

Safe Church News

www.crcna.org/safechurch

December 2015

Immanuel: God is with us!

This is the time of year when we reflect on the Lord's coming, his incarnation, the time he spent wearing flesh and living among us. And we expectantly wait for his coming again, when he will descend to right every wrong, wipe away every tear, and establish his kingdom of justice. In the meantime, he is present with us through his Spirit. As we work in Safe Church Ministry, whether it's listening with compassion to a story of abuse, or discussing with a council the importance of healthy boundaries, or helping to draft a policy to protect children; we can be confident of one thing, Immanuel, our God is with us!



It Takes All of Us

How does safe church ministry happen? We have five guiding goals: That congregations abide by safe church policies to prevent abuse, use age appropriate materials for teaching children and youth about abuse, take misconduct by a church leader seriously, understand the dynamics and effects of abuse so that prevention and response efforts are more effective, and have leaders who are committed to safe church ministry. So... do you ever feel a bit overwhelmed by such a large mandate? I know I do. That's one reason we need one another. Safe church ministry will not happen by itself; it takes all of us working together to bring about the changes that we would like to see.

We will soon begin a new year – 2016! This is a good time for all of us, to reflect on what we hope to see in safe church ministry in 2016 and consider our own involvement to make it happen. Start planning now for 2016. And don't forget to **save the date for our bi-annual conference on Nov. 4-5!**

Here are some ideas to prayerfully consider:

Prayer Team – A prayer guide goes out monthly to those who are committed to praying for Safe Church Ministry. I know that's not everyone, but **let us know** if you are interested in being part of this team and we will make sure you receive the guide.

Team Meetings – Maybe you need to make a commitment to attend, or even host a meeting if that's needed and not happening. We may be able to help you connect with other

safe church team folks in your area. Perhaps just meeting regularly with one other person could give you extra encouragement and support.

Online Communication – In the past, Safe Church has used a Google group format for networking and interaction. This has not been well used and we are looking at other formats for greater interaction. Stay tuned.

Focus Group Discussion – Our first focus group will start up after the first of the year and focus on the topic of ministry with those who have experienced abuse. This topic came out of the strategic planning meeting that was held last April. Please **let us know** if you would be interested in joining this online focus group.

Safe Church Training – Do you need more training yourself? Are there others that need to know what you know? We may be able to help with a context and ideas. Maybe you want to take advantage of the Mini-Grant initiative! **Let us know.** (See below)

Mini-Grants for Safe Church Training and Educational Events

Now is a good time to think about planning a spring classis or regional educational event. Safe Church is offering mini-grants to classis team members that could help to defray some of the costs of hosting a spring event. Though we can't pay you a salary to plan an event, through this mini-grant opportunity you can receive an honorarium of up to \$500 for all your planning efforts. And an additional \$1500 is available for speaker fees or travel costs for presenters. We can even help with ideas and potential presenters for planning. **If you are interested in applying for a safe church mini-grant, please feel free to contact Safe Church Ministry for details.**

Last Monday Conference Call

December 28 – Last Monday Conference Call – Our topic will be assessing how we're doing in safe church ministry. What does success look like? Are there helpful assessment tools? How do we decide where to focus our energies? To join the call at **8pm Eastern time, dial: 800.503.2899, then enter access code 4319590.**

Your News Here

Let us know what's happening with YOU. Feel free to send us information about events, a helpful resource, something you've tried that worked well, or whatever is happening regarding safe church ministry in your area.

*Have a
Wonderful
Christmas
Season!*

