

First Unitarian Church of St. Louis
Safe Church Policy
Care and Concern Volunteers

In order to create an environment that is safe for church members and friends, the following policies and procedures are best practices to be followed by the Care and Concern Committee Volunteers. Exceptions to these policies and procedures, while necessary under some circumstances, should be avoided whenever possible.

1. Volunteer Service – Care and Concern Volunteers are expected to serve with reasonable care, common sense and good intention.
2. Volunteer Training – Care and Concern Volunteers will be offered training opportunities on a broad variety of topics related to the Committee's mission; when possible, volunteers are expected to participate.
3. Volunteer Limitations – Care and Concern Volunteers will not take the place of family members, health care providers, social workers or home health care workers. Volunteers must be realistic about their own abilities and limitations and not try to do anything beyond their skills and abilities or beyond the scope of what we should be doing. For example, volunteers probably cannot help someone move about who cannot move about independently. Falls are one of the most common problems for the sick and elderly and can injure helpers. Volunteers will not be doing any medical/nursing procedures. Volunteers will not be handling financial matters.
4. When providing food, Care and Concern Volunteers need to make sure food is carefully prepared, preserved, and that dietary concerns have been addressed (allergies, low sodium, diabetic diet, etc..) Please take into consideration whether the recipient has the ability as well as a place to prepare and store food properly.
5. Background Checks – Care and Concern Volunteers will be subject to criminal background checks and driving record checks (if volunteer drives) to ensure safety for the congregation members served. We have a responsibility to protect church members and friends from theft, abuse, injury, etc. by the Care and Concern Volunteer assigned to help them. Permission for these criminal background and driving record checks will be kept in a locked drawer in the church office. Background and driving checks will be sought every three years for those who are active volunteers in the Care and Concern program. They will be sought for all new volunteers before they may fully participate. In the event that there is an issue raised from a criminal background or driving record check, the Religious Educator or Administrator, who conduct background checks on behalf of the church, will discuss the issue with the Minister and person in question. Leadership of the Care and Concern Committee may also be involved in this discussion. The Religious Educator or Administrator and the Minister make the final decision about the person's suitability to participate as a Care and Concern Volunteer.

6. Accused or convicted sex offenders – In the event that a person has been formally accused, indicted, or convicted by a court in the State of Missouri, any political subdivision thereof, any other state, or any political subdivision thereof of a sex offense or who is under investigation by said entities as a possible sex offender will not be eligible to serve as a Care and Concern Volunteer. If charges are dropped against a person who was formally accused, of a sex offense, he/she may be considered to serve in the Care and Concern program as a volunteer.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR CARE AND CONCERN COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS

PREAMBLE

First Unitarian Church of St. Louis Care and Concerns Committee provides and strengthens the emotional and spiritual connection among members of the First Unitarian Church community who are in need due to life-changing challenges.

Our mission is to provide help to those of our congregation who are elderly, disabled, ill, or experiencing a life crisis and need hands-on support from fellow members. The services we want to be available include: transportation, phone calls, home and hospital visits, shopping, meals, caregiver respite, assistance with memorial or funeral services, morning calls, and emotional support in times of hardship. We view this mission as part of the church's covenant to be a caring community and to lend support to one another.

EXPECTATIONS

1. All Care and Concern Volunteers will comply with the statutes, regulations and rules of the Federal, State and Local Governments, plus the regulations and rules of any applicable State Agency.
2. All Care and Concern Volunteers will relate in a respectful and appropriate manner with church members and friends they are assigned to serve.
3. All Care and Concern Volunteers will refrain from engaging in sexual, seductive or erotic behavior with the church members and friends they are assigned to serve. Volunteers will refrain from sexually harassing or engaging in any behavior that constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse or neglect with the church members and friends they are assigned to serve.
4. When any Care and Concern Volunteer has reasonable cause to suspect that a person they are assigned to serve has been or may be subjected to abuse or neglect, they are encouraged to immediately report or cause a report to be made to the Care and Concern Chair, who will contact the Senior Minister or Religious Educator or Administrator. Nothing in this section will be construed as limiting the right of any Care and Concern Volunteer from making a report to the appropriate Federal, State, or Local Government authorities or applicable State Agencies. In addition to watching for signs of neglect or abuse by other caregivers, the volunteer needs to watch for changes in conditions (deterioration) that move the recipient outside the capacity of the volunteer to help safely.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I have read and received a copy of the foregoing Safe Church Policy and Code of Ethics. I agree to comply with all of its provisions.

I agree to allow the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis to obtain a background check prior to my activities as a Care and Concern Committee Volunteer. I understand that any information acquired through such a check will only be released to individuals who require this information in order to execute the duties of their Church office or position in the Church Administration.

Signature

Printed name

Date

CONSENT FOR BACKGROUND HISTORY CHECK AUTHORIZATION, WAIVER, AND INDEMNITY

I hereby give my permission to the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis, a not for profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Missouri, to obtain information relating to my child-care/family-care/elder-care history record. The child-care/family-care/elder-care history record, as received from the reporting agencies, may include arrest and conviction data as well as plea bargains and deferred adjudications and delinquent conduct committed as a juvenile. I understand that this information will be used in part to determine my eligibility for an employment/volunteer position with this organization. I also understand that as long as I remain an employee or volunteer here, the child-care/family-care/elder-care history records check may be repeated at any time. I understand that I will have an opportunity to review the child-care/family-care/elder-care history as received by the First Unitarian Church. If I dispute the record as received, it will be reviewed and any alleged errors will be investigated. I also understand that the child-care/family-care/elder care history could contain information presumed to be expunged.

I, the undersigned, for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, release and agree to indemnify the First Unitarian Church or St. Louis, and each of its officers, board members, employees, and agents and hold them harmless from and against any and all causes and actions, suits, liabilities, costs, debts and sums of money, claims and demands whatsoever (including claim for negligence, gross negligence, and/or strict liability of the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis) and any and all related attorneys' fees, court costs and other expenses resulting from the investigation of my background in connection with my application to become a volunteer/employee.

Signature

Printed name

Social Security # _____

Birth Date _____

Date

Information Required from Volunteer Drivers

I, _____, agree that First Unitarian Church of St. Louis may make a background check on my driving record in the state of Missouri and/or Illinois.

My driver's license number is: _____.

My date of birth is: _____.

My personal injury liability levels of automobile insurance meet state standards:

I agree to maintain these limits of insurance coverage or to notify First Unitarian Church of St. Louis if these limits are modified. Should the coverage be cancelled, I agree that I will no longer volunteer to drive for First Unitarian Church events.

Signed:

Signature

Date

(Please print name)

Copy of my driver's license is attached / on reverse /

For information only:

I plan to be driving for Religious Education

Care and Concern

Other

_____ (pls specify)

ADMINISTRATION OF POLICY

1. To achieve efficiency and privacy for volunteers, all background checks will be processed by the Religious Educator or Administrator (whether or not the check is for a Religious Education program).

2. Volunteers are asked annually for permission to obtain background and driver record checks. Permission for these background checks and the results of the checks will be kept in locked drawer in the church office. Background checks will be sought every three years for those who are active volunteers in programs that require said checks. They will be sought for all new volunteers before they may fully participate. In the event that there is an issue raised from a background check, the Religious Educator will discuss the issue with the minister and person in question. The Religious Educator or Administrator and Minister will make the final decision about the person's suitability to participate as a volunteer.

3. Documents related to background checks will be destroyed (shredded) when they are no longer needed