

1 **Safe Sanctuaries® Team**

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3 The Safe Sanctuaries Team (SST) addresses policy making issues, training, and accountability related to
4 Safe Sanctuaries. The SST establishes minimum standards and procedures, provides training programs,
5 and assists local churches and Conference ministry programs in reducing the risk of abuse to children,
6 youth, and vulnerable adults (2011 AC Safe Sanctuaries Resolution). We believe that reducing the risk of
7 abuse in churches and ministries is essential. We believe there will be no vital congregations or new faith
8 communities without leaders who are diligent in reducing abuse risks.
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10 The Minimum Standards are reviewed as questions and concerns arise. During the past several years,
11 there have been questions about who needs training and how often. We would like to remind the Annual
12 Conference that all Clergy and anyone working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults are all required
13 to take the UNY Safe Sanctuaries Basic Training, only once as per the minimum standards. However, the
14 local church can require their clergy, staff, and laity to attend the training more than the minimum
15 standards require. Refer to The Minimum Standards plus other resources that are posted on the
16 Conference website for further clarification.
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18 Throughout this year, our committee has been working together to reconstruct the curriculum so that we
19 can better equip our churches with the information and situations happening within church and other
20 community settings around the wellbeing of our children, youth and vulnerable adults. In the coming new
21 year, we hope to implement a new curriculum to include areas around grooming as well and bring updated
22 statistics to our training.
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24 The Committee has also been working hard at reworking the minimum standards to better support the
25 importance of Safe Sanctuaries. As soon as those changes are finalized we will make sure they get out to
26 all the churches via the conference news and district trainers. We hope everyone will help support these
27 changes, not to be burdensome, but to be proactive and to help keep the safety of children, youth, and
28 vulnerable adults a priority in our churches.
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30 The standardized Safe Sanctuaries Training program of the UNYAC is a large part of the SST's work. The
31 training consistently receives very positive evaluations from participants. The training is led by facilitators
32 who have completed six hours of training – the three-hour basic course and a three-hour Training of
33 Trainers (TOT). They are recertified annually. We have continued to train trainers around the conference
34 via Zoom, Since our last report 27 individuals were prepared to facilitate the standard, three-hour Safe
35 Sanctuaries training both in person and via Zoom.
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37 As we all know, the COVID-19 pandemic has made many of our ministries look different. So far In 2023,
38 we were able to train 115 clergy and laity from the Upper New York Annual Conference. The team assists
39 local churches in a variety of ways. Conference staff and team members address numerous questions
40 during the year using email, phone calls, and face-to-face Zoom conversations. Many questions relate to
41 the interpretation and implementation of the 2016 Minimum Standards. The Minimum Standards are just
42 that, the **minimum** that the UNY Conference Safe Sanctuaries® team recommends: each church is
43 encouraged to begin with the Minimum Standards and create their policy around protecting and reducing
44 the risk of all children, youth, and vulnerable adults in their church.
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46 For the 2023 year, the SST has prescheduled all of their conference wide Zoom Basic and TOT training. A
47 flier was sent out to all the districts to be shared with your church leaders, if you did not receive it or

1 would like to have one please contact your district office or the SST. We are always looking for new
2 members to help move us forward in keeping our children, youth, vulnerable adults, and churches
3 safe. Feel free to contact us anytime at safesanctuaries@unyumc.org.

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