

Child Protection Month

April 2018



Prayer for Our Church

Loving God, you care for the needy and vulnerable among us. Children are always close to your heart.

We ask that you kindle in us love for the children and youth among us. Strengthen our resolve to defend those who cannot defend themselves. Guide us as we respond to those who have been harmed.

Help us make our congregation a place where your love and grace are experienced and where fear and harm are forever banished.

Make us your servants in caring for your beloved children.

Amen.



www.DovesNest.net
info@dovesnest.net

Empowering and equipping faith communities to keep children and youth safe in their homes, churches, and communities.

#MeToo

The time is coming when everything that is covered up will be revealed, and all that is secret will be made known to all. Whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be shouted from the housetops for all to hear!

Luke 12:2–3 New Living Translation

Since October, an astounding number of women and men have been fulfilling Jesus's prophecy. Famous and ordinary alike, they have begun to speak openly of their experiences of sexual abuse, assault, and harassment.

On October 15, 2017, actor Alyssa Milano tweeted, "If all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote 'Me too' as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem." More than a half million people tweeted "MeToo" over the next day. More than 4,700,000 posted it on Facebook. Clearly the times are changing!

Unfortunately for children who are abused and neglected, their "Me Too" moment may be years, even decades away. Their suffering will be long and scars may be deep. When, as adults, they talk about what they went through, they say things like:

"I never knew things could be different."

"I thought that was just the way it was for everyone."

Our children can't stand up against abuse and neglect—we must stand up for them. This is a huge task, but we can start where we are. We can make sure our churches are free from all kinds of abuse and that children and youth are able to talk with trusted adults about whatever is going on in their lives.

Ten years before Alyssa Milano made the phrase popular, it was coined by Tarana Burke, who struggled to respond to a 13-year-old girl who told her she had been sexually assaulted. Burke later said she wished she had just told the girl, "Me too."

Dove's Nest helps congregations stand up for children.

David Orr is a pastor in the United Church of Christ and a member of the Dove's Nest board.