

Annual Conference Safe Sanctuary Policy

A RESOLUTION TO REQUIRE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY IN EVERY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND IN EVERY UNITED METHODIST CONFERENCE EVENT IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE

WHEREAS, Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." Mark 10:14-15 (NRSV) Jesus also said, "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)

WHEREAS, The Hebrew people treasured their place of worship as a holy place, a sanctuary, a place where they could worship in safety and harmony. (See Psalms 20:1-2 and Psalms 27:4-5) This scripture provides examples of how the sanctuary is to be a community of protective nurture and harmony, holy and safe.

WHEREAS, The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church regarding rights of children states, "children must be protected from economic, physical, emotional, and sexual exploitation and abuse." *Social Principles* (Paragraph 162C, 1996, 2000, 2004)

WHEREAS, The General Conference of the United Methodist Church adopted a Resolution in 1996, and readopted it in 2004, calling upon all local congregations and every Annual Conference to strive to make our churches safe places protecting children and other vulnerable persons from sexual and ritual abuse, and provided a list of steps for local churches, Annual Conferences, and the General Board of Discipleship and the Council of Global Ministries to follow. The Book of Resolutions 2004 (Paragraph 65, Page 201)

WHEREAS, The South Carolina Annual Conference adopted the *Sexual Ethics Policies and Procedures* on May 30, 1994, and by 1997, *Policies and Procedures for Reducing the Risk of Children/Youth Sexual Abuse in the Church* was written as it pertained to local and conference church events relating to both employees and volunteer workers, and the Conference strongly recommended each local church have a Safe Sanctuary Policy in place; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the South Carolina United Methodist Church Conference will require every local church to have a Safe Sanctuary Policy by December 31, 2008; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the South Carolina United Methodist Church Conference provide guidance to local churches to write and implement a Safe Sanctuary Policy by providing training, workshops and sample policies to meet criteria as outlined in The Book of Resolutions 2004, and that this will be coordinated at the district level by the Congregational Specialists; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the South Carolina United Methodist Conference will require accountability of each church annually at Charge Conference beginning in the year 2008; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the South Carolina United Methodist Conference will have a Safe Sanctuary Policy in place for all district and conference events to include training and screening procedures including, but not limited to, having application forms, interviews, reference checks and background checks for all staff and volunteers by December 31, 2008, and that this will be coordinated through Connectional Ministries by the Board of Education.

Church Name: _____

District: _____

Each Church Council is responsible for the development and implementation of their Safe Sanctuary Policy.

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| 1. Do you have a Safe Sanctuary policy filed in the District Office? | yes | no |
| If no, do you need assistance? | yes | no |

Date

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| 2. Have you made changes in your Safe Sanctuary policy since last Charge Conference? If yes, please attach a copy. | yes | no |
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| 3. Has the Church Council reviewed your Safe Sanctuary Policy this year? | yes | no |
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Date

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| 4. When was the training last conducted? | Date |
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Chairperson, Church Council

Chairperson, Trustees

Pastor