**Trinity Presbyterian Church**

**Child Protection Plan**

*What is the biblical foundation for our child protection plan?*

Δ *Our God is a God of light. We are called to walk in his ways as his children of light.*

 ● John 12:35–36

 ● I John 1:5

 ● Ephesians 5:8–9

Δ *Children are special in God’s sight. They are a precious gift, made in God’s own image. Jesus rebuked his disciples in righteous anger when they tried to prevent children from coming to him. Jesus welcomes children and gives them a central place in his kingdom.*

 ● Genesis 1:27

 ● Psalm 127:3

 ● Mark 10:13–14

Δ *Some of Jesus’ harshest words were reserved for those who would cause a child to stumble.*

 ● Exodus 22:21–24

 ● Matthew 18:5–6

Δ *God hears the prayers of those who are afflicted.*

 ● Psalm 10:17–18

Δ *Children are valued by God, but also vulnerable spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally, and morally. God hates the oppression of the vulnerable. God recognizes the temptation for the powerful to use their power for the exploitation of the weak and condemns anyone who would thus abuse their power.*

 ● Deuteronomy 10:17–19

 ● Psalm 9:9

 ● Luke 4:18–19

Δ *As his redeemed image bearers, his children of light, God calls us to speak up and use our power for the protection of the vulnerable. When we intervene on behalf of the vulnerable we are reflecting the moral beauty of our God. When we remain silent, or we abuse power by harming the vulnerable, we are denying the glorious moral purity of God. This is why the abuse of power is so personal to God.*

 ● Leviticus 19:13–15

 ● Job 29:11–17

 ● Proverbs 31:8–9

 ● Ecclesiastes 4:1

 ● Isaiah 1:16–17

 ● James 1:27

*Because of this biblical foundation we are compelled to: Promote, Protect, Prevent and Respond*

 ● We believe in **promoting** healthy relationships between adults and children.

 ● We believe that **protecting** children is an adult’s responsibility.

 ● We believe in **preventing and responding** to abuse with training and accountability.

*As we seek to Promote, Protect, Prevent and Respond, we follow these guiding principles:*

 **● An intergenerational church is God’s covenant plan:** Trinity Presbyterian Church highly values the role that

 loving, godly adults have in discipling and nurturing children and the ways children bless adults in the church. Our

 congregation vows, at a covenant child’s baptism, to “undertake the responsibility of assisting the parents in the

 Christian nurture of this child.” (PCA BCO 56-5)

 **● Protecting children honors Christ:** Jesus holds Trinity Presbyterian Church accountable for protecting our

 children, and calls us to follow his lead in loving children. Good policies, procedures, and codes of conduct facilitate

 mutual accountability as we submit to Christ.

 **● We must proactively work to protect children:** Preventing and responding to child abuse takes a heavy

 investment of time, money and resources. However, the spiritual, emotional, physical and financial toll of child abuse

 is far greater if passively allowed.

 **● Up-to-date child protection is in everyone’s best interest:** Churches that practice good child protection

 procedures protect children as well as adults who serve children, because training and accountability will build trust among parents, volunteers and church staff.

 ● **Child protection requires humility:** As Christians, we confess our spiritual brokenness and sin, and therefore, we

 must all humbly submit to boundaries established around children. Moreover, those who have committed child sexual abuse and other crimes against children will not be allowed to serve with children.

 **● The church is a place for sinners:** We want to be a church that is safe for hurting, broken people to come and

 find grace, hope and healing. Prioritizing child protection creates an environment of humility and accountability where

 such healing can take place.

 **● First-rate protection:** Because any setting where children are present may be sought out by those wishing to harm

 them, we aspire to be a place where parents walk in and sense that their children will be loved and safe. We also want to conform to the most up-to-date laws and research about child abuse and abuse prevention. In this way, Trinity Presbyterian Church will strive to be a safe place in our city for children.

 **● Protecting every child:** Trinity PresbyterianChurch’s child protection plan applies to any child under eighteen at any Trinity Presbyterian Church activity.

*Given the biblical foundation and our guiding principles we have the following key commitments:*

 ● We have a zero-tolerance policy for child abuse.

 ● We report child sexual abuse to the civil authorities.

 ● All employees and volunteers will be screened according to our Child Protection Procedures

 ● We do not employ anyone who has been convicted of or confessed to sexually abusing a child.

 ● We do not allow anyone to volunteer who has been convicted of or confessed to sexually abusing a child.

 ● Any employee or volunteer accused of sexually abusing a child will be immediately suspended from serving children and we will do our best to ensure they have no access to children in our church or in the community until we have clarity on the accusation.

 ● All employees and volunteers are required to abide by our child protection procedures and code of conduct.