



Greetings Ministry Partners,

Each autumn, the fourth Sunday in September, Safe Church Ministry invites all the Christian Reformed congregations throughout the United States and Canada to participate in Abuse Awareness Sunday. This year Abuse Awareness Sunday falls on Sept. 27, 2020. This is a time for your congregation to reflect on the ways that abuse has touched people gathered there—whether in their homes, in the community, or within the church itself. It is a time to repent of the ways that we’ve been complicit in allowing a culture of abuse to exist, a time to pray for healing, as well as a time to celebrate the healing and restoration that has come.

Additionally, each year we offer a more specific theme for Abuse Awareness Sunday, and offer a bulletin insert for your use. In 2018 we wrote to you introducing the newly created position of Safe Church Classis Coordinator, and asked for your financial support to make that position possible. In 2019 we wrote to you about introducing the Circle of Grace Curriculum, which is an effective way for your congregation to equip children and youth in creating a safe environment for themselves and one another.

And now, in 2020, we are taking a broader look at the dynamics of abuse and power. The theme for this year’s Abuse Awareness Sunday comes out of Synod 2019’s mandate to address abuse of power in the CRC. In response to this mandate, Safe Church has been actively collaborating with other agencies in the CRC—Pastor Church Resources and Calvin Theological Seminary among others—to find ways to promote learning about the topic.

*What is power? Is it good or bad? How can it be abused, and how does God mean for us to use it?* These are questions that we have been asking, and questions that we encourage your congregation to consider. Enclosed you will find [a bulletin insert titled: Power. How Will We Use It?](#) The flier, offered free to your congregation, highlights the question of how we use the power we are given. Will we, like Jesus, be able to resist the temptation to use our power for our own gain and instead use it for his purposes and for the sake of the church?

The Synodical mandate calls the Christian Reformed Church to continue to build a culture that *prevents* the abuse of power—and this will only happen as we all begin to be aware of the way power dynamics are at work in our lives. It is fair to say that many of us hold power that we are not even aware of—we certainly do not always feel powerful. To begin to understand more about our own power and its potential abuses, we invite you to participate in Abuse Awareness Sunday. You may also want to consider this article on The Network: <https://network.crcna.org/safe-church/its-all-about-power>. If you need ideas for what your church can do, please contact your classis Safe Church Coordinator, or Safe Church directly.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

The Safe Church Advisory Committee and Safe Church staff