



### Agenda

- What are Safe Sanctuaries?
- Safe Sanctuaries Policy
- Definitions
- Reporting
  - Break
- Screening
- Supervision
  - Break
- Cyber Safety
- Questions/Answers

*Ask questions as needed.*




### What are Safe Sanctuaries?

Churches are meant to be sanctuaries – A safe harbor where all people can feel safe.

### Churches express the presence of Christ

- A Sanctuary is a safe place for all – especially for children, youth and vulnerable adults.
- It provides for the protection of the whole person – which includes the physical, emotional, spiritual, mental and relational health and wellbeing of each person.
- It is free from intimidation, exploitation, abuse and harassment.
- In a safe Sanctuary we find security, compassion, support, guidance and the presence of God.



### Theology

- The church is the body of Christ and so represents His presence in our communities (1 Corinthians 12:27 "Now you are the Body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it" NIV).



### Theology (continued)

- Christ's loving, nurturing, healing, affirming, merciful and just nature needs to be experienced by all – especially children, youth and the vulnerable.  
(Mark 9:36,37 "Jesus took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms He said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one of these little children in My name welcomes Me.'")



### Theology (continued)



- Our Social Principles in the Book of Discipline are explicit about protecting our children: "In particular, children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional and sexual exploitation and abuse."  
- BOD 2012 ¶162.C p117,118

### Theology (continued)



- At Baptism we affirm our responsibility as a congregation to the nurture and safety of our children as they grow into adult members. "With God's help we will so order our lives after the example of Christ, that these children, surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal."  
- From Baptismal Covenant II - B

### Safe Sanctuaries Policy



Building on these theological foundations we have developed a policy that enables us as a church to offer hospitality to all while working to protect everyone - especially children, youth and vulnerable adults and those who work with them – from harm or abuse.

### Safe Sanctuaries Policy (continued)

It seeks to provide a safe environment for all.



It makes our churches places where people feel safe to report abuse.

### Safe Sanctuaries Policy (continued)

It helps to protect, staff and volunteers from false accusations.



### Safe Sanctuaries Policy (continued)

It lowers our church's legal risk.



### Safe Sanctuaries Policy (continued)

It guards the reputation of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church.

It raises awareness and provides accountability.



### Definitions



- Child: An individual under 18 years of age.
- Vulnerable Adult: Any person 18 yrs and older who because of mental or physical dysfunction is unable to manage his/her own resources, carry out the activity of daily living, or protect himself/herself from abuse or neglect without assistance from others.

### Child Abuse – New Pennsylvania Laws

- Intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly doing any of the following:
  - Causing bodily injury.
  - Causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury.
  - Causing sexual abuse or exploitation.
  - Causing serious physical neglect.
  - Creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury or sexual abuse or exploitation.

### Child Abuse (continued)

- Engaging in any of the following acts:
  - Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing, or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child.
  - Unreasonably restraining or confining a child.
  - Forcefully shaking, slapping or otherwise striking a child under one year of age.
  - Interfering with the breathing of a child.
  - Causing a child to be present at a meth lab.
  - Knowingly leaving a child with a known sexual predator.
  - Causing the death of a child through any act or failure to act.

### Bodily Injury

- Recent act or failure to act (within 2 years of the date of report) that causes **impairment** of physical condition or **substantial** pain:
  - Old law said “significantly impairs”
  - Old law said “severe” pain



### Mental Injury

Definition has not changed.

- act that results in a psychological condition
- diagnosed by a physician or licensed psychologist
- renders a child chronically and severely anxious, agitated, depressed, socially withdrawn, psychotic, or in reasonable fear that life or safety is threatened
- seriously interferes with the child’s ability to accomplish age-appropriate developmental and social tasks



### Sexual Abuse or Exploitation

- Having a child engage in or assist someone to engage in sexually explicit conduct, including, but is not limited to:
  - Looking at the sexual or other intimate parts of a child or another individual *for the purpose of arousing or gratifying sexual desire in an individual.*
  - Participating in sexually explicit conversations either in person, by telephone, by computer or by a computer-aided device *for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratifying of an individual.*



### Sexual Abuse or Exploitation (continued)

- Actual or simulated sexual activity or nudity *for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification of an individual.*
- Actual or simulated sexual activity for the purpose of producing visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depiction or filming.
- Any of the following offenses committed against a child: rape, statutory rape, involuntary deviant sexual intercourse, sexual assault, aggravated indecent assault, indecent exposure, incest, prostitution.

### Serious Physical Neglect

- Repeated, prolonged or unconscionable egregious failure to supervise appropriately.
- Failure to provide adequate essentials of life.
- Any of which endangers life or health, threatens well-being, causes bodily injury, or impairs health, development or functioning.



### Creating A Reasonable Likelihood of Bodily Injury or Sexual Abuse or Exploitation

Putting a child in a situation where the child could easily suffer a bodily injury or sexual abuse, but by good fortune, luck, "the grace of God," or by chance, injury or abuse was averted.



### Who Must Report Suspected Abuse?

#### Mandated Reports

- A clergyman, priest, rabbi, minister, Christian Science practitioner, religious healer or spiritual leader of any regularly established church or religious organization.
- An adult **paid or unpaid**, who, on the basis of the individual's role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accepts responsibility for a child.

**• UNDER THE NEW LAW, EVERY VOLUNTEER IS NOW A MANDATED REPORTER. THIS IS A MAJOR CHANGE!!**



### Reporting

Reporting of an allegation of child abuse is required whenever there is "reasonable cause to suspect" that abuse has occurred, according to PA Child Protective Services Law, Title 23 Pa. C.S.S. Chapter 63.



Reasonable cause to suspect abuse can occur:

- 1) when any staff or volunteer personally witnesses an incident of abuse,
- 2) when an allegation of an event of abuse is made to a staff or volunteer by a third party, and/or
- 3) when a child, youth, or vulnerable adult discloses abuse to staff or a volunteer which meets the criteria of the above PA Law.

### Reporting (continued)

The mandated reporter observing the behavior or receiving the allegation or disclosure must **immediately** file the report to the Pennsylvania Child Abuse Hotline.

A mandated reporter who fails or delays reporting may be charged with a misdemeanor or a felony, depending on whether the non-reporting is willful and how serious the abuse is.



Reports of suspected child or youth abuse are made to: Pennsylvania Child Abuse Hotline (24/7 service) at **800-932-0313**.

### Reporting (continued)

- Immediately after filing the report, the person filing the report must inform the pastor or a designated church leader.
- Within 48 hours, the person filing the report must also make a written report on the appropriate form (CY-47). [See sample on the conference website or can be emailed if requested.]
- Persons making reports have immunity from civil and criminal liability. It is presumed that reports are made in good faith.
- Releasing the identity of the person making the report is prohibited. This applies to law enforcement, the child welfare workers, and the church.

### Reporting (continued)

#### Conference Policy

- a requirement that a written statement be submitted by the person who made the report.
- a requirement that the District Superintendent be notified if the alleged perpetrator is a clergy, staff person, or volunteer of the church.



### Reporting (continued)

In the event that a member of the clergy becomes aware of suspected child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse as a result of *confidential communication* which is protected under [Title] 42 PA C.S. 5943 (relating to confidential communications to clergymen), the Conference legal counsel should be consulted.

### Response

Any allegation of abuse requires a process to address responding to legal authorities, the alleged victim, the alleged perpetrator, and the press. The response must be quick, appropriate, compassionate, and unified.

# Response Ability

### Response (continued)

#### Response to alleged victims of abuse:

- Reach out to the alleged victim and the victim's family.
- Pastoral resources shall be extended, and the Conference ICARE Team can be contacted to assist in providing this service to victim, family, and congregation as needed and desired.
- The care and safety of the alleged victim shall be considered the first priority. Response to the alleged victim and family shall be done in a positive and supportive manner.



The parents of a child or youth alleged victim shall be notified promptly and steps shall be taken to address the safety and well being of the child or youth until parent(s) arrive.

**NOTE:** If one or both of the parents is the alleged abuser, the direction of child welfare authorities shall be followed concerning notification of others. For vulnerable adults, a person legally authorized for care shall be notified.

### Response (continued)

**Response to all alleged perpetrators of abuse:**

- The alleged perpetrator of abuse shall *immediately, yet with dignity* and respect for their sacred worth, *be removed from further involvement* with children, youth, or vulnerable adults, *and advised* that there has been an allegation of abuse.
- Details of the allegation of the abuse shall not be discussed with the alleged perpetrator at the time of removal.
- In any removal of clergy, staff member or volunteer from any activity/ministry, care shall be taken to handle the removal in a discreet manner, *to avoid contamination of investigation* by either state or church authorities, or both. Pastoral resources shall be extended, and the Conference ICARE Team can be contacted to assist in providing this service.

### Response (continued)

**Response to all alleged perpetrators of abuse (continued):**

- Should the alleged perpetrator of abuse be a child or youth themselves, their parents shall be informed of the allegation promptly and given responsibility to remove the child/youth from contact with other children or youth while the investigation proceeds.
- When it has been alleged that a member of the clergy or lay church staff or a volunteer has committed an act of abuse, the staff member or volunteer shall be required to refrain from all ministry activities/events with children, youth and vulnerable adults until the incident has been thoroughly investigated and the outcome determined by the appropriate state authorities and/or in accordance with the Book of Discipline.
- Questions of later resumption of ministry activities/events with children, youth or vulnerable adults by the alleged perpetrator shall be guided by church and Conference policy, and the recommendations of legal and social service authorities, where appropriate.

### Response (continued)

**Response to the Media:**

- The District Superintendent, the Conference Director of Communications, and Pastor, in consultation with appropriate congregational leadership, shall decide on *a single spokesperson* for contact with the public/media.
- All media requests for statements shall be directed to that person.



### Response (continued)

**Compliance**

Compliance with this policy shall be a matter of record at each annual Charge Conference.



### Reducing Risk

**Steps We Take to Minimize Risk of Abuse**

- Screening and Selection of Staff and Volunteers
- Training of Staff and Volunteers
- Supervision of Children and Youth



### Screening and Selecting of Staff and Volunteers

**Screening Standards**

- Programs and ministries which are licensed or accredited by another body, or that have formally adopted screening, training and supervision processes, and are preapproved by the Conference Board of Trustees, shall follow their established requirements for screening and selection.
- For all other programs and ministries: all new applicants for employment or volunteer serving with children shall complete the following prior to service.
  - Written application
  - Background checks (renewed every 3 years)
  - References (non-related personal references)
  - Relationship with the church



**Screening and Selecting of Staff and Volunteers (continued)**

Written Application

- The basic information required by conference policy:
  - Name, Address, Phone Number
  - Work/volunteer history/Experience/skills related to position
  - Names of 2 non-related personal references
- Additional information that could be requested:
  - Driver's License information
  - If married, spouse's full name; If children, names and ages
  - Current member of church? How long? Other churches attend in past 5 years
  - Brief statement of Christian faith
  - Activities/ministries involved with
- Applicant's signature
- See sample application on the conference website or can be will be emailed if requested.



**Screening and Selecting of Staff and Volunteers (continued)**

Current Required Background Checks

- PA State Police Criminal Record Check (Form SP 4-164 \$10)
- PA Child Abuse Clearance (DPW) (Form CY-113 \$10)
- FBI Clearance (fingerprinting) if lived out of the state for 5 years (\$27.50)
- See list of offenses that rule out person from working with children.
- Copies of the State and FBI clearance (when required) and the PA Child Abuse History Clearance must be kept in a secure/locked file box or cabinet.
- Access to documents must be restricted. Local Church policy will designate who has access, often the Pastor, Christian Education Director, or Church Office Administrator, as appropriate.

**Screening and Selecting of Staff and Volunteers (continued)**

**Background Checks – New Law Awaiting Governor's Signature**

For all **EMPLOYEES** age 14 and older responsible for the welfare of a child or having direct contact with children:

- PA State Police Criminal Record Check (Form SP 4-164 \$10)
- PA Child Abuse Clearance (DPW) (Form CY-113 \$10)
- FBI Clearance (fingerprinting) (\$27.50)
- All the above repeated every 3 years

**Screening and Selecting of Staff and Volunteers (continued)**

**Background Checks – New Law Awaiting Governor's Signature**

For all **ADULT VOLUNTEERS** responsible for the welfare of a child or having direct contact with children:

- PA State Police Criminal Record Check (Form SP 4-164 \$10)
- PA Child Abuse Clearance (DPW) (Form CY-113 \$10)
- FBI Clearance (fingerprinting) (\$27.50) – UNLESS:
  - Has been a resident of Pennsylvania for all of the past 10 years
  - Affirms in writing they have not been convicted in any other state of any of the Pennsylvania offenses that prohibit service.
- All the above repeated every 3 years

**Screening and Selecting of Staff and Volunteers (continued)**

Suggested Good Practice for Record Keeping

- Retain a list of volunteers that includes:
  - Name
  - Date clearance documents were obtained
  - Date forms expire
  - Date approved for ministry
  - Date for renewal of clearances
  - New Forms sent
  - New Forms Returned
  - Approved by



**Screening and Selecting of Staff and Volunteers (continued)**

Training

- Initial Orientation
  - Everyone who works with children and youth must receive an initial orientation when they first assume their responsibilities, **including training on Mandatory Reporting.**
- Annual review and training of **current** policy and requirements for working with children, youth and vulnerable adults.
- **Train staff and volunteers in appropriate** physical contact with children.
- Create accessibility plans for accessing the information in a timely manner

### Supervision Requirements

- Two-adult rule
- No child left unsupervised
- Ministries & activities conducted in open view
- No supervision by persons under age 18
- Five-years-older rule
- Written consent forms for activities that include transportation



### Supervision Requirements (continued)

#### Two-Adult Rule

- Two adults present at all times during any church sponsored program, event, or ministry.
- A roamer can be the second adult, if necessary.
- Protects children from potential abusers.
- Protects adults from false allegations.



### Supervision Requirements (continued)

#### No Child Left Unsupervised

- Once parents turn over responsibility for their child to the church, the child must remain supervised by screened and trained adult staff and/or volunteers at all times until the parent assumes responsibility again.



### Supervision Requirements (continued)

#### Activities Conducted in Open View

- Windows in doors.
- Half doors.
- Doors left open.
- Avoid opportunity for secrecy.
- Creative ways to ensure confidentiality for counseling meetings.



### Supervision Requirements (continued)

#### No Supervision by Persons Under Age 18

- Children should not be supervising children.
- Teens can be great helpers for adults supervising younger children.
- An adult must always be in the role of supervisor.



### Supervision Requirements (continued)

#### Five-Years-Older Rule

- The supervising adult must be at least five years older than the youth whom they are supervising.
- College-aged young adults can work with high school youth, but can't be the supervising adults unless they are five years older than all the youth in the group.



### Supervision Requirements (continued)

#### Written Consent Forms for Activities that Include Transportation

- Destination and planned activities
- Time of Departure
- Time of Arrival

### Supervision (continued)

#### Additional Steps You Can Take

- When activities with children or youth are being held there will be periodic inspections of classrooms, offices, work areas and other areas where children and adults are together. Also, check bathrooms, closets and other areas where sexual abuse might occur. Use "Roamers".
- Pay close attention to adults who spend considerable "off duty" time with the same child or children. Discuss the matter with the adult and, if necessary, with the child.
- Consider developing a written standard of conduct for adult/children relationships. Establish parameters of conduct and contact during and after working hours.

### Supervision (continued)

#### Guidelines applicable to all Local Church Safe Sanctuaries Policies regarding staff and volunteers who work with children in our churches.

- Designate a "confidential counselor" to whom any child can go at any time, without special permission, to discuss any problems he or she is having.
- Make sexual abuse awareness part of an annual safe sanctuaries program, or include it in your curriculum.
- Include rules for electronic communication with children, including email, text messages and social media websites such as Facebook. Staff and volunteers should not have any one-on-one, private contact with children through these means.

### Cyber Safety In Your Church



### Cyber Safety In Your Church (continued)

Keeping our children safe with technology and keeping our volunteers safe and on the *Look Out*.



### Cyber Safety In Your Church (continued)

#### Today's Teenagers:

- 78 % have a cellphone
- 37 % have a Smartphone
- 93 % have Computer Access at home
- 74 % can access the internet thru cellphone
- 23 % have access to tablets



### Cyber Safety In Your Church (continued)

Pornography Industry Statistics:

- 12 % of all internet sites are pornographic
- 93 % of Boys and 62 % of Girls are exposed to internet porn before the age of 18 years of age
- 3% of boys and 17% of girls have never seen internet pornography



### Cyber Safety In Your Church (continued)

#### What can we do as the church?

- Limit and monitor access to the internet
- No identifiable information on church electronic media such as the church's Website-Facebook-Twitter -OR- hard copy forms like church bulletins, bulletin board postings, etc.
- If you communicate by e-mail, do not use "broadcast" e-mails. Use the "Bcc" (blind carbon copy)
- Be cautious when transmitting easily identifiable information like event dates, times, locations, or participants for church events.

### Cyber Safety In Your Church (continued)

#### What can we do as the church?

- Church should obtain a media release form from parents or legal guardians for all children under the age of 18 to use pictures.
  - Save all communications you have with children, youth, and vulnerable adults (i.e. instant messages (IMs), chat room conversations, e-mails, etcetera.).
- An electronic "paper trail" can be important.



### Cyber Safety In Your Church (continued)

#### What can we do as the church?

- Get permission from Parents and/or Guardians of both Children and Teenagers to apprehend their Cellphones, if necessary.
- Always be on the look out for any type of activity that looks suspicious - such as a boy or girl taking various phone photos of themselves (This is where Sexting can start).
- If abuse is divulged electronically, follow standard Abuse reporting procedures. If you are the witness of this electronic abuse, you are considered a Mandated Reporter by law and must report this DIRECTLY to the Abuse Hotline.

### Cyber Safety In Your Church (continued)

Church Computer Use

- Have ALL church staff and volunteers who have access to church computers sign an agreement to follow a Technology Use Policy. (See sample on the conference website.)



### Review

We have discussed:

- What are Safe Sanctuaries?
- Safe Sanctuaries Policy
- Definitions
- Reporting
- Screening
- Supervision
- Cyber Safety

What questions do you have?

