

Safe Sanctuary Training

First United Methodist Church
Sunday, July 22 from 5-7:30 p.m.
In the Christian Life Center



Safe Sanctuaries is an overt expression in making congregations safe places where children, youth, and elders may experience the abiding love of God and fellowship within the community of faith. God has called us to make our ministries safe, protecting our children, youth and vulnerable adults from abuse and exploitation. God has also called us to create communities of faith where children, youth and vulnerable adults can be safe and grow strong.

Jesus taught that *“Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me,”* (Mark 9:37 NRSV) and *“If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones...it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.”* (Matthew 18:6 NRSV).

We recognize that our faith calls us to offer hospitality and protection to all children, youth and vulnerable adults, as well as those who are committed to ministering to them as volunteers and employees. Every 15 seconds, a child is abused or neglected. Often, abuse occurs in places where children and youth feel safe – homes, schools, camps, and even churches. In over three quarters of reported cases, the victim was related to or acquainted with the abuser. In light of this, the United Methodist Church has seen fit to outline policy and procedures that can 1) prevent such abuse from happening in our church; 2) be a place where children can feel safe in disclosing abuse; and 3) protect the loyal volunteers and employees that minister to our children, youth and vulnerable adults.

This training is open to church leaders and ministry volunteers and will be led by Jullie Meyer, a Safe Spaces Trainer, from the TN Conference Office. Church leaders and volunteers interested in participating should register online at cookevillefumc.org or contact the church office. Dinner is available for \$5 per person.



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