Updated ECMN Safe Church Policies
Everything you need to get started

What is Safe Church Policy?
In our Baptismal Covenant, we promise to respect the dignity of every human being. Our Safe Church Policies establish and maintain standards intended to ensure that our faith communities are safe places where all of God’s people are loved and encouraged to grow into the people God calls us to be. These updated policies call the church to respond in proactive and intentional ways to care for, be responsible to, and create safe and transformational spaces for everyone. For more info visit https://episcopalmn.org/safe-church or email sarah.b@episcopalmn.org.

Which policies are updated?
ECMN has 4 Safe Church Policies.
- UPDATED: Safe Church Policies: Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth
- UPDATED: Safe Church Policies: Policies for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults (separated into its own policy)
- Safe Guarding God’s People: Policies for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment
- Safe Guarding God’s People: Policies for the Protection of Sexual Exploitation

Note: The updated policies collectively are called “Safe Church” and not “Safe Guarding.” This is a way to indicate that they are an expansion upon the original “Safe Guarding” policies and training materials.

What are the most notable updates?
These updated policies and training materials now include best practices for: facility safety, current child protection research, the needs of vulnerable adults, support for LGBTQ and gender non-binary persons, awareness of diverse sensory needs, off-site and overnight programming, camp and retreat centers, social media and other communication practices. It also notable that renewal is now required every three years instead of every five years.

What is the new training model that will deliver these new policies?
ECMN now has 3 distinct tiers of training. Each tier can be completed live (by an ECMN trainer) or online.
1. Universal Training
   • Summary: Each faith community is required to offer this one-hour community-wide training annually. It can be delivered by a trainer or by anyone in the faith community through digital materials.
   • Policy: It provides a broad overview of all four policies with attention to how to create a safe, healthy, and transformational faith community.
2. Safe Church for God’s Children
   • Summary: Tier Two is a three-hour foundational training for anyone who has access to facilities and/or is in ministry with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
   • Policy: It covers the first two of the four Safe Church Policies (Children and Youth & Vulnerable Adults).
3. Safe Church for God’s People
   • Summary: Tier Three is a three-hour training for staff, clergy, who are involved in managing ministries for youth and adults alike. It discusses the power dynamics present in pastoral relationships and how to prevent sexual harassment and exploitation.
   • Policy: It covers the second two of the four Safe Church Policies (Harassment & Exploitation).
Who in my faith community needs to be Safe Church trained, how, and when?

• **Who?** Both updated policies contain a grid of training requirements listed by role (Appendix C).

• **How?** People can attend a live training hosted by an ECMN Trainer at their own faith community or at another (Google Calendar of all ECMN trainings). People who cannot attend a live training may complete their training individually online (Google Doc instructions).

• **When?** Everyone requiring training must renew their training every 3 years (not 5).

What is the timeline for implementing these updated policies and the new training model?

**Part 1: Policy update**

- **January:** The updated policies were approved by ECMN's chancellors.
- **March 9:** The updated policies will be reviewed/approved by ECMN's Council at their quarterly meeting.
- **March 15-31:** The updated policies will be publicly announced to all of ECMN with an implementation plan.

**Part 2: Training model update**

- **April:** The updated training model (with additional content/videos/resources) is developed by a team of trainers, clergy, and lay volunteers.
- **April 30:** The updated training model is finalized and presented at Clergy Conference.
- **May 21-22:** First "test drive" of the new training model with the ECMN team of missionaries.
- **June:** Trainer Camp (Thursday June 27 1 – 5pm (at ECMN) or Saturday June 15 9am – 1pm (Zoom Only)). The new training model is brought to ECMN's community of trainers. All trainers or new people desiring to be trainers must attend this if they want to be trainers for our new policies.
- **July-December:** Approximate 6 month window for faith communities to read new policies, adjust/adopt their own internal policies at a vestry meeting, and begin using the new training model.

What specific steps should faith communities take now?

**Step 1:** Formally adopt these Safe Church Policies at a Vestry, Bishop’s Committee, or Board of Directors meeting and recorded the text of the policies in the minutes. Review and reaffirm your adoption of these policies annually and record it in the meeting minutes.

**Step 2:** Ensure adequate documentation for previously safe church trained individuals (who have been trained in the last five years). Find a contemporaneous paper record or online database entry. If you can’t find such a record, that individual must redo their training either in person or online. The only instance in which past trainings may be entered online retroactively is when there is a *signed* paper copy documenting the past training by a trainer.

**Step 3:** Establish a practice for determining who needs renewal and has past the three-year training window. One way to do this is to go into the online safeguarding database, download a spreadsheet of the entire faith community organization, and sort by training date.

**Step 4:** Identify those in your faith community who need to now be safe church trained (Appendix C).

**Step 5:** Contact a certified ECMN safe church trainer to schedule or attend a live training starting in July 2019 (See Google Calendar of trainings and list of trainers by May 31 [https://episcopalmn.org/safe-church](https://episcopalmn.org/safe-church)). Refer anyone who can’t attend in person to the online options (Google Doc instructions).

**Step 6:** Steps 1-5 should be completed by December 2019.