

Greetings and welcome to Safe Sanctuary Insights, a monthly eNews filled with expert advice, articles, commentary and announcements relating to the important mission of keeping our members, visitors and staff safe in our churches and nonprofits ministries.

In This Issue

[Safe Sanctuaries Plans for Vacation Bible School](#)
[Plan, Prepare, Protect! Stopping Violence in Church](#)

Safe Sanctuaries Plans for Vacation Bible School

Let's get ready for Vacation Bible School! Even though summer seems a long way off, it's really time to get your plans underway. Now is the time for selecting and screening all of your staff and volunteers. Here is a list of helpful hints for streamlining your work.

1. **Written application:** have each prospective volunteer complete a basic written application.
2. **Personal references:** collect contact information for at least three personal references for the prospective volunteer. Check with each reference and keep a report of the impressions they give of the prospective volunteer.
3. **Process a criminal background check** on each prospective worker. The background check consent form should be included as part of the initial application. Today, it is easy to process background checks online. However, be cautious in selecting the screening company. I recommend Trak-1 Technology (www.trak-1.com) because Trak-1 can process all your background checks for VBS quickly, and economically, and deliver reliable information to you in a very short time.

In the selection process, our first priority when using background checks is getting up-to-date and reliable information. Our next priority is efficiency and economics. You have just a few short weeks between now and the time you'll have to train your VBS workers; therefore, you need to get the screening results as quickly as possible. Although some local police departments will process "background checks" at no cost for a church, I have learned that often these "background checks" only review records in the county where the church is located. This can mean that inadequate information is provided and reported to you for consideration in your selection and screening process. It is far better to use a reliable screening company and get independent objective information on your applicants.

Use the information you receive in the applications, from the references, and from the background checks to select your VBS summer staff. This robust selection process will give you great confidence that the leaders of your ministry will provide the children with a wonderful experience in a safe and well-supervised environment. You can find sample application and reference forms in SAFE SANCTUARIES, available from www.upperroom.org/bookstore. Then, plan a training and orientation session for the whole group - make it a "VBS PREVIEW PARTY" and have a little extra fun!

Plan, Prepare, Protect! Stopping Violence in Church **A Conference for Church Leaders**

Rev. Joy Melton, along with Pfeiffer University and the leaders of the Security Executive Council, are hosting a conference at the Charlotte Campus of Pfeiffer University and Myers Park United Methodist Church in Charlotte, N.C. , April 17-19, 2013.

PLAN, PREPARE, PROTECT: STRENGTHENING SAFETY IN MINISTRY will address a variety of important issues for church business administrators, trustees, finance leaders, and clergy. Violent crime in churches is a well-documented fact. Ministry security expert Carl Chinn has tracked hundreds of deadly force incidents at churches since 1999. Recent statistics posted at www.carlchinn.com include attacks, abductions, suspicious deaths, suicides and deadly force used in intervention. The National Archive of Criminal Justice also reports thousands of such crimes in houses of worship. The most frequent known triggers are domestic violence spilling over to the church, personal conflict involving non-related church members and robbery. The crimes occur in churches of virtually every denomination.



Leading experts in safety and security will prepare clergy, church business administrators, and church leaders to educate congregations about security priorities for churches. Participants will learn successful risk management and mitigation techniques for reducing security risks. Participants will also learn effective evaluation methods for analyzing the church's safety plans. Presentations and discussions will be provided on security of the church's physical facilities, preventing cyber risks, appropriate staff selection methods, financial fraud prevention, and many other topics. Leaders will include Boy Hayes and Mark Lex of the Security Executive Council, Rev. Joy Melton, author of *SAFE SANCTUARIES: THE CHURCH RESPONDS TO THE ABUSE, EXPLOITATION AND NEGLECT OF OLDER ADULTS*, and Pfeiffer University faculty experts in stewardship and risk-management preparedness. Attendees will receive solid resources and will also have the opportunity to join a continuing networked cohort of colleagues who desire to participate in more in-depth consultation and study.

Churches certainly can reduce the likelihood of crime and the injuries that can be devastating for individuals and congregations. It takes thinking ahead and proactive planning to fully develop comprehensive risk management plans. It also takes a robust effort to raise awareness within the congregation of security tools that are available. The biggest expense in this type of proactive risk management is, quite simply, the time it takes to plan, prepare, and implement the protection strategies.

For registration information, contact Rev. Melton by email at joy@hindsonmelton.com or by phone at 770-512-8383. Mark your calendar now and join us for the first PLAN, PREPARE, PROTECT CONFERENCE at Pfeiffer University.

Rev. Joy Melton, J.D. Esq.

As an author, speaker, attorney and clergy, I have unique insight into the needs of churches and ministries, from safety and crisis situations to labor disputes and employment concerns. I hope that you find this monthly eNews both insightful and concretely useful as you develop your safe sanctuary plans and tackle the issues that are bound to come your way. If at any time you have questions or could use expert input, feel free to contact me. ~ Joy



Testimonials

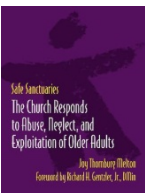
"Joy Melton is an accomplished minister, attorney, author, speaker and woman. Trak-1 Technology is proud to offer her Safe Sanctuaries training to churches across the country through its Smart-Trak platform."

Nancy Lynn Roberts

Trak-1

NEW BOOK: SAFE SANCTUARIES: The Church Responds to Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of Older Adults

Please check out my latest book, now available from Discipleship Resources! Released just in time for the new year, *SAFE SANCTUARIES The Church Responds to Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of Older Adults* is the latest in the *SAFE SANCTUARIES* series of resources.



TO PURCHASE:

SAFE SANCTUARIES The Church Responds to Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of Older Adults can be purchased at upperroom.org/bookstore or discipleshipresources.org.

To secure Rev. Melton as a keynote speaker or presenter for your older adult ministries planning event, contact joy@hindsonmelton.com

About Legal Representation

Joy Melton is a partner with Hindson & Melton, LLC. At Hindson & Melton, LLC, we believe that our commitment to the quality legal services we provide our clients has resulted in a national reputation for excellence and effective representation. We offer our clients a commitment to quality and help them understand what their legal matter will involve. We believe that what puts us a step above other attorneys is our commitment to serving our clients and community with honesty, integrity, and courage.