Hello colleagues,

As our May 21 clergy day draws closer, I wanted to give you a detailed overview of what items need to be completed in preparation for the Safe Church Refresher Training. As a reminder, the training will take place at the Homewood Suites by Hilton, Center Valley. Check-in starts at 9:30am. The program will begin promptly at 10am and end at 3pm. Register here.

As you're aware, maintaining our Safeguarding Certifications is vital first and foremost because it helps us to keep all of the people in our congregations safe from exploitation and victimization. That is why all clergy are required to maintain these certifications, and why *all clergy who are active in the diocese, including supply clergy, are required to attend the training on May 21.*

In order to be prepared for the training, all Safeguarding online courses must be completed, as well as all necessary steps to be compliant through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Keep in mind that completing all of these items is time-intensive, so please plan accordingly. *Please carefully read the list below (includes steps 1-2d) to learn what must be done in order to be in compliance with church canons and state law.*

1) **Complete all required Safeguarding courses online.**

The Episcopal Church Model Policies have changed, so clergy must now renew our training every THREE years. Beginning this year, there have also been updates to the modules we must complete in order to be compliant. *Because of these updates, we are asking ALL CLERGY to complete ALL of the modules required through the online Safeguarding portal.*

In order to complete the necessary modules, you will need to have a username and password for the SafeGuarding website. Paula has created simple logins to help everyone in this process. Your username is your first initial followed by your last name (ex: mdembi), and your password is the last four digits of your phone number followed by "pa" (ex: 5151pa). If your username and password don't seem to work, you can click the "I forgot my username/password" links on the bottom of the login screen for help.

If you are still unable to login, please email Paula Lapinski, and she will provide you with a username and password.

Everyone must complete the following modules (keep in mind this will take several hours, and they don't need to be completed in one sitting):

Meet Sam
It Happened to Me
Preventing Sexual Activity Between Young Children
Keeping Your Church Safe
Safeguarding God's People: Preventing Sexual Exploitation – for Congregations
Your Policies
Safeguarding God's People: Preventing Sexual Harassment – For Managers and Supervisors
Duty to Report – Mandated Reporter
Social Media Safety

There are additional modules you'll need to take if your church runs a camp or a school. Please consult the chart below to ensure you are completing the correct modules. (Keep in mind that you should be following the list for "Clergy, Staff, and Vestry" as your base-list, not "Clergy, Staff, and Vestry Renewal," as that column will only apply in the years moving forward.)

http://www.diobeth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Safeguarding-Module-Breakdown-Chart.pdf

2) Obtain all necessary clearances and background checks to be in compliance with requirements through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

There are multiple steps that all clergy must take in order to be in compliance with state law. All of the steps are listed below, and must be redone every 60 months (5 years) in order to maintain compliance. *If your clearances and/or background checks are older than 60 months, you must renew them. All of these documents should be on file in your church office and copies must be sent to the diocesan office.* Again, give yourself plenty of time to complete these, as some steps can be time intensive. *Please read steps "a" through "d" to ensure you are in compliance*.

a) Obtain a Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance.

This can be done through the online portal or you can submit a paper form to:
ChildLine and Abuse Registry
Pennsylvania Department of Human Services
PO Box 8170
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8170

Keep in mind that as clergy, you _cannot_ register for clearances and background checks as a volunteer. You are considered an employee.

b) Obtain a Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record Check.

This can be done through the online portal or you can submit a paper form to:

Pennsylvania State Police
Central Repository – 164
1800 Elmerton Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9758

Keep in mind that as clergy, you _cannot_ register for clearances and background checks as a volunteer. You are considered an employee.

c) Obtain an FBI Criminal Background Check.

In order to do this, you must first go to the IdentoGO website and enter the service code **1KG756**. You will then be able to schedule an appointment at a fingerprinting site near you, and learn what you'll need to bring in order to facilitate processing.

For more information about obtaining child abuse clearances and state/FBI background checks, visit PA's DHS website.

d) Send copies of all documents to the diocesan office

Once you have received documentation showing you have completed steps 2a-2c, copies must be sent to the diocesan office to keep on file. You may email copies to Paula Lapinski, or send them via mail to

Paula Lapinski
The Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem
333 Wyandotte Street
Bethlehem, PA 18015

If you have any questions or run into any issues, please contact [Megan](#) or [Paula](#) and we will help you in any way we can.

Peace,

Megan and Paula