

REPORT OF THE BISHOP'S TASK FORCE FOR A SAFE CHURCH, VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT AND SCREENING

Focus:

It is our desire that the Church be a safe and holy place for all whom our ministry effects.

As a faith community, the Anglican Diocese of Niagara is committed to fostering an atmosphere in which our members, volunteers, staff and those who use our buildings, can work and worship together in an atmosphere that is free from all forms of harassment, misconduct, interpersonal violence, exploitation or intimidation.

It is our work to share a body of knowledge that embodies "best practice resources" within the Diocese of Niagara. A significant part of our work, therefore, is that of educating and mentoring lay people and clergy within the Diocese. We offer workshops, some of which are mandatory (such as our basic policy orientation), and others which are tailored to regional or parish need (such as workshops designed for Church School and Youth workers and volunteers, those who work with fragile adults, those working to maintain healthy boundaries, etc. as well as in the investigation of situations where misconduct is alleged to have taken place.

Activities:

During this past year, we have continued to provide basic education to clergy and lay people in the creation of an environment of a Safe Church. This includes the prevention of individual misconduct, but goes beyond that to support individuals in the maintenance of healthy interpersonal boundaries. We are consult with congregations about the planning of physical plants, and work at creating a safe environment in which both individuals and the community can function. In the past year, we dealt with several parish and employment situations requiring investigations, and on an informal basis, coached a number of individuals through personal and professional challenges.

Support is available for parishes, regions and clericus groups to educate people around the nature of harassment, abuse and the misuse of power.

This year marks the year when Jim Sandilands has left the Safe Church Task Force. He has given not only of his wisdom and courage, but years as a volunteer to the cause of creating a Safer Church in the Diocese of Niagara. Thank you, Jim.

We thank other individuals who are involved with the work of this committee, especially Canon Robert Welch, Diocesan Chancellor; Max Woolaver, Nancy Blackie, Christyn Perkons, Jane Wyse, Alison D'Atri, Mary Anne Grant all of whom continue to give generously of their time in special projects of the Safe Church Task Force.

Respectfully submitted,
The Reverend Canon Marni Nancekivell, Chair