



Introduction to Safe Sanctuary

Friendship UMC



Conference Policy:

- Requires everyone who works with children or youth to file a Sexual Misconduct Questionnaire annually;
- Requires that the pastor and SPRC certify at charge conference that all volunteers and paid staff (including the pastors) have complied with the requirement;
- Requires that youth working with adult supervision complete a covenant and that the local church provide training for them in the church's procedures for keeping children safe.



Mandate from BW Annual Conf.

- **The NEW recommendation requires that every local church use the book *Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church* by Joy Thornburg Melton as a guide to develop their own SS policy and implement SS procedures.** This book is a guide through the process. Each local church needs to do this so that they can agree on exactly what they will do and everyone will understand and abide by the decisions. **The annual conference will not dictate what the policy should be nor what the procedures will be for the local church.**



- **Will this apply to everyone at church who works with children and youth?**
- Yes. All volunteer and paid staff of the church, including Sunday School, youth groups, nursery care or any other program are included.



- **Will this new requirement replace the Sexual Misconduct Questionnaire (SMQ)? (aka. Michael Jackson form)**
- No. The SMQ is still a requirement and reporting in that manner will not change.

What is the timeline for development and implementation?




- Every local church should report the following to their 2007 Charge Conference:
 - 1) who will serve on the task force that will develop the policy and procedures
 - 2) provide a preliminary timeline and plan for completion.
 - 3) At their 2008 Charge Conference, every local church will be required to submit their safe sanctuaries plan.



Incidence and Prevalence

- 1997 over 3 million children were reported to child protective services because of abuse.
- **1 out of 3 girls and 1 out of 7 boys were reported to be abused by 18 years of age.**
- 2000 deaths from child abuse/neglect occur per year.



Circumstances in a church that could make it easier for an abuser to hurt a child.

- Pedophiles can be opportunistic or seek out to be in specific situations to be alone with a child.
- Because we trust the adults working with kids, it is easier for an abuser to hurt a child.
- We are welcoming to visitors.
- Class room doors don't all have windows.



Range of consequences of abuse in the church:

- negative consequences for the victim and their family,
- distress in the congregation,
- potential legal and financial negative consequences for the church and the conference



Implementation Plan

- We will all be working towards being compliant with the FUMC SS Policy in the Spring and Summer of 2008.
- GOAL: By Sept 2008 FUMC will be compliant with the new FUMC Safe Sanctuary Policy.



Education & Training

- Website
- New Members
- Training Sessions after church and between services



What will it cost?

- Background checks – range from \$9.00 to \$23.00 depending on the type of screening
- Our total cost will depend on the number of screens we conduct.
- We also need a locking filing cabinet for confidential info.
- If we did 75 checks at \$23.00, plus the cabinet = approximately \$2000.00.
- Safety in our church = PRICELESS!



Introduction

- Following the words of Jesus who said, "*Whoever welcomes a child welcomes me*" (Matthew 18:5), we are intent upon creating an atmosphere at Friendship that is both safe and loving. Remembering the words of Jesus who said, "*If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea*" (Matthew 18:6), we are serious about preventing abuse.



Introduction continued...

- Friendship is a welcoming congregation! As our name indicates, we have a long history of strong, trusting relationships. We also have a long history of creating a safe haven for persons needing refuge. Protecting children and youth is a top priority at our church. The purpose of this Safe Sanctuary Policy is to address the safety of our children and youth, and those responsible for their care.



3 Sections of Policy

- Screening
- Supervision
- Reporting, Investigation, Response



Screening

- Screening form required for those working with children and youth
- Confidentiality is key
- Safe Sanctuary Team role
- Review forms for screening and background check



Supervision

- Avoid 1:1 situations is the key premise to protect children/youth and adults working with them
- Review Supervision Guidelines section of policy
- Review forms (driving, permission, medical, etc)



Reporting, Investigation, Response

- Review responsibilities of Safe Sanctuary Team
- Confidentiality is key
- Review forms for reporting/response