

Safe Church

Policy for the Protection of Children, Youth, & Vulnerable Adults

ECMN Council
March 10, 2026

Brief History of Safe Church in ECMN

- 1991 - Committee on Sexual Exploitation (COSE).
- 2000 - COSE conducted a survey of dioceses on their processes for dealing with issues of sexual misconduct. The results of this survey indicated a need for a larger conversation.
- 2001 - 125 bishops, chancellors, clergy, and laity from 70 dioceses gathered and unanimously called for a review of existing sexual misconduct policies and for the development of the "next generation" of policies.
- 2003 - 74th General Convention: Resolution B008, Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse, was submitted and passed at that General Convention.
- 2018 - General Convention in 2018, new model Safe Church Policies were recommended for all dioceses of the Episcopal Church. Those model policies were used to re-draft existing ECMN policies in 2019.

History (continued)

- In 2020, Rt. Rev. Craig W. Loya became Bishop X for The Episcopal Church in Minnesota
- In 2021, a search began for the new Minister for Children & Youth, who would help untangle and re-tool Safe Church at the diocesan level.
- In 2023, Council approved a new policy for the Protection of Children & Youth, updating language around training to include Praesidium Academy, online modules, and more.
- This was a vital step in increasing the systems capacity to train in a modern, meaningful method.

Current* Safe Church Policies

- Safe Church for God's Children & Hospitable Communities Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth
- Safe Church Policies Policies for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Safe Church Policies Policies for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults
- Safe Church Policies Policies for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation
- Safe Church for God's People Policies For Addressing Concerns for Lay Ministers Regarding Abuse, Harassment, And Exploitation
- Respecting the Dignity of Children and Youth (Feb. 2023)

The Problems



These policies were good policies, written with great intentions, in a very different time.



Because the policies were written and approved at separate times, there is significant inconsistency and incongruence between them.

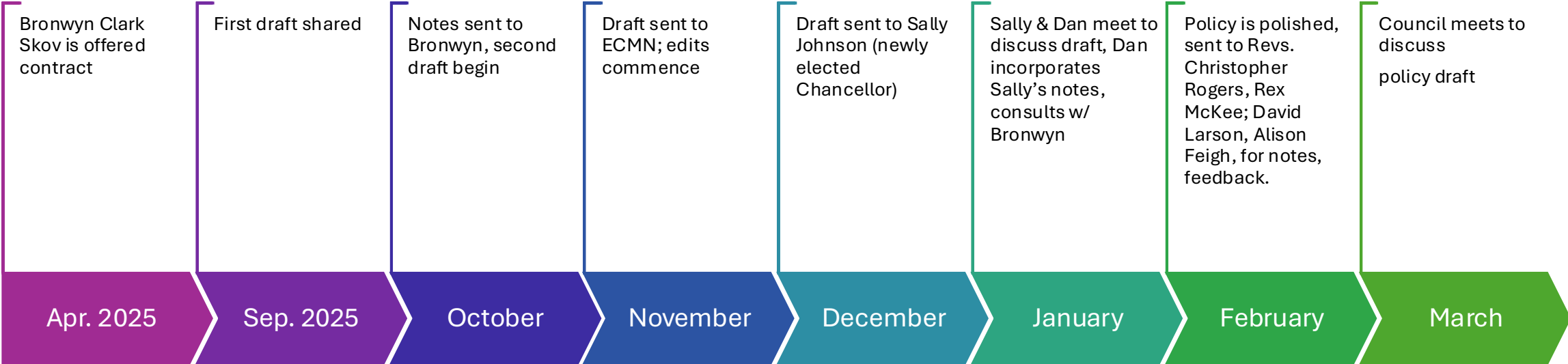


Which policy takes precedent?
What if there is an issue of abuse or harm?



New Clergy/Staff – which policy is the main one? (St. Matthew's example)

The work.



The Policy you have now is...

- One. Single. Policy.
- Comprehensive: includes necessary pieces of extant policies, and moves away from “best practices”, which can be added as supplements or handouts at the Diocese of Faith Community level.
- Usable for clergy, staff, volunteers.
- Built upon legacy of ECMN’s robust and dynamic history of Safe Church.

This policy...

- Is largely based on model policies of The Episcopal Church, with Minnesota statutes included.
- Training language completely moves away from “Tiered” training (1, 2, 3), to the modules being “General” and “Specialized”.
- Uses more appendices than previous policy for ease of updates.
- Updates language and standards regarding LGBTQIA+ inclusion in ways previous policies hadn’t.
- Seeks to give faith communities and their leaders more adaptability – “How can we make our spaces/ministries *actually* safer, instead of the ‘minimum viable product’.”
- Aims to empower clergy and laity to provide care to victims of abuse beyond the legal-ese of previous policies.

Summary

- You are being presented with the new ***Policy for Protecting Children, Youth, & Vulnerable Adults*** for the Episcopal Church in Minnesota.
- You are not expected to vote on this tonight.
- Take all the time you need to read, digest, and prayerfully consider this document.
- Key players include: Dan Miglets-Nelson, Bronwyn Skov, Fr. Christopher Rogers, Fr. Rex McKee, David Larson, and Alison Feigh.

Endorsement

- This policy is exactly what we need: it's *actually* usable for your average parish, rather than something over-long and complicated which would sit on a shelf. This is something which I would be totally comfortable giving to a lay leader and asking them to read and get on top of as part of getting involved with a ministry. Rather than being an extra layer of bureaucracy to get on top of, this policy will help all of us to advocate for a culture in which a safe church is just part of what we do, and is central to our mission as the Church of God in Minnesota. – Rev. Christopher Rogers, Rector of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church