



# family handbook for first presbyterian charlotte

## middle and high school student ministries

**2011-2012**

**Dear Family,**

We at First Presbyterian Church are pleased that you have chosen to participate in REACH! for the 2011-2012 year. (REACH! is the youth ministry of First Presbyterian Church Charlotte. It includes all youth related activities and events) If you are participating with us for the first time, or if you are a long time participant, it is our desire that you experience with us the joy of walking together in partnership, not just with each other, but also with Jesus Christ, our “bridge to life.” Christ has bridged the great divide that sin creates between God and us, allowing us an opportunity to life in relationship with God.

Please read this handbook carefully. Note some dates you need to be aware of, some ways in which you need to prepare yourself, the information that your family needs to discuss, and the information that you need to return to the church. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Jen Evans or Josh Herrin.

We are excited about how the Holy Spirit is going to work this year. As God works through each of us this year there may be times of happiness, times of sadness, times of anger, times of being uncomfortable, times of being scared, but we pray that there will always be the knowledge and joy that God is PRESENT with us.

Jen Evans  
Director of Middle School Ministries

Josh Herrin  
Director of Senior High Ministries

**Our Vision and Mission for First Presbyterian Youth Ministries**

Convinced of the overwhelming importance of ministry partnership, our vision statement seeks to reflect this value. In addition to the many youth in our ministry, we recognize and welcome the many adult volunteers in our programs; from parents and/or guardians, to teachers, PYC advisors, mentors, and so many others, who strive to model Christian discipleship. We also celebrate the abilities and guidance of our professional staff. Youth, adults, and staff walk together in partnership with each other and with Jesus Christ, our “bridge to life”.

This rich mix of talents, experience, and gifts seeks to construct durable relationships. Our goal is to live our faith in a world that is broken. We live out our faith through worship, love, service, and witness. We believe our youth ministries assist our youth in making the often frightening and always surprising transition from childhood to young adulthood, from learning the faith, to expressing it in authentic ways.

**Answers to FAQ's**

- Forms we need returned: Covenant and notarized medical form
- PYC typically meets Sunday evenings (check the church calendar for details) 6:00-7:45pm.
- Dinner is together at 6:00pm in fellowship hall, followed by breakout of Confirmation, Middle School, and High School youth until 7:45pm.
- Subsidy cost for dinner is \$90 for the year per student. **DO NOT** let money be an issue. Confidential financial aid is available. Simply contact Jen Evans or Josh Herrin for more information.

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**Our Method of Fulfilling Our Mission and Vision****some of what you can expect from us...**

- We will provide opportunities for youth to grow in their faith and learn more about our Presbyterian heritage through faith exploration, studies, service, fellowship.
- We will communicate with you through email, electronic newsletters, and telephone and will respond promptly to questions or concerns and hope that you will come to us with positive feedback and areas that may need some extra attention.
- We will minister to youth and their families with a spirit of love.
- We will attend extracurricular activities as often as possible given that we know about them in advance.
- We will build appropriate relationships with the youth and help make positive connections between youth and their peers.
- We will be side by side with youth as they deal with some of the life issues and challenges that they face.
- We want to know your youth as an individual. Please let us know if there is something in particular that you want us to know about your youth!

**some of what we expect from the family...**

- You will read this entire packet carefully and contact us should you have any concerns or questions. It is designed to provide you with important information regarding REACH!.
- You will come to us with positive feedback and constructive criticism.
- You will let us know if there is something in particular that you want us to know about your youth.
  - If they are having a difficult time or have an extracurricular activity we might attend.

**some of what we expect from everyone...**

- Recognize that students and leaders will know their limitations as peers and advisors to others in REACH! and will contact Jen Evans or Josh Herrin should additional resources be needed.
- We expect that everyone involved in REACH! will lift up in prayer the program and any participants, families, youth, and adult leaders.
- We expect that while attending REACH! sponsored event, youth and adult leaders will be respectful of all people and all property, have a good attitude, and abide by REACH! covenant.
- We expect that participants, families, students, and leaders who fail to comply with REACH! covenant will be subject to discipline that may include being sent home at their own expense, based upon discretion of the leadership team and staff.
- We expect that:
  - At no time will leaders be in compromising situations with students.
  - There should be absolutely no physical contact that can be interpreted as sexual advances made toward any student or leader.
  - Leaders should not walk alone at night with students of the opposite sex.
  - Leaders should not be with students of the opposite sex in secluded areas.
  - There should be no sexual conduct between leaders and students, students and students, or leaders and leaders at REACH! sponsored events.
  - Students and leaders (Guys AND Gals) will bring honor to the Lord and be respectful of others and themselves by dressing modestly.
  - When leaders are notified of inappropriate conduct by anyone, they must immediately report it to Jen Evans or Josh Herrin. Since the person in question may be a minor, the church office must be contacted to respond appropriately.

**REACH! Covenant – Sign and Return**

**who we are**

As children of God we are ALL connected to one another. We seek to be inclusive and respectful of others. As a community we promote and support all persons in their healthy development (physically, mentally, socially, emotionally, and spiritually) in order to lead them to the fullest sense of identity, belonging, and wholeness. While taking on healthy risks and challenges individually and as a group, we rejoice in our successes. We also seek to support and challenge one another in our times of shortcomings and weakness.

**student and leader accountability**

In light of the Covenant and in the spirit of partnership and inclusion, we understand that the whole group may need to discuss any behavioral issues (except as limited by confidentiality). Discussions may be needed to explain circumstances, share feelings, develop solutions, seek reconciliation, and increase personal investment and accountability in the group. For any problem, we understand that every effort will be made in the spirit of grace to respond to each person as a child of God, include all points of view, build mutually trusting relationships, and meet the needs and interest of all individuals involved.

**behavioral problems**

Any student or leader behavior that threatens the values, spirit, or peace or his/herself, others or the group as a whole will be responded to directly through a meeting between the person(s) involved and the group leaders to discuss the issues and establish solutions. Examples of such behavior include, but are not limited to, physical violence, expletive language, put-downs, breaking ground rules established at activities, or any other hindrance to group commitment to the Covenant.

**dangerous behavior**

Any student or leader behavior that seriously threatens or shows disregard for the health and life of his/herself, others, or the group as a whole (as described, but not limited to, the items below) will be responded to by the group leader(s) as follows:

1. Use or possession of tobacco products, alcohol, or illegal drugs, or prescription drugs not prescribed to the individual, or misuse of over the counter drugs, theft (shoplifting or stealing), and inappropriate sexual behavior are not allowed in the context of any youth ministry event because they are deemed beyond the

scope of youth ministry events, beyond the leadership capability, or they significantly threaten the individual, group unity, or other individuals. – **Any Offense: Parent/Guardian contact and participant removed from group and sent home at their own expense.**

2. Evidence of probable cause concerning any participants' violation of these guidelines may result in his or her belongings being searched by a leader to ensure group and individual safety. We ask you to read the Covenant and discuss it together as a family. Please read the handbook carefully and take special care to read and sign the Covenant.

**repeated poor behavior**

We understand that repeated poor behavior of any kind will have more serious consequences, such as parent/guardian conferences, restrictions on participation, or legal action.

**I, the undersigned, have willingly chosen to participate in activities related to REACH! (the youth ministry of First Presbyterian Church Charlotte). I agree to work toward the building of community by participating in all activities, possessing a positive attitude, showing respect for self, other youth, and adults and their possessions. I also agree to be encouraging, accepting, and open to faith building experiences. I will not bring or use controlled substances including drugs, tobacco products, or alcohol. I will not bring weapons or incendiary devices to youth activities. I will not participate in inappropriate sexual behavior during youth activities. I will strive to follow the example of Christ in behavior towards others. I understand the consequences for failing to abide by these guidelines may include, but are not limited to, a call to parents/guardians or being sent home.**

Youth Name  
\_\_\_\_\_

Youth Signature:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Event Registration Policy**

Please read over this Event Registration Policy. In an effort to be a good steward of the budget here at First Presbyterian Church, we are asking you all to consider and commit to events in a timely fashion. In the past our hopes to maximize youth participation in youth events has led to money loss in the youth budget. Our acceptance to verbal confirmation rather than monetary confirmation has many times incurred a loss in our budget. Please do your best to keep abreast of deadlines and secure your spot with a monetary deposit. Having said this, **PLEASE never** let money be something that keeps a youth from attending a church sponsored event. **Financial aid is ALWAYS available** and any request will be handled in a confidential manner. Please direct any questions to Jen Evans or Josh Herrin.

**Guidelines:**

1. In order to reserve a spot on any youth outing, a non-refundable deposit and/or the full amount of the trip must be returned by the deadline in order to hold a place. The amount of the deposit will depend on the church's financial liability for the event.
2. Sign-ups will be taken AFTER the deadline on a first come first serve basis. However, please be advised, any extra spaces MAY be let go immediately following the deadline.
3. Event cancellations will be decided upon by the Director of Middle School Ministry, Director of Senior High Ministry, Ministers, and Business Administrator.
4. If you cancel within the two-week window of event departure, you will be expected to pay the full amount of the event. Refunds on cancellations prior to the two-week window will depend on the financial liability of the church. **\*\*Confirmation Participants:** Be a good steward of the Church. Remember that if you cancel within the two-week window of event departure, the Church will lose that money and you will be expected to reimburse the Church for any expenses related to your cancellation.

## Transportation Policy

In light of advice received from our insurers, the Session resolved to purchase mini-buses to supplement our available transportation options. Session also made a decision, again based on the explicit direction of our insurers, regarding the use of vans for transporting youth and other church members. This policy is summarized below:

Fifteen (15) passenger vans had been developed on the foundation of a cargo van design and had gained widespread notoriety as being unstable and unsafe for transporting people. In light of this, insurers insisted that for passenger configuration these vans must have a dual rear wheel configuration which overcomes the instability issue. Additionally such vans are required to have safety glass in all windows. Our insurer made recommendations based on this industry-wide standard.

Accordingly Session resolved in terms which can be summarized as:

Transportation of members of First Presbyterian, other than in privately owned vehicles, must be done utilizing the following:

- First Presbyterian mini-buses
- 15 passenger dual wheeled vans no older than two model years in age
- 12 passenger vans no older than two model years in age

***This policy shall be rigidly followed.***

## Church Insurance Information

The below information explains insurance coverage when on church-related business:

**Insurance for Church Vehicles:** First Presbyterian Church's insurance policy covers drivers of church vehicles while on church-related business. The driver must have an updated insurance form on file with the church and must notify the church of any changes to their driving record to retain the privilege to drive a church vehicle.

All drivers are expected to have an acceptable driving record reflecting their personal standards for not speeding, not driving while impaired, not being responsible for major accidents, and should exercise all other characteristics and habits of safe, responsible driving. Further, drivers carrying passengers for a church-related activity should be at least 21 years of age and had experience driving for a minimum of two years.

**Insurance for Non-Church Owned Vehicles:** Privately owned vehicles that are being used for church purposes are covered under the individual's personal insurance for both bodily injury and property damage liability. The church's policy would only participate in medical coverage as a secondary policy after the primary insured's policy benefits had been exhausted.

**Church Leader's Role:** The church leader responsible for the activity is responsible for ensuring the driver meets these guidelines.



**MEDIA FORM**

At times, photos, videos, or audio likenesses will be taken at REACH! events, and may be used by First Presbyterian Church, Charlotte in church newsletters, church promotional material such as brochures, and/or to be published on the church website [www.firstpres-charlotte.org]. These photos, videos or audio likenesses can be openly viewed, but no identifying information relating to individuals depicted will be displayed outside of the First Presbyterian Church, Charlotte community.

If you do not wish to be included in presentations of any kind by First Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, please fill out and return the following form. By not returning this form, you hereby grant permission to First Presbyterian Church, Charlotte to use your image.

Youth's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Adult's name (if youth under 18): \_\_\_\_\_

Adult's signature (if youth under 18): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Youth Medical Release & Parental/Guardian Consent Form 2011-2012**

This form is necessary to ensure that your child receives proper medical treatment in the event of an emergency.

[Note: For all participants in First Presbyterian programs under the age of 18 years.]

Child/Youth's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Names \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone# \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone ## \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone ## \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone ## \_\_\_\_\_

Any other information that may help us in get in touch with you:

**Emergency Contact if a Parent/Guardian cannot be reached:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

**Medical Information**

Family Doctor/Practice \_\_\_\_\_ Phone# \_\_\_\_\_  
Allergies \_\_\_\_\_  
Chronic or existing diseases or medical problems (diabetes, epilepsy, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

List medications that are currently being taken. Include prescription and non-prescription, as well as dosage amounts

\_\_\_\_\_

Are all immunizations, including tetanus, current? \_\_\_\_\_

Are contacts lenses worn? \_\_\_\_\_

Additional comments or information you think we should know:

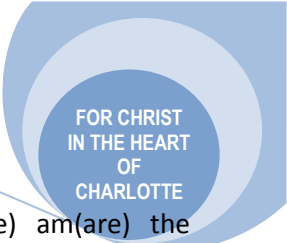
**Insurance Information**

Carrier/Provider \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Member's ID Number \_\_\_\_\_

Group Policy Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Please provide a copy of both sides of your insurance card.**



**Parent/Guardian Consent for Emergency Medical Treatment**

I/we \_\_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_\_ (name) state that I(we) am(are) the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of \_\_\_\_\_ (child)(youth). If the above child/youth is injured or becomes ill while he/she is participating in an activity sponsored by First Presbyterian Church (the "Church"), I/we understand that every effort will be made to contact us. However, I/we hereby grant(s) permission to any Church staff member, or any adult team leader approved by Session, to authorize whatever medical care is necessary in the judgment of a licensed physician. The undersigned agrees to inform the Church if there are any changes to the child/youth's medical condition or prescriptions prior to departure.

I (we) acknowledge that activities sponsored by the Church may involve some degree of inherent or unavoidable risk and that the First Presbyterian Church does not, and cannot, guarantee the safety of participants in such activities. I (we) assume the risk of such activities, and the undersigned Parent or Guardian, and youth (if of legal age) hereby release the First Presbyterian Church from, and agree to indemnify and hold it harmless against, all claims of any nature arising from the participation of, the child/youth all in such activities.

**Parent/Guardian Signature(s)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF MECKLENBURG

I, \_\_\_\_\_, a Notary Public of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, do hereby certify that the following person(s) (the "Signatory(ies)") personally appeared before me this day: \_\_\_\_\_.

I certify that *(check one of the following)*

- I have personal knowledge of the identity of the Signatory(ies); **or**
- I have seen satisfactory evidence of the Signatory(ies)'s identity, by a current state or federal identification with the Signatory(ies)'s photograph in the form of:  
*(check one of the following)*
  - a driver's license *or*
  - in the form of \_\_\_\_\_; **or**
- a credible witness has sworn to the identity of the Signatory(ies).

The Signatory(ies) acknowledged to me that he/she/each of them has/have voluntarily signed the foregoing document for the purpose stated therein.

Witness my hand and official stamp or seal this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
**(Note: Notary must sign exactly as on notary seal)**

My Commission Expires: \_\_\_\_\_