



Why Safe Sanctuaries?

- ◆ Protect our children
- ◆ Protect our Volunteers
- ◆ Protect our Church's resources/ assets for mission and ministry



Baptismal Covenant

(p.44 The United Methodist Hymnal)

Pastor: Do you as a congregation accept the responsibility of assisting *these parents* in fulfillment of the baptismal vows, and do you undertake to provide facilities and opportunities for Christian nurture and fellowship?

People: **We will, by the grace of God.**

Pastor: Members of the household of faith, I commend to your love and care *this child*, whom we this day recognize as a *member* of the family of God. Will you endeavor so to live that *this child* may grow in the knowledge and love of God, through our Savior Jesus Christ?

People: **With God's help we will so order our lives after the example of Christ, that *this child*, surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith, and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal.**



Our Reality

1. Many cases of abuse
2. The church is not exempt
3. There are many costs

Costs of An Allegation/Incident

Victims
Financial
Ministry

Updated Statistics

(American Psychological Association)

- Most children are abused by someone they know and trust.
- 60% of perpetrators – known to the child but NOT a family member
- About 30% are family members
- Just 10% are strangers to the child: Child pornographers/Abusers who are strangers may make contact with children via the internet.
- 23% of reported cases are perpetrated by individuals under 18

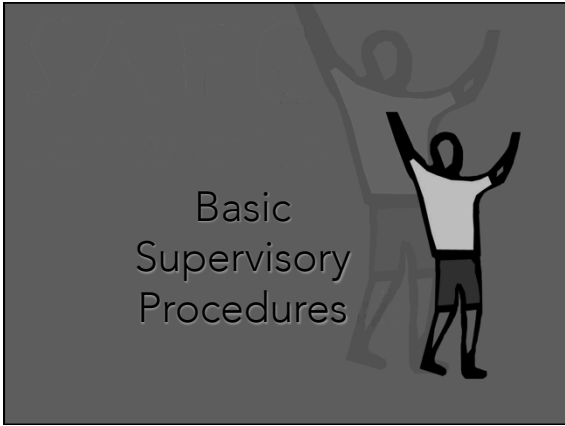
Overview of Safe Sanctuaries



Recruiting - Hiring - Screening

- ✓ Written Application Form
- ✓ Personal Reference Checks
- ✓ Personal Interviews
- ✓ Six month affiliation rule
- ✓ Participation Covenant
- ✓ Criminal Background Check
- ✓ Driver's License Check





BASIC OPERATING PROCEDURES

Two Adult Rule (not spouses)
Windows In All Classrooms
No Volunteers in Charge Under Eighteen
Five-Year Older Rule
Open Door Counseling
First Aid/ CPR Training

BASIC OPERATING PROCEDURES

Participation Covenant For All Participants/Leaders
Annual Orientation For Workers
Advance Notice To Parents
Parent and Family Education
Appropriate Equipment and Supervision
Unsupervised Time

Supervising persons with a background of abuse
* Premises Protection Agreement*

THINGS TO CONSIDER IF YOU OBSERVE, SUSPECT, OR RECEIVE ALLEGATION OF ABUSE

Victim **IS** in immediate danger - 911

Victim **IS NOT** in immediate danger and it happened at a church sponsored function.....then:

MANDATORY REPORTING

What does this mean for our churches?



**The United Methodist Church:
Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse**

- ✓ Georgia State Code Section 19-7-5
- ✓ HB 1176: Criminal Justice Reform Bill Provision
Georgia definition of child abuse and child sexual abuse
The legal reporting requirements for Georgia
- ✓ Clergy Guidelines for Reporting Abuse
- ✓ If the allegation involves clergy – contact your District Superintendent immediately.

House Bill 1176

- Child service organization personnel means persons employed by a business or an organization, whether public, private, for profit, not for profit, or voluntary, that provides care, treatment, education, training, supervision, coaching, counseling, recreational programs or shelter to children.

What to do if you receive information/allegation of suspected abuse involving a child.

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graph LR
    A["Volunteer/  
Employee  
Receives information -  
reports to person  
designated under  
the protocol of Safe  
Sanctuaries policy."] --> B["Volunteer/  
employee makes the  
report to designated  
person = their  
mandatory  
reporting  
requirement is fully  
satisfied."]
    B --> C["Pastor/SS Coordinator  
receives information-  
shall make the report or  
assist in the report  
being made."]
  
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Document Everything!

To Whom Do You Report

Oral Report - immediately, but no later than 24 hours
Child Protective Services (or)
Appropriate Law Enforcement or District Attorney

1-855-GA-CHILD (422-4453)

*If unable to reach DFCS, or if the child is in immediate danger,
report to law enforcement (911)*

What Do You Report

- Reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused
- Suspicions, not necessarily direct evidence
- Make the report even if you do not have all the information

Conference Leadership Contact Information

- At any point along the way, feel free to contact one of the following for guidance in your process:

Denise Walton – Assist. to Bishop for Connectional Ministries -
(888) 266-7642 denise@sgaumc.com

Deborah Wight-Knight – Conference Pastoral Counselor
(478) 929-1032

Allison Lindsey – Associate Director of Connectional Ministries-
(912)393-5524 allison@sgaumc.com

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