

ST. MARK'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH POLICY FOR USE OF CHURCH BUS

1. **STATEMENT:** The purpose of this policy is to establish rules and procedures for the operation of the church bus(es) in connection with program ministry of St. Mark's UMC.
2. **USE OF THE CHURCH BUS:** Only groups that are part of the program ministry of St. Mark's are authorized to use the bus. This does not include groups sponsored by the church or individual members of the church. Exceptions to this policy must be referred to the pastor and/or Board of Trustees.
3. **DRIVER RESTRICTIONS:** To help provide safe transportation and to comply with church insurance requirements, the following restrictions apply:
 - a. Drivers must be between the ages of 21 and 70. (An exception to the age limit will be made for the Youth Minister, who must be at least 21.) Drivers must have a valid Virginia driver's license and may not have received any speeding tickets or had any accidents in which they were at fault during the previous three years. Any change in driving record must be reported to the church office.
 - b. Drivers must complete a 30 minute certification class before operating the bus.
 - c. Drivers will receive a copy of the Policy for Use of Church Bus and must sign an acknowledgement that they have received and read the policy. Copies of the acknowledgement forms will be kept in the church office and Property Managers office.
 - d. A list of approved and registered drivers and the signed acknowledgement will be kept in the church office and with the insurance company insuring the busses. This driver list will include name, driver's license number and date of birth. **Only the drivers listed may drive the busses. There will be no exceptions to this rule.**
 - e. Each church group wanting to use the bus, may want to identify at least one driver who would be registered with the church office. **Sufficient time must be allowed when registering a new driver, so insurance company can check DMV driver records.**
4. **RESERVATIONS OF THE BUSES:** Any group within the church is encouraged to make use of the busses. The Property Manager will keep a log of groups reserving the busses for specific dates. The general policy of reservations shall be one of first come, first served. Resolution of conflicts will be made by the Church Council. The busses may not be reserved more than three months in advance.
5. **OPERATION OF THE BUSES:**
 - a. The driver is expected to drive responsibly, following all traffic regulations and with regard to the weather and passengers. **The registered driver is responsible for the conduct and safety of the passengers.** No activity will be permitted within the busses that may distract the driver's attention away from the safe operation of the vehicle. Misbehavior by individual passengers is cause for removal and future passenger prohibition.

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- b. As a safety precaution, the busses are to be driven at a maximum safe speed of 65 mph.
 - c. A mileage log will be kept in each bus. Drivers are responsible for completing the log for each trip taken.
 - d. No smoking will be allowed on the busses. No alcohol will be permitted in the busses.
 - e. A maximum of 14 passengers plus the driver will be allowed in the bus. The driver and all Passengers must wear seat belts at all times when the bus is in use.
 - f. The busses must be locked when not in use.
 - g. The bus user or group must provide car seats for children as required by law.
 - h. The driver is responsible for paying all traffic tickets issued to him or her while driving the bus. Any driver issued such a ticket will be removed from the approved driver list.
 - i. No pets of any kind will be allowed in the busses.
 - j. Written information giving relevant phone numbers (church office, roadside service) and location of spare tire, type of gas and oil used, etc. will be left in the busses for the drivers use. Each bus will also have emergency equipment including flares and a first aid kit.
 - k. Before using the bus, a pre-trip inspection is required. Upon returning to the church, a post-trip inspection is required. Both check lists will be issued to drivers when the keys are released.
 - l. On trips out of the Richmond metropolitan area, the driver should ensure that another adult on the trip has the extra bus key.
 - m. Any and all accidents must be reported immediately to the Trustees. The church has a comprehensive and collision policy on each bus and will be responsible for deductibles as required.
 - n. Upon returning to the church after a trip, all trash will be removed from the busses. If the trip ends late at night or if major cleaning is necessary, such should be completed within 24 hours. If another trip is booked immediately following the just completed trip, the cleaning must occur immediately. Failure to do so by a group may result in prohibition of future use by the group.
- 6. MAINTENANCE OF THE BUSES:** The Property Manager will keep a log of bus mileage and have the oil changed as required. The Property Manager will also be responsible for periodically checking the busses for minor maintenance problems (low oil, low tire pressure, etc.) and for reporting any problems to the Trustees.
- 7. PURCHASE OF GAS:** Each group using the busses is responsible for the purchase of gas. The busses should be returned to the church with a **full** tank of gas.
- 8. MAINTENANCE OF THE BUS WHILE ON A TRIP:** Emergency maintenance of the busses while on the road should be referred to the roadside service.