

Oxford-University UMC
Building and Supervision Policies Proposal

Table of Contents

Opening Letter.....	3
I. Definition of Terms.....	4
II. Introduction	5
III. Access to the Building.....	6
IV. Supervision of Children and Youth.....	7
V. Activity Center Rules.....	8
VI. Activities Center Hours of Operation.....	9-10
VII. Conclusion.....	11
VII. Access Point Map.....	12

Dear Members of the Administrative Council,

April 2, 2009

Jesus told his followers: ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.’ (Luke 18:16) Our faith tradition, the United Methodist Church, has adopted as its motto: ‘Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.’ The congregation of Oxford-University UMC has set as its mission statement: ‘As disciples of Jesus Christ, Oxford-University UMC exists to let people know they matter to God, by showing them they matter to us, so that others will matter to them.’

When we read over these statements, one thing is clear: We understand our church, Oxford-University UMC, to be an open and inviting community, living into the vision set not only by our own congregation and faith tradition, but by Jesus Christ himself.

Of course, being ‘open and inviting’ does not mean that we should be wide-open or inviting chaos. Instead, being blessed as we are, we have the responsibility to provide a space that is safe and secure for our children and youth, as well as provide programming that embodies the faith, hope and love of Jesus Christ. Our end goal, after all, is not to be a hang out or a country club, but rather, as Jesus said, to teach those who enter our doors about the kingdom of God. For us then, ‘open and inviting’ means we are open to the community where we find ourselves and invite all God’s people to join us in various forms of Christian fellowship within a structured and safe space.

Creating such a space is not always easy, but we understand here at Oxford-University UMC that it is our responsibility and call to do so. In answering this call, however, we should not be motivated by a spirit of fear or desperation by being overly reactionary or unnecessarily arbitrary. Rather, our mission as disciples of Jesus Christ should be central. Therefore, it is absolutely imperative that every policy, guideline and program we develop should grow out of our understanding of what it means to be followers of Jesus Christ, as well as faithful stewards of God’s kingdom and creation.

When answering tough questions about church theology or policy, I like to start with scripture; and my model for resolving any issue or debate within the church is Acts 15. There we find a church debate where both tradition and experience are taken seriously; and where the voices of the church leaders and elders, as well as those doing ministry ‘on the ground,’ are heard. In whatever way we decide to answer this call and responsibility, we must do it together as a community of God’s people, remaining true to who we are as Christians and as United Methodists. We must hear and take seriously the concerns of our leaders; the guidelines and traditions set forth in the UMC Book of Discipline; and the experience of those personally involved with the ministries of our church.

The proposal presented here is the product of researching and reviewing UMC Safe Sanctuaries policy, as well as the policies of other churches that have similar facilities and issues as Oxford-University UMC. It has also been reviewed, revised and approved by our own task group given the charge of developing the policies appropriate for our church and facilities, as well as by the Board of Trustees.

In both location and facilities, we have been blessed with an incredible opportunity to minister to the community of Oxford, Mississippi – and I am confident we will not fail to faithfully answer the call.

Peace,
J Johnson
Director of Student Ministries
Oxford-University UMC

I. Definition of Terms

<i>Oxford-University UMC:</i>	Refers to our church, both in building and in people. Also referred to as OU or OUUMC.
<i>The Building/Facilities:</i>	Refers to the entire building of OU, including both the Old and New Buildings.
<i>Old Building:</i>	Refers to the older section of the building and includes the sanctuary, church offices, youth center and youth kitchen.
<i>New Building:</i>	Refers to the newer addition to the building, including the Multipurpose Activities Center.
<i>Activities Center:</i>	Refers to the part of the new building that holds the gym, the kitchen, the restrooms, and the Activities Center desk. Also referred to as AC or MAC.
<i>Program/Programming:</i>	Refers to any ministry or event that takes place at or is sponsored by OU, including those that take place off church grounds and during transport.
<i>Adult Programming:</i>	Refers to all programs at or sponsored by OU for those age 18 or older.
<i>Youth Programming:</i>	Refers to all programs at or sponsored by OU for those age 12 through 17 and/or in the 7 th through 12 th grades.
<i>Children Programming:</i>	Refers to all programs at or sponsored by OU for those between infancy and the 6 th grade.
<i>Program Coordinator:</i>	The staff or layperson in charge of a particular program at OU, whether adult, youth or children, including equipment, set-up, breakdown and supervision. Distinguished from the <i>ministries director</i> .
<i>Facilities Director:</i>	The staff person with whom programming coordinators schedule or arrange use of any part of the facilities.
<i>Ministries Director:</i>	The staff person in charge of coordinating all particular programs within a certain area: Children, Youth or Adult.
<i>Gym Steward:</i>	The adult hired by the Facilities Director to oversee the Activities Center. The primary responsibilities of a Gym Steward are: 1) checking people in and out of the facilities, 2) checking in and out OU equipment, 3) overseeing the facilities and ensuring proper use. Not responsible for supervision or programming. Distinguished from a <i>program volunteer</i> .
<i>Program Volunteer:</i>	An adult assisting the Program Coordinator for a particular program. Duties are assigned by the Program Coordinator and may include supervision, programming, or directing children and youth.

II. Introduction

Oxford-University UMC has been blessed with both location and facilities, and is positioned to provide an incredible ministry to the community of Oxford, Mississippi. Given these facts, we believe that it is our call and responsibility to do so, and to do so in a manner faithful to our mission as disciples of Jesus Christ.

An important and current issue is the ***supervision of children and youth in our building and during church sponsored events***, especially during high traffic times (i.e., half-days, after school, etc.). Connected with this issue are several others: *access to the facilities, clearly defined and posted rules, programming for all ages, and our hours of operation.*

Supervision is the responsibility of three separate areas within our church working together:

- ***Facilities***: This term refers to our building, both old and new, but with special attention to the Activities Center and Youth Center, which is overseen and scheduled by the facilities director. This is the space where the children and youth are present and where the supervision needs to happen. Falling under the area of facilities are the connected issues of access to the building and rules of conduct within it – which include not only children and youth, but adults as well.
- ***Programming***: This term refers to the ministries and events that we host and sponsor in our building. Under this area fall all programs for children, youth and adults, which are overseen by the respective ministries director (i.e., Youth Ministries Director, etc.). Regarding children and youth, our programming acknowledges that supervising children and youth in our building or during church sponsored events involves supervising them to do something – that is, organized and structured activities.
- ***Coordinator***: This term refers to the program coordinator, whether staff or layperson, serving to bring programming and facilities together for a particular program, ensuring adequate and appropriate supervision for children and youth.

When all three of these areas work together, then we have a clear idea of when the building should be accessible and what our *hours of operation* should be.

The general guideline this diagram suggests for our church is: ***All activities and events within our facilities or sponsored by OUUMC shall be programmed, supervised and structured, regardless of age group.***

Note: The following proposal is intended to be a general proposal. The life and ministries of the church will of course demand certain exceptions to what follows. Prior to any change, those exceptions will be determined by the staff and subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees. Furthermore, this policy does not supercede existing policies, except the required adult to child ratio for appropriate supervision of children and youth.

III. Access to the Building

OUUMC's access plan is as follows (please refer to attached map for access point numbers):

1. Access to the building will be granted only during office hours or programmed activities, unless otherwise authorized and/or supervised by staff or other program coordinator.
2. All access points are to be locked from outside entry during office hours and all programmed events, except for #1 and #11. The doors will allow egress or exit from the inside in the case of an emergency. Additionally, access point #4 will ALWAYS remain locked from outside entry.

During **church-wide events**, all access points (except #4) will be unlocked, including Sunday morning worship, Wednesday night activities, funerals and weddings. Other church-wide events are to be determined by the staff.

3. Signs shall be posted at every access point directing visitors or members to the appropriate entry points, #1 and #11.
4. ***Except during church-wide events***, anyone entering the building, *regardless of age*, must check-in, as well as check-out when they leave, at either access point #1 or #11. 'Check-in' involves taking the person's name and available phone numbers, and in the case of children and youth, the parents phone numbers as well.
 - a. Anyone who enters the building at access point #1, *regardless of age*, must check-in with the attendant at the Activities Center Welcome desk and receive a sign of check-in verification (i.e. bracelet, sticker, etc.). The welcome desk will be supervised by rotating volunteers during office hours and a gym steward after office hours. *During half school days, access to the old building will be gated off.*
 - b. Access point #11 is only open during regular office hours and anyone who enters the building at access point #11 must check-in with the main office and receive a sign of check-in verification (i.e., hand stamp). Those entering the building in order to use the Activities Center, including children and youth, will be directed to access point #1.
5. Anyone found in the building without verification of check-in will be directed and/or escorted to a check-in point or asked to leave the building.
6. All internal doors (i.e. Sunday school rooms, offices, etc.) must be closed and locked when the room is not in use. Access to these rooms for use or preparation by Sunday school teachers or other program coordinators will be provided. Method of that access, whether by issuing internal keys or through scheduled unlocking, will be determined by the facilities director.
7. Any equipment belonging to Oxford-University UMC that is used in the Activities Center (i.e. basketballs, volleyballs, etc.) must be checked out from the Activities Center desk by leaving a personal effect (i.e. ID, backpack, etc.) to be returned when the equipment is checked back in.

IV. Supervision of Children and Youth

OUUMC's supervision plan is as follows:

1. The coordinator of the particular program involving either children or youth (i.e., Bible study, children's church, youth worship, etc.) must be responsible for providing or arranging appropriate adult supervision during the event or program.
2. All supervisors must be at least 18 years old and five years older than the children or youth with which they will be working.
3. For any program sponsored by Oxford-University UMC involving children or youth, there must always be at least two unrelated supervisors present, including programs or events off church grounds and during transport.
4. For any program or trip sponsored by Oxford-University UMC involving children or youth, a 1 to 10 adult to child ratio should be maintained, including programs or events off church grounds and during transport.
5. At any time the Activities Center is being used for programming, this ratio must be guided by the following:
 - a. At least two unrelated supervisors must be present during any youth or children programming.
 - b. At least one supervisor must always be at the check-in desk of Activities Center.
6. All supervisors should be and at least one must be trained in the following:
 - a. How to work with the age groups involved, including conflict resolution and appropriate behavior of supervisors, youth and children.
 - b. Red Cross First aid and CPR.
 - c. OUUMC's policies regarding programming, supervision, and facilities, including OUUMC's Safe Sanctuaries policy – training in which will be provided annually.
7. All supervisors must have completed background checks and a signed Volunteer Covenant on file with the church.
8. Any room in which children or youth programming takes place must either have an open door or, if the door is closed, a window in the door, so that outside visibility into the room is maintained.
9. An OUUMC Safe Sanctuaries Committee shall be formed consisting of the following permanent members: the pastor, the lay leader, the youth ministries director, the children's ministries director, the director of any week day program involving children or youth; and a representative from the following administrative committees serving on a rotating basis: staff parish, trustees, children's ministries and youth ministries. The committee shall meet quarterly.

V. Activities Center Rules

OUUMC's Activities Center rules are:

1. Have fun and keep an attitude that reflects the Spirit of Jesus Christ.
2. Obey and respect all adults and supervisors at all times.
3. Respect and take care of all church property and equipment.
4. Stay in the designated and supervised areas at all times.
5. No child or youth is allowed upstairs, in the stairwells or in the elevator without adult supervision.
6. Upon arrival, everyone, regardless of age, must check-in and keep with them verification of check-in for as long as they are in the building.
7. When leaving, everyone must check-out.
8. Do not open any outside doors, except in the case of an emergency.
9. Do not allow anyone into the building without first checking-in.
10. Only equipment issued or approved by the Gym Steward is allowed in the gym.
11. No running outside the Activities Center.
12. No hanging on the rims.
13. During sporting activities or other games that involve running, only non-marking soles are allowed on the basketball court.
14. You must be appropriately dressed, including shirts and shoes at all times.
15. No alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, firearms, fighting, spitting, horseplay, or inappropriate language or music will be tolerated.
16. Please throw away all trash before leaving the Activities Center.
17. Please report any violations of these rules to a supervisor.
18. Failure to follow these rules will result in being asked to leave the church premises.

VI. Activities Center Gym Hours of Operation

Weekly Calendar	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8:00am	Journey	Walking Club	Walking Club	Walking Club	Walking Club	Walking Club	X
9:00	Journey	DDS, or Parent and Preschoolers	DDS, or Parent and Preschoolers	DDS, or Parent and Preschoolers	DDS, or Parent and Preschoolers	DDS, or Parent and Preschoolers	X
10:00	Sunday Program	DDS, or Parent and Preschoolers	DDS, or Parent and Preschoolers	DDS, or Parent and Preschoolers	DDS, or Parent and Preschoolers	DDS, or Parent and Preschoolers	X
11:00	Sunday Program	DDS, or Parent and Preschoolers	DDS, or Parent and Preschoolers	DDS, or Parent and Preschoolers	DDS, or Parent and Preschoolers	DDS, or Parent and Preschoolers	X
12:00pm	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
1:00	X	Community Open Gym	Scheduled Use	Community Open Gym	Scheduled Use	Community Open Gym	X
2:00	X	Community Open Gym	Scheduled Use	Community Open Gym	Scheduled Use	Community Open Gym	X
3:00	X	Youth Program (Leap Frog)*	Youth Program (Leap Frog)*	Wednesday Program (Leap Frog)*	Scheduled Use (Leap Frog)*	X	X
4:00	X	Youth Program (Leap Frog)*	Youth Program (Leap Frog)*	Wednesday Program (Leap Frog)*	Scheduled Use (Leap Frog)*	X	X
5:00	Youth Program	X	X	Wednesday Program	Family Night	X	X
6:00	Youth Program	Family Night Boy Scouts (First Mon)	X	Wednesday Program	Family Night	X	X
7:00	Youth Program	Family Night Boy Scouts (First Mon)	Men's Basketball	Wednesday Program	Family Night	X	X
8:00	Youth Program	Family Night Boy Scouts (First Mon)	Men's Basketball	Wednesday Program	Family Night	X	X

* Leap Frog uses half the gym during times of inclement weather.

Explanation of Weekly Calendar Terms

<i>DDS:</i>	Refers to ‘Discovery Day School.’
<i>Parents and Preschoolers:</i>	Refers to times open for parents to bring their preschool children and use the gym.
<i>Community Open Gym:</i>	Refers to times when the gym is open for community use by adult members or non-members.
<i>Scheduled Use:</i>	Refers to times when the gym is reserved for scheduled use by staff, members or non-members, including programming, recreation or other use.
<i>X:</i>	Refers to times when the gym is closed and/or is available for program scheduling.

Hours of Operation for Special Youth Programming:

- Activities Center:
 - Half-Day Youth Programming (Jr. High Only):
 - 12:00-4:00pm
 - No School Day Youth Programming:
 - 12:00-4:00pm
- Student Lounge (Room 201):
 - Regular Youth Programming:
 - Sunday 5:30-8:30pm
 - Wednesday 3:00-8:00pm
 - Friday 3:00-5:00pm
 - Half-Day Youth Programming:
 - Closed (except with Youth Director’s approval)
 - No School Day Youth Programming:
 - Closed (except with Youth Director’s approval)
- Youth Director’s Office:
 - During office hours or by appointment.

VII. Conclusion

After several productive meetings, conversations and revisions, our task group has approved and presents the preceding building and supervision policy proposal. It provides a basic structure within which to plan and carry out our church programming and addresses issues with access to our building and supervision of our children and youth, including adopting the suggestions and guidelines of Safe Sanctuaries.

As we worked through the various issues and concerns of our congregation regarding our building and facilities, we came to the conclusion that we have more hours available during the week than we do programs. This is certainly a good problem to have, as it means that we now have the opportunity to provide more activities and programs to both our congregation and the surrounding community. At the same time, however, we did not feel that it was the goal of our task group to put these programs in place. Rather, we leave this task to those who know better – the team leaders, program committees and ministry directors of our church.

With this structure and policy in place, we encourage our team leaders, program committees and church staff to promote, plan and program activities and events within our facilities that will minister to our congregation and community. We have the space and the time – all we need now is the will to make it happen.

Peace,

The Building and Supervision Task Group

Oxford-University UMC Access Point Map

