

Safe Sanctuary Policy

for the Prevention of Abuse of Children, Youth, & Vulnerable Adults at Buncombe Street Methodist Church

Since 2007, churches have sought to provide and implement Safe Sanctuaries practices. Each local church must maintain a Safe Sanctuaries policy and review it annually.

Jesus said, “Whoever welcomes (a) child...welcomes me.” (Matthew 18:5). Children are our present and our future, our hope, our teachers, our inspiration. They are full participants in the life of the church and the realm of God.

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). Our Christian faith calls us to offer both hospitality and protection to the little ones, the children.

Buncombe Street Methodist Church adopts this policy for the prevention of child abuse in our church:

I. Purpose

This Safe Sanctuary Abuse Prevention Policy and its procedures reflect our unwavering commitment to ensuring the physical, emotional, and spiritual safety of all children, youth, and vulnerable adults. Abuse—whether physical (e.g. corporal punishment or assault) or sexual (e.g. inappropriate contact, language, or exposure)—can be perpetrated by peers, staff, or volunteers. All forms must be considered when fostering a truly safe environment.

The Safe Sanctuary policy will be evaluated every year and approved during the Charge Conference, per the requirements by the Global Methodist Church’s *Book of Doctrines and Disciplines*.

II. Covenant Statement

Buncombe Street Methodist Church hereby pledges to conduct the ministry of Jesus Christ in ways that assure the physical and emotional safety and spiritual growth of all of our children, youth and vulnerable adults – as well as all of our workers with children, youth and vulnerable adults. We will follow reasonable safety measures when selecting and recruiting workers; we will implement appropriate operational procedures in all areas of programming and care; we will train our workers with children and youth on our procedures and policies; and we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse consistent with South Carolina state law.