

Safeguarding God's Children

St. John's Lutheran Church
301 8th Ave NW
Kasson, MN 55944

Safe Space Policy

Mission Statement

We are a faith-filled community, welcoming, inspiring, serving,
and reaching out through the love of God.

St. John's Commitment

The following policies and procedures are to help ensure that St. John's Lutheran Church's ministry is a place where all people can feel safe, loved, and valued. St. John's is committed to providing a safe environment for all people regardless of age, gender, race, or ability.

Why is a safety and security policy necessary?

To affirm and protect children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

To affirm and protect volunteers and staff.

To be a leader and advocate in our community.

To affirm and protect St. John's Lutheran Church.

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IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

St. John's Lutheran Church 507-634-7110
301 8th Ave NW
Kasson, MN 55944

MN Regional Poison Center 1-800-222-1222

Kasson Fire - Police Emergency 911

Kasson Fire (non-emergency) 634-7103

Kasson Police (non-emergency) 634-3881

Dodge County Sheriff 635-6200

Staff

Pastor John 406-590-2974

Pastor Nirmala 507-271-0348

President Dennis 507-358-7170

Deacon Amanda 701-770-0360

CYF Coordinator Lindsay 507-319-4930

Resources

Trinity Lutheran Church Safety Policy

http://www.trinityhayfield.com/uploads/2/9/9/2/2992458/trinity_lutheran_church_in_hayfield_safety_policy.pdf

Kasson-Mantorville Public School District Policies

<http://www.komets.k12.mn.us/page/2984>

Minnesota Department of Human Services

Children –

http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatesReleased&dDocName=id_000152

<http://childcareawaremn.org/adult-child-ratio>

Adults -

http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatesReleased&dDocName=id_005710

Background Check Policy

St. John's Lutheran Church – Kasson, Minnesota will conduct a criminal background check on all individuals that serve in any position that puts them in contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults. This includes all members of the staff, teachers, chaperones and anyone else identified as appropriate. Background checks will be conducted every three years through a professional screening and background check company. Background checks will be performed by St. John's regardless of any other checks that may have been conducted by the individual's place of employment.

The findings of all background checks will be considered confidential and maintained in a secure place. The process will be administered by two of three people - the Senior Pastor, the Children, Youth, and Family Ministry Development Director, and the Church Council President so no self-evaluation takes place.

Individuals identified as needing a background check must complete the following process.

- Complete an authorization form for a background check.
- A background check will be completed through a reputable company.
- When the completed background check is received back, it shall be reviewed by the two administrators to ensure no issues are identified. Information will then be securely filed.
- In the event that an issue is identified, the administrators will respond as necessary. If the two administrators disagree on the findings, they will call on the third administrator to make the final decision on the identified issue's pertinence to the position applied for.

Weapon Policy

No leader or participant shall possess, use, or distribute a weapon on St. John's Lutheran Church premises.

“Weapon” – as referenced in KM School Weapons Policy (501)

1. A “weapon” means any object, device or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use is capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury including, but not limited to, any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded; airguns; pellet guns; BB guns; all knives; blades; clubs; metal knuckles; numchucks; throwing stars; explosives; fireworks; mace and other propellants; stun guns; ammunition; poisons; chains; arrows; and objects that have been modified to serve as a weapon.
2. No person shall possess, use or distribute any object, device or instrument having the appearance of a weapon and such objects, devices or instruments shall be treated as weapons including, but not limited to, weapons listed above which are broken or non-functional, look-alike guns; toy guns; and any object that is a facsimile of a real weapon.
3. No person shall use articles designed for other purposes (i.e., lasers or laser

pointers, belts, combs, pencils, files, scissors, etc.), to inflict bodily harm and/or intimidate and such use will be treated as the possession and use of a weapon.

Supervision Policy

Safety of Children

It is the responsibility of all employees and volunteers having contact with children participating in St. John's Lutheran Church programs to promote the safety of all participants.

Parental Responsibility

All parents are encouraged to assume individual responsibility for their children and not assume the church sponsored activity or presence on the church premises is a guarantee of the child's safety. Children ages 12 and under should never be left unattended in the church building. It is expected that parents make sure a responsible adult is present before leaving their child at St. John's Lutheran Church.

Ratio of adults to children

Infant – 1:2

Toddler – 1:4

Preschooler – 1:6

School-age & High School – 1:8

At any St. John's Lutheran Church event there must be a minimum of two adults, with a criminal background check on file, present. This is true in the church building and at church sponsored events off-site. During non-church sponsored off-site events where the adult to children ratios differ from our own, St. John's will abide to the outside organization's ratio.

The only exception to this rule is for Education classes, including but not limited to Sunday School, Oasis Education and Confirmation.

- Doors must be left open for groups with only one adult who are meeting in a room without an interior window, i.e. – Fireside Room & Choir Room.
- Speaking to a minor one on one should only be done in a public space or in an office with an open door. An adult should never be alone with a student in a closed room.

Off-Site Activities

A Parental Authorization and Medical Form is required to be filled out and signed by the child's parent or legal guardian prior to any off-site activities.

Privacy

Adult leaders will respect the privacy of minors and other participants in situations such as: use of rest rooms, changing clothes or taking showers. They also need to protect their own privacy in similar situations. *Children needing to use the restroom should be escorted to the door of the appropriate restroom. The volunteer should wait outside the door until the child is finished.* Adult leaders will intrude only insofar as health and safety require.

Overnight Supervision - A minimum of two adults should be present at an overnight event. If participants are both male and female, the adults should be both male and female. If these conditions cannot be met, the event will be cancelled. Males and females should sleep in separate rooms/areas at events and have access to separate bathroom facilities. When separate facilities are not available, times for male and female use will be scheduled and posted by the primary leader of the event. In the event that an adult needs to share a room with a minor of the same sex, the adult will not occupy the same bed as a minor. In the event there is no option but for an adult to share a room with a minor, there must be at least two students with the adult. If there is not a second student of the same sex, separate accommodations must be arranged for the safety of both the child & adult. The only exception to this rule is that students who have a legal guardian on the trip maybe placed with their legal guardian without the need for a second student.

Relationship Policy

Avoid all inappropriate touch. See guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate affection on page 7.

- No sexual behavior is permitted with or between minors. Other behaviors which are abusive but do not involve physical contact are also prohibited. Examples are sexual comments, showing pornographic sexual material and the exposure of sexual parts of any person's body.
- Volunteers will be alert for inappropriate behavior or relationships with children or youth. Questionable behaviors should be reported to a Ministry Staff person or Pastor.
- Alcohol and drugs are prohibited for adults leading and participating in any event with children or youth. Youth, children, or adult participants/leaders will be sent home immediately if found in possession of alcohol or drugs. *Supervising adults must be informed of prescribed drugs brought to an event by a minor.*
- Equality of Treatment: No leader will give preferential treatment to any child, youth, or adult.
- Adult leaders, including Ministry Staff and Pastors, will never date or be romantically involved with minors or vulnerable adults.

Reporting Abuse

It is the policy of St. John's Lutheran Church that anyone who has cause to suspect a minor or vulnerable adult has been or will be the victim of abuse or neglect must report the case immediately (within 24 hours) by phone or in person to St. John's staff and/or appropriate authorities.

Concern for the alleged victim, good judgment and open communication are the standards surrounding the reporting of an alleged case of abuse. Keep calm, stay with the victim and know that you don't have to deal with the situation or information alone. All reports will be treated with confidentiality by St. John's staff and authorities.

How to Report Abuse

If you do suspect a child is being harmed, reporting your suspicions may protect the child and get help for the family. Responding quickly is essential to prevent or stop abuse.

→ **If you suspect a child is being abused or harmed in any way.**

o **Report directly to Dodge County Child protective services at 507-635-6170.**

o **If you want you may also inform a member of the program staff.**

→ **If a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger call 911.**

Protection for Reporters

- No civil or criminal liability for good faith reports.
- Identity of reporter is anonymous (except with consent or by court order).
- Penalties for retaliation against reporter.
- Civil Protection for good faith investigative activities.

Adult Protective Services

Minnesota law mandates safe environments and services for vulnerable adults and protective services for vulnerable adults who have been maltreated. The DHS Adult Protective Services Unit provides training and consultation to citizens, service providers, counties, law enforcement and state agencies regarding the **Minnesota Vulnerable Adult Act** [Minnesota Statute Section 626.557 (1995)]. The unit also develops policy and best practices and collects and evaluates data to prevent maltreatment and plan adult protection services.

Mandated Reporters

The Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC), is the common entry point under Minnesota Statutes 626.557. MAARC operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the public and mandated reporters. MAARC also provides an opportunity for mandated reporters to meet their reporting duty by making a web report at mn.gov/dhs/reportadultabuse/. Mandated reporters may refer to the MAARC Report Guide for information on using the web-based reporting system. Mandated reporters may also make phone reports by calling the statewide toll-free number MAARC at **844-880-1574**. Phone and web reports are promptly submitted by MAARC to the agencies responsible for investigation and protective services. Mandated reporters are professionals or professional's delegate identified by law (MS 626.5572 Subd. 16) who **MUST** make a report if they suspect a vulnerable adult has been abused, neglected or financial exploited.

Those who care for children, youth, and vulnerable adults are mandated reporters and must report abuse.

Display of Affection Guidelines

Appropriate

- Ask permission before touching.
- Quick hugs.
- Pats on shoulder or back.
- Handshakes.
- High-fives.
- Verbal praise.
- Touching hands, face, shoulders, and arms.
- Arms around shoulders.
- Hold hands in prayer or when person is upset.
- Sitting close to small children.
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
- Holding or picking up children 3 years old and younger.

Inappropriate

- Any form of unwanted affection.
- Full frontal hugs or bear hugs.
- Touching bottoms, chests, or genital areas.
- Lying down or sleeping beside children.
- Massages.
- Patting children on thigh, knee, leg.
- Tickling or wrestling.
- Touching or hugging from behind.
- Games involving inappropriate touching.
- Kisses, on the mouth or anywhere else.
- Showing affection in isolated rooms of building.
- Compliments that relate to physique or body development.

Transportation Policy

Drivers

Drivers for St. John's Lutheran Church activities must:

- Be 21 years of age or older, and
- Have a valid driver's license, and
- Have proof of vehicle insurance, and
- Have completed a criminal background through St. John's Lutheran Church.

The only exception to the age requirement will be with written parental/guardian permission.

In compliance with the St. John's Supervision Policy, there must be at least three people in the vehicle (1 adult w/Criminal Background Check + 2 students).

- All activities that involve an approved driver transporting minor riders leaving from St. John's require said minors to return to St. John's with an approved driver.
- Travel speeds are to be followed in accordance with state and local laws and road conditions in all motor vehicles.
- Vehicle must be in safe and reliable condition.
- *When driving more than 4 (four) hours in one direction, there must be a minimum of two approved drivers if only one vehicle is used, or extra approved drivers to rotate if more than one vehicle is used.*
- *An individual driver is limited to a maximum of 8 (eight) hours per day of driving time. Driving time shall be interrupted by rest, food, or recreation stops approximately every 2 (two) hours.*

Cell Phones

St. John's Lutheran Church highly recommends that drivers do not operate cell phones while driving on youth events except to communicate with other vehicles in the group. If you must use your cell phone while driving, the following should apply:

- Where state laws exist to restrict or limit cell phone usage, all drivers shall meet the requirements of those laws.
- Where no laws exist, all cell phone usage should be restricted while driving. These restrictions include the use of hands-free devices, auto answer, and/or voice-activated dialing.
- Calls should be brief and to the point. Extended calls should be avoided.
- All calls should be avoided in inclement weather and heavy traffic.
- Walkie-talkies and similar devices may be used for communication between vehicles but should follow the same rules as cell phones.

Example of Release Statement

Oasis Afterschool Transportation Release

I hereby give a representative of S. John's Lutheran Church of Kasson, MN permission to transport my child from Kasson-Mantorville Elementary or Middle School to St. John's Lutheran Church in Kasson, MN on Wednesdays which Oasis Afterschool is in session. If my child will not be attending Oasis Afterschool, it is my responsibility to inform St. John's Lutheran Church prior to noon on that given Wednesday.

Photography & Video Guidelines

- Permission will be sought from a parent or legal guardian to display photos or videos of all children ages 17 and younger; names will not be used. Photos can be used for promotion of St. John's Lutheran Church events.
- This permission is given when the parent signs the registration form at the beginning of each school year. Permission can be rescinded at any time through written conversation.
- Credit for who took a particular photo will be given if desired by the photographer.
- Photos will be removed immediately upon request.

Social Media Guidelines

These Social Media Guidelines apply to all online tools for sharing content and discussing information, including but not limited to, social websites, blogs, message boards, wikis, podcasts, image- and video sharing sites, live webcasting and real-time web communities. Because this is a constantly evolving area, this policy applies to all new social media platforms whether or not they are specifically mentioned in this policy.

Staff, leaders, and members should:

- Be responsible. Social media are individual interactions, not official congregational communications. Members of the St. John's Lutheran community are personally responsible for their posts.
- Be selective. Use the right medium for your message – a blog or social network might not be the right place for messages intended only for a small group, and email or other means might be best.
- Be smart. A blog or community post is visible to the entire world. Remember that what you write will be public, and potentially for a long time.
- Identify yourself. Use real identities to the greatest extent possible rather than anonymous posts and comments.
- Take care to safeguard the privacy of others. Do not publish the personal information of others in the community without their permission or, in the case of minors (17 and under), written permission of their parents or legal guardians. Do not disclose any information that can identify a particular person, including name, phone number, address or email address without written consent.
- Honor differences. St. John's is a faith community that encourages free expression and values civil debate. If you disagree with others, do so with care and respect.
- Obey Copyright Laws. Users must comply fully with copyright law when posting and uploading copyrighted materials. It is preferable to point to a link so the proper person can take credit for the materials.

Bullying Policy (adapted from Trinity Lutheran, Hayfield)

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is an act of aggression, causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take a number of forms; physical, verbal, making gestures, extortion and exclusion. It is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organized, or it may be unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of pupils.

FORMS OF BULLYING

- Physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another student.
- Interfering with another student's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it.
- Using offensive names when addressing another student.
- Teasing or spreading rumors about another student or his/her family.
- Belittling another student's abilities and achievements.
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another student.
- Excluding another student from a group activity.
- Ridiculing another student's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms.
- Misusing technology (internet or mobiles) to hurt or humiliate another person.

RATIONALE

St. John's Lutheran Church is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of the church community have a right to worship and participate in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

PRINCIPLES

- Students have a right to learn free from intimidation and fear.
- The needs of the victim are paramount.
- St. John's will not tolerate bullying behavior.
- Bullied students will be listened to.
- Reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

Three Strikes Policy

Physically or verbally harming other students, adults or staff will not be tolerated. In the event of a physical or verbal altercation the following steps will be taken.

1. Conversation with student one-on-one:
 - a. Both sides of the story will be heard.
 - b. Parents called and informed of the situation and further steps.
2. Conversation with student & parents:
 - a. Both sides of the story will be heard.
 - b. Parents called immediately.
 - c. Set up an in person meeting with supervising staff person.
3. One Week suspension of participation:
 - a. Student removed immediately.
 - b. Parents called immediately.
 - c. Meet immediately with student and parent together to talk about next steps
 - i. Student will not participate in the next scheduled event.
 - ii. Other action will be based on the particular offense.
4. In the event something happens again, the student will be removed from that programming for the remainder of the school year.

Damage to property and Trespassing

Incidents of illegal entry, theft of school property, vandalism, or damage to St. John's property from other causes, will be reported by phone to the Council President or Lead Pastor, and a report filed with the local Police Department as soon as discovered. A report of the incident will be made to the Council President within 24 hours of discovery.

Fire Evacuation Plan

In the event of a fire emergency, the following action should be taken:

- 1.** Staff or supervising leaders will immediately dial 911 and report that **St. John's Lutheran Church, 301 8th Ave NW Kasson, MN has a fire.**
- 2.** Staff and leadership on site will immediately begin to assist any class, group, or volunteers out of the building through the nearest exit.
- 3.** Sunday school teachers will move students directly out the nearest exit. **PARENTS SHOULD NOT TRY TO GET THEIR CHILDREN OUT OF CLASSROOMS DURING A FIRE ALARM. THIS WILL CREATE CONFUSION AND DIFFICULTY IN EVACUATION.** Teachers will take attendance lists with them. All fire exit doors are unlocked from the inside at all times.
- 4.** All groups evacuating will come together on the empty church lot, a safe distance away from the structure and emergency vehicles. **PARENTS MUST MEET CHILDREN AT THE EMPTY LOT. DO NOT TAKE CHILDREN OFF GROUNDS UNTIL THEY ARE ACCOUNTED FOR.** Any available adults will help supervise children. If there is direct knowledge of people still in the structure, inform the fire department immediately upon their arrival.
- 5.** Cars and vehicles should not leave the area until told. They may cause bottle neck at the intersections and make it difficult for emergency vehicles to get to the site of the fire. Let all emergency vehicles have the right of way.
- 6.** Fire extinguishers are located throughout the build, see the diagram following these instructions.
- 7.** The staff will have pre-assigned areas (with focus on bathrooms) to check for any people left behind in evacuation before leaving the building themselves.
- 8.** During a fire, evacuate directly outside through the nearest exit and proceed to the empty church lot on the south/west side of the building. Sunday school rooms will be posted with the nearest exit which should be used. If that exit is blocked by fire, teachers should calmly lead the children to the next closest exit.

Severe Weather Procedure

If the area is under a **storm watch**:

- Keep a close eye on the sky for bad weather.
- Keep a battery operated device on hand for weather updates.
- Be prepared to move indoors as soon as you are notified.
- Always have at least two adults in each room that the children are in.
- Keep the kids calm by remaining calm yourself.

If the area is under **storm warning or tornado watch**:

- Keep a battery operated device on hand for weather updates.
- Be prepared to move to safer areas under stairs soon as you are notified of tornado activity.
- Always have at least two adults in each room that the children are in.
- Keep the kids calm by remaining calm yourself.

If the area is under a **tornado warning**:

- Quickly and calmly move the kids to any of the following labeled safe areas including:
 - o Conference room
 - o Bathrooms
 - o Kitchen storage room or pantry
 - o Custodian's office
 - o Interior hallways – crouch down against the wall.
 - o Conference Room
 - o Meeting Room
 - o Boiler Room
 - o Sacristy/Altar Room
 - o Music Room Office
 - o End of the hallway outside music room or hallway between Sanctuary & Office – crouch down against the wall
- Stay away from all windows.
- Keep a battery operated device on hand for weather updates.
- Keep the kids calm by remaining calm yourself. You can lead them in singing or share happy stories.
- Always have at least two adults in each room that the children are in.

Crisis and Emergency Management Policy

Emergency Building Security Procedures when a violent intruder is identified at the church.

1. When a violent intruder is identified in the building a “CODE BLUE” status will be implemented immediately.
2. Since we do not have an intercom system at St. John’s, the person identifying the threat will shout, “CODE BLUE” to the nearest group of people, and they will shout the message on to the next group, etc.
 - a. The people in the kitchen (if this is during Sunday School, Oasis or Confirmation) or the office assistant (if this is during worship) will call 9-1-1 and stay on the line with the 9-1-1 dispatcher.
 - b. Pertinent information for law enforcement authorities:
 - i. The Nature of the problem
 - ii. Our location and the specific location of any intruder
 - o St. John’s Lutheran Church
301 8th Ave NW Kasson, MN
507-634-7110
 - iii. Any injuries
 - iv. Suspect description, number of suspects, any weapons, etc.
3. “CODE BLUE” means:
 - a. All children, staff, and adults clear the hallways.
 - b. Go to the nearest secure place (any room with a lock on the door). Any children/adults in the hallways should immediately go to the closest lockable room.
 - Including - Music Room, main office or staff offices, office kitchen, Nursery, Conference Room, custodial office, Creation Kid’s Preschool classrooms, and youth room.
 - c. Lock doors to the classrooms.
 - d. Turn off all the lights in locked rooms.
 - e. Go to the most remote part of the room so you can’t be seen from the door/hall, or windows.
 - f. Close drapes and shades on all windows in the room.
 - g. Be very quiet.
 - h. Remain in the classroom until you hear the all clear password (CODE BLUE ALL CLEAR and the date that day) or directed by law enforcement.
4. WAIT
 - a. Once you have secured your room/area, do nothing until the all clear password (CODE BLUE ALL CLEAR and the date) is given, or until you have been given directions from a police officer.
 - b. If asked to do something, do it in PAIRS only. Use the buddy system.
 - c. You and/or your class may be directed by the police to the emergency staging area they set up.
5. If an armed individual comes into the classroom:
 - a. If possible, shout the “CODE BLUE” warning.
 - b. If possible call 9-1-1 and leave your phone on so the dispatcher can hear any conversation.

- c.** Do as the armed intruder demands.
 - i.** Do not make sudden moves, which could frighten the intruder (ask for permission to move).
 - ii.** Never argue.
 - iii.** Take your time and remain calm.
 - iv.** Keep children as calm as possible.
 - v.** Physical force should not be used unless someone's life is in imminent danger.
 - d.** Talk to the armed intruder
 - i.** Learn as much as you can about the armed intruder.
 - ii.** Keep the armed intruder's attention on you, not on your students.
 - iii.** If more than one person is involved, concentrate on only the one person.
 - e.** Be observant
 - i.** Mentally record a detailed description of the individual and the weapon.
 - ii.** Identify a distinctive feature and continue to concentrate on that one item.
 - iii.** Remember what object the intruder touches and preserve them for Law Enforcement.
 - iv.** It is critically important to preserve the crime scene and never touch or move or disturb any possible evidence or objects at that site.
6. If the armed intruder starts shooting:
- a.** Tell students to get down and lay on the floor.
 - b.** Take cover on the floor and/or behind equipment.
7. If the threat is outside the church, we will shout "code blue external lockdown" and lock all of the outside church doors to keep the threat out.