

## Safe Church Ministry Classis Coordinator: Envisioned

The Safe Church Ministry Classis Coordinator is a position envisioned to assist each classis in establishing an effective and sustainable safe church team. Why? Because we are called by God to reflect our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to a world that needs him so much. Our love for God is reflected in the way we love and treat one another.

Therefore, active safe church ministry helps us live into God's calling by building communities where the value of each person is honored and where people are free to worship and grow free from abuse. In addition, we are part of a culture where abuse is far too common, and has wounded many of God's children. Therefore, active safe church ministry equips God's people to respond in situations of abuse with compassion and justice that foster healing. This kind of response provides opportunity for the transforming power of God's love to be revealed in our midst. The Coordinator will help cultivate spaces of learning, equipping and healing so that churches can better experience the good news of God's kingdom that transforms lives and communities worldwide ([CRCNA Vision](#)).

There are three ways that we envision this position to work:

**First** - Each Coordinator will use their own leadership gifts and skills to equip and train others who are active in congregational safe church ministry. Facilitating meetings (virtual and actual) will help to encourage and support individuals who are actively working in each congregation towards greater awareness, leading to more effective abuse prevention, and response. We recognize that each congregation has unique needs as well as gifts and resources. Safe church ministry must fit these unique contexts, which is why empowering people to serve in each congregation is so important.

**Second** - Classis support for a Coordinator position will show that abuse awareness, prevention and response is taken seriously, which is an especially important message in this time, when the voices of those who have suffered abuse are louder and stronger than ever. A designated position, whether paid or unpaid, provides an ongoing integral connection with the classis structure, offering greater sustainability as well as a bit of accountability. It will help keep the issue from "falling off the back burner" which so commonly happens when no one is specifically paying attention to it.

**Third** - A safe church ministry Classis Coordinator (Coordinator) will need resources, encouragement and support. Therefore, creating connections with others doing the work, building knowledge of resources that are available and offering consultation and coaching as needed will become a primary responsibility of the director and Safe Church Ministry associate.

Synod has repeatedly reminded all classes in the denomination of the vital importance of a safe church team, noting that, "a safe church team is an important part of the pastoral care that the church offers to its members." (Acts of Synod 2014; p.559) It is our hope that this position will assist our congregations and classes in this matter. We hope that you will prayerfully consider the advantages to creating this position within your classis structure. In some classes this position is already in place, whether paid or unpaid, and the results speak for themselves in terms of increased learning opportunities, better connections, and more effective prevention and response efforts. Please don't hesitate to contact Safe Church to discuss this further.

## **Safe Church Ministry Classis Coordinator: A Sample Position Description**

### **Primary expectations include:**

#### **1. Organize classis-wide safe church ministry team meetings:**

Meetings, virtual or actual, would ideally occur 2-4 times annually. Meeting responsibilities will include:

- a. recruiting team members from congregations within the classis (a classis team may consist of a representative from each church, or a smaller team may connect with liaisons from each church).
- b. assisting team members in establishing a group of three or more in each church to “champion” safe church ministry within each congregation.
- c. facilitating meetings to collaborate, encourage, equip and empower one another.
- d. forwarding contact information for church representatives to SCM along with minutes from classis team meetings.
- e. resourcing congregations by connecting them to online SCM resources and other local resources related to abuse awareness, prevention and response.

#### **2. Develop a collaborative working relationship with the classis:**

The Coordinator seeks a working relationship with classis, which includes:

- a. regular attendance and reporting at classis meetings.
- b. regular communication with the stated clerk of classis and other classis functionaries as required, particularly when situations of abuse arise.

#### **3. Connect with SCM (Safe Church Ministry) denominational staff:**

SCM will offer support to coordinators through coaching calls or visits at least twice per year. Coaching calls or visits will include discussion of:

- a. resources, from within and outside of the CRC for promotion, equipping and training.
- b. processes and goals for leading the team forward.
- c. situations, and/or events affecting the ministry.