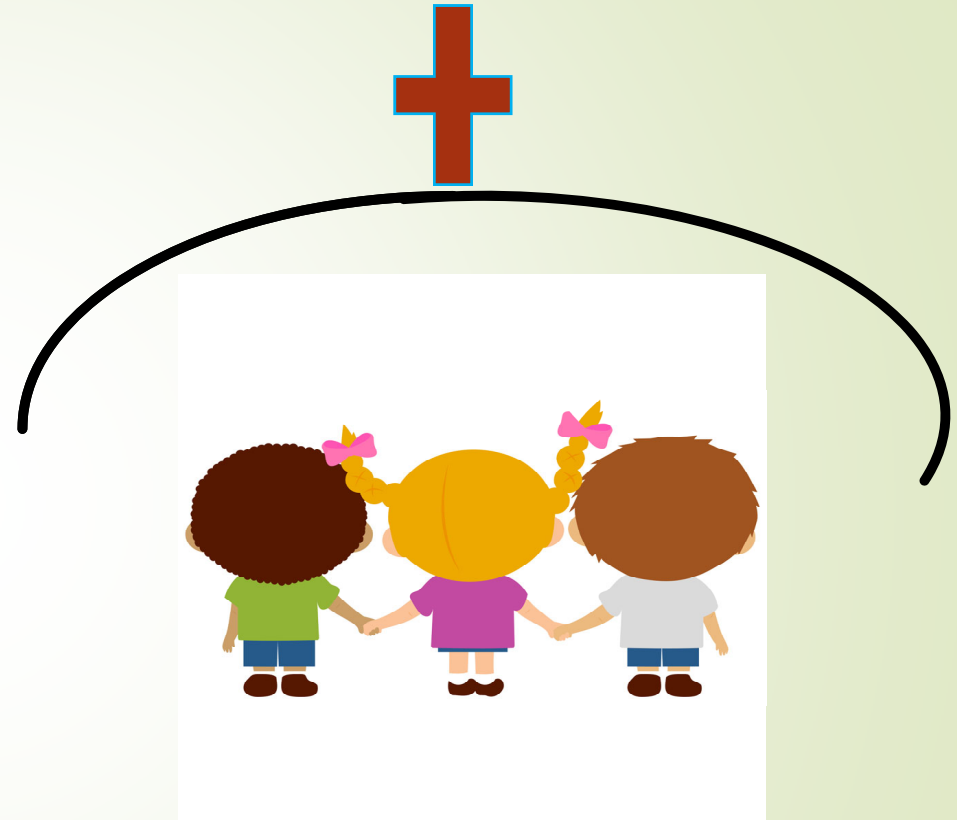


SAFE SANCTUARIES

Child Protection Policy Training

Rev. Judy Hall

(adapted from Rev. Jason Stanley)





OPENING PRAYER

- ▶ **Gracious and most merciful God, you have brought us together in witness to your love of all children. Open our hearts and minds in this moment and prepare us to receive your message. Show us your will and fill us to overflowing with courage to face the reality of child abuse. Give us energy and dedication enough to make this, your church, a holy and hallowed place where all children may be safe and secure as they grow in faith and in their knowledge of your presence in their lives.**



WHY A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY?



EXODUS 22:21-23

MATTHEW 19:14

LUKE 9:46-48

MATTHEW 18:6-7





BAPTISMAL COVENANT

- **Clergy**: Members of the household of God, I commend this child to your *love and care*. Do all in your power to *increase their faith, confirm their hopes and perfect them in love*.
- **Congregation**: We give thanks for all that God has already given you and we welcome you in Christian love. As Members together with you in the body of Christ...

BY THE NATIONAL NUMBERS:

3.6 million cases reported; **6.6 million** children-an increase of **1.1 million** since 2011 (**3.2 million** of those reports are investigated).

- **1 of every 3 girls is sexually abused before age 18**
- **1 of every 7 boys has been sexually abused before age 18**
- **1,580 deaths** attributable to child abuse and/or neglect per year (National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse)-likely undercounted by **50%**. **70%** of those children are under **2 years** of age.
- **Of abuse reported to Health and Human Services, 60% is neglect, 20% physical abuse, 10% sexual abuse, 5% emotional abuse.**



BY THE NATIONAL NUMBERS:

- Sexual predators can have up to 500 victims. One study showed an average number of victims per incarcerated predators at 226, another found an average of 110
- 4 % of teens say the have sexted.(sexually explicit text messages or photos.)
- 15% of teens say they have received sexts.
- 33% of youth are victims of cyber bullying; 42% of those don't tell anyone offline about it.
- 34% of youth had unwanted exposure to sexual material online.
- Many children are reluctant to report abuse, so numbers do not reflect the unreported cases



BY THE VIRGINIA NUMBERS:

- A child is abused every 75 minutes; every 14 days a child dies from abuse or neglect (Prevent Child Abuse America)
- From the Virginia Department of Social Services:
 - 58,234 reported cases in 2018 of possible victims of abuse or neglect
 - 32% under age of 4
 - 75% under age of 12
 - 67% of victims white
 - 32% of victims African American
 - 1.6 % of victims Asian
- Most common abuse is neglect-56.6% (28% physical abuse, 10% sexual abuse, 3.8% mental abuse/neglect, 2.4% medical neglect)



BY CHURCH NUMBERS:

- There are 70 reports of abuse in churches each week (across denominations).
- In one district in New York, there were 12 reported cases in 14 months.
- 14-18% of UMC clergy are sexual predators (Do No Harm Summit of 2011).
- UMC Conferences budget \$6 million to cover costs of abuse cases.





THE CHURCH IS....

- The Body of Christ
- A community of love, safe haven, sanctuary. A place where children and youth can safely seek wise advice, help, and nurture.
- A safe place for learning about child abuse and about compassion, justice, repentance, and grace.
- A safe place for children to learn and develop inner strengths and spiritual resources they need to remain connected to God when they face suffering and evil.
- A place that teaches and supports children and adults how to respond to painful, confusing events using the wisdom of Scripture, Tradition, Experience, and Reason.



HOW IS THE CHURCH VULNERABLE?

- Depending on Trust alone to protect the vulnerable
- Failing to adequately screen volunteers and employees
- By nature providing opportunities that also include dangers:
 - Opportunities for close contact
 - Opportunities for cross-generational connections
 - Opportunities for close personal relationships
- By failing to understand that “charitable immunity” is a thing of the past.

WHO NEEDS PROTECTION?

Children: Birth to age 12	Youth: Age 13-18	Vulnerable Adults
Staff and Volunteers	Trustees and other church leadership	Church's Ministry & Mission



WHAT IS ABUSE?

WHO ARE THE ABUSERS?

A Story of Abuse within the Church

(Based on a true story published in the Washington Post, April 2, 2011)

A youth director at a large suburban church privately deceptively convinced several girls in the youth group that he was in love with them, saying to each that he wanted to marry her, convincing her to keep their relationship secret, and then gradually increasing sexual contact with each girl, stealing private moments with her as she grew older. He quoted scripture to each girl, to convince her the relationship was ok.

When one of the girl's parent became aware of and reported what was happening to her daughter to Child Protective Services, the youth director was publicly accused and forced to resign. He pleaded guilty to abusing that girl and was charged guilty of contributing to the delinquency of a minor. However, neither public agents nor the church officials asked sufficient questions. The remaining girls who were involved remained silent, fearing disapproval. Some members of the church community were vocal in support of the youth director in court. They loaned him money, and suggested that the young girl seduced him.

The youth director moved to a different state. The girls gradually withdrew from the church.

Five years later, a new associate pastor, sensing malaise and divisiveness in the congregation, sought to correct the damage. It was only then that the church community began to learn the full story of what was happening in the lives of their youth five years earlier.



What ARE WE DOING?



IN THE POLICY

- At least 2 adult rule
- At least 6 month rule
- At least Age of workers/volunteers (18-21)
- At least 5 year older rule
- Windows in doors/half-doors
- Open door counseling



IN THE POLICY

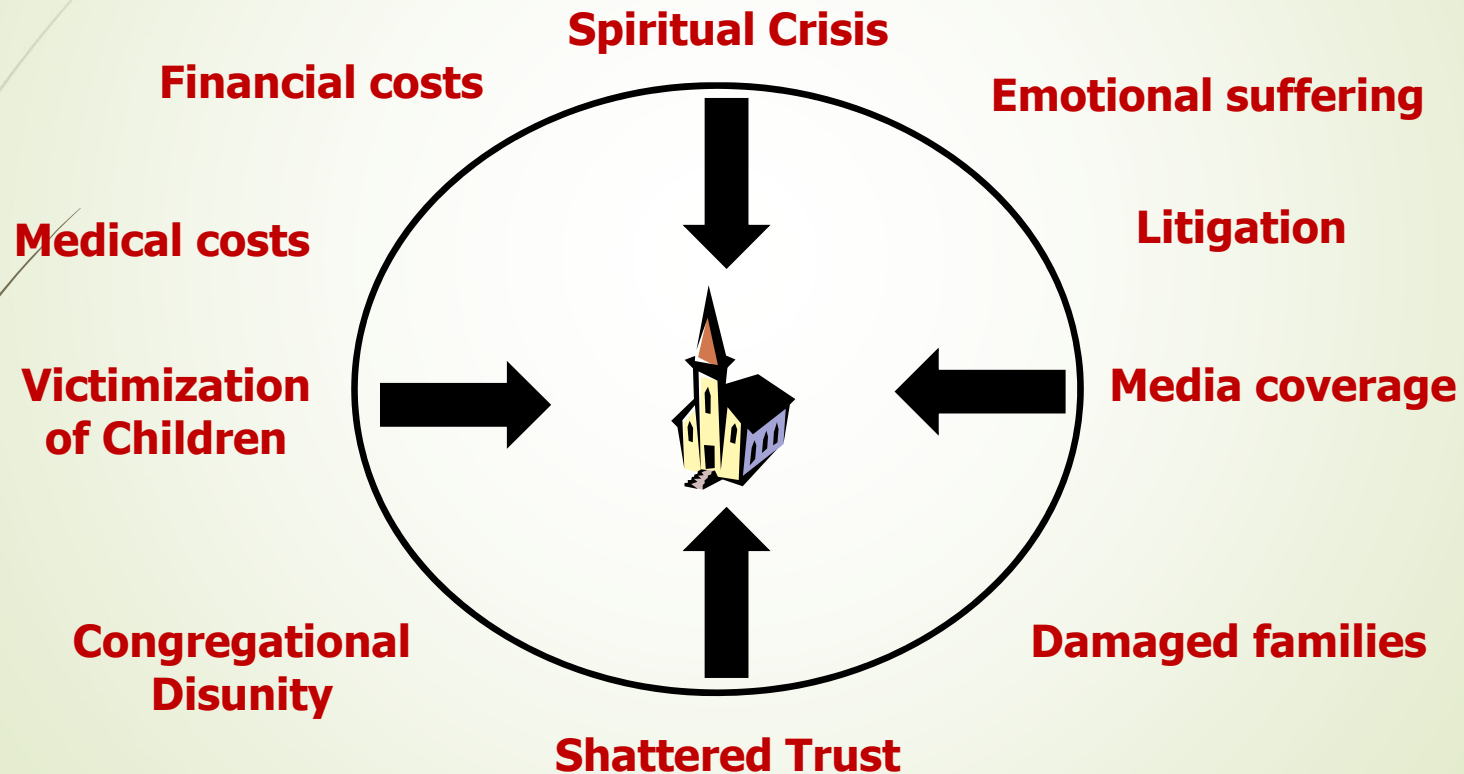
- Appropriate/Adequate equipment and supervision
- First Aid/CPR training
- Annual Safe Sanctuaries orientation/training
- Advance notice to parents
- Volunteer/Worker Covenant /Screening Form
- Parent and Family Education
- Background Checks/Screening Form
 - Every 2-5 years
 - Check with insurance carrier for recommended company to do the background checks.



ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Social media and Online engagement
- Overnight Trips
- Elderly Adults
- Vulnerable Adults
- Secure Building
- Bullying or Youth on Youth Misconduct

WHY FOLLOW THE POLICY?



From Rev. Beth Perry



REPORTING OBLIGATIONS



CLERGY MANDATORY REPORTING

CLERGY AS MANDATORY REPORTERS

“All clergy of The United Methodist Church are charged to maintain all confidences inviolate, including confessional confidences, except in the cases of suspected child abuse or neglect or in cases where mandatory reporting is required by civil law. (2016 Book of Discipline ¶341.5 page 340)”



WHEN ABUSE HAPPENS

- Remain in your pastoral role with both abuser and victim.
- Keep written record of every step taken in response.
- Do NOT speak with media until you have contacted your DS. (ideally the DS will be the spokesperson.)



REPORTING

- Report incident/concern to clergy
- Notify parents and remove the child from the situation
- Clergy will report suspected abuse to proper law enforcement or Department of Family Services
- The clergy person will report to the DS and the DS will notify the Conference. At that point the Conference's resources will be deployed.
- Notify the church insurance company and a church trustee.
- Do not speak to media unless directed.
- Clergy will prepare a brief and honest statement that can be made to the congregation.
- Cooperate fully with the investigation conducted by law enforcement officers or Department of Family Services.



CONFIDENTIALITY

- Must be maintained, except for 2 conditions:
 - Suspected child abuse or neglect
 - Person is a danger to himself or others
- This must be clearly stated and accepted in all situations, including counseling settings.



QUESTIONS?



CLOSING PRAYER

- God of the little ones, give us courage and wisdom to be their good shepherds
- **We care for children and youth in your name**
- God of our baptismal promise, guide us to protect them from the forces of evil
- **We care for children and youth in your name**
- God as we commit to lead the church in being a force for good in the world
- **We care for children and youth in your name**
- God through our commitment to keep your Church holy and safe
- **We care for children and youth in your name**

AMEN