Ministry Safety & Risk Management Reminders for the New Year

As we begin a new year of church ministry, we reaffirm our commitment to providing a safe, secure, and caring environment for children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

Below are important **Safety and Risk Management** reminders for all ministry leaders, staff and volunteers:

1. Statement of Policy

Please review your **Statement of Policy.** Legally, the only thing worse than having no written policy is having a written policy that is **not followed**.

Policies must reflect what we **actually do**, not just what we say we do.

2. Screening Checklist

All staff and volunteers must meet the following screening requirements:

- Ministry Application (one time)
- Police Information Check with Vulnerable Sector Search (renewed every 3 years)
- Interview (one time)
- Reference Checks (one time)
- Abuse Prevention and Safety Training (annually)

By neglecting proper screening practices, you risk exposing your church and community to injury, abuse or avoidable lawsuits.

3. Documentation Retention

The following records must be **retained indefinitely**:

- Staff and volunteer files (records are kept using a confidential, secure system respecting the privacy of personal information)

- Attendance records
- Consent and waiver form
- Incident forms

4. Proactive Communication

Every church has a vested interest in clearly communicating that:

- This church is serious about protecting **children, youth, and vulnerable adults**
- This church screens staff and volunteers effectively
- This church requires ministry applications, police information checks, interviews, reference checks, and abuse prevention training
- This church actively monitors the behavior of staff, volunteers, and participants
- This church expects **all staff and volunteers** to understand and comply with policies and procedures designed to prevent abuse.

5. Understanding Risk

To properly protect children, youth, and vulnerable adults, church leaders and volunteers must understand **how risk unfolds** and how abuse can occur if safeguards are not in place.

6. Best Practices

Our ongoing best practices include:

- Statement of Policy
- Effective screening
- Child/youth check-in systems and/or attendance records
- Two-adult rule
- Six-month membership rule

Thank you for your continued diligence and commitment to maintaining a safe church ministry environment. Protecting those entrusted to our care is a shared responsibility.

If you have any questions or need assistance please contact: **Cindy Bartlett**, Ministry Safety & Risk Consultant (cbartlett@thewcd.ca)