted time off with pay by the Congregation Council, while serving in that capacity, provided their absence does not seriously impair their normal duties. Time for synodical or other congregation-related activities beyond the congregation shall be considered a part of the employee's duties only when authorized by the Pastor(s), in conjunction with the Personnel Committee and the Congregation Council.

## **10.6 Leave Without Pay**

Leave without pay may be granted for personal reasons, after due consideration has been given to the work requirements of this Congregation. Leave without pay may be granted for a period of up to one year. Such leaves of absence are granted by the Congregation Council, in consultation with the Personnel Committee and Pastor(s). Service credits and other benefits do not accrue for an employee while on a leave without pay, nor is there an implied guarantee of employment at the end of the leave.

## **10.7 Military Leave**

This Congregation will grant military leave to employees who perform military service on a part-time and regularly-occurring basis or who perform military service on a full-time but temporary basis. An employee with a military obligation should notify the Personnel Committee and the Pastor(s) and submit a certified copy of their military orders as soon as practical. The Congregation will comply with the requirements of the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), as applied to churches and religious organizations, and with applicable provisions of Washington State law, as well as regulations adopted pursuant to the applicable federal and state laws.

## **10.8 Family and Medical Leave**

This Congregation complies with all federal laws as described in the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and all state laws as described in Washington's Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) Program. FLC will run both programs concurrently in the case that an employee qualifies for both.

When taking a leave of absence, employees are required to use accrued sick and/or vacation hours. These hours have been designated as supplemental to state paid family and medical leave and can be used alongside this benefit to make pay whole.

## **10.9 Absence Due to Weather or Travel Conditions**

An employee will not forfeit pay for a day on which they are unable to report for work because of the closing of the office, or a breakdown in transportation facilities due to an accident or hazardous weather conditions, provided the employee has made every reasonable effort to utilize alternate methods of transportation and has notified their immediate supervisor and/or the church office.

## **11.0 STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

### **11.1 Continuing Education**

Continuing education is an opportunity in which Congregation employees develop their present knowledge, acquire new skills, and experience growth for more effective service. This developmental activity must be related to the employee's job responsibilities and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- A. **Funding.** Funds for continuing education will be budgeted by the Congregation. Continuing education funds which are not expended in the year for which they are budgeted are surrendered; the funds may not be held for use in a subsequent year. Expenditures shall be authorized by the Pastor(s), with the exception of expenditures for the rostered minister(s) themselves. Continuing education expenditures for a rostered minister(s) shall be authorized by the Congregation Council, in consultation with the Personnel Committee.
- B. **Time.** With the approval of the Pastor(s), full-time staff will be eligible to take up to ten (10) days of time each year for continuing education purposes. Part-time staff will be eligible to take up to five (5) days each year for continuing education purposes. Employees may be granted time, up to the 5 or 10 days, as applicable, even if all funding budgeted for the year has been expended. Time for continuing education is to be arranged in consultation with the Pastor(s). The rostered minister(s) shall arrange for their continuing education time with the Congregation Council.
- C. **Planning.** The determination of an employee's plans for continuing education for the coming year are to be part of their annual appraisal. Plans are to be made in consideration of both the employee's and this Congregation's needs.

### **11.2 Sabbatical Leave**

A Sabbatical leave will be considered after each seven years of employment. This Congregation recognizes that rostered ministers (ministers of Word and Sacrament and ministers of Word and Service) have a need to increase and extend their knowledge and competency in their fields of specialization. This may be accomplished through a Sabbatical Leave, during which time full salary and benefits will be continued. The granting of a Sabbatical Leave, not to exceed three months, needs consideration by the rostered minister(s), Congregation Council and the Personnel Committee. Following the completion of the sabbatical, the rostered minister will agree to remain employed by the Congregation for a period of not less than one year, at the discretion of the Congregation Council.

Sabbatical Leaves are restricted to those employees for whom it can be demonstrated that the leave will increase their value to this Congregation. Requests for Sabbatical Leaves, including the program of study or spiritual renewal, are to be submitted in writing to the Personnel Committee. Upon review, the proposal will be reviewed and approved by the Congregation Council. The Personnel Committee, with the approval of the Congregation Council, will negotiate the terms of the sabbatical leave.

## **12.0 SEPARATION AND RETIREMENT**

Regardless of the terms of any offer letter or employment contract, all employees of this Congregation are employees "at will," which means that this Congregation and the employee each have the right to terminate employment at any time, with or without cause. No written document or verbal discussion can alter the "at will" employment. This Congregation's relationship with employees who are rostered with the ELCA and who are under a letter of call with this Congregation shall be governed by ELCA guidelines.

Regardless of the reason for termination, it is the desire of this Congregation that the employee cooperate in the transition process and participate in an exit interview. This is especially true when an employee resigns or retires. In addition, the Congregation asks that, on the effective date of the resignation or retirement, all work assignments be completed to the extent possible, all files be brought up to date and all property belonging to this Congregation returned.

### **12.1 Completion of Specific Term**

"Completion of a specific term" refers to employees serving this Congregation for a stipulated period —whether because of a term call, election to an office with a specific term, a written employment agreement for a specified time, or some other reason. Such employees will be separated from employment at the end of that period. The ending of a specific term does not prohibit the person from being re-employed by this Congregation in the same or in a different capacity.

### **12.2 Termination Without Prejudice**

This phrase refers to the termination of call, election, or employment by this Congregation at any time, for any reason other than a discharge for cause. Employees will ordinarily be given two weeks' notice. The Pastor(s), in consultation with the Personnel Committee, has the right to discharge this Congregation's obligation in such case, by continued payment of salary for the designated period, in lieu of continued service.

### **12.3 Discharge for Cause**

Discharge for cause can occur at any time and shall be effective at the time notice is given. Examples of discharge for cause include, but are not limited to: failure to adequately fulfill the duties of the position, insubordination, fighting, violating a law, theft, and sexual harassment in the work place. No payment shall be made except for earned salary for the time employed since the last pay period and earned and unused vacation. No separation pay shall be paid. An employee discharged for cause may receive appropriate care and counsel from this Congregation, as deemed appropriate by the Personnel Committee.

### **12.4 Resignation**

An employee need not remain in a position beyond the time that they believe they can make a contribution to this Congregation. Employees who wish to terminate their employment are expected to give a two-week notice. Employees who resign will receive payment for the time they have worked since the last pay period and for their earned and unused vacation time. An employee who resigns will not receive separation pay.

### **12.5 Personal Day and Accrued Sick Leave**

Any persons leaving the employ of this Congregation will not be paid for an unused Personal Day or for any accrued and unused sick leave.

### **12.6 Separation Pay**

Where separation from employment is by termination without prejudice, separation pay *may* be given to an employee at the discretion of the Congregation Council, depending on the circumstances of the termination and the length of service.

## **13.0 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Grievances and conflicts are accepted as normal by a well-functioning leadership team, and staff members are encouraged to see them as providing opportunities for growth and learning. All employees of this Congregation are expected to treat each other with respect and to offer positive and constructive criticism. The Congregation encourages an atmosphere in which any job-related problem, complaint, suggestion, or question receives a timely response. They should initially be discussed with the parties involved and/or the rostered minister(s) and the respective staff liaison(s) from the Personnel Committee. Every effort should be made to settle the matter through such discussion, and employees are encouraged to utilize this method to resolve problem situations. When this informal process does not achieve resolution, a staff member may initiate the following process.

### **13.1 Grievance Committee**

The Personnel Committee will handle the grievance process of this Congregation.

### **13.2 Filing of Grievance**

If the grievance cannot be resolved informally, the employee may file a written grievance with the Personnel Committee and a copy to the President of the Congregation Council. The Chair of the Personnel Committee will provide a written response to the grievant within seven (7) working days after the grievance is filed, outlining the specific process to be followed to achieve resolution.

The filing of a grievance under this procedure will not delay implementation of any personnel action, including discipline or discharge of the employee. If the grievance is subsequently sustained, the Personnel Committee, in consultation with the Congregation Council's Executive Committee, will determine what, if any, remedial steps should be taken.

### **13.3 Hearing on Grievance**

The Personnel Committee will schedule a hearing within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the grievance. At least five (5) working days in advance of the date set for the hearing, notice of the hearing will be given to the grievant, the rostered minister(s), the Congregation Council President and any other person whom the Personnel Committee decides should be notified of the hearing. All hearings will be closed to the public. The grievant may be present at the hearing and is entitled to an advocate of their own choosing. The grievant will be notified, in writing, regarding the disposition of the grievance, within five (5) working days after the hearing.

Employee grievances are to be processed promptly; however, time limits may be waived or extended with the written consent of both parties.

### **13.4 Response to Grievance**

The Personnel Committee will make a disposition of the grievance, in writing, within twenty (20) working days of its receipt. If the employee is not satisfied with the disposition by the Personnel Committee, the employee may submit a written request for a hearing with the Congregation Council. This request must be received within ten (10) working days after the disposition of the grievance by the Personnel Committee.

### **13.5 Review of Grievance**

An appeal to the Congregation Council is to be submitted to the President of the Congregation Council within ten (10) days of receipt by the grievant of the response of the Personnel Committee. The Executive Committee shall meet with the grievant and their chosen advocate, if any, within fifteen (15) days of the date on which the appeal is received. The Executive Committee shall make a final disposition of the grievance, in writing, within five (5) working days of meeting with the grievant.

## **14.0 HARASSMENT & DISCRIMINATION**

### **14.1 Policy**

The Policy of this Congregation regarding harassment shall be in accordance with the policies of the Northwest Washington Synod and the ELCA. As such, it is the policy of this Congregation to maintain a work environment free of any form of harassment or intimidation, sexual or otherwise, including but not limited to, verbal, physical, social media and visual forms of harassment. All employees are expected to be sensitive to and respectful of co-workers and others with whom they come into contact while representing this Congregation. Any form of harassment within the work place is unacceptable behavior, strictly prohibited and is subject to appropriate disciplinary action by this Congregation.

### **14.2 Definition**

Harassment includes inappropriate references or behavior with regard to sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, race, color, national origin, citizenship status, creed, religion, age, disability, veteran status and any other form of harassment. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to: unwelcome and unsolicited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, discriminatory tormenting based on gender and any other undesired verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, race, color, national origin, citizenship status, creed, religion, age or disability.
- Written or graphic material brought to, displayed or circulated in the workplace that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, race, color, national origin, citizenship status, creed, religion, age or disability.
- Intimidating, hostile, derogatory, contemptuous or otherwise offensive conduct or remarks that are directed at a person because of that person's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, race, color, national origin, citizenship status, creed, religion, age or disability.
- Using Congregation-owned resources (such as voicemail, e-mail or Internet access) to obtain, deliver, forward, circulate or store inappropriate or offensive materials.

With respect to sexual harassment, examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Vulgar or sexual comments, jokes, stories and innuendo.
- Graphic or suggestive comments about someone's body or manner of dress.
- Gossip or questions about someone's sexual conduct or orientation.
- Vulgarity, leering, inappropriate touching and obscene or suggestive gestures.
- Displaying, accessing or circulating in the work place (including via Internet or e-mail) sexually suggestive photographs, cartoons, graffiti, jokes and the like.
- Unwelcome and repeated flirtations, requests for dates and the like.
- Subtle pressure for sexual activity.
- Solicitation or coercion of sexual activity, dates or the like by the implied or express promise of rewards or preferential treatment.
- Solicitation or coercion of sexual activity, dates or the like by the implied or express threat of punishment.
- Sexual assault.
- Intimidating, hostile, derogatory, contemptuous or otherwise offensive conduct or remarks that are directed at a person because of that person's gender, regardless of whether the remarks themselves are sexual in nature or sexual orientation.
- Retaliation against an employee for refusing sexual or social overtures, for complaining in good faith about sexual harassment, or for cooperating in good faith with the investigation of a complaint.

### **14.3 Reporting Harassment or Other Discriminatory Behavior**

An employee who believes there has been a violation of this Harassment Policy has the right and responsibility to report the perceived violation as soon as possible, either to the Pastor(s), the Chair of the Personnel Committee, or the President of the Congregation Council. Any complaint received must be reported to the Pastor(s) and the Personnel Committee. If the matter cannot be resolved between the parties involved, the Personnel Committee will investigate all allegations promptly, objectively, and confidentially. A complainant has the right to invite a colleague to be present at proceedings regarding the complaint.

This Congregation will take no adverse action against an employee who, in good faith, reports a concern regarding harassment or discrimination, and will, to the extent possible, protect such employees against reprisal. This applies to harassment or discrimination caused by anyone with whom an employee comes into contact as part of the employee's job: supervisors, co-workers, vendors, or others. Disciplinary action, including dismissal, when appropriate, will be taken where it is determined that harassment or discrimination did occur, or where the rostered minister(s) or a supervisor, has failed to report violations of this policy or employee complaints of harassment to the Personnel Committee. If the employee reported for having violated this Congregation's anti-harassment or anti-discrimination policy is a rostered person, the appropriate sections of the ELCA and Northwest Washington Synod constitutions will also apply.

This Congregation recognizes that the question of whether a particular action or course of conduct constitutes harassment requires a factual determination. This Congregation also recognizes that false accusations of harassment can cause serious harm to innocent persons. Therefore, a thorough investigation will be conducted in each case. Malicious accusations will be subject to appropriate sanctions.

### **14.4 Appeals**

If the complainant is not satisfied with the investigation made and/or action taken by the Pastor(s) or the Personnel Committee, the complainant should follow the steps outline in Section 13, Grievance Procedures.

## **15.0 SAFE COMMUNITY**

### **15.1 Policy**

FLC Bothell (the “Church”) has a Safe Community Policy (“Policy”) that applies to all Church-related activities that involve children, youth and vulnerable populations. The Policy helps to educate staff and volunteers and/or general members of the congregation about their role in abuse and injury prevention, provides general procedures that reduce these risks, and describes a method of effective response if an incident should occur.

A full copy of this policy is included in the Appendix B section of this document. The policy applies to staff and volunteers serving in the Church’s youth or children’s ministries or other vulnerable populations and is distributed to all staff and volunteers as well as is available in the Church office.

## **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION GUIDELINES**

This Congregation desires to provide equal employment opportunities for all qualified persons. The following guidelines are intended to guard against discrimination in employment based upon race, ethnic background, sex, age, or handicapping conditions in this Congregation:

1. The Hiring Procedures are to be programmed to identify the background and skills of persons within the groups defined above for this Congregation's recruitment efforts. Particular church affiliation (i.e., Lutheran) may be required when deemed necessary for fulfilling the duties of the position.
2. Staff positions are to be publicized in congregations, educational institutions, and through church organizations in this Congregation, where rostered ministers and others in special positions to recruit qualified minority persons, women and persons with disabilities can be enjoined in the search.
3. The Congregation Finance Committee is to review contracts negotiated by this Congregation, and encourage the purchase of assets, goods, and services to reflect the support of businesses owned by minorities or women, of vendors committed to affirmative action, and of agencies providing opportunities for employment of persons with disabilities.
4. Personnel training programs of this Congregation will include sensitizing personnel to discrimination in the work place, and will require implementation of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action guidelines.
5. The Personnel Committee will include in its annual report to the Congregation Council equal employment opportunity and affirmative action implementation.
6. It is the policy of this Congregation to proclaim, in any advertisement for employment or for purchasing of goods, that this Congregation is an Affirmative Action employer and purchaser.
7. There will be no disparity in the compensation received by employees performing substantially equal work in terms of skill, effort, and responsibility.
8. Benefit programs supported by the Congregation will be made equally available to all employees, without discrimination.
9. Opportunities for performing overtime work or other ways of earning increased compensation will be afforded to nonexempt staff, without discrimination.





## REVISION HISTORY

Adoption	March 17, 2009
Rev A	January 29, 2017
Rev B	April 25, 2019
Rev C	August 15, 2024
Rev D	May 08, 2025
Rev E	August 13, 2025

## **APPENDIX A: FORMS**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF PERSONNEL POLICIES

I, the undersigned, do hereby acknowledge that I have received and reviewed a copy of the Personnel Policies of First Lutheran Church of Bothell.

I understand that all the policies of First Lutheran Church, hereafter referred to as FLC, including those specified in the Personnel Policies, are subject to changes and exceptions without prior notice and at the discretion of FLC. I understand that both the FLC and I are free to terminate my employment or volunteer work at any time, with or without cause or advance notice, and without compensation except for actual time worked. I understand that any exceptions to this at-will policy must be in a written employment agreement signed by the FLC Council President.

I acknowledge that FLC has the right to access all information created or stored on or with equipment owned by FLC, including email and documents stored on any FLC computer or at any off-site location, such as cloud storage. I also acknowledge that FLC has the right to access all physical areas on its premises, including areas that may be assigned to me, such as desks or files.

Reviewed with Employee By
Signature:
Print Name:
Date:

Employee
Signature:
Print Name:
Date:

Please keep a copy of this receipt and acknowledgement for your records.



## REQUEST FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Requester: \_\_\_\_\_

Submission Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>DESCRIPTION OF OPPORTUNITY:</b>	
Title of Event:	
Location:	
Dates of Event (mm/dd/yyyy thru mm/dd/yyyy):	
Travel Time Required (if any):	
Description: (Include how this opportunity will enhance service to FLC and any other pertinent information, such as an agenda or website, that would be helpful. In addition, as recommended for rostered ministers by the NWWA Synod, provide information on how feedback about the continuing education experience will be shared with the congregation.)	

<b>CURRENT STATUS OF FUNDING &amp; TIME:</b>			
Annual Budgeted Amount:		Amount Expended YTD:	
Annual Allotted # Days:		# of Days Used YTD:	
Is Position Coverage Required?		Identify How Resolved:	

If time off will be taken immediately preceding or following the actual days of the event, please submit a Vacation/Personal Day time off request in conjunction with this Continuing Education request.

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS &amp; APPROVALS:</b>		
Approved by Rostered Minister (Supervisor):		Date:
Personnel Committee Recommendation: (for rostered ministers only)		Date:
Approved by Council: (for rostered ministers only)		Date:
Requester & Bookkeeper Notified By:		Date:



## TIME OFF REQUEST

Requester: \_\_\_\_\_

Submission Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Instructions:

- *Submit one Time Off Request form for the same type of payroll request within the same pay period.*
- *Submit separate forms: 1) for unlike requests, e.g., vacation vs sick, that fall within the same pay period and 2) for the same type of request that spans multiple pay periods.*

Reason for Request:

Vacation ☐

Personal Day ☐

Sick ☐

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
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# of Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approval Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF SAFE COMMUNITY POLICY – APPENDIX B

I, the undersigned, do hereby acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Safe Community Policy, Appendix B of the Personnel Policies of First Lutheran Church of Bothell, hereafter referred to as FLC. I agree to comply with the policy and accept that it is my responsibility to ask for clarification on any portion that I do not comprehend.

I understand that all the policies of FLC, including those specified in the Safe Community Policy, are subject to changes and exceptions without prior notice and at the discretion of FLC.

I acknowledge that FLC has the right to access all information created or stored on or with equipment owned by FLC, including email and documents stored on any FLC computer or at any off-site location, such as cloud storage. I also acknowledge that FLC has the right to access all physical areas on its premises, including areas that may be assigned to me or that I use, such as desks or files.

Reviewed with Employee/Volunteer By
Signature:
Print Name:
Date:

Employee or Volunteer (circle one)
Signature:
Print Name:
Date:

Please keep a copy of this receipt and acknowledgement for your records.

## APPENDIX B: Safe Community Policy (for Youth and Vulnerable Populations)

*People were bringing little children to [Jesus] in order that he might touch them. . .  
And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.  
(Mark 10:13a, 16)*

### PURPOSE

FLC Bothell (the “Church”) has prepared this Safe Community Policy (“Policy”). The Policy applies to all Church-related activities that involve children, youth and vulnerable populations. The Policy should help educate staff and volunteers and/or general members of the congregation about their role in abuse and injury prevention, provide general procedures that reduce these risks, and implement a method of effective response if an incident should occur. Changes to this policy are written by the Personnel Committee and submitted to the Church Council for approval. Addendums will be updated as Revised Codes of Washington (RCWs) and Washington Administrative Codes (WACs) change and not require Council approval.

#### To whom does the policy apply?

The policy applies to staff and volunteers serving in the Church’s youth or children’s ministries or other vulnerable populations. It should be distributed to all staff and volunteers and is available in the Church office.

Definitions used in this policy and addendum:

**Volunteer** is a person who performs services for the Church without payment.

**Children/Youth/Minor** is any person who has not reached their 18th birthday, or the age of majority as defined by state law.

An **Adult** shall be defined as any person who has reached their 18th birthday or as defined by state law.

A **Vulnerable Person** is an **adult, young person or child** who, by reason of disability; age; gender; social and economic status; or illness, the context they are in, may be unable to take care of or to protect themselves against abuse, harm or exploitation.

**Youth and Children’s Ministry Program Staff** are staff directly involved in the Youth and Children’s Ministry Programs of the Church. Also includes the FLC Preschool Staff.

*This is a general policy and should not be construed to provide any explicit or implied contractual rights. The Church reserves the right to amend this policy at any time without advance notice in its sole discretion.*

### PROTECTION & PREVENTION

It is necessary that adults interact with all persons in a way that is caring, nurturing and respectful. These general policies regarding conduct and supervision represent the minimum standards of conduct expected from all staff and volunteers; some programs have additional requirements. Church staff or volunteers should direct questions or concerns regarding these policies or the care of our vulnerable populations to Pastor or the Personnel Committee.



## The Two Adult Rule

A good faith effort should be made to ensure at least two adults (over age 18) are present at all Church-related activities involving children and vulnerable adults. Adults should monitor one another's interaction with our vulnerable populations. They are also to be available to vulnerable populations in case of emergencies.

When one or more children are present for activities on or off the church premises, at least two unrelated adults will provide supervision in each room, vehicle, or other enclosed space.

## Exceptions to the Two-Adult Rule

An exception to the Two-Adult Rule is that a minor, 14 years or older, may supervise younger children in the nursery as long as an adult is in close proximity and able to observe activities in the nursery.

A second exception to the Two-Adult Rule is that a classroom setting, in which one instructor may be alone in a room with several children, complies with this policy only if other adults, such as instructors in other classrooms, are in close proximity. "Close proximity" means that a second adult is close enough to monitor the classroom and regularly observe all activities.

## Overnight Rule

On an overnight Church-related activity, children and adults must not sleep in close physical proximity. No child shall sleep in a tent or alone in a room with one adult unless the adult is the child's parent or guardian. Overnight activities that are mixed genders should have at least one adult male and one adult female present. If the activity is single gender-based, at least one of the adults present should be of the same gender as the children. At least two adults should be present at all overnight Church-related activities involving minors.

## Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying

The Church recognizes its responsibility to provide a safe environment that is free from all types of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying, and intimidation.

All persons have the right to participate in an environment free from harassment, including sexual harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying means any intentionally written message or image (including those that are electronically transmitted) or verbal or physical act, including but not limited to one shown to be motivated by race, color, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, sex, gender, sexual orientation, including gender expression or identity, marital status, age, mental or physical disability or other distinguishing characteristics, honorably discharged veteran or military status, or the use of a trained guide dog or service animal by a person with a disability, when an act:

- Physically harms a person or damages the person's property.
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with a person's participation.
- Is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening environment.
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the group.

Nothing in this section requires the affected person to actually possess a characteristic that is a basis for the harassment, intimidation, or bullying. "Other distinguishing characteristics" can include but are not limited to: physical appearance, clothing or other apparel, socioeconomic status, and weight.

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying can take many forms including, but not limited to, slurs, rumors, "put-downs," jokes, innuendoes, demeaning comments, drawings, cartoons, pranks, gestures, physical attacks,

threats, or other written, oral, physical, or electronically transmitted messages or images.

This policy is not intended to prohibit expression of religious, philosophical, or political views, provided that the expression does not substantially disrupt the environment.

Many behaviors that do not rise to the level of harassment, intimidation, or bullying may still be prohibited by other program policies or rules.

### Staff and Volunteer Screening

All staff and volunteers working with vulnerable populations should complete the following:

1. A screening form, including photo identification;
2. A criminal history information supplement form (background check).

Candidates approved for employment or volunteer service after screening must sign a written statement that they will abide by the Safe Community Policy.

Staff and program leaders will follow a screening process and will be made aware of the Safe Community Policy.

Anyone refusing to participate fully in the screening process, or any person with prior convictions, may not be allowed to work with children or vulnerable persons. Exceptions, if appropriate, may occur. This does not necessarily exclude them from other areas of ministry as determined by the discretion of the pastor and/or Council. *If, however, a background check reveals a prior sexual-misconduct-related offense, that person will be permanently ineligible to volunteer to perform social services, counseling, or in any way be involved in the care, supervision and/or teaching of minors, including nursery, day care, school, athletic and/or overnight activities involving minors, or mentorship of minors.*

Minimum age for those who work with children is 14, assuming the Two-Adult Rule. Minors who assist adults in ministry to children are also to be screened to the extent deemed appropriate by a program leader after obtaining parental consent. The minimum age for those who work with youth are a minimum of 3 years older than the oldest youth present (Ex. If the oldest student at a high school youth group event is 17, the volunteer must be at least 20 years old).

Applicants should be a regular attendee of the Church for at least six months. In certain circumstances (for example, with a new employee or an intern), this rule may be waived as long as the screening process has been completed.

At the discretion of the pastor, staff member or preschool board, references may be requested for each staff or volunteer, with at least one of these from a person who has known the applicant for an extended period of time. The program leader or their designee should contact references and document those conversations. Records of the reference checks should be maintained with the screening folder.

In addition to the above process, those who drive on behalf of the Church must be at least 21 years of age and no older than 70 years of age, possess a valid driver's license, be insured, have proof of insurance, and have a driving record which the program leader deems acceptable under the terms of the Church's current driving policy. The Church reserves the right to verify driving records. In the case of a rental vehicle, only those adults who fall within the rental agreement age range will be permitted to drive the rental vehicle. Drivers must also agree to enforce current seat belt laws and current child restraint laws. Drivers must also agree to abide by the current wireless communication and texting laws.

The Church reserves the right to reject any application for work in youth and children's ministries, recognizing that there are many factors in addition to screening that may influence this decision. In instances where it is unclear to a program leader whether an applicant meets selection criteria, that decision may be made by

consensus of the program leader, the staff responsible for background checks, and the staff with oversight of this program leader.

### Training

The Church should provide training to its staff and volunteers regarding this policy, including, but not limited to, Safe Place operating procedures, child abuse reporting policies, and the recognition of general signs of abuse and neglect. The Church should offer this training bi-annually, and also for new staff and volunteers before they have unsupervised interaction with children.

### Incident Reporting

An employee who believes there has been a violation of this Safe Community Policy has the right and responsibility to report the perceived violation as soon as possible, either to the Pastor(s), the Chair of the Personnel Committee, or the President of the Congregation Council. Any complaint received must be reported to the Pastor(s) and the Personnel Committee. If the matter cannot be resolved between the parties involved, the Personnel Committee will investigate all allegations promptly, objectively, and confidentially. A complainant has the right to invite a colleague to be present at proceedings regarding the complaint.

This Congregation will take no adverse action against an employee who, in good faith, reports a concern, and will, to the extent possible, protect such employees against reprisal. This applies to the violation of this policy caused by anyone with whom an employee comes into contact as part of the employee's job: supervisors, co-workers, vendors, or others. Disciplinary action, including dismissal, when appropriate, will be taken where it is determined that a violation of this policy did occur, or where the rostered minister(s) or a supervisor, has failed to report violations of this policy or employee complaints to the Personnel Committee. If the employee reported for having violated this Congregation's Safe Community Policy is a rostered person, the appropriate sections of the ELCA and Northwest Washington Synod constitutions will also apply.

This Congregation recognizes that the question of whether a particular action or course of conduct constitutes a violation requires a factual determination. This Congregation also recognizes that false accusations can cause serious harm to innocent persons. Therefore, a thorough investigation will be conducted in each case. Malicious accusations will be subject to appropriate sanctions.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the investigation made and/or action taken by the Pastor(s) or the Personnel Committee, the complainant should follow the steps outlined in Section 13 of FLC's Personnel Policies titled Grievance Procedures.