

**Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church
Holmen, WI**

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Approved by Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran
Church Voters on October 19, 2025

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Purpose

Every life is a gift from our Father in heaven. He is the One who created us. David confesses, "For you created my inner organs. You wove me together in my mother's womb" (Ps. 139:13). Solomon tells us, "Indeed, children are a heritage from the Lord. The fruit of the womb is a reward from him" (Ps. 127:3). Having received these wonderful gifts from our Father in heaven, we look to him for guidance on raising them, for Paul writes, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

We also live in a sinful world. Each of us is born in sin. As David said, "Certainly, I was guilty when I was born. I was sinful when my mother conceived me" (Ps. 51:5). Jesus himself was physically endangered as a child when Herod ordered the murder of infants in Bethlehem, forcing Jesus and his family to flee and his whereabouts hidden by the Magi (Mt. 2). In a sinful world, we must protect these wonderful gifts of children we receive from our Father in heaven. Jesus said, "But, if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a huge millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" (Mt. 18:6). We do not want to put stumbling blocks in our children's lives, but rather point out stumbling blocks and remove them where we can, as Paul urges: "Do not participate in fruitless deeds of darkness. Instead, expose them" (Eph. 5:11). As Scripture reveals to us here, God takes seriously any action that harms a child, especially spiritually.

Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church and Little Lamb Preschool want to provide a nurturing and dynamic Christian environment that will help children grow spiritually, physically, and intellectually. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Mt. 19:14). Since children are important and dear to their Father in heaven, they are also important and dear to each of us. Jesus tells us, "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him is the one who bears much fruit, because without me you can do nothing" (Jn. 15:4,5). Following and staying connected to our Savior, we, on behalf of the children God has entrusted to our care, place this policy before our congregation.

This policy will direct the protection of children. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Team (which consists of the congregation's pastor, the congregational president, and the preschool director) of Good Shepherd to carry out this policy within Good Shepherd congregation. That team will do the work of this policy, make sure it is carried out, keep it before the congregation, and review the policy regularly.

Definition of a Child

We consider a child to be one who has not attained the age of eighteen, per the definition in Wisconsin statutes, and anyone who is still in high school.

Definition of Abuse

We condemn the following types of abuse, as does God's Word.

- a. Sexual abuse
- b. Physical abuse
- c. Emotional and verbal abuse
- d. Neglect
- e. Spiritual abuse

A full definition for each type, plus examples, can be found in Appendix B.

Impact of Child Sexual Abuse & Maltreatment

Though a child's injuries may be hidden from the untrained eye, child sexual abuse and other forms of child maltreatment can result in immediate and/or lasting impact in all realms of the person's well-being. Understanding how child sexual abuse can traumatize the child and have lasting impact in the life of a surviving adult is a critical first step in preventing abuse and responding compassionately. Not every child will display the impact of their maltreatment and not every adult will experience the long-term consequences of their traumatic childhood experiences, but all are at increased risk.

Impact on Emotional Health

The Center for Disease Control's Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study found that children who had suffered one of the ten adverse childhood experiences surveyed were at an increased risk throughout their lifetime for: obesity, smoking, illicit drug use, alcohol abuse, marrying an alcoholic spouse, early initiation of sexual activity, unintended or teen pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, anxiety disorder, depression, attempting suicide, experiencing domestic or sexual violence, difficulties with academics, employment, or relationships, hallucinations, memory disturbances, or sleep disturbances.

Impact on Physical Health

The ACE study found that children who had experienced maltreatment were more likely to suffer from a variety of serious medical problems, including cancer, heart disease, lung disease, liver disease, autoimmune deficiencies, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and obesity as adults.

Impact on Spiritual Health

Spiritual injuries from child sexual abuse or child maltreatment might include negative shifts in victims' perception of God (e.g., perceiving God as cruel, unfair, punitive, and distant), a ruptured relationship with God (e.g., feeling unloved by God), disruptions of faith (e.g., doubting God's existence), decreased involvement in organized religion (e.g., less willing to attend formal religious events), and a decline in spiritual well-being and functioning (e.g., feeling angry, guilty, or disconnected from one's sense of personal spirituality). Children who have suffered sexual abuse or other maltreatment often endure spiritual injury and may feel guilty, doubtful of God's existence, or believe that God is unjust. Victims report a sense of enhanced betrayal when their abuser is a person they perceived as holy, and numerous studies have found that spiritual injuries are more pronounced in instances when the perpetrator is a member of the clergy.

Identifying Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse and Child Maltreatment

Any church member who may witness one or more of the indicators of abuse in Appendix C should consider the possibility of abuse. In addition, church members familiarizing themselves with the indicators of neglect make it more likely they will understand the potential significance of what they are seeing and follow up with exploratory questions or actions.

Screening and Background Checks

Initial Screening

All volunteers will be asked to fill out an application, read the policy, and complete the policy statement of agreement and background check release form. An interview may also be required. Applications and related papers are confidential and maintained in locked files with limited access. Good Shepherd will use its discretion in reviewing and investigating the history of each applicant and in determining the activities for which a background check is required. In general, adults - both staff and volunteers - who have supervisory responsibility for children, provide transportation, or otherwise have contact with children that is planned and not sporadic, will be asked to submit to a criminal and driving background check. This includes pastors, teachers, Sunday School teachers, and others who will be with children off the church property, chaperone overnight events, and/or serve as youth group leaders.

Acknowledgement of Policy

All adults participating in programs involving significant contact with children will be contacted and asked to read this policy and sign a statement indicating they have read the policy and agree to abide by its terms. This is a proactive approach toward protecting the children and the adults who generously give their time to work with children.

Criminal Background Checks

Criminal background checks will be performed at least every three years. Good Shepherd will request the following information when conducting a background check through a company that provides such services:

- Social Security identification
- State sexual offender criminal check
- Nationwide criminal check

Currently, Good Shepherd uses Protect My Ministry for conducting criminal background checks. The cost of the background check will be covered by Good Shepherd.

Driving Record Checks

Any church member, volunteer, or staff member transporting a child in a vehicle must have a current driver's license and a clear driving record for the last five years. Good Shepherd will request your driver's license number and issuing state information to conduct the check.

In Case of Concerns

The Safeguarding Team (again, consisting of the pastor, congregational president, and preschool director) will contact applicants regarding any concerns raised by the application, reference checks, or background checks and shall determine whether the applicant may or may not work with children at Good Shepherd. Good Shepherd will err on the side of caution in restricting an individual from working with children if the background check or other information arouses suspicion or uncertainty about the individual's ability to work safely with children. Applicants deemed by Good Shepherd to pose a threat to children will not be permitted to participate in Good Shepherd activities for children.

Prohibited vs Safe Behaviors

A. Prohibited Behaviors

In addition to the behaviors listed in the Definition of Abuse section and Appendix B, Good Shepherd considers the following to be abuse or behaviors that may conceal abuse and therefore its church professionals, volunteers, and members are prohibited from these behaviors:

- Sexually or physically abusive touch
- Touches or interaction with children in any way intended to be sexually stimulating
- Playing with a child's hair
- Tickling
- Tapping a child's buttocks
- Touching a child's thighs
- Any touch that is unwanted by a child

Sexual Language, Photos, or Video

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church acknowledges that sexual language is more than mere jokes, but a serious boundary violation. The Apostle Paul instructs the church at Ephesus "not to let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs" (Ep. 4:29). "Neither should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving" (Ep. 5:4). As such, the following are prohibited:

- Using sexually suggestive language, racy jokes, sexual innuendo, descriptions of sexual experiences/habits
- Uploading, downloading, or viewing of pornography
- Playing music, videos games, and movies with sexual themes without prior parental approval

If the church staff or volunteers want to give a lecture or organize a program to help youth understand age-appropriate questions about their body or sexuality, the event must be planned in advance and parents notified beforehand. When children or teens raise questions about their body or sexuality, Good Shepherd volunteers and staff will answer the question at hand in an age-appropriate way and inform a supervisor.

Technology & Social Media

- Online interactions with children should be observable and interruptible. They should not be secret.
- Text messages should include the parent as part of a group text.
- Photos or videos of children should not be posted without written permission from the caregiver and child.
- If photos or videos are posted online, the children's full names, location, or names of schools should not be posted.

B. Safe Behaviors – How can we show children affection in a safe and responsible way?

By promoting safe behaviors, this policy aims to cut down on situations where children are vulnerable. Therefore, Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church recommends church professionals, volunteers, and members show healthy affection to its children through the following:

- Displays of affection that are observable and interruptible
- Kind words
- High fives

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- Pats on the shoulder
- Side hugs

Good Shepherd encourages positive verbal interactions, including:

- Encouragement
- Kind words
- Positive reinforcement
- Appropriate jokes

Routine Protective Measures

Two-Adult Rule & Open Door Policy

1. Whenever possible, two trained adults will be present at all of Good Shepherd's activities, practices, and classes involving children. A caregiver in Surround Care may typically work alone but should adhere to the open-door policy.
2. Good Shepherd holds to an open-door policy. There will be no locked doors with a child in the room, and administrators and other visitors may make unannounced visits at any time. Windows in doors must remain uncovered. Emergency situations that necessitate a lockdown may be excepted.

Registration

At the beginning of each ministry year, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church will create/update a registration for any child who attends activities and programs.

The registration form should include:

- Parental/Guardian contact information
- The child's allergies
- Any medical concerns
- Doctor to contact in case of an emergency

Good Shepherd follows the arrival/departure procedures as listed in the Little Lamb Preschool Parent Handbook for all events involving children. See that handbook for more details.

Transportation

Any church member, volunteer, or staff member transporting a child in a vehicle must have a current driver's license and a clear driving record for the last five years.

Reporting and Responding to Abuse

"Do not participate in fruitless deeds of darkness. Instead, expose them," commands Paul (Eph. 5:11). By refraining from confronting abuse, we condone it. Instead, let us bring it to light by responsibly using the avenues that God has provided for us in the church and justice system.

Abuse Related to Church Personnel, Events and/or Activities

1. Church staff, volunteers, and any other mandated reporters are required to report known or suspected physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect of children to the authorities (contact numbers are listed below) (Rom. 13:1-5). A person may learn of abuse by direct observation or by being told of the abuse by another person. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. Every state provides immunity from civil or criminal liability for persons required to report suspected abuse in good faith and without malice. "In good faith" means that the person submitting the report believes what he or she is reporting to be true.
2. If the adult involved is another church employee, volunteer or church member, then the church and the Safeguarding Team shall be notified of the suspected child abuse. The church and the Safeguarding Team shall also be notified of any inappropriate behaviors or other violations of the *Child Safeguarding Policy*.
 - a. Some signs of sexual abuse are included in Appendix C of this document.
 - b. Examples of inappropriate behaviors or policy violations include seeking private time with children outside the scope of the programs at Good Shepherd, taking children on outings or overnight trips without other adults, swearing in front of children, making suggestive comments to children, or putting volunteers in positions to work with children without the required application or screening.
 - c. Other examples related to church events and/or activities may include (but are not limited to):
 - i. Suspected abuse occurring on church premises
 - ii. Suspected abuse occurring at a church-sponsored event
 - iii. Suspected abuse by a staff member or volunteer at Good Shepherd that takes place in any location
3. The staff member, volunteer, or church member to whom the alleged abuse is reported should record incident details on the "Report when You Suspect Abuse Has Taken Place" (Appendix E) or "Confidential Notice of Concern about Situations and Practices but Abuse is not Suspected" form (Appendix F). The child should not be questioned regarding the concern. Only factual evidence of abuse (including descriptions of observations and a record of statements from the child) should be recorded. The person reporting should not attempt to substantiate any allegations of suspicions, nor should they draw conclusions about abuse.
4. An alleged perpetrator will be removed from any position involving contact with children at Good Shepherd until the allegation is resolved. The Safeguarding Team will maintain a confidential written record of each such report and will use appropriate judgment to designate a person or a team to gather additional information if someone has violated church policies. Good Shepherd's policy requires that the Safeguarding Team, mandated reporters, or the person informed of child abuse reports the incident to the appropriate governmental authority, as required by state law and church regulations. Good Shepherd will cooperate fully with government authorities in the investigations of allegations of child abuse and will coordinate

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with law enforcement and Child Protection Services to avoid interference with government investigations (Rom. 13:1-5). All persons involved in reporting or investigating any alleged incident of abuse shall hold information received in strict confidence, subject to such disclosures as are required under church procedures or by law, or that may be necessary to protect a child or children.

5. Cases involving allegations of misconduct by any called worker of this congregation shall be promptly reported to the Circuit Pastor and the Western Wisconsin District President.

Abuse Unrelated to Church Personnel, Events and/or Activities

1. Individuals who are mandated reporters by law must comply with the law (Rom. 13:1-5) and make a report to the authorities (contact numbers listed below) if they are a witness to or have a reasonable suspicion of any physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect of a child, whether or not it is connected to the church. Failure to report suspected abuse of children may be a crime. Reports may be made confidentially or anonymously. Every state provides immunity from civil or criminal liability for persons required to report suspected abuse in good faith and without malice. "In good faith" means that the person submitting the report believes what he or she is reporting to be true.
2. Examples of abuse unrelated to church events/activities may include (but are not limited to):
 - a. Abuse occurring in the home
 - b. Abuse occurring in the community
 - c. Abuse related to other relationships outside of the church
3. Irrespective if someone is a mandated reporter, Good Shepherd strongly encourages all employees, volunteers, and church members who witness or have a reasonable suspicion of any physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect of a child to report it to the authorities (contact numbers are listed below). If the abuse is unrelated to church activity or personnel, the witness may still report it to the church using the "Report when You Suspect Abuse Has Taken Place" (Appendix E) or "Confidential Notice of Concern about Situations and Practices but Abuse is not Suspected" form (Appendix F, forms used to document details and gather information.

Local government agencies' contact information:

- **La Crosse County Department of Human Services**
 - a. 300 4th Street North, La Crosse, WI 54601
 - b. Phone: 608-784-4357 (HELP)
 - c. Business hours: Mon-Fri 8:00AM to 4:30PM.
 - d. After Hours/Weekends/Holidays: Call 911 in the event of an emergency
 - e. <https://lacrossecounty.org/humanservices/services/our-services/children-and-youth#reporting>
- Local police – **In an emergency, call 911.**
 - a. Holmen Police Department
 - i. 119 Wall Street West, Holmen, WI 54636
 - ii. 608-526-4212
 - iii. hpd@holmenwi.gov
 - b. Onalaska Police Department
 - i. 415 Main Street, Onalaska, WI 54650
 - ii. Main line: 608-781-9550
 - iii. Tip line: 608-392-0228

- c. La Crosse Police Department
 - i. 400 La Crosse St, La Crosse, WI 54601
 - ii. Non-emergency phone: 608-782-7575

Listening and Responding to Abuse Disclosures

Because children and adult survivors are reluctant to disclose abuse, Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church acknowledges that survivors who choose to do so need our community's utmost support.

When children disclose, they often do so tentatively or by accident, and may later recant even when there is proof that the abuse occurred. If questioned directly, many child victims may deny the abuse. When children disclose intentionally, children may first test the adult's reaction by pretending that the abuse happened to a friend or by supplying only a small bit of information. If a child discloses abuse to you, the following are helpful tips on how to respond in the moment:

- Stay calm.
- Show love and respect for the child.
- Thank the child for telling you and praise the child's courage.
- If the child expresses guilt or concerns about getting in trouble, reassure the child that no matter what happened he or she is not to blame.
- If the child expresses concern about not being believed, reassure the child that you believe him/her.
- Allow the child to talk freely; do not interrupt, ask the child to repeat words, or probe for details. Keep in mind you are not conducting an investigation and there is no need to obtain the details of the reported abuse. If, however, you need to ask some follow up questions in order to have enough information to make a mandated report or take other action to protect a child, use open-ended questions such as "What happened next?" or "Tell me more."
- Do not offer false assurances, such as promising to keep the child's disclosure a secret.
- Let the child know what to expect next and incorporate their input where possible.
- Protect the child immediately from the suspected offender.
- Report the abuse to authorities and your supervisors/church leaders.
- Document the disclosure and your report.
- Protect the child's right to privacy and avoid the urge to turn indiscriminately to colleagues, friends, or family for advice. Instead turn to professionals experienced in handling cases of child abuse and to carefully selected individuals who can provide assistance and support to the child and you.

Receiving an adult's abuse disclosure is an honor, not a burden; it is a sign of trust. Victims often choose to disclose their abuse years, even decades, after it occurred. Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church encourages anyone receiving an adult's abuse disclosure to be guided by the responses in Appendix D.

Support and Encouragement

Though we created this policy to protect our children from abuse, we also acknowledge that many children have lived without caring adults in their lives to support and protect them. If you have been a victim of abuse or know someone who has suffered abuse, Good Shepherd wishes to extend a message of support, hope, and healing.

Not everyone can understand the abuse you have suffered, but one person grasps such an experience: Jesus Christ. The prophet Isaiah tells us that Jesus "was despised and rejected by men, a man who knew grief, who was well acquainted with suffering. Like someone whom people cannot bear to look at, he was despised" (Isaiah 53:3). And Jesus did experience every hurt imaginable. He knows what it is like to be rejected and scorned (Luke 4:29). He understands what it feels like to have his testimony overlooked and doubted. He felt the pain of physical abuse at the hands of his religious enemies; they spit on him, struck him, pulled out his beard. Roman soldiers mocked him, called him names, pressed a crown of thorns onto his skull, scourged him, and made him bleed. They nailed his hands and feet to a cross. He hung there unclothed, his nakedness exposed to the eyes of all (Luke 23:35). Jesus endured all of this so that he could be the Savior that understands your abuse and "[carries your] sufferings" (Isaiah 53:4). Therefore, the comfort he offers to you in his Word is more legitimate than any other.

Resources for Victims

- WELS Freedom for the Captives Ministry website: www.freedomforcaptives.com
- Christian Family Solutions (Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family Service Inc): www.christianfamilysolutions.org

Education, Dissemination, and Policy Review and Adoption

Education

Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church will provide training to staff and volunteers to be taken upon hire or when they first volunteer. Church staff and volunteers, including members of the Safeguarding Team, are expected to take refresher training annually. Church members are welcome to sign up as well.

The Safeguarding Team will also provide resources to related trainings that children, parents, and other members may be interested in taking, such as personal safety education.

Dissemination

This Policy shall be disseminated widely to the church community through publications, public discussion, educational opportunities, sermons, training programs, and other appropriate means of communication that will raise awareness and create a safe environment for our children. Specifically, the most current version of the Policy shall be:

- Posted on the church website
- Readily available in the church office, lobby, surround care center, preschool, and nursery
- Communicated to every member biannually (every other year) via email
- Included in new member packets
- Summarized and posted on the wall in the preschool wing
- Incorporated into a sermon delivered biannually by the pastor

Policy Review and Adoption

The policy was last reviewed by these Safeguarding Team members: Pastor Greg Pope, Jacob Werre, Tammy Melott in early August, 2025.

This policy is adopted by action of the Good Shepherd Church Council on August 20, 2025 and also approved by the voters at the Vision Together Meeting on October 19, 2025.

"My Brother's Keeper" Bible Study

This Bible Study was developed by WELS Pastor Michael Lindemann, formerly of St John's Lutheran Church, Lewiston, MN. He currently serves as pastor at Grace Lutheran Church in Spring Hill, Florida. A Bible Study is included in this child safeguarding policy because God's Word is "a lamp for my feet, a light on my path" (Psalm 119:105). God's Word provides ultimate comfort and direction on the subject of child abuse – its prevention, and healing and renewal for those affected by it.

Introduction

This is a brief study of what Scripture says about child abuse. As with all sin, we must look at what God says, not what society says. It is very clear what God thinks about those who abuse children. As his representatives, we can feel no different. Using Law and Gospel, we must confront the sin so that the sinner might repent and so that the abused might continue to stay close to their Savior.

Genesis 4:8-10 – *Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. 9Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" 10The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.*

- How long has hatred, abuse and murder been around?
- For whom does God make us responsible?
- How much blood cries out to God today?

Ephesians 5:11 – *Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.*

- How must we deal with those who do "fruitless deeds of darkness"?
- Can we encourage people to turn themselves in? If so, how?

Matthew 18:5,6,10 – *And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. 6But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. 10 See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.*

- Why so severe?

Trying to help those who have been abused

The abused try to make sense of two realities. First, that God promises to be with them and protect them, and also that they have been abused sometimes by someone calling themselves a Christian. How can we help them make sense of those two realities?

Isaiah 60:15 – *Although you have been forsaken and hated, with no one traveling through, I will make you the everlasting pride and the joy of all generations.*

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Isaiah 53:4 – *Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.*

- Of what must we constantly assure the abused?
- Although our fellow Christians as well as medical and mental health providers can be instruments God uses to comfort the afflicted, who ultimately is the source of comfort to the survivors of abuse or neglect?

1 Peter 5:7 – Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

- An abused person can do this because Jesus knows....

Isaiah 53:3 – *He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

Psalms 142:4 – *Look to my right and see; no one is concerned for me. I have no refuge; no one cares for my life.*

Psalms 69:20 – *Scorn has broken my heart and has left me helpless; I looked for sympathy, but there was none, for comforters, but I found none.*

Psalms 116:3 – *The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.*

Psalms 22:16-17 – *Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. ¹⁷I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me.*

Psalms 22:1 – *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?*

- What does Jesus know?

Trying to help the abuser

1 Corinthians 5:1-5 – *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife. ²And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this? ³Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. And I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as if I were present. ⁴When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, ⁵hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.*

- What must be carried out with the abuser?

2 Corinthians 2:5-11 – *If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent—not to put it too severely. ⁶The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is*

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sufficient for him. 7 Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. 9 The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. 10 If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, 11 in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

- What is always the goal of any church discipline?

James 5:13-16 – *Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. 14 Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*

- Someone who has abused children might seem to be out of reach or lost. Are they?
- What should we pray for the abused? What should we pray for the abuser?
- Be careful not to put conditions on the Gospel.

John 15:4,5 – *Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*

- When counseling with an abuser or the abused what or who must be at the center?

Appendix A – Letter from the Pastor

Dear friends,

Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church and Little Lamb Preschool are concerned with difficult and sensitive issues relating to personal ethics and sexual misconduct, especially related to children in our midst. Churches are by nature trusting institutions, which have traditionally accepted the services of anyone expressing an interest in working as a volunteer with children.

While asking sensitive questions of potential youth workers, teachers, or anyone else closely involved with our children might appear distasteful and offensive, not doing so can make a church extremely susceptible to child abuse or molestation incidents. A single incident involving a child, or even an adult, devastates the individuals involved and can do the same to the entire church community.

Because Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church and Little Lamb Preschool are concerned for the welfare of all its members, beginning with the youngest infant, we have worked to create a "Child Safeguarding Policy" that seeks to take practical steps to reduce the risk of abuse in our church and school. This policy aims to ensure that our church and school are safe for children, youth, and all our members and guests.

To that end, this Child Safeguarding Policy has been adopted by our congregation. All adults participating in programs involving significant contact with children will be contacted and asked to read the policy and sign a statement indicating that they have done so. We see this as a proactive approach toward protecting the children and the adults who generously give their time to work with children. We rely on the Holy Spirit's guidance by his Word as we strive to be a caring and responsible flock, knowing that we are safe in the mighty hand of Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd.

In Christ,

Pastor Gregory Pope

Appendix B – Definitions of Abuse

A. Sexual Abuse

Good Shepherd aims to prevent sexual abuse and to recognize it if it occurs. This policy defines sexual abuse as physical contact with a sexual or intimate part of the body, or other forms of sexual activity, conducted without consent, or engaged in for the purpose of sexual gratification or to degrade or abuse.

Physical contact includes:

- Touching, grabbing, patting, slapping, pinching, rubbing, fondling, groping, poking, or other forms of contact, whether over or under clothing
- Rubbing one's genital area up against another person or touching another person with one's genitals, whether over or under clothing. This includes instances when an individual acts as though the rubbing was inadvertent but was in fact intentional.
- Sexual intercourse of any kind

Sexual or intimate body parts include but are not limited to:

- Breasts
- Buttocks
- Genitals
- Groin area
- Upper thighs

Other forms of sexual activity include:

- Photographing, videotaping, or making any other visual, descriptive, or auditory recording of sexual activity or the sexual or intimate parts of a person's body
- Displaying to another any writings, photograph, videotape, or other visual or auditory recording of sexual activity or the sexual or intimate parts of a person's body

Lack of consent includes:

- Explicit indication of lack of consent
- Physical/ verbal force or intimidation, whether express or implicit
- Circumstances making it obvious that consent has not been granted, such as:
 - If one individual is an adult and one individual is a child, since children cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult
 - Being too intoxicated to say "no"
 - Being asleep
 - Lack of knowledge of the activity's occurrence
 - Otherwise not having the physical or mental capacity to consent

B. Physical Abuse

Good Shepherd aims to prevent physical abuse and to recognize it if it occurs. This policy defines physical abuse as a non-accidental physical injury (ranging from minor bruises to severe fractures or death) as a result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, shaking, throwing, stabbing, choking, hitting (with a hand, stick, strap, or other object), burning, torturing, or otherwise harming a child, that is inflicted by a parent, caregiver, or other person who has responsibility for the child. Such injury is considered abuse regardless of whether the caregiver intended to hurt the child.

C. Emotional and Verbal Abuse

Good Shepherd aims to prevent emotional and verbal abuse and to recognize it if it occurs. This policy defines emotional abuse as acts toward a child that cause or have a substantial likelihood of causing harm to the child's physical, psychological, social, spiritual, or moral development.

Emotional abuse might include, but is not limited to, patterns of:

- restricting a child's movement
- discrimination (e.g. serving snack to all the children in a youth group except for one child or one group of children)
- blaming
- belittling, denigrating, ridiculing, or humiliating
- threatening or scaring
- unrealistic expectations and demands
- other non-physical forms of hostility or bullying

D. Neglect

Good Shepherd aims to prevent neglect and to recognize it if it occurs. This policy recognizes that neglect can take the form of the following:

- Physical (e.g., failure to provide necessary food or shelter or lack of appropriate supervision)
- Medical (e.g., failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment)
- Educational (e.g., failure to educate a child or attend to special education needs)
- Emotional (e.g., inattention to a child's emotional needs including failure to provide psychological care, or permitting the child to use alcohol or other drugs)

E. Spiritual Abuse

Good Shepherd aims to prevent spiritual abuse and to recognize it if it occurs. This policy defines child spiritual abuse as abuse administered under the guise of religion.

Examples include:

- Use of religious ideology, precepts, tradition, or sacred texts to harm a child
- Compelling a child to engage in religious acts against his or her will
- Abuse that occurs in a religious context (e.g., church)
- Abuse perpetuated by a religious leader (e.g., pastor)
- Invocation of divine authority to manipulate a child into meeting the needs of the abuser

Appendix C – Indicators of Abuse

Church professionals, volunteers and members should consider the possibility of sexual abuse if a child has the following:

- **Physical indicators**
 - Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
 - Difficulty, pain, or blood in the genital area when walking, sitting, or using the bathroom
 - Discharge from the penis or vagina
 - Injuries (e.g., bruises, tearing, bleeding), itching, or swelling in the genital, vaginal, or anal area
 - Urinary tract infections, yeast infections, sexually transmitted diseases
 - Pregnancy

- **Atypical sexual behaviors for pre-adolescent children (the younger the child, the more concerning these and similar behaviors may be):**
 - Placing mouth on sex part
 - Asking others to engage in sexual acts
 - Trying to have intercourse or imitating intercourse
 - Undressing others, especially if done forcefully
 - Imitating sexual positions with dolls
 - Inserting an object into vagina or anus, especially if child continues to do so despite pain
 - Manually stimulating or having oral or genital contact with pets
 - Making sexual sounds
 - Inserting tongue in mouth when kissing

- **Emotional or behavioral signs:**
 - Depression; emotionless or passive behavior; withdrawal from family, friends, church, or school; exhibiting low self-esteem or self-loathing
 - Lack of attachment to a caregiver; displaying distrust or wariness at the approach of adults, caregivers, or specific people; fear of going home that may manifest by arriving at youth groups early, staying late, and appearing frightened or upset when it is time to return home
 - Being constantly watchful, as though preparing for something bad to happen
 - Sudden changes in behavior, including academic changes » Extremes in behavior, such as over-compliance, over-achieving or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or behaving more responsibly than would be expected of a child that age
 - Aggressive, destructive (e.g., fire-setting), demanding, or disruptive behavior; frequent and inexplicable anger, rebellion, or running away
 - Self-degradation; self-injury (e.g., "cutting") or wearing long sleeves on hot days (to hide bruising or other injuries); suicide attempts
 - Delays in emotional, cognitive, physical, or academic development
 - Unwillingness to change for or participate in certain youth department activities such as a gym night or swim program
 - Being inappropriately adult (e.g., parenting other children) or infantile (e.g., rocking or head-banging)
 - Bed-wetting in children who have previously outgrown it; nightmares; difficulty sleeping
 - Exhibiting high anxiety, including through physical problems associated with anxiety, such as chronic stomach pain or headaches
 - Frequent, unexplained absences at school

Church professionals, volunteers and members should consider the possibility of physical abuse if a child has the following:

- Frequent injuries of any kind (e.g., bruises, cuts, fractures, burns)
- Especially if the child is unable to provide an adequate explanation of the cause of injury
- These injuries may appear in distinctive patterns such as grab marks, human bite marks, cigarette burns, or impressions of other instruments
- Pay particular attention to injuries that present on both sides of the head or body, as accidental injuries typically only affect one side of the body

Church professionals, volunteers and members should consider the possibility of neglect if a child has the following:

- Is obviously malnourished, listless, or fatigued
- Beggars, steals, or hoards food or complains frequently of hunger
- Is consistently dirty or has severe body odor
- Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- Untreated illness, injuries, health (e.g., unfilled cavities) or serious educational needs
- Broken or missing eyeglasses, hearing aid, or other necessary aids or equipment
- Has an untreated need for glasses, dental care, or other medical attention
- Stays at school outside of school hours
- Frequently absent or significant, unexplained academic struggles
- Is inappropriately left unsupervised
- Abuses alcohol or other drugs

Appendix D - Supportive Dos/Don'ts

Follow these Dos and Don'ts to better support those who disclose their childhood abuse.

Do Say	Don't Say
Thank you for telling me	Why are you telling me this?
I'm glad you're safe now.	Why didn't you _____ (scream/stop him/her etc.)?
You did the right thing _____ (asking for help/telling me/reporting the abuse etc.).	What do you mean when you say he/she abused you? What exactly did he/she do?
I'm glad you're talking with me.	Tell me more details about what happened.
I'm sorry this happened to you. How can I help?	Why did he/she do that to you? Had you done something to make him/her think that was okay?
Take as much time as you need.	You need to forgive and move on.
Things may never be the same, but they can get better.	Don't worry, it's going to be all right.
I am here.	It'll take some time, but you'll get over it.
I stand with you. This congregation stands with you.	Calm down and try to relax. Try to be strong.
<i>The following should only be said if the victim indicates these concerns are on his/her mind.</i>	
It is okay to be angry.	It was so long ago, why are you still letting your abuse win by hanging on to it? Let it go.
It is okay to still love your abuser.	You should get on with your life.
It's understandable you're feeling that way.	Time heals all wounds.
Your reaction is not an uncommon response.	Out of tragedies, good things happen. You're lucky that _____ didn't happen.
You're not going crazy. These are normal reactions following an assault.	It was God's will. I know how you feel.
I believe you.	Perhaps you misunderstood...
It wasn't your fault.	Better to receive punishment in this world than the next.

Appendix E. Report When You Suspect Abuse Has Taken Place

Name of adult observing or receiving disclosure of abuse or suspected abuse _____

Date and time disclosure was given or abuse was observed _____

Place disclosure was given or abuse was observed _____

Notes on the Victim

- Victim's name _____
- Victim's age _____
- Victim's date of birth _____
- Date of initial conversation with victim _____
- Time of initial conversation with victim _____
- Place of initial conversation with victim _____

Victim's statement (attach additional sheets as needed):

Notes on the Accused

Name of accused _____

Position and status (paid staff, volunteer, or other) of person accused of abuse:

Date/time/place of any conversation with the accused:

Please note we are not conducting an investigation and, generally speaking, there should be no conversation with the accused until the authorities have completed their work. However, there may be times when a conversation has already happened with the accused. This may happen if an offender confesses their actions to you or someone else at church, if you or someone else walks in on an offender hurting a child, or if you confront someone about a policy breach and they make concerning statements.

Notes of conversation (please attach additional sheets as needed):

Result of information gathering

- Asked to step down from activities with children at Good Shepherd
Suspension date/time _____
Notes of suspension _____

- Information reported to police and/or other appropriate authorities
- Asked to continue activities with children at Good Shepherd

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

Please submit this form to the Safeguarding Team in one of the following ways:

- Email pastor@gsholmen.org or tmelott@gsholmen.org or email our church president. If you need contact info, contact office@gsholmen.org or call the church: (608) 526-4829.
- Mail to:
Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church
C/O Safeguarding Team
1500 Sand Lake Rd
Holmen, WI 54636

Appendix F: Confidential Notice of Concern about Situations and Practices but Abuse is not Suspected

Individual(s) of Concern _____

Date of occurrence _____

Time of occurrence _____

Type of Concern:

- Inappropriate behavior with a child or youth
- Policy violation with a child or youth
- Possible risk of abuse
- Other concern:

When answering the questions below, please attach additional sheets as needed.

Describe the situation: What happened, where it happened, when it happened, who was involved, who was present, who was notified?

If reported to the local or state police, what was their recommendation about investigating?

Has this situation ever occurred previously?

If so, what action was taken?

How was the situation handled, who was involved, who was questioned, were police called?

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What is the follow-up plan?

Does anyone else need to be notified?

Will the situation need monitoring?

Would you like someone to call you to discuss this situation?

If willing, please include the following information:

- This notice submitted by _____
(Please print)
- Telephone number _____
- Address _____
- Signature _____
- Date _____

Reviewed by _____

Date _____

Please submit this form to the Safeguarding Team in one of the following ways:

- Email pastor@gsholmen.org or tmelott@gsholmen.org or email our church president. If you need contact info, contact office@gsholmen.org or call the church: (608) 526-4829.
- Mail to:

Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church
C/O Safeguarding Team
1500 Sand Lake Rd
Holmen, WI 54636

Appendix G: Application

The information provided in this application will be kept confidential and shared only as necessary with those making the hiring/selection decision and/or the Safeguarding Team. The separate Background Check Release Form and Child Safeguarding Policy Statement of Agreement must also be completed.

Attach additional pages as necessary to answer the questions below.

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Are you 18 or older? Yes No If younger than 18, list age: _____

Email Address _____

Home Phone Number _____

Cell Phone Number _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please list all addresses you have lived at for the past five years, and your dates of residency:

Position applying for _____

Describe why you think you would be a good fit for this position. _____

Education

High School _____

Location _____

Have you graduated? Yes No Year of Graduation _____

List any other high schools attended. _____

Have you ever been suspended, expelled, or formally disciplined in high school for anything other than academic grades? If so, please list the date and reason for the suspension/expulsion.

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College, University, or post high school program (if applicable) _____

Location _____

Degree/Program _____ Program completed? Yes No

Dates of attendance _____

College, University, or post high school program (if additional) _____

Location _____

Degree/Program _____ Program completed? Yes No

Dates of attendance _____

College, University, or post high school program (if additional) _____

Location _____

Degree/Program _____ Program completed? Yes No

Dates of attendance _____

Have you ever been suspended, expelled, or formally disciplined at any post-high school academic institution for anything other than academic standing (including academic misconduct)? If so, please list the date and reason for the suspension/expulsion.

Work Experiences

Please list any and all experiences you have had working with or caring for children, whether paid or unpaid. This may include summer jobs, babysitting, volunteering, or caring for younger siblings.

Experience 1

Employer/Organization _____

Position _____

Start Date _____ End Date _____

Supervisor's Name _____

Supervisor's Phone Number _____

Supervisor's Email _____

Your role/responsibilities _____

Reason for Leaving _____

Experience 2

Employer/Organization _____

Position _____

Start Date _____ End Date _____

Supervisor's Name _____

Supervisor's Phone Number _____

Supervisor's Email _____

Your role/responsibilities _____

Reason for Leaving _____

Experience 3

Employer/Organization _____

Position _____

Start Date _____ End Date _____

Supervisor's Name _____

Supervisor's Phone Number _____

Supervisor's Email _____

Your role/responsibilities _____

Reason for Leaving _____

Experience 4

Employer/Organization _____

Position _____

Start Date _____ End Date _____

Supervisor's Name _____

Supervisor's Phone Number _____

Supervisor's Email _____

Your role/responsibilities _____

Reason for Leaving _____

Criminal History

Please list any and all criminal arrests or charges, including relevant dates, nature of the offense, conviction, sentence imposed, and any rehabilitation.

Have you ever hurt a child or been accused of hurting a child? If so, please explain.

Have you ever been investigated for child abuse, neglect, or endangerment in any form by an institution, a civil or criminal authority, or any other entity? If yes, please list any and all dates of investigation; the individual, organization, or agency conducting the investigation(s); and the finding of the investigation. (Please note that supporting documentation may be required.)

Appendix H: Child Safeguarding Policy Statement of Agreement

Sign below to indicate you have read and understand Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church's Child Safeguarding Policy and that you agree to follow the policy when working with children.

I, (print name) _____, have read and understand Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church's *Child Safeguarding Policy*. I promise to exhibit appropriate behavior and conduct when working with children. I hereby affirm that I have not resigned from or been terminated from a position for reasons relating to abuse or misconduct, as defined in the policy statement. I further affirm that I am not a registered sex offender nor do I have any pending or resolved cases with the civil authorities concerning the welfare of children. I affirm that I will not use my position of trust in the church to abuse or harm any child.

I accept the responsibility to nurture the Christian faith and well-being of the children of Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church and Little Lamb Preschool and to care for them as Christ cares for me. Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes a child, welcomes me" (Matthew 18:5). Children are the next generation to hear and share God's Word – they are our future. They are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God. Jesus also said, "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matthew 18:6).

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the *Child Safeguarding Policy* of Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Signature _____

Date _____

Contact information:

Name _____

Mailing address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home telephone _____ Work telephone _____

Email address _____

Appendix I: Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church's Background Check Release Form

Background checks are conducted **every three years** for those directly involved with the children of Good Shepherd. This includes but is not limited to: teachers, school staff, pastor(s), staff minister(s), coaches, teacher aides, Sunday School teachers, and anyone else who works with the children on a regular scheduled basis.

I, _____ (print name), give Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church permission to run a background check so that I may serve as a called worker or volunteer working with the children of Good Shepherd. I understand and consent to the retrieval of information that may include but is not limited to criminal history and driving records.

Signature _____

Date _____

Information for background check:

Please complete all of the below. Information provided will be used for the background check only and will be maintained in a confidential manner.

Last Name _____

First Name _____

Middle Name _____

Any other name(s) used, including maiden name if married:

Social Security Number _____

Date of Birth (Month, Day, Year) _____

Email _____

Primary Phone Number _____ Alternate Phone Number _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Driver's License State _____ License # _____