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### **VOLUNTEER SCREENING AT LAUMC: Background**

Dear LAUMC Children's Ministry Volunteer,

We are blessed at LAUMC with a Children's Ministry program that provides a loving and nurturing environment in which our children can grow and learn about their faith. We are blessed with a talented and dedicated Children's Ministry staff under Lisa Conway's inspired leadership, but the vitality of our program also depends heavily on caring volunteers like you. Thank you for giving your time to this important ministry of the church.

As the Managing Director of Operations at LAUMC, I am accountable for maintaining a safe and secure environment for everyone who visits our campus. I take no aspect of this responsibility more seriously than ensuring the security of the children who are entrusted to our care. For that reason, as part of my first year on the job, I reviewed the processes we have in place for screening volunteers who work with our children and youth. My findings led me to the conclusion that we can and should do more to rigorously and reliably screen volunteers who work directly with our young people. In the last few years, comprehensive internet-based background screening has made it financially and administratively feasible for non-profit organizations to carry out a conscientious screening program. After piloting such a program with Vacation Bible School this summer, LAUMC has adopted a new process for screening and training all adult volunteers working with children and youth.

We have partnered with a company called *Protect My Ministry.com* that offers us the following basic package of services:

- SSN Verification and Address History
- National Criminal Database Search
- National Sex Offender Search
- Re-verification of criminal records
- Alias Name Search
- DMV History Report (for volunteer drivers only)

The process is completely internet-based, so we will no longer maintain paper files with background information about our volunteers. This will make it easier for us to keep volunteer information secure and private, and to periodically update our records with new information.

*Protect My Ministry*, like all companies that provide this type of screening, is regulated and audited by the federal government to ensure that personal information is kept private and secure. They provide the highest level of online assurance for customers by using security and encryption processes that are standardized across all certification authorities.

In addition to background screening, LAUMC has adopted a computer-based child safety training program from *Protect My Ministry* that enables volunteers to take a 50-minute course online at their convenience rather than having to incorporate basic training information in teacher orientation meetings every fall.

Volunteers will be automatically re-screened and asked to repeat the child safety training every five years.

The subject of child safety is a troubling one for most adults. We all wish that special measures to screen out unsuitable volunteers were unnecessary but, unfortunately, the dangers to our children are real and we need to be alert to the risks and vigilant about our protections. Thank you for your understanding about these changes and for your cooperation in implementing them.

In order to establish a consistent set of records, we are asking all Children's Ministry volunteers to participate in both screening and training, even if you have been serving as a volunteer for a number of years. You will receive instructions from your ministry leaders on how to initiate the process. Again, thank you for sharing your gifts with our youth. Through your love, they come to know the love of God!

In faith,

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