

Charlotte District E-Pistle

Colleagues:

I am grateful for the arduous work that nearly all of our clergy and lay leadership has given to the matter of providing Safe sanctuaries throughout the Charlotte District. A few churches have not yet complied with this Annual Conference mandate. The 2007 Charge Conference will be a time for compliance by these congregations. Moreover, the adopted Safe Sanctuary Policies require on-going implementation in all our churches. If you have done some updates in time for Charge Conference, be prepared to (a) present a copy of the policies your church has developed and adopted for Safe Sanctuaries, (b) present for specific consideration any revisions of those policies for review and adoption.

Use the attached checklist as a guide to ensure your policies are complete. NOTE: This is a checklist not the policy, nor is it the fulfillment of (a) or (b) above. It is just a progress report. REMEMBER - All churches were to have Safe Sanctuary policies and procedures in place by December 31, 2005. **A few churches still have none on record with the Charlotte District Office. This must be a priority and those policies must be presented this year, without fail. Even if you do not adopt and implement all of the steps/procedures recommended by the conference, you must present documentation regarding what your church has developed and adopted.**

There will be an annual request for these policies at charge conferences for the foreseeable future. PASTORS, PLEASE TAKE THE LEAD with your folks regarding this very serious and important aspect of your responsibilities for pastoral care and for ordering the life of the Church. This is not OPTIONAL; it is ESSENTIAL.

Recent court cases affecting churches in our annual conference indicate that even when churches are without fault or blame in child abuse cases, they can still be sued for 100s of 1,000s of dollars. Don't let your church be one of those! Pray, train, prepare, plan, develop, adopt, activate and implement policies and procedures that will help protect and prevent harm to any of God's children and/or the Church.

I cannot underscore enough how important this is! If you have questions about Safe Sanctuaries, training, policy development, etc., please contact Kim Ingram at the Conference Office: 704-525-3320 or kingram@wnccumc.org Training manuals with examples of policies are available from our Charlotte District Office.

Grace and peace,

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