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(Model Policy) Church Oversight of Child Sexual Offenders

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Given the child protection and legal risks when a known child sex offender (as defined in this model document) attends a church, do not consider implementation of this model policy unless you first consult with your district superintendent and C&MA general counsel.

From time to time our church may become aware that a child sex offender (CSO) is attending Sunday morning worship and/or other church activities. This special policy allows a CSO to participate in certain church activities without creating an inappropriate level of risk to children and youth in our congregation.

1. “Child sex offender” – Definition: A person will be subject to this policy when he or she fits under any of the following: (1) admits to a history of or propensity to sexually abuse children; (2) has been charged and convicted, or has otherwise admitted to child sex abuse in any court proceeding; (3) is under deferred prosecution for child sexual abuse; or (4) is otherwise determined by the elders to pose a danger to children (e.g., has been accused of child sexual abuse).
2. Conditions for participation in our church activities:
 - a. The most important condition for participation in our church activities is a humble and submissive heart attitude. This would include a willingness to be reconciled and to make restitution as appropriate.
 - b. Under no circumstance shall the CSO attend or participate in any youth activity, except as specifically authorized by the elders.
 - c. The CSO shall grant any appropriate release to the elders, an oversight team, and any other necessary church representatives for full access to any and all public and private information related to any sexual activity by the CSO, including but not limited to pre-sentencing probation reports, psycho-sexual evaluations, and treatment documents.
 - d. The CSO shall grant a release for the elders and, if appropriate, an oversight team to speak freely with the CSO’s counselor, probation or parole officer, or any other treatment provider or government official related to the CSO’s sexual offense.
 - e. The CSO shall not be permitted to attend any church function if the victim or the victim’s family is in attendance without specific authorization by the elders, the CSO’s probation or parole officer, and the CSO’s sexual treatment provider.
 - f. The CSO shall cooperate in any ongoing treatment plan, counseling, or other condition that is established by the elders.
 - g. The CSO shall submit to a Covenant agreement with our church. The Covenant may contain one or more of the following terms:¹

¹ Two examples of a confidential covenant are attached.

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- i. A statement of the elders' commitment to watch over the CSO as a beloved member of the flock.
- ii. A commitment to full disclosure of all matters related to the offense to anyone involved in CSO oversight.
- iii. A willingness to let the offense be known to the congregation in an appropriate manner.
- iv. Agreement to have no contact with children outside the worship service except as specifically authorized by the elders.
- v. Full compliance with probation or parole conditions.
- vi. Bathroom access will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

3. Informing our church congregants

There are a variety of biblical reasons for attendees of our church to be informed in an appropriate way that a CSO is participating in the congregational life of the church, including child safety, community protection, and pastoral care of the CSO.

- a. Any communication will be consistent with the Apostle Paul's reminder to the Corinthian church about those who formerly were caught in lifestyles of sexual sin, "And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6: 11).
- b. The extent and nature of any communication will be determined and led by the elders. The reach of any communication will be determined according to the pastoral needs of everyone involved and the high priority we place on caring for our children and youth by doing what is reasonable and appropriate to reduce the risk of abuse.

4. The role of an oversight team

An oversight team may be designated to provide counsel to and be a resource for the elders as requested. An oversight team is directly accountable to the elders. The team's authority is only that which is delegated by the elders.

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Covenant of Discipleship and Accountability Between John Doe and _____ Church

Example A

Month, Day, Year

1. To assist John Doe in rebuilding his life, becoming a productive member of our community, and living a life that is honoring to the Lord Jesus Christ, the elders of _____ Church hereby enter into the following covenant with John for the year [day/month/year through day/month/year]. Upon adoption of this letter by approval of the elders.
2. The elders will watch over John as a member of the flock, teaching, correcting, supporting, encouraging, and praying for him so that he will grow in godliness and live a life that honors God (see 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Tim. 4:2; Heb. 10:24-25; 1 Pet. 5:2).
3. John will submit himself to the spiritual leadership of the elders, obeying them and submitting to their authority (Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13). Among other things, he will:
 - a) Participate regularly in the weekly worship service and Sunday School classes;
 - b) Participate in regular discipling under the oversight of the elders or a designated man; this discipling may include Bible study, prayer, journaling, and participation in a men's accountability group;
 - c) Meeting regularly with Pastor _____ or other elders for counseling and encouragement;
 - d) Work with the elders to establish godly life disciplines in all areas of his personal life.
 - e) Pastor _____ will inform the church administrator and _____ about this covenant and the conditions herein.
4. To honor the terms of this covenant and protect himself from false accusations, John will scrupulously avoid having any contact with a minor child without the immediate presence of another adult. John will avoid all places where the population is predominately minors (i.e., skate parks, arcades, malls, or parks). He will remain in the continual presence of adults during all church activities and whenever children are present. John will inform an officer of the church before entering the restroom at the church during Sunday morning ministries. He will not be directly involved in any ministry involving minors.
5. John will not use or possess pornography, internet pornography, erotica, X-rated materials, videos, adult books; he will not frequent any establishment where such materials are a chief item of sale or enter any adult bookstores, gay bars, or massage parlors. John will not view any movie that has been rated PG-13 or higher for its sexual content or situations.

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- 6. John authorizes the elders to inform current and future friends and members of the church about his past and describe his current walk with the Lord according to their discretion.
- 7. John authorizes the elders, deacons, and _____ to talk openly and candidly with one another and to disclose to one another any and all information, insights, or concerns they have regarding John. John agrees to submit to a polygraph examination if requested by the elders of the church.
- 8. John willingly agrees to give any other elder or deacon the right to make a spot check on his home to hold him accountable to the terms of this covenant. These checks will seek to determine whether he is in possession of materials as specified above in this covenant (see #4).
- 9. John will disclose to Pastor _____ or the elder’s representative any violation of this covenant.
- 10. _____ will administer this document as the elder’s representative and will ensure that a thorough review is conducted within this coming year, day/month/year through day/month/year. Changes may be made with the approval of the pastoral staff. The session will be informed of any changes to this covenant.

John Doe

Date

Pastor _____, for the elders

Date

Oversight Team Member

Date

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Covenant of Discipleship and Accountability Between John Doe and _____ Church

Example B (Probation/Parole Officer Involved)

Month, Day, Year

To assist John Doe in rebuilding his life, becoming a productive member of our community, and living a life that is honoring to the Lord Jesus Christ, the elders of _____ Church hereby enter into the following covenant with John.

1. The elders will watch over John as a member of the flock, teaching, correcting, supporting, encouraging, and praying for him so that he will grow in godliness and live a life that honors God (see 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Tim. 4:2; Heb. 10:24-25; 1 Pet. 5:2).
2. John will submit himself to the spiritual leadership of the elders, obeying them and submitting to their authority (Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13). Among other things, he will:
 - a. Participate regularly in the weekly worship service and Sunday School classes
 - b. Participate in regular discipling under the oversight of the elders or a designated man, which may include Bible study, prayer, journaling, and participation in a men's accountability group
 - c. Meet regularly with an assigned pastoral staff member or other elders for counseling and encouragement
 - d. Work with the elders to establish godly life disciplines in all areas of his personal life
3. To honor the terms of John's parole and protect him from false accusations, John will scrupulously avoid having any contact with a minor child without the immediate presence of another adult. He will remain in the continual presence of adults during all church activities and whenever children are present. He will not be directly involved in any ministry involving minors.
4. Moreover, in keeping with the court order dated _____, 20____, as issued by Judge _____:
 - a. John will not use or possess pornography, erotica, X-rated materials, videos, adult books that promote sexual immorality of any kind, particularly incest. Neither will John frequent any establishment where such materials are a chief item of sale or enter any adult book stores, topless bars or massage parlors.
 - b. John is to not have any contact whatsoever with his victims(s) and / or the victim's families by any means or in any manner: in person, by telephone, writing, email, regular mail, or through a third party. John must also stay at least 1500 feet away from the victims and their families for the duration of his sentence.
 - c. John will comply with all other conditions imposed by the court or his treatment program as presently administered under the care of Counselor Jones, Christian Counseling Center's sex offender treatment program.

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- 5. John may, at his own discretion, enjoy fellowship with families in the church that do not have minor children. He will not accept invitations for fellowship with families with minor children until he has met the following requirements:
 - a. First, he must make sure that an elder has talked with the parents to inform them of John's limitations and how to properly minister to him.
 - b. Second, he must notify his counselor of his intentions to fellowship with that family and his whereabouts during that time. This can be done simply by way of leaving a message at his counselor's answering service.
- 6. John authorizes the elders to inform current and future friends and members of the church, including future new members, about his past, his offense, his treatment and to describe his current walk with the Lord.
- 7. John authorizes his parole officer, professional counselor, the pastoral staff and elders of this church to talk openly and candidly with one another and to disclose to one another any and all information, insights, or concerns they have regarding John.
- 8. John willingly agrees to give permission to any of the pastoral staff, elders and deacons to make spot checks on his home in order to hold him accountable to the terms of this covenant. These checks will seek to determine whether is in possession of prohibited materials as specified above in this covenant (see #4.a).

John Doe

Date

Pastor _____, for the elders

Date

Oversight Team Member

Date