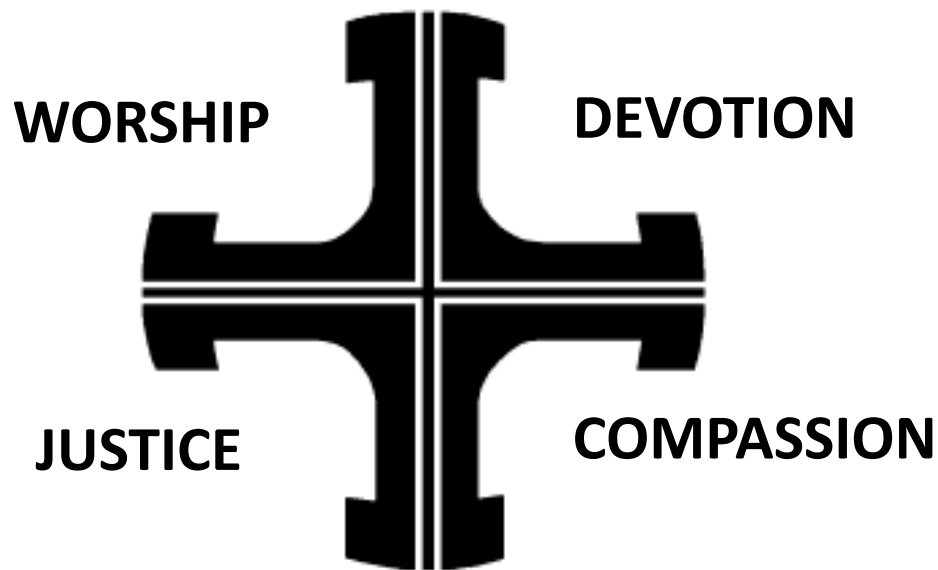


# Northfield United Methodist Church

## Parent Handbook



*The mission of the United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. What, exactly, is a disciple? At Northfield UMC, we define disciples as "companions in Christ, called, nurtured, and sent to glorify God by acts of devotion and worship, compassion and justice."*

*It is the church's high privilege and sacred duty to welcome and form people of all ages and stages of faith into becoming such "companions in Christ." This handbook is designed specifically for our families with children and youth - it includes expectations of supervision, our discipline policies, our conflict resolution policy and other tools to fulfill our mission specifically with our youngest disciples.*

*The church rightfully takes this work very, very seriously - consequently, we are committed to creating a safe space of grace for all who worship and grow here. We look forward to our work of learning how to best love God and neighbor this program year, and to joining you as disciples in transformation of the world around us.*

*Blessings,*

*Pastors Rachel and Jerad*

# **Northfield United Methodist Church**

## **Our Values**

The Northfield United Methodist Church will operate by the values it hopes to cultivate in the families it serves: caring, honesty, respect, responsibility and a deep foundational faith in God. These values will direct the governance of the organization, the creation and operation of its programs, and the conduct of its leaders, staff, and volunteers.

The Northfield United Methodist Church is a place to build and grow one's faith in God, develop character, feel a sense of belonging, accomplish new things, build meaningful friendships, and be an important part of a community of faith, a church family.

## **Important Contact Information**

### **Northfield United Methodist Church**

1401 Maple St. Northfield, MN 55057

[northfieldumc@gmail.com](mailto:northfieldumc@gmail.com)

507-645-5689

### **Pastor Rachel McIver Morey**

[rmorey@northfieldumc.org](mailto:rmorey@northfieldumc.org)

Cell: 507-403-0071

### **Pastor Jerad Morey**

[jmorey@northfieldumc.org](mailto:jmorey@northfieldumc.org)

Cell: 507-403-0070

### **Rev. Todd Campbell, Jr.** – Director of Youth & Family Ministries

Cell: 507-417-9415

[youth@northfieldumc.org](mailto:youth@northfieldumc.org)

### **Gregory Ennis** – Children's Ministry Programming Coordinator

[gennis@northfieldumc.org](mailto:gennis@northfieldumc.org)

## **Participant Expectations**

Safety is paramount to the church program. Rules will be established and taught to the children at the beginning of each program year and regularly reviewed to ensure the safety of all students. Please review the following list of rules with your child.

### **General Safety Rules**

- Listen to the staff and volunteer leaders and follow their directions.
- Students should not be alone at any time while in the church.
- Students must participate in activities during event.
- No cell phone or electronics are allowed during programming.
- Do not throw any harmful items at another person.
- No fighting. If you have a problem, walk away from the situation and tell a leader or staff person.
- Youth must be supervised while in the church building.
- No youth should be in the church before programming on Wednesdays unless they are helping with KC3 or are with their parents.
- Any youth helping with KC3 must remain with the group the entire time.
- Special Youth Events – parents will receive at least two weeks' notice of dates, times, and transportation needs prior to the event.
- Children & youth activities without appropriate number of adult supervisors/chaperones will be cancelled.

### **Where should children & youth be during. . .**

- **Sunday Worship:** in the sanctuary, (or nursery for infants - early elementary age) unless they are a youth helper in the nursery.
- **Discovery Zone Children's Church:** in their classroom or with their parents.
- **Wednesdays:** with KC3 or other supervised children and youth activities as scheduled, or with their family. Gym/education wing supervision will be provided by staff/volunteers most Wednesdays 6:15-7:30pm.

### **Picking up your children & youth from an event:**

- Please be prompt when picking up your children.
- Youth will not be allowed to drive other youth to or from church activities.
- Adults are not allowed to drive the student home without parents' permission.
- **Please notify KC3 Program Coordinator, Director of family ministries, or Pastors Jerad or Rachel prior to the event if someone else will be picking up your child.**

### **Event/Activity Cancellation policy**

- **Weather related:** We will follow the school's plan. If school is cancelled or released early due to inclement weather, we will not have children and youth programming or the Super Wednesday meal. For all other adult activities, please contact the leader responsible for the activity.
- **Lack of supervision related:** Children & youth activities without appropriate number of adult supervisors/chaperones will be cancelled.

### **Student Expectations**

Please review with your child the types of behaviors that we expect (outlined below) and perhaps even spend some time discussing their importance in order for your child to have a successful time in children or youth activities.

❖ **Friends Helping Friends!** Honesty and respect will be the basis for all relationships and interactions. Reach out and make a new friend each week. We respect each other and the environment. If we listen to others; they will listen to us. Use kind words, please and thank you often. Be courteous with the words you use. Inappropriate language, verbal threats, fighting and tactics used to humiliate or intimidate another simply will not be tolerated.

❖ **Social Inclusion:** Teamwork and cooperation will be the basis for including every one. Politeness and courtesy go a long way. People are responsible for their actions. Use positive language at all times. Speak for yourself, not anyone else. Encourage others by avoiding put downs. Show respect. Every person is important. Keep your hands and feet to yourself at all times. You are not allowed to touch another student/staff member/volunteer in a negative or inappropriate way.

❖ **Building a community of faith:** Every child is an important part of our church family. You are here to grow in your faith, make new friends, enjoy time with old friends, learn new games, try something new, build on an old skill and just have fun. Respect all staff, group leaders, volunteers and other students. The proper use and cleanliness of the classrooms and church building, equipment, supplies, etc. is the responsibility of all. Clean up is important and we need your support. Not only do we respect each other but also we respect our church environment by putting litter in its place, by not destroying property that belongs to the church or to others and putting equipment in its proper place. We are all responsible for our words and our actions. Be responsible for personal belongings. More things are lost than found. Leave important things at home. Stay in program areas with your leader. Cooperate with staff and follow directions.

## **Bullying Policy**

Bullying is when one or more people exclude, tease, taunt, gossip, hit, kick, or put down another person with the intent to hurt another. Bullying happens when a person or group of people want to have power over another and use their power to get their way, at the expense of someone else.

We are open to all to develop the spirit, mind and body. We work together as a team to ensure that students grow in their faith, gain self-confidence, make new friends, and go home with great memories. Unfortunately, persons who are bullied may not have the same potential to get the most out of their church experience. Our leadership addresses all incidents of bullying seriously and trains staff to promote communication with other staff and volunteer leaders and their students so both leaders and students will be comfortable alerting us to any problems during their church experience. Every person has the right to have the best possible experience at church, and by working together as a team to identify and manage bullying, we can help ensure that all children, youth and staff have a great experience at our church.

At the Northfield United Methodist Church, bullying is not tolerated, and we have a firm policy against all types of bullying. All children are gifts from God, and deserve to be treated as companions in Christ by others.

## **Corrective Action Plan Process**

When positive behavior is displayed, students create a positive, welcoming community for everyone. In case of negative or inappropriate behavior among students, the following process will be followed.

1. **Reasoning:** Every effort will be made to help the child understand the inappropriateness of his or her actions and agree to an alternate form of behavior. When the conflict is child-to-child, every effort will be made to have them reason together face-to-face with staff facilitating.
2. **Redirection:** When reasoning has been pursued and behavior has not changed, redirecting the child from the activity involved to another program space for an appropriate amount of time will take place if necessary.
3. **Child/Church Staff Conference:** When the program leader/teacher is not successful in correcting behavior, the Youth or Children's staff person or pastors will be consulted and may decide on further appropriate action/consequences.
4. **Conferences:** If the parent needs to be formally involved in the process, specific changes in behavior will be requested, with specific consequences for non-compliance outlined. This is usually accomplished through the use of a Fix-It Plan. *(Fix-it Plan continued on next page)*

**A Fix-It Plan** is used for a child who, after much effort and numerous attempts, has not been able to modify their behavior. Goals are stated in positive ways to help children understand the desired behavior and the time line is fair and realistic.

5. **Decision-making leave for inappropriate Behavior:** In order to provide a safe, effective program, a break from program participation may occur for children unable to follow the General Safety Rules and Student Expectations. The Program Director will work with parents to determine the length of the break.
6. **Removal from the Program:** If the above process has not resulted in corrected behavior, as a last result, the family may be asked to remove the child from the program.

## **Safe Zone**

Our church programs provide a safe place for all children and are zero-tolerance, non-violence programs. This means that hitting, fighting, verbal threats or violent statements will not be tolerated. Weapons of any kind are not allowed in church programs. If a child is found to have a weapon, they will be removed from the program immediately. Our policy also means that toy guns, knives, or weapons of any kind are not allowed and will be confiscated.

## **Serious behaviors that may result in immediate suspension**

If a child is removed from church programming, no refunds will be given if expenses were incurred.

- Any behavior that endangers the health and safety of children, staff or volunteers
- Leaving the church program and/or assigned group without permission
- Inappropriate touching of other students or sexual misconduct
- Theft, defacing or destruction of property belonging to the church or others
- Any kind of physical assault such as hitting, kicking, biting
- Possession of weapons, tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs

## **Conflict Resolution Guidelines (for Adults!)**

### **UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF NORTHFIELD**

Because God has called us from many different backgrounds and experiences, we recognize the possibility of differences and disagreements. Often these enrich our congregational life, but sometimes they cause friction or divide us. It is our responsibility to demonstrate the unity and love that ultimately bind us.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE RULE OF CHRIST PRACTICE:**

To gracefully address and resolve concerns/conflicts that occur at United Methodist Church of Northfield in a manner guided by scripture, calling for: discernment of God's will, personal responsibility, empathy, open communication and above all, love.

*If I have a concern or am in conflict with someone about something, my practice will be to follow these steps:*

#### **STEP 1: SELF REFLECTION TO DISCERN GOD'S WILL**

##### **I will pray/meditate on:**

What is my concern/conflict? – describe it, keeping it as simple as possible.

What is my position on this matter?

What value/personal principle underlies my position?

What is my perception of the other person's position on this matter?

Is there history behind my concern? Is this history impacting my reaction?

Can I let it go?

##### **If I am able to let it go, the matter is resolved, IF NOT I will ...**

Put myself in the other person's shoes; what might they say I contributed to this matter?

What does God want?

Proceed to **STEP 2 ...**

#### **STEP 2: TALK WITH THE PERSON 1:1**

##### **Self-preparation for this discussion:**

Plan ahead and practice what I want to say.

Plan to meet in a neutral location.

Remember that we are ALL part of the body of Christ.

##### **The actual discussion:**

Begin the meeting with prayer.

Goal of the meeting: discuss, in effort to work together to find a solution that satisfies us both.

Work hard to understand the other person's point of view.

Share using "I" statements; example: I feel "X" when "Y" happens.

**If a satisfactory resolution is not found, proceed to STEP 3 ...**



### **STEP 3: GET SOME OBJECTIVE HELP**

#### **Set up and meet with the appropriate committee/team leader and the pastor**

Prior to this meeting I will provide a written statement describing the concern.

I may bring one or two others who share the concern to participate in this meeting.

All invited to this meeting will be made aware of who will be attending the meeting and that it will be a closed meeting.

#### **At the actual meeting:**

The appropriate body will meet with all and discern satisfactory conclusions to all.

**If a satisfactory conclusion is not found, proceed to STEP 4 ...**

### **STEP 4: SHAKE THE DUST**

#### **All individuals involved in the matter will try their best to:**

Understand that some matters may not be resolved, despite best efforts.

Let go of related anger, resentment, and hurt feelings.

Re-focus on NUMC's current mission: We are companions in Christ, called, nurtured, and sent for this purpose: to glorify God by acts of worship, devotion, compassion, and justice.

**Throughout the practice of Rule of Christ we are mindful of the guidance of Matthew 18:20  
God promises to be with us as we gracefully do our best to work through our conflicts!**

### **Volunteer Screening**

*"Why do I need to be screened?"* We strive to make our church a safe place for all who gather here. It is with the utmost love and respect that we ask all of our children and youth volunteers to be screened for the safety of our children and youth, the safety of our church and for the volunteer's safety as well.

*"Who needs to be screened?"* Do you work with children or youth in any way - drive children or youth to an event, chaperone, teach Sunday school, involved with Wednesday programming, Confirmation guide, nursery volunteer, Partner in Faith, etc.? Then you should be screened if you have not been already.

All volunteers must complete a screening process and training through the Safe Gatherings program, supported through the United Methodist Church. This is an online program that you can complete in your own home. It will take approximately one hour to complete. Go to the [www.safegatherings.com](http://www.safegatherings.com) website to complete the training and background check.

A background check will also be done with the results being sent directly to the church. Safe Gatherings keeps all data collected private. It is used solely for the purpose of screening and contact from Safe Gatherings as needed. It will take a few days to fully complete the process so please plan accordingly.

## **Children and Youth Involvement in Worship**

Children and youth are always encouraged to be a part of our worship services. It makes the worship experience so much more meaningful for them and our congregation, giving and using their God-given talents and creating a sense of belonging, a sense of family. Here are a few of the opportunities for them to serve.

- Scripture readers – every second Sunday of the month, children and youth read scripture for worship. Contact Rev. Todd Campbell if your child or youth would like to read.
- Ushering – Contact Rev. Campbell if interested.
- Providing music for worship – vocal or instrumental, playing with the band, solos, small groups, lead congregational singing, etc.

|