

Form #9

Guidelines for Volunteers with Older and Vulnerable Adults (Pastoral Care Ministries)

Note: We live in an age where sexual misconduct, and elder abuse is a reality in our society. The church must deal with this issue as a “good shepherd” by taking steps to protect the older and vulnerable adults in our care. Living Word United Methodist Church has implemented policies to help safeguard our older and vulnerable adults while promoting a positive, nurturing environment for ministry to them. The guidelines below are to be strictly followed by anyone working in the Pastoral Care ministries. We pray for God’s blessing for our older and vulnerable adults, workers and the church.

Before You Begin

Six-Month Rule – All volunteers must be members or regular attendees of Living Word United Methodist Church for at least six months before volunteering for a caring ministry.

Completion of Application – All volunteers in Pastoral Care ministries must complete and sign an application form.

Release Authorization Form – All volunteers in Pastoral Care ministries must sign a Release Authorization Form.

References – Three personal references must be submitted by each worker. The “children’s, youth, and vulnerable/older adult reference” (Form #4) forms are to be mailed directly to the Lead Administrative Assistant for Age-Level Ministries by the person completing the reference.

The three references should include: one person who has known the applicant well for an extended period of time, and whenever possible, a pastor/church staff person. For applicants for compensated positions, additional former supervisors may be checked.

Interview – All volunteers in Pastoral Care ministries must be interviewed by a church leader to determine their suitability for participating in the caring ministries. Information from this interview will not be released to unauthorized persons. Interviews will be done in person.

Background Check and Social Services Registry – After gaining the applicant’s permission, church leaders will conduct a criminal background check and a Missouri family registry check for applicants. This is mandatory.

Auto Safety Form – All volunteers in Pastoral Care ministries who will be driving older or

vulnerable adults or conducting other church business must complete and sign an Auto Safety Form.

Signed Agreement to Follow Guidelines – All volunteers in Pastoral Care ministries must sign the agreement at the end of these guidelines to show their commitment to observe these guidelines.

Guidelines

Two-Person Rule/Same Gender Rule – Caregivers in Pastoral Care ministries will always be assigned care receivers who are of the same gender. Volunteers who bring communion to shut-in's, those hospitalized, those in retirement and assisted living communities will always go in pairs.

Volunteers in Pastoral Care ministries must report Abuse, Neglect, Abandonment, and Exploitation

Abuse and neglect of older persons includes several categories of acts and/or omissions generally referred to as abuse, neglect, exploitation and abandonment. Signs of potential abuse or neglect include:

1. An elderly person with bruises, welts or burns or evidence of physical restraints.
2. An elderly person who appears over or under-medicated.
3. An elderly person with inadequate food or water, or with unclean clothes or bedding.
4. An elderly person whose caregiver abuses alcohol or is emotionally unstable.
5. An elderly person who previously has had excellent credit or resources but now seems unable to meet expenses.
6. An elderly person whose caregiver is under severe stress such as illness, unemployment or family problems.
7. An elderly person living in a family with history of violence such as child or spouse abuse.
8. An elderly person who is not permitted visitors or direct, private communications with others.

Volunteers in Pastoral Care ministries who disobey these guidelines may be reassigned or relieved from their caring ministry duty at the discretion of the Director of Pastoral Care or a Pastor.

I have read the guidelines above. I agree to observe them faithfully.

Signature _____ Date _____