



# Westminster Presbyterian Church

*Knowing Christ, Making Christ Known*

Pastors:

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Attention All Westminster Employees and Volunteers

On December 31, 2014, a new child protection law went into effect in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The new laws expand the categories of people considered "mandated reporters" of child abuse and provide for direct reporting to PA Childline. Other change requirements are for background checks for both paid employees and volunteers working with children. As of July 1, 2015, **all employees and volunteers (age 18 and over)** who deal with children and youth of Westminster are required to get three background clearances and complete the mandated reporter training course.

The clearances needed are:

1. Pennsylvania Criminal History report from the Pennsylvania State Police
2. Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance Certification from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services
3. Federal Criminal History report from the FBI, which includes submission of fingerprints to the Pennsylvania State Police. Volunteers do not need to submit fingerprints if they have lived in Pennsylvania for the last 10 years and sign the Residency Affidavit.

The clearances can be obtained on-line using the following links:

1. PA Criminal History Report: <https://epatch.state.pa.us/>
2. PA Child Abuse History Clearance Certification: <https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>
3. If you have not lived in the state of PA for the past 10 years, fingerprinting for the FBI Clearance: [https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index\\_dpw.htm](https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_dpw.htm)

If you prefer, Westminster will process all applications for clearances. Return the attached completed forms to Karen Randel for processing.

**The PA Criminal History Report and the PA Child Abuse History Clearance must be renewed every 60 months.**

## **Mandated Reporting**

The PA Department of Human Services' **Keep Kids Safe PA** website has complete details, including a Q&A about mandated reporting of suspected child abuse.

To help train mandatory reporters the link below is a FREE online three-hour course for mandatory reporters. Developed by University of Pittsburgh, the Department of Public Welfare, Office of Children, Youth and Families, the Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators, the course covers how to recognize and report suspected child abuse. Registration is required. **Participants can then print out a certificate signifying their completion of the course.**

[https://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu/webapps/portal/execute/tabs/tabAction?tab\\_group\\_id=21](https://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu/webapps/portal/execute/tabs/tabAction?tab_group_id=21)

Westminster must retain copies of the required clearances for every employee and volunteer. Please bring the original documents to your supervisor so a copy can be made for your personnel file.

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Randel at the church, 610-399-3377 ext. 111