Commission on Safe Church

Members

Ms. Lesley Williams, Director of Safe Church Training	*Bishop's Staff – Extended*
The Rev. Dr. Deborah Silver, Safe Church Consultant	*Bishop's Staff – Extended*

Mandate

Policy of the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta

Who is required to take Safeguarding God's Children Training:

- All clergy whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, or otherwise who are engaged in ministry or service to the church.
- Seminarians and interns.
- All persons who teach, supervise or assist with supervising children or youth in ministries, programs or activities more often than occasionally.
- All paid or volunteer Church Personnel whose work regularly takes them throughout the facility or grounds.
- All persons who provide transportation to children or youth without other adults in the vehicle more than occasionally.
- All vestry members or members of similar decision-making groups who have the authority to approve the creation of ministries, programs or activities for children or youth.

Who is required to take Safeguarding God's People Training:

- All clergy whether stipendiary, non-stipendiary, or otherwise who are engaged in ministry or service to the church.
- Seminarians, interns and lay chaplains.
- Church employees.
- Vestry members.
- Lay pastoral care ministers (including Stephen Ministers and Community of Hope ministers).

- Spiritual directors, eucharistic visitors, hospital visitors authorized by the church.
- Leaders and facilitators of all adult programs and small group ministries.

Summary of Work

The purpose of the Safe Church ministry in the Diocese of Atlanta is to educate and empower clergy, staff, and volunteers to create and maintain safe and inclusive environments in our churches and ministries. This is achieved via in-depth training and consultation regarding policy violations, best practices, and allegations of suspected abuse.

Training is comprised of two programs:

- **Safeguarding God's Children** training seeks to protect the thousands of children who are served every year in our churches, worshiping communities, schools, programs, and activities. This training must be renewed every 3 years.
- **Safeguarding God's People** training seeks to protect adults from sexual exploitation and abuse in every and all ministry settings. This training must be renewed every 5 years.

Since 2020, when we shifted to primarily offering Zoom training, the ease of accessibility has enabled thousands of people in our diocese to complete and maintain their training compliance, helping to make our churches and ministries safe places for everyone. This faithful work is essential to helping us live out our commitment to the baptismal covenant. Our commitment is to nurture all of God's beloved in faith and keep them safe from any kind of abuse.

The Safe Church Atlanta website includes the following:

- Current information regarding Safeguarding training requirements, including who is required to complete each training course and the specific requirements based on a person's role in their parish or organization.
- The schedule and registration information for all upcoming diocesan trainings (both online and in person).
- Current diocesan policies and protocols as well as best practices and additional resources.

To learn more, please visit the Safe Church pages on the diocesan website [https://www.episcopalatlanta.org/safe-church/] or https://safechurchatlanta.org