Looking Back... and Looking Forward

Introducing Our New 2018 Safe Church Format

Our next Safe Church Cluster is set to begin on January 27, 2018 and to date it includes churches from Dauphin, Lebanon and Berks Counties. We have modified the schedule, so the entire Safe Church process will be completed in 7 months instead of 11. We have streamlined the time frame to help accommodate busy churches, but the core content will remain the same. If your congregation has already completed Safe Church and would like to review and update your policy, has new members on your Child Protection Committee or think you would benefit from some refresher training, we are offering the opportunity for your church to participate in this cluster for half the enrollment cost. To learn more, visit our website.

Safe Church Workshops

Did you know that 30% to 50% of sexually abused children are the victims of other children and teens under the age of 18? During the fall we partnered with Evangelical Seminary and Gibbel Kraybill and Hess LLP to offer our new workshop, Children & Teens with Sexual Behavior Problems, in Lebanon and Lancaster. Linda Crockett (Safe Church) and Cathy Palm (Children’s Center for Justice) led sessions on Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse and Mandated Reporting as participants learned how to recognize, report what is becoming one of the most urgent and perplexing issues of our time. To learn more about our workshop offerings click here.

Circles of Learning, Hope and Wisdom

New in 2017, the Circles of Learning are a series of 5 workshops designed to educate, equip and engage individuals who believe the prevention of child sexual abuse is possible and necessary. Using the Safe Church model, participants receive the same materials presented in cluster meetings, but without the organizational policy templates. This format is ideal for therapists, teachers, spiritual directors and others who recognize the importance of protecting children in their workplace and community. After completing Circles of Learning, participants will continue to receive support from the Samaritan Safe Church / Safe Places team, becoming part of the growing network of individuals and congregations committed to making God's dream of keeping children safe from sexual harm a reality.
Also new this year, Circle of Hope is a safe place to which we invite adult survivors of child sexual abuse to share common ground with other survivors. Together, we looked at the ways that our lives have been shaped not only by our stories of trauma, but by our own strength, struggle, and resilience. We explored God's healing truth and hope through conversation and creative expression, and considered the many ways that the "cracks" in our lives allowed the light of beauty to shine through. Our Circle of Hope themes included honoring our survivor voices, connectedness, restorative practices, resilience and hope.

Wisdom Circles are a safe place to which we invite survivors and allies each spring and fall to share their wisdom on how to stop sexual abuse and encourage healing. We use a practice of deep listening, rather than cross-talk, that allows each participant opportunity to respond to the questions posed to the Circle, mining the wisdom of the heart. This year our discussions included making meaning of abuse, the story our body wants to tell/healing touch, the secrets we carry/protecting ourselves & others, the wisdom we carry and the costs and benefits of disclosing abuse. Safe Church / Safe Places will be offering all these circles again in 2018. To learn more about the circles, click here

**Safe Church National Convening**

In November we hosted our first national convening of leaders working in congregations and organizations to protect children from sexual abuse and empower survivors to heal and lead. This time together allowed us to connect relationally and discuss the things that inspire us, the obstacles we face and how we can build a stronger faith-based movement. Together, we explored the challenges of forgiveness after sexual abuse and integrating known sexual offenders into congregations. The 23 participants included Safe Church facilitators from other states, congregational leaders from the Susquehanna Valley and other organizational leaders working to engage faith communities in this complex issue of sexual abuse, justice and healing. [Click here](#) to learn more about bringing our 3 day facilitator training to your area in 2018!

**Hollywood, the Christian Church, and Sexual Abuse**  
A blog by Linda Crockett

Those of us who are survivors of sexual violence are particularly impacted when this issue surfaces in the national spotlight. Our lived experience has taught us that no matter how many victims of a particular perpetrator come forward with credible allegations, there will be a swell of support for the offender, who typically denies or minimizes his actions. Disparagement is heaped upon the victims, many of whom don't come forward due to shame, fear and reluctance to bear the public scorn directed toward them for speaking out. Despite the research showing that most victims of sexual harm never disclose, and when they do it is often a decade or more after the abuse, the predictable chorus of voices insists that there must be some ulterior personal, financial or political motive at play. [Continue reading...](#)

#MeToo #ChurchesToo
Our Safe Church / Safe Places team thanks you for your continued support in this work of keeping children safe from harm and empowering survivors to heal and grow.

At this time of year we recall the vulnerability of the infant Jesus, born at a dangerous time when people were suffering political oppression. Those in power feared his potential and wanted to silence him. But God empowered the adults charged with his care with wisdom and courage, and he was protected.

The Good News embodied in this holy child continues to be alive in all of you who work to protect and nurture the most vulnerable among us. It is alive within the many survivors of child sexual abuse who refuse to become like their abusers, choosing instead the hard path of healing themselves, and the world.

We wish you a safe, joyful Christmas and look forward to our continued partnership in 2018.

*Linda, Deb, Bethany and Dianne*

---

Samaritan Counseling Center, 1803 Oregon Pike, Lancaster, PA 17601

SafeUnsubscribe™ bsmith@scclanc.org
Forward email | Update Profile | About our service provider
Sent by bsmith@scclanc.org in collaboration with

Try it free today