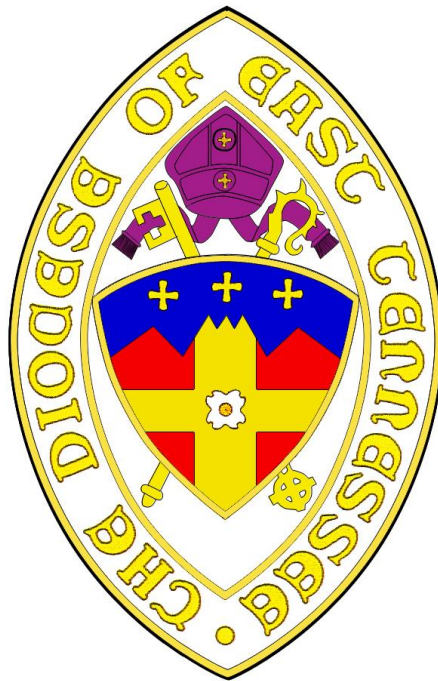


# **Policy on Parish Guidelines for Dealing with Registered Sex Offenders**



**The Right Reverend George D. Young, III  
Bishop of East Tennessee  
May 7, 2012**

## **PURPOSE**

These guidelines are intended to reasonably promote the safety of all persons in the parish while maintaining a welcoming place for registered sex offenders. It is applicable to all Congregations and Ministries in the Diocese of East Tennessee.

## **POLICY**

As the number of registered sex offenders living in the community increases, it is foreseeable that one or more such persons will seek to attend services at a parish, and may seek to be involved in other activities of the parish. These guidelines are intended to reasonably promote the safety of all persons in the parish while maintaining a welcoming place for registered sex offenders. It is acknowledged that some registered sex offenders may attend our churches without our knowledge of their status. Should any of those persons seek to participate in volunteer activities or certain leadership capacities covered by our Church Worker Conduct Policy requirements for background checks, their registry status will usually be determined. It is hoped that all such registered offenders will self-disclose their status to the clergy or lay leadership.

## **Definition**

**Registered Sex Offender:** Person convicted of a sexual offense such as rape (sexual assault), sexual contact, or lewdness.

## **Procedures**

The following procedures apply in each case when the parish clergy, staff or lay leadership learns of a registered offender seeking to worship in the parish or otherwise participate in the life of the parish.

1. Interview the offender. Obtain residence address and telephone contact information. Ask about the offender's desires regarding contact with the church. Review these guidelines with the person and seek their cooperation as a means of making church services available to him/her while keeping the people of the church and our guests safe. Talk about how information concerning their status will be shared with people needing to know and do not promise confidentiality. Obtain information described in these guidelines from the offender, and permission to talk to their parole or probation officer to verify terms and conditions of parole/probation and the offender's criminal record.
2. Call the parole/probation officer to verify the terms of parole/probation, and criminal history. Talk about whether attending church or participating in any church activities, with or without a monitor, would violate the terms of parole/probation.
3. Persons to be informed: In the parish, clergy, staff, wardens, vestry, ministry leaders (ECW, etc). At the Diocese, the Bishop, the Chancellor and the Executive Officer.

4. Consider talking to the offender's therapist, depending on other circumstances. This would be helpful if there are certain behavioral tools the therapist might want the monitors or others to know about that would protect the offender from becoming vulnerable.
5. Identify appropriate monitors and provide them with explicit training and instructions. This includes having the offender in line of sight at all times, deflecting contact with children and watching for any social invitations by unsuspecting parishioners.
6. Develop an agreement or covenant with the offender, affirming the mutual desire to make it possible for the offender to attend services within these guidelines and other reasonable efforts to make the church a safe place. The covenant should include a description of how the information will be handled by the parish, but not promise confidentiality beyond the sacrament of confession. It should state that any violations of the covenant will be grounds to deny the offender further access to the church or its activities. The offender should agree to notify the church office if s/he decides to attend a different church. It should also be reviewed periodically (every six months).

The parish needs to identify a means by which this information will be preserved and shared with all new clergy, staff and lay leaders as changes in personnel occur.