

Synod has encouraged each classis to have a safe church team to be a resource for congregations, fulfilling three important mandates:

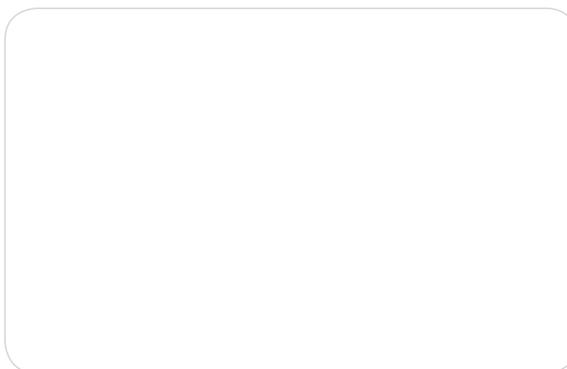
1. Provide opportunities for **education** to build awareness and to change culture, so that congregations can recognize abuse, develop strategies to prevent it, and respond appropriately when abuse is disclosed or discovered.
2. Equip congregations to offer invaluable **support**, walking alongside those who have been impacted by abuse and pointing them to available resources.
3. Offer the **Advisory Panel Process**, for use in handling abuse allegations against a CRC leader.

For more information, visit:
www.crcna.org/safechurch

or contact us at:
safechurchministry@crcna.org
Phone: (616) 241-1691 x2193

Or contact the director,
Bonnie Nicholas
bnicholas@crcna.org 616-224-0735

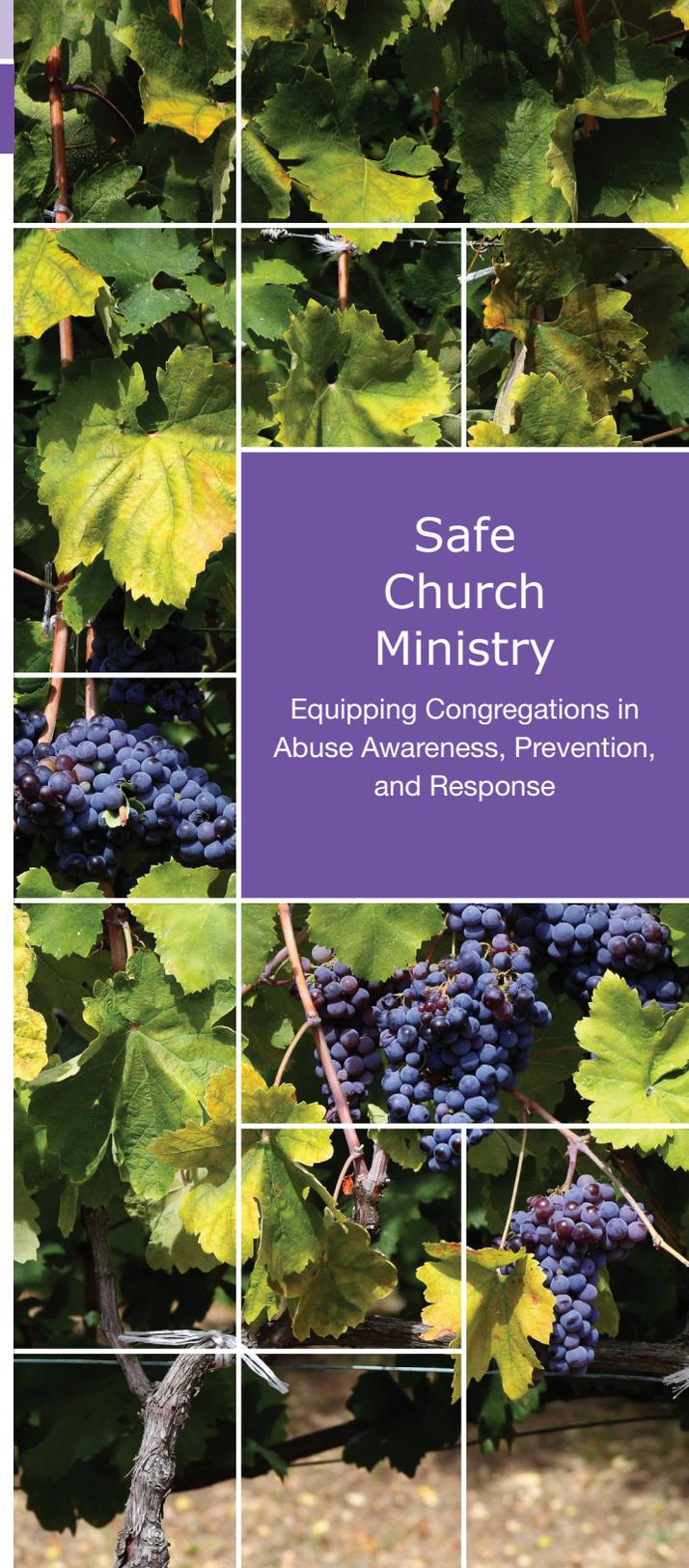
You can also visit Safe Church on
The *Network* at:
<http://network.crcna.org/safe-church>



Christian
Reformed
Church

Safe Church Ministry
1700 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49508-1407

810160



Safe Church Ministry

Equipping Congregations in
Abuse Awareness, Prevention,
and Response

Vision:

Safe Church Ministry equips congregations in abuse awareness, prevention, and response. We help build communities where the value of each person is honored; where people are free to worship and grow free from abuse; and where abuse has occurred, the response is compassion and justice that foster healing.

Safe Church pursues our vision by offering training and support to volunteer safe church team members so that they can be resources for their congregations and classes. Team members provide learning opportunities, support, and consultation in their own local contexts. Safe Church Ministry has identified the following key goals to bring our vision closer to reality. Safe church team members work to promote these goals.

Safe Church Ministry Guiding Goals

1. Policy

Every congregation will implement a written abuse prevention/safe church policy to protect children, youth, and those most vulnerable among us. A good policy provides for adequate screening, annual training, accountability, and regular review.

2. Education

Every congregation will use an age-appropriate program in church school and youth programs that teaches respect and promotes healthy relationships. Safe Church recommends *Circle of Grace*.

3. Response

Congregations will take misconduct and abuse very seriously and never hide or minimize it. Every congregation will have protocols in place that are carefully followed in

responding to misconduct and abuse by a church leader. The Advisory Panel Process, approved by synod, will be used when appropriate.

4. Awareness

Given its prevalence, we acknowledge that the impact of abuse is very real and serious in our congregations. Therefore, we will address it. People will understand the dynamics and effects of abuse, as well as the nature of offending, so that our prevention and response efforts will be more effective.

5. Commitment

Leadership at all levels will be committed to the importance of safe church ministry. Leaders at both the congregational and classis level will encourage and support safe church team development.

They will live in safety and no one will make them afraid.

—Ezekiel 34:28