

**UNITED EVANGELICAL CHURCH**  
**3200 Dillon Street, Baltimore, Md. 21224**

**POLICY**

**The Covenant Relationship**

The relationship between Pastors, Council Members, Church School Teachers, Volunteer Leaders and people is based upon trust. Repeatedly, Scripture asserts that religious leadership is a covenantal relationship that presumes the trustworthy exercise of power in behalf of those in their care. The role of ministry involves shared expectations that will use their skills and authority for the wholeness and well-being of others.

Because leadership in a church is a covenantal relationship, unethical behavior is a tragic betrayal of trust and an abuse of power. All who enter professional relationships with church leaders trust themselves to one whom they expect will provide for their care, safety and justice. Leadership oversight is a privilege and a trust. This is especially the case for those who are vulnerable and need protection and safe-keeping. Such persons entrust religious leaders with representative and symbolic power in light of the office of ministry and the God in whose name leaders dare to speak, preach, pray, and bless.

Power in church relationships is inevitably unbalanced because of the power associated with the office of leader as well as the actual power that leaders have in relationships and especially in contexts in which persons trust that their vulnerability will be honored. Persons in religious leadership, like all others in helping professions who have access to people in their most vulnerable moments, are always responsible for keeping appropriate boundaries and assuring the safety of those in their trust.

While Scripture often links the appropriate exercise of power and ministry, we live in a culture that is uncomfortable with acknowledging the reality of power. The Council hopes this policy will help those in religious leadership to acknowledge the responsibility accompanying the exercise of power with which they are entrusted. Church Leaders far more likely to abuse such power when they fail to acknowledge it.

**Fundamental Principles of Ethical Conduct at United Evangelical Church:**

- A. In all matters, Pastor and Church Leaders are to maintain practices that give glory to Christ, advance the goals of the Church, and nurture, challenge, and protect the welfare of church members, parishioners, clients, and the public.
- B. Leaders are to act in a manner that upholds the honor, integrity, morality, and dignity of the Faith.

- C. Leaders are to limit their ministry to those positions and responsibilities for which they are qualified.
- D. Leaders are to conduct themselves in a manner that assures security and confidentiality and avoids conflicts of interest.
- E. Leaders are to demonstrate respect, honesty, and fairness when interacting with colleagues and persons in related work or professions. At all times they stand for the values of the church.
- F. Leaders are to maintain competency in their work.
- G. In personal as well as professional relationships Leaders are to have honest and sincere motives, upholding the peace, unity, and purity of the Church, and sharing faith, hope, and love with all people.
- H. Leaders are to maintain covenantal faithfulness and trust in their sexual relationships.
- I. Leaders are to respect and be sensitive to the vulnerability of others and avoid all exploitation.

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