



August 22, 2018

To the people of Wesley United Methodist Church:

In light of the recent revelation of sexual abuse committed by former pastor Bill Hybels of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, IL, the church's recent \$3.2 million settlement for the sexual abuse of a disabled child by a volunteer and last week's grand jury report that over 300 priests in six Roman Catholic dioceses across Pennsylvania abused over 1000 children, it is important that you hear from your church.

There is no excuse for sexual abuse of any kind. The stories of those abused need to be taken seriously and investigated. Congregations need clear policies and procedures to administer complaints of misconduct. Congregational leaders need to publicly denounce sexual abuse.

We want you to know the following:

Wesley United Methodist Church adopted a Safe Sanctuary policy in 2005 which has been continually updated. It lists the church's stance on abuse and how we protect children including the following guidelines:

- Employee and volunteer screening for those who work with children and youth
- No fewer than two unrelated adults must be present at all church-related activities involving children and youth
- Open/uncovered doors and windows
- Electronic communication with children and youth must be copied to another volunteer, staff member or parent
- Workers or volunteers must be at least five years older than children and youth
- No volunteer may work with children or youth until said volunteer has been an active participant in the congregation for six months (unless partnered with another adult who has volunteered with children and youth for six months or more)

All are encouraged to review the Safe Sanctuary Policy in its entirety. It can be found on the Forms & Downloads page of the church's web site.

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Additionally, Wesley United Methodist Church has a grievance policy for claims of misconduct against the pastor, staff member or a volunteer. It can also be found on the Forms & Downloads page of the church's web site.

Wesley United Methodist Church takes stories of abuse seriously and will listen to your story. Some people are the victims of abuse that may or may not have been shared publicly. Your staff is committed to hearing these stories, honoring them and standing with you.

We believe in transformation. We welcome those who have abused others. We will work to provide responsible ways to engage individuals who have abused someone. We believe in the power of #koinonia to heal us and make us whole.

Solving this problem begins with each person. We can all do better to raise children who can function better, we can do better to provide a safe place for all and we can all do better at being the best version of ourselves that God is calling us to be.

Grace and Peace,

*The Governing Board of Wesley United Methodist Church*