

A CHARTER FOR SAFE AND INCLUSIVE CHURCH

Preamble

We, the Anglican Church of Southern Africa are people of God. Recognising that all people embody the spirit of God that needs to be nurtured and brought into the fullness of life. We recognise and acknowledge that our places of worship and learning have for many caused untold pain, hurt and harm, and have left individuals and families deeply scarred.

We therefore commit ourselves to a Programme of Action based on this Charter to promote a culture of safety and inclusion amongst all our people, organizations, institutions and places of worship. And through ongoing education and training to equip all who minister to prevent the occurrence of abuse and create spaces where justice and restoration can take place. And we accept this work of creating as safe and inclusive church as part of our sacred vocation as God's people in the world.

Charter

Culture of safety and inclusivity

We recognize that a culture of safety and inclusivity needs to be grounded in our theological understanding of who we are as people of God. This understanding informs not only our approach to "being in the world, but not of the world" but also must be manifested in how we "do" Church. We therefore commit ourselves to being a people called to manifest the saving and unconditional love of God. We will promote a culture of safety and inclusion in parishes, church organizations and institutions by theological education and ongoing training to help all ministers prevent the occurrence of abuse. In addition, we commit to boldly confronting the systemic factors which create the context of abuse.

Effective Response to Abuse

We recognize that prevention is better than cure. As such we commit ourselves to taking the necessary steps to create a culture of safety and inclusion. Were abuse does occur we will implement policies and procedures we have to respond properly to allegations of abuse against all ministers within the church as defined by Act XV including but not limited to:

- Making known within churches the procedure for making complaints;
- Arranging pastoral care for any person making a complaint of abuse;

- The impartial determination of allegations of abuse against a minister of the church, and assessment of their suitability for future ministry;
- Providing support for affected parishes, organizations and institutions;

In addition, we recognize that a timeous response is of utmost importance and commit to creating processes and structures to ensure this.

Pastoral Support where there is Abuse

We will provide pastoral support for the abused and abuser; their families, affected parishes, organizations and institutions by:

- Listening with patience and compassion to their experiences and concerns;
- Offering spiritual assistance and other forms of pastoral care;
- Providing practical support as those affected go on the journey of healing.

Practice of Pastoral Ministry

We remain committed to the implementation of Act XV, and promote by education and training these standards. This includes ongoing professional development of all ministers of the church as well as a commitment to their continued spiritual growth.

Suitability for Ministry

We will have and implement policies and procedures to assess the suitability of persons for ordination as clergy or appointment to positions of responsibility in the church including:

- Practice of background checks;
- Ongoing checks prior to each licensing appointment