



Western District Conference

An area conference of
Mennonite Church USA

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Western District Conference is well on its way to becoming a Safe Sanctuaries Conference.

What does this mean?

- We take seriously our Christian mandate to provide a safe place for worship and nurture for people of all ages, but especially children, youth and other vulnerable persons. Jesus' words in Matthew 18:5-6 call us to be mindful of how we guide and protect children. "Whoever welcomes a child, welcomes me...Do not place a stumbling block before one of these little ones."
- We provide training and resources for congregations on how to develop **Safe Sanctuaries** policies and share insights on how to implement the policies. The initial training is usually a two-hour event. Currently, approximately half of our 70 congregations have completed Safe Sanctuaries / Child Protection Policies.
- Examples of Safe Sanctuaries policies include: two-adults present in every ministry situation with children or youth; windows in all classroom and office doors; understanding personal boundaries and safe-touch; annual orientation/training; no workers under the age of 18; advance notice to parents of all activities; first aid/CPR training.
- Another way of being a Safe Sanctuaries Conference is to require all pastors to be trained in **Prevention of Clergy Misconduct**. This takes place during a full eight-hour day and covers many topics: from ethics and power to safe touch and clergy self-care.

The trainer is Marlene Bogard, WDC Minister of Christian Nurture. She has trained over 30 congregations, dozens of pastors and annually trains all staff, directors and counselors for the WDC Camp Mennoscah. Marlene is a certified trainer from the FaithTrust Institute, a nationally recognized leader in Prevention of Clergy Misconduct. Marlene is available as a resource and trainer to other area conferences and congregations for a fee. She will be glad to visit with you and imagine a variety of possibilities!