

Linglestown
Life UMC

Safe Sanctuaries

February 2006

Newsletter

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Welcome

Welcome to our first Safe Sanctuaries newsletter. In order to help our volunteers (active and inactive) stay better informed, I am beginning a quarterly newsletter.

If you have any questions about Safe Sanctuaries, do not hesitate to contact me.

Nancy Cartwright

Know your staff leaders

Nancy Cartwright is the Minister of Safe Sanctuaries. It is her job to keep all the records for the staff and volunteers, coordinate training and education events and support the staff in carrying out the policies.

Nancy's strongest gift is in administration. She enjoys cruising the internet and talking with other church leaders about child protection issues.

Yvonne Barbush is the Minister of Child Care and the Minister of Children's Ministry at Linglestown Life.

She supervises the Nursery and Preschool classes during worship. Yvonne also has a team of child care workers who provide care at other LLUMC events.

As Children's Minister, Yvonne supervises the Elementary Sunday School program. Each Sunday morning she is meeting parents and children on the Upper Level of the Education wing.

Yvonne has a deep passion to share Christ's love to children and adults.

Annie Garner is our Youth Minister. Annie supervises the Junior

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Safe Sanctuaries Update

By Tom Salsgiver, Council Director of Central Pennsylvania Conference, United Methodist Church.

There have been some questions and recent update information regarding Safe Sanctuaries and Safe Sanctuaries policies. Please read the following and share with your Safe Sanctuary committee!

CLERGY AS MANDATORY REPORTERS. In 2004, General Conference was specific about clergy confidentiality and child abuse or neglect. "The United Methodist Book of Discipline," paragraph 341.5 says, "...All clergy of The United Methodist Church are charged to maintain all confidences inviolate,...except in the case of suspected child abuse or neglect, or in cases where mandatory reporting is required by civil law."

Pennsylvania State Statute effective July 1, 1995, says that 'persons who, in the course of their employment, occupation, or practice of their profession, come into contact with children shall report or cause a report to be made...'

It is important for all clergy to understand that we are mandatory reporters in the State of Pennsylvania. "The United Methodist Book of Discipline" also supports the issue of mandatory reporting. Thus., we don't have a choice.

A report must be filed with the state within 24 hours of becoming aware of the issue. Our job is not to investigate the al-

leged incident. We report—the state investigates.

If you suspect abuse, or if a children/youth worker or volunteer comes to you with a suspicion of abuse, you must report it.

The Pennsylvania State Statute also says that a person is to report 'when they (the clergy, teacher, etc.) have reasonable cause to suspect, on the basis of their medical, professional, or other training and experience, that a child... is an abused child.'

ADULTS WORKING WITH CHILDREN/YOUTH—WHEN TO BREAK A CONFIDENCE?

Recently there have been questions raised about when should a youth leader/Sunday school teacher break a confidence that a child or youth has shared with them.

We checked with several authorities in youth ministry. They included the youth staff of the General Board of Discipleship; Kenda Creasy Dean, faculty and head of youth ministry at Princeton Theological Seminary; Joy Melton, author of "Safe Sanctuaries," and a woman who is a certified youth counselor.

All agree that keeping confidences in children and youth ministry is essential except in three instances:

- When the child/youth indicated that she/he

has been or is being harmed (sexually, physically, or emotionally).

▫Has done harm in the past or talks about doing harm to him/herself (such as suicide or cutting).

▫ Threatens or talks about harming someone else.

SOME HELPFUL HINTS:

▫If a youth ever says “Can you keep a secret?” or “I have never told anyone this before...,” it may be important to let the young person know that you can keep their confidence unless you determine that they are being harmed or pose a threat to themselves or others.

▫Make sure you listen to the young person. If you are the first person they have told, they may try to minimize the story, feel guilty about it, rationalize, or may even deny it the next day. In many cases, they don’t always remember everything in a neat, chronological order. Just listen and assure them it is not their fault and that there are caring people who will help. It is extremely rare that a young person or child will make up a story of abuse —take them seriously.

▫Do not discuss the situation with other youth or adults.

▫Remember the young person, their family, and the situation in your personal prayers.

Dealing with the uncomfortable, broken, painful, and sick parts of life is part of the ministry you are called to. These are the situations and human circumstances that cry out loudest for God’s healing and

reassuring presence experienced through one another. We wish these painful realities didn’t exist, especially for young people, but they do exist, and you and I are called to respond each day with care and wisdom. It is important for those of us doing children and youth ministry to provide a safe environment for counseling. However, the greater good and safety of the child/youth takes precedent over confidentiality.

REMINDER

It is critical to understand that clergy are mandated reporters of abuse or suspected abuse. It is also critical that persons working with children and youth understand the boundaries of confidentiality and when it is essential to break the confidence.

Clergy must make sure that those working with children and youth are trained in listening for and spotting abuse, as well as understanding the need when to break a confidence.

Children/youth workers and volunteers should immediately go to the pastor if there is a suspicion so that it is reported within 24 hours. The pastor works with the children/youth worker or volunteer to not only report the incident, but to provide the appropriate response to the child or youth.



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Linglestown Life
UMC

Know your staff, cont'd

and Senior High Sunday School classes and leads the Sunday evening Youth Group.

Mercy is one of Annie's strongest gifts and she can often be found ministering to our youth and their families. She has a real heart for our teens and we are blessed to have Annie on our ministry team.

Jeanne Chubb is our Minister of Music. She supervises all the music groups at LLUMC, including the many groups of children that support our music program. She has a team of volunteers who lead our singing choirs, bell choirs and instrumental groups for children and youth.

Jeanne's strongest gift is her administrative skills. She has many schedules and volunteers to coordinate each week and keeps our music program running smoothly.

Check out www.safesanctuaries.org

This site is maintained by the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church. The conference Safe Sanctuaries policy, success stories, resources, frequently asked questions, survivor stories contacts and news are found on this site.



Training events

Joy Melton, author of the book "Safe Sanctuaries", is coming to Pennsylvania this spring. Don't miss this opportunity to hear her speak.

She will be conducting training sessions on Saturday, May 20 in State College, Sunday May 21 in Chambersburg and Monday, May 22 in Colonial Park. (Each session is the same.)

The cost is only \$6.00 per person. Let's get a group together to attend.

Joy is known throughout the country for her work in the area of child protection.

Brochures are available in Nancy Cartwright's mailbox across from the church office or call her at 545-3617 & tell her your interested.