

Aldersgate United Methodist Church Bus Policy



December 01, 2025

Aldersgate United Methodist Church

Bus Policy

The Bus Ministry of Aldersgate United Methodist Church (AUMC) shall be operated under the general supervision of the Trustees. The Administrator, appointed by the Trustees, is responsible to the Trustees for soliciting interest from bus manufacturers, for managing the selection and purchase process and developing a written policy that clearly establishes standards for all drivers and vehicles. This policy, approved by the Trustees, meets this requirement.

These standards are critically important because accidents are typically the result of basic driver safety violations, lack of safety precautions, and/or poor vehicle maintenance.

Purpose

The Bus Ministry will provide safe, dependable group transportation for the church family to enhance the programs and ministries of the church.

Operating Policy

A. USE OF THE BUS

1. **ELIGIBILITY:** Any AUMC group has approval and authority to use the bus. Groups sponsored by or connected to AUMC shall be allowed to use the bus upon request made to the Office Administrator and subject to approval of the Trustees. The bus will not be available to individuals or to outside groups or organizations. Trips out of state require special approval and must be cleared, in advance, through the Office Administrator, in consultation with the Trustees. Training and responsibilities for drivers are noted in attachments A, B and C.

2. **NUMBER OF PASSENGERS REQUIREMENT:** The maximum number of passengers MAY NOT exceed the capacity of the bus design, including the driver. No minimum number is required for pick-up for Church services. The bus shall not be used to transport three or fewer passengers for other activities, unless specifically approved by the Trustees.

3. **SCHEDULING PROCEDURE:** All proposed uses of the bus will be requested through the Office Administrator, who will coordinate with the Facility Manager. Availability is on a first come, first serve basis. Schedule requests may be made up to twelve (12) months in advance, but will be subject to review with other requests that may come in later. Priority will be determined by the Trustees. The organization or group using the bus is responsible for securing a driver from the approved list and completing the Reservation Form, Attachment D.

4. **POINT OF ORIGIN:** The bus will leave from and return to the church parking lot. The bus will be parked in the designated parking area. Keys, Bus Log, and Checklists will be obtained from the Office Administrator. Be sure to get these items by Thursday noon for weekend trips. Prior to departure, a listing of all passengers will be left with the Church office.

5. **TRIP SUPERVISION:** It is the responsibility of the group or trip sponsor using the bus to provide proper adult supervision. The driver may **NOT** be this supervisor. An adult as-

sistant will be provided on every trip so the driver has access to immediate help with any distraction or other adverse situation. Adult/child ratios will be kept according to the church's Safe Sanctuary Policy guidelines. The trip supervisor shall be solely responsible to maintain order at all times. **A passenger list, attachment E. will be left in the church office prior to departure.**

6. PASSENGER CONDUCT: All users of the church bus are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that exemplifies Christian principles. The Trustees reserve the right to deny use of the bus to passengers whose conduct becomes detrimental to the general safety of the group. Vandalism or property damage shall be paid for by the person/group responsible for the damage and constitutes due reason to deny use of the bus for future trips. Trip sponsors and adult supervisors shall have sole responsibility for passenger conduct.

- a. Illegal drugs, non-prescribed controlled substances, alcohol, firearms, or tobacco (including any smokeless kind) are **NOT** allowed on the bus by passengers or driver.
- b. All passengers are to remain seated with seat belts buckled while the bus is in motion.
- c. No drinking of any beverages other than water in a spill proof container shall be allowed on the bus.
- d. No offensive music or offensive language is allowed on the bus.
- e. No articles are to be thrown from the bus, nor shall arms or heads be outside of the vehicle when it is moving.

7. BUS CLEANLINESS: Each group is responsible for cleaning the bus, including picking up all refuse, cleaning spills, cleaning/sweeping/vacuuming all debris from the seats, floor, corners and ledges, seat backs and bottoms, and any dirty, sticky areas on floor and foot rests. Return seats (pushed together, arm rests up) and seat belts to stowage position (on top of seats). Clean and close all windows. A fee of \$100.00 (if more, the actual cost) will be assessed any group that does not adequately clean the bus per standards of the Administrator.

8. TRIP RECORDS: The driver is responsible for completing the Bus Log & Trip Report, attachment F, leaving a copy in the church office prior to departure, and returning the original with any comments to the church office following the trip. Forms will be filed in the Bus Book for at least one year. Maintenance needs will be specifically (orally) mentioned **and** recorded in writing.

9. LUGGAGE AND CARGO: Luggage must be safely and securely stowed so as not to impede visibility of the driver. Cargo may not be hauled at any time without the prior written approval of the Trustees.

10. TRAILERS: Trailers shall NOT be towed unless such use has been specifically approved by the Administrator before the trip. Special training will be required of any driver prior to approving trailer use.

11. SAFETY EQUIPMENT: The Facility Manager shall ensure that a first-aid kit, a fire extinguisher, and other necessary items are maintained in all vehicles. Each driver is responsible for equipment and supplies appropriate for the season and trip planned (e.g. warm blankets, emergency food, water, maps, jumper cables, etc.). Drivers will complete their own pre-trip inspection checklists to ensure that all items are present, in addition to those listed in attachment G.

Proper maintenance of the vehicles safety equipment is especially important for the life of the driver and passengers. For every trip, at least one functioning cell phone must be taken. Record the telephone number on the Bus Reservation Form, which stays in the Church office.

B. DRIVERS

1. **REQUIREMENTS:** Prospective drivers shall submit an application form, attachment H. The Office Administrator, in conjunction with the Facility Manager, shall maintain a list of approved drivers for the church bus, renewing it annually, with a copy to the church office and church insurance agency, and a copy on the bus in the Bus Folder. A driving background check will be conducted for each prospective driver before approval.

A. To be approved, a driver must be a member of AUMC, at least 25 years of age. Groups sponsored by or connected to AUMC may have a driver permitted if approved by the Trustees.

B. All drivers must provide a copy of their current North Carolina license, date of birth, and attest that they have had:

1. No DUI'S / DWI's within the past five years.
2. No reckless driving in the last five years.
3. No more than two moving violations in the previous two years.
4. No physical conditions that might affect drivers abilities or safety.

2. **AVAILABILITY:** It shall be the responsibility of the organization requesting use of the bus to secure its own driver from the approved list. Drivers may be added to the list by the Facility Manager as they meet the above requirements.

3. **TRIP RESPONSIBILITY:** The driver of the church bus will have sole responsibility and authority in matters pertaining to the bus operation, maintenance and safety. Attachment G is the pre-trip check list. The driver is responsible for complying with this policy, obeying all traffic laws, completing post-trip actions and returning the key, Log & Trip Report to the church office. **Prior to departure, a copy of the trip passenger roster, attachment E, shall be turned into the church office.**

4. **TRIP COMPLETION:** Driver will complete the Post-Trip check list, attachment G.

5. **CHURCH SPOKESPERSON:** In any accident or emergency situation involving the church bus, AUMC should be represented at the scene **by only one individual** in any ensuing discussion with authorities, insurance representatives, etc. **The driver will be the spokesperson on the scene for the church in any such situation.**

5. **BUS DRIVER CANNOT BE COUNTED AS AN ADULT SUPERVISOR.**

C. OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

1. **BUDGET:** An amount shall be allocated in the church budget to cover annual operating and maintenance expenses, and bus expenses for activities not reimbursed. All fees collected for mileage and other reasons shall be deposited in the church "bus fee account" and used to offset the cost of purchase, licensing, maintenance and repairs as directed by the Trustees.

2. **TRIP CHARGES:** Each group shall pay a mileage charge of \$0.25 per mile in addition to paying for fuel consumed during their trip. Groups shall return the bus with a full tank of

gas. If tank is not filled after trip, tank will be filled, cost charged to using group along with a \$50 fueling fee. No charge shall be made for the following groups:

- A. Riders transported to and from worship services or special services/events.
- B. Church groups attending District-wide or Conference-wide events (when the budget will allow and when specifically pre-approved by the Trustees).
- C. Other specific events approved by the Administrator and/or the Trustees.

3. **MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY:** The Trustees are responsible for major items of upkeep such as insurance coverage, tires and repairs. The Trustees, in consultation with the Facilities Manager, will provide for operational maintenance such as registration, fuel, oil and filter/lube, exterior wash, tune-ups, and preventative/routine maintenance, etc.

D. INSURANCE

The church shall insure the bus. Minimum coverage shall include bodily injury and property damage, liability, medical payments, uninsured motorist, fire, theft, comprehensive and collision. The cost of the insurance shall be provided for in the annual church budget.

E. SAFETY

At all times, the driver of the church bus shall have final responsibility and authority in matters relating to the safety of the bus and its passengers. In this regard, passenger discipline is related to safety. Keep the Church informed of any trip abnormalities 919-477-0509.

F. REVIEW OF POLICIES

The Trustees will review this policy from time to time, as deemed necessary, to incorporate changes or to update.

attachment A

DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY

The Trustees shall insure that all drivers are properly trained in the operation of the bus and that they are supplied with all pertinent information and instructions. Accordingly, prospective drivers will receive instruction on those areas listed on the Bus Driver Vehicle Orientation form, attachment B, contained in this policy, and he/she will drive the bus for a supervised familiarization road test. See detailed listing on the Training attachment.

A. Driving buses and towing trailers present significantly different driving challenges than normal passenger car operation. Also, adverse weather and road conditions, caravanning and transporting passengers all present hazards the untrained driver may not be prepared to handle.

B. When transporting passengers, extreme care must be taken during passenger loading and unloading. Pick up and drop off passengers on the same side of the street as their destination. If a child must cross the street, provide an adult escort. Plan transportation routes in advance to ensure that this is done.

C. In the event of a mechanical breakdown, make sure hazard lights are flashing and safety triangles are available. When using safety triangles, place them 100 to 200 feet to the rear of the vehicle. Keep passengers in the vehicle at all times unless fire or other dangers pose problems. Call for help (may call 911 in addition to Ford Motor Company Roadside Assistance 800.241.3673) as soon as possible and be prepared to make alternative transportation available to passengers.

D. Written accident instructions from the Church's insurance agent are available in a convenient package and will be carried on the bus at all times. Information includes when to call police; how to report accidents; obtaining witness information; notification of AUMC; and notification of our insurance company. **Only the Church Spokesperson (driver) shall talk with police or other drivers.**

E. Since driver error is the major factor in motor vehicle accidents, the driver becomes the greatest area of influence in a safe motoring experience. Consequently, there are some important, defensive driver skills to use in avoiding the terrible results of a highway accident. The following defensive techniques are important for a driver to follow:

- Expect the unexpected, and always have a way out.
- Never tailgate. Stay two seconds behind the driver in front.
- Look out ahead. Be aware of what's happening several vehicles in front of you.
- Keep your eyes moving to the front, sides and rear.
- Anticipate potential accidents and situations, and prepare for a way out.
- Before entering an open intersection, look left, right and left.
- Don't insist on the right-of-way. Be willing to yield.
- Do not use cell phone while driving or headphones or earbuds.
- Never drive under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

attachment B

DRIVER TRAINING

REQUIREMENTS: All drivers will complete the Bus Driver Application, attachment H, and must complete driver training. this training will include familiarity with bus systems, controls and equipment. Prospective drivers will also be required to have the ability to operate the bus safely as demonstrated by a road test.

RESPONSIBILITY: The driver of the church bus will have sole responsibility and authority in matters pertaining to the bus operation, maintenance and safety (see pre-trip check list). The driver is responsible for:

Keeping all personal licensing requirements up to date.

Drivers shall be responsible for traffic violations incurred. Complying with this policy.
Obeying all traffic laws.
Comply with this this policy.
Closing all windows and locking the bus when passengers depart.
Returning the key, along with the Bus Checklist and Log, to the church office.
Completing post-trip actions and checklist.
Advising the Administrator of bus maintenance needed.
To perform pre- and post-trip inspections.
Pre-trip inspections should be completed with adequate time to correct problems found.
Confirm safety equipment is stored at all times in its prescribed location.
 Fire Extinguisher
 Safety Triangles
 Shovel
 First Aid Kit
 Flashlight

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS:

Never leave the bus with engine running when it is loaded with passengers.
Never fuel the bus while the engine is running.
Allow passengers to only cross in front of the bus, never behind the vehicle.
Posted speed limits are to be rigidly obeyed.
Keep order in the bus at all times.

attachment C

Bus Driver Vehicle Orientation

Cab/Driver Controls

Windows / Door locks
Hood release
Parking brake & release
Dashboard: lights, wipers, cruise, gauges
Signals
Mirrors – rear views and side mirrors
Heat / AC – front / back
Side passenger doors
Audio Entertainment System (see Owner's Guide)
PA System

Ford Motor Co. Roadside Assistance 24/7, call: 1-800-241-3673

Warranty and non-warranty towing Winch out service

Battery jump-start

Flat tire change

Fuel Delivery Lock-out assistance

Passenger Compartment

Wheelchair station & lock down straps

Windows

Courtesy lights

Individual Reading lights

Outside the Bus

Gas tank

Oil dip stick

Tires – ensure tires are at 80#pressure

Lights

Safety equipment

Seats, belts, sliders & recliners

Emergency exits – 3 (2 side, 1 rear, roof portal)

Height clearance 10' 4" – **plan for 11 feet**

attachment D

Aldersgate United Methodist Church Bus Reservation Form

Sponsoring Group _____ Today's Date _____

Dates & Times desired _____ Destination(s) _____

Group Contact & Phone# _____ Purpose of trip _____

Driver's name* _____ Alternate Driver/Supervisor* _____

Driver / Alternate Driver License # _____ / _____

Driver / Alternate Driver Cell Phone # _____ / _____

cleared on reservation calendar: _____

AUMC Communication Director

Approved by _____ Date _____
(administrator)

* Drivers from approved list

attachment E

Aldersgate United Methodist Church TRIP ROSTER

1. passenger name _____

2. passenger name _____

3. passenger name _____

4. passenger name _____

5. passenger name _____

6. passenger name _____

7. passenger name _____

8. passenger name _____

9. passenger name _____

10. passenger name _____

11. passenger name _____

12. passenger name _____

13. passenger name _____

14. passenger name _____

Driver: _____ Trip date: _____ Trip / Event : _____

attachment F

Aldersgate United Methodist Church BUS LOG & TRIP REPORT

Today's Date: _____

CHECKLIST, KEYS, BUS LOG & TRIP REPORT delivered to Church Office
INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR CLEAN; and POST-TRIP INSPECTION COMPLETED
GAS TANK FULL

Trip Start Date: _____ Trip End Date: _____

Mileage at Start: _____ Mileage upon Return: _____

Trip Destination: _____

Group sponsoring / traveling on trip: _____

Purpose of Trip: _____

SERVICE OR REPAIR DONE OR NEEDED AS NOTED HERE: _____

Signed _____ Signed _____
Primary driver office administrator

TRIP RATE: Each group shall pay a mileage charge of \$0.25 per mile in addition to paying for fuel consumed during their trip. Groups shall return the bus with a full tank of gas. If tank is not filled after trip, tank will be filled, charged to using group along with a \$50 fueling fee, plus cost of fuel.

attachment G

Aldersgate United Methodist Church PRE AND POST TRIP CHECKLIST

The driver of the church bus will have sole responsibility and authority in matters pertaining to the bus operation, maintenance and safety. Proper maintenance of the vehicle's safety equipment is especially important for the life of the driver and passengers. Prior to and upon return from every trip, check:

A. Brakes: Check brakes regularly. Be sure fluid levels are correct. Have the mechanic check for wear at each tire rotation.

B. Tires: Check wear regularly. All tires should have at least 1/8-inch tread remaining. Rotate tires with every other oil change. Maintain tire pressure at the recommended 80 psi. Look for trouble if tires wear unevenly.

C. Lights: Review all safety lights prior to making each trip. Headlights, taillights, break lights and back up lights are very important. Turn signals and emergency flashers should also function properly.

D. Windshield and Wipers: Be sure the front windshield is unobstructed and no cracks exist in the driver's vision area. Wipers and washers must be operating correctly at all times. Side window vision should not be obstructed.

E. Horn: Test horn before departing.

F. Mirrors: Make sure the side and rear view mirrors function. The driver should adjust the mirrors prior to starting the trip.

G. Seats: Drivers should adjust their seat prior to starting out. All passengers should have and use seat belts.

H. Fluid Levels: Check all fluid levels regularly perhaps prior to each trip or at least with every oil/filter change.

attachment H

Aldersgate United Methodist Church Bus Driver Application Form

Driver Applicant Name _____

DOB _____ NC Driver Lic # _____ Exp.Date _____

During the past 2 years, have you:

1. Been involved in a motor vehicle accident YES NO

If yes, were you at fault? Issued a ticket? YES NO

2. Had any moving traffic violations? YES NO

3. Been cancelled or refused vehicle insurance? YES NO

4. Had a license revoked, suspended, or restricted? YES NO

(Other than corrective eye glasses)

5. Had any physical impairments that might impair driving? YES / NO

(not including corrective glasses or lenses)

6. Undergoing physicians care that restricts driving in any way? YES / NO

6. In the past 5 years, have you been ticketed for DUI YES NO
for reckless driving? YES NO

If "yes" to any of the above, please provide full details.

Applicants acknowledge that Aldersgate United Methodist Church will conduct a background check on each applicant.

Applicants will provide a copy of their North Carolina drivers license.

Applicant Signature _____	_____
	Date
background check completed _____	_____
Office Administrator	Date
Approved by _____	Date _____
initial Facility Manager / Trustees	