



Lord of Life

LUTHERAN CHURCH

"Growing together in faith, centered in Christ, serving God's world with love."

Dear Friends,

This Covenant Partner policy, attached to our Safe Sanctuary Policy, and oftentimes used with the title "What if the offender is one of us?", has been approved by the Lord of Life Congregation Council for our use as a congregation when one of our members has been either charged or convicted with a sexual crime. Among these may be child abuse, pornography, or other sexual boundary violations.

This policy is intended to protect both the congregation and those charged or convicted, so that all can feel safe in being part of worship and fellowship here at Lord of Life. As you will see, this involves assigning "covenant partners" to each person charged or convicted, based on their legal status in the court system. This policy will be administered by the accused or convicted person, Mutual Ministry Committee, the pastors, the Congregation Council, and by the assigned Covenant Partners. A copy of the covenant agreement is included in this document.

In using this policy, we intend to demonstrate the availability of the unconditional love of God in Jesus Christ, and our willingness to minister to all who come to Lord of Life, including those who have been charged or convicted of sexual crimes. If you have any questions, feel free to contact a member of the Mutual Ministry Committee or one of the pastors.

Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary D. Heath". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pastor Gary D. Heath

Senior Pastor



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Covenant Partner Policy, Part 1 of 3

A Covenant regarding participation in worship and fellowship at Lord of Life Lutheran Church for an individual charged with a sexual offense

Lord of Life takes seriously and reverently its role of church as sanctuary.

Leviticus 19:30 Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my sanctuary. I am the Lord.

Hebrews 9:1-3 Now for the first covenant had regulations for worship and an early sanctuary. A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lamp stand, the table and the consorted bread; this was called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place.

The church is a place of sanctuary, a tabernacle of sacredness and safety. It is a place where God's presence through the Holy Spirit resides. Through the story of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, all people are invited to come to this sacred, safe, and holy place. However, only behavior which honors the sacredness of the sanctuary and the safety of all people will be accepted. Sexually abusive behavior is not tolerated in any way.

This covenant is for the purpose of protecting you and our congregation. Out of an abundance of caution for individuals charged of a sexual offense, procedures and policies have been put into place to assure the sacredness and safety of our church sanctuary for both you and all those who attend worship services. Your attendance and participation at Lord of Life will follow this structure:

1. We expect that you comply fully with all restriction and requirements placed upon you as a result of any legal actions.
2. The church council will identify and approve at least two "covenant partners", all of whom will be the same gender as yours and one of whom must accompany you at all times while on church premises. The covenant partner's role is outlined in the Covenant Partner Policy, Part 3, The Covenant Partner Addendum. Additionally, all same gender, active pastors are included on the list of covenant partners for the purpose of meetings outside of worship.



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3. You will be expected to remain with your covenant partner at all times under the following structure:
 - Upon your arrival in the church parking lot, you will remain in your car until your covenant partner receives you and escorts you into the building.
 - You will sit next to your covenant partner during the worship service.
 - Before and after the worship service, you shall remain with your covenant partner while having fellowship with the congregation.
 - If you or your covenant partner need to use the restroom facilities, you will use the restroom adjacent to the kitchen and will enter together separated only by the private stall. You will remain together inside the restroom until you are both ready to leave.
 - You must remain with your covenant partner at all times while on church premises, no exceptions.
4. Your presence while on Lord of Life premises shall be limited to the Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, Welcome Center, and restroom facility adjacent to the kitchen. You must remain with your covenant partner at all times.
5. You may participate in regularly scheduled worship services with an arrival no earlier than twenty minutes before and exit no later than twenty minutes after the service. You are welcome to participate in fellowship during your twenty minutes before and after worship service. Your covenant partner will remain with you at all times.
6. You will use the most direct route from the parking lot to enter the church through the Main Entrance near the Welcome Desk and will not pass through other parts of the church building.
7. If you want to attend a wedding, funeral, or other special event, you must receive permission from the presiding pastor in advance and will be escorted by your covenant partner at all times as outlined above. This permission is granted on a case by case basis and will be up to the full discretion of the presiding pastor.
8. You shall, until the outcome of your case, resign from any leadership or representational position within the church.
9. At least twice per calendar year and as otherwise requested, you will be contacted by the senior pastor and/or a Mutual Ministry committee member for a required meeting regarding your adherence to these policies.
10. All relevant court documentation in regards to your sexual offense charge(s) shall be attached to this covenant.



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In the event that you are exonerated of all sexual abuse charges and upon Lord of Life's receipt of the relevant documentation, all restrictions shall be lifted and this covenant shall be null and void.

In the event you are convicted of your sexual offense charges, this covenant will be replaced with Covenant Partner Policy, Part 2, The Lord of Life Lutheran Covenant for Convicted Sex Offenders.

In response to your acceptance of these conditions, Lord of Life will:

- Welcome you into our worship and fellowship with love and grace
- Prepare and monitor this covenant
- Support you in your spiritual journey

This covenant shall be monitored by you, the Mutual Ministry Committee, the pastors, and covenant partners until your charges are either dismissed or adjudicated. You shall be responsible for your compliance to all elements of this covenant. Mutual Ministry shall ensure the six month reviews are completed as well as oversee the covenant partner process. The pastors and covenant partners shall be responsible for the day-to-day enforcement of this document.

Covenant Partner Policy, Part 2 of 3

A Covenant regarding participation in worship and fellowship at Lord of Life Lutheran Church for a Convicted Sex Offender

Lord of Life takes seriously and reverently its role of church as sanctuary.

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Hebrews 9:1-3 Now for the first covenant had regulations for worship and an early sanctuary. A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lamp stand, the table and the consorted bread; this was called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place.



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The church is a place of sanctuary, a tabernacle of sacredness and safety. It is a place where God’s presence through the Holy Spirit resides. Through the story of Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection, all people are invited to come to this sacred, safe, and holy place. However, only behavior which honors the sacredness of the sanctuary and the safety of all people will be accepted. Sexually abusive behavior is not tolerated in any way.

Because you have been convicted of a sexual offense and are a registered sex offender, strict procedures and policies have been put into place to assure the sacredness and safety of our church sanctuary for both you and all those who attend worship services. Your attendance and participation at Lord of Life will follow this structure:

1. We expect that you comply fully with all restrictions and requirements placed upon you as a result of any legal actions.
2. The church council will identify and approve at least two “covenant partners”, all of whom will be the same gender as yours and one of whom must accompany you at all times while on church premises. The covenant partner’s role is outlined in the Covenant Partner Policy, Part 3, The Covenant Partner Addendum. Additionally, all same gender, active pastors are included on the list of covenant partners for the purpose of meetings outside of worship.
3. You will be expected to remain with your covenant partner at all times under the following structure:
 - Upon your arrival in the church parking lot, you will remain in your car until your covenant partner receives you and escorts you into the building.
 - You will sit next to your covenant partner during the worship service.
 - Before and after the worship service, you must remain with your covenant partner while having fellowship with the congregation.
 - If you or your covenant partner need to use the restroom facilities, you will use the restroom adjacent to the kitchen and will enter together separated only by the private stall. You will remain together inside the restroom until you are both ready to leave.
 - You must remain with your covenant partner at all times while on church premises, no exceptions.



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4. You will only be allowed to be present in the Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, Welcome Center, and restroom facility adjacent to the kitchen at any time. You must remain with your covenant partner at all times.
5. You may participate in regularly scheduled worship services with an arrival no earlier than twenty minutes before and exit no later than twenty minutes after the service. You are welcome to participate in fellowship during your twenty minutes before and after worship service. Your covenant partner will remain with you at all times.
6. You will use the most direct route from the parking lot to enter the church through the Main Entrance near the Welcome Desk and will not pass through other parts of the church building.
7. If you want to attend a wedding, funeral, or other special event, you must receive permission from the presiding pastor in advance and will be escorted by your covenant partner at all times as outlined above. This permission is granted on a case by case basis and will be up to the full discretion of the presiding pastor.
8. You will not accept any leadership or representational position within the church.
9. At least twice per calendar year and as otherwise requested, you will be contacted by the senior pastor and/or a Mutual Ministry committee member for a required meeting regarding your adherence to these policies.
10. As part of your growth and penitence, you shall prepare and deliver to the church council written acknowledgements and apologies for the pain caused directly and indirectly by your actions. Included in your written apology should be acknowledgements of the pain caused to victims, their family(s), your own family, and members and supporters of our church. Requests for forgiveness shall be included.
11. The senior pastor will inform the congregation of your presence and of the conditions of your participation.



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12. You shall continually participate in a professional counseling program, specifically addressing your abusive behaviors, for the entire time you participate in the church community. Lord of Life strongly encourages that you continue such counseling for life.
13. You agree to show this document to your parole or probation officer and have that person sign a copy for our church records.
14. If you should decide to relocate your membership or frequently attend another congregation, the senior pastor will inform the leadership of that congregation concerning your status as a sex offender as well as the guidelines contained within this covenant.
15. All relevant court documentation in regards to your sexual offense conviction, including parole and/or release documents, must be attached to this covenant.

In addition to what you will do, Lord of Life Lutheran Church will:

- Welcome you into our worship and fellowship with love and grace.
- Prepare and monitor this covenant.
- Support you in your spiritual journey.

This covenant shall be upheld by you, the Mutual Ministry Committee, the pastors, and covenant partners on a permanent basis. You shall be responsible for your compliance to all elements of this covenant. Mutual Ministry shall ensure the six month reviews are completed as well as oversee the covenant partner process. The pastors and covenant partners shall be responsible for day-to-day enforcement of this document.



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Covenant Partner Policy, Part 3 of 3

Covenant Partner Addendum

Lord of Life takes seriously and reverently its role of church as sanctuary.

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

1 John 3:17-18

But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

In the context of our theology of grace, all are welcome to worship at Lord of Life. However, in order to protect our congregation and those who are charged or convicted of a sexual offense, Lord of Life asks you to serve as a Covenant Partner.

As part of the covenant guidelines and as a covenant partner, you must accompany the signee of the covenant (hereafter known as Covenantee) at all times, no exceptions.

Those who volunteer to act as covenant partners will be approved by the pastors and the Church Council.

As a covenant partner you agree to follow these guidelines:

- Familiarize yourself with all aspects of the Covenant.
- Familiarize yourself with the current list of all approved covenant partners. Mutual Ministry Committee shall notify you of any changes.
- Accompany the Covenantee at all times while on the premises.



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- Arrange with the Covenantee in advance the time for each worship service to be attended.
- Receive the Covenantee at their car before they enter the facility.
- Accompany the Covenantee to the designated area within the church for worship and/or fellowship, with their arrival no earlier than twenty minutes before and exit no later than twenty minutes after the service.
- Sit with and accompany the Covenantee during all aspects of the worship service.
- If you or the Covenantee need to use the restroom facilities, accompany the Covenantee into the restroom adjacent to the kitchen. You will enter together separated only by the private stall. You will remain together inside the restroom until you are both ready to leave.
- Accompany the Covenantee back to their car when leaving the facility.

There is a possibility that a breach of this covenant may occur. In the event this happens, you are expected to remain with the Covenantee at all times. In addition, as a council approved covenant partner, you have a unique understanding of the details and expectations of the covenant. As such, should you observe any breach of this covenant at any time, including when you are not serving as the active covenant partner, Lord of Life's expectation is that you must promptly report such to a pastor.

Thank you for taking on this important role in communicating the Gospel of unconditional love which is at the heart of our witness as a congregation.