



Silence Broken

MINISTRY FOR ADULT SURVIVORS
OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

WWW.SILENCEBROKENNOW.ORG

3924 SAINT CHARLES AVENUE, NEW ORLEANS, LA 70115

Our Faith

We believe that God has many different names but that God's essence is Love. The tradition of Protestant Christianity is the one that we know best so it is the "language" we speak, but the principles of this ministry can be applied to any faith tradition.

We believe that divine Love is greater than external differences; we embrace all who want to be a part of this community.

We know that the dreadful sin of child sexual abuse has long-lasting, far-reaching consequences. We also know that God's love lasts longer and reaches farther. No matter who you are, your story is not over. Your scars can become trophies of victory through the healing and restorative power of Love.

Our Focus

Our focus is on helping facilitate ministry to survivors. All good faith leaders desire the wholeness of their members, but most pastors are unaware of the extent of the damage inflicted on their people by the trauma of child sexual abuse. Many are not sure how to respond to disclosures of abuse. It is not the pastors' job to offer emotional counseling, and they are not trained to do that; however, it is their calling and responsibility to provide spiritual support to survivors. We are here to help them in that work.

Our Mission

Silence Broken is a nonprofit organization that facilitates loving, truth-based ministry for adult survivors of child sexual abuse.

Our Core Values

We seek to work and to live with **INTEGRITY** and **TRANSPARENCY**.

We strive to be **RELIABLE** and **RESPECTFUL**.

We honor **THE PRESENCE OF GOD** in each individual and we **BELIEVE** in everyone's capacity to change, grow, and be truly free.



Participants at an interactive SB exhibit decorated metal tins with stickers, markers, and magnets as reminders of God's endless presence. They then chose 15-20 small scripture cards to store in their boxes and take home.

Vision Statement

We pray and work toward the time when pastors of all denominations are free and equipped to speak the truth about child sexual abuse: It is not the child's fault; it is never God's desire for innocents to suffer; it is God's will to provide healing, restoration, and wholeness. We envision churches where survivors are embraced, and where appropriate ministry is offered that does not stifle, isolate, or stigmatize. Silence Broken does not ever discriminate on any basis; all are invited and welcomed into this community of faith.

Our First Seven Months

In June 2024, Silence Broken formally began its work with an interactive exhibit at the Annual Conference of the Louisiana United Methodist Church. The trailblazing display was enthusiastically received by clergy and laity alike.

From there, we went on to participate in three other events: the Mission Fair at Rayne UMC, the National Fellowship of Associate Members and Local Pastors Annual Meeting, and the 2024 Take Back the Night event jointly sponsored by five local universities. To strengthen our community network, we began meeting individually with New Orleans pastors and with organizations whose missions parallel ours.

Silence Broken now has a Board of Directors and an Advisory Board; we are incorporated with the state of Louisiana and have received 501(c)(3) nonprofit status.

Our emailed newsletter, *Joyful News*, went out every week; we have a targeted mailing for pastors each month; and our lovely survivor support kits provide immediate comfort to recipients.



Teal is the color for sexual assault awareness, and our eye-catching exhibit at the Louisiana United Methodist Annual Conference in June had plenty of teal. More importantly, we offered a variety of literature, snacks, pens, stickers, and the opportunity to win one of three extravagant grounding baskets. Freshly-baked oatmeal cookies each morning served as an additional draw. Our booth had steady streams of visitors, and we're looking forward to returning to Baton Rouge in 2025.



After Mary speaks at a church or an event, someone usually says to her, "I'm a survivor too. Where can I find help?" She always has a few of these kits on hand. They contain SB literature for survivors, helpful scriptures, other resources, and grounding tactics and tools such as fidget items, strong mints, and bubbles. The soft cloth sacks are lovingly handmade by an SB volunteer to show tenderness, care, and concern for each survivor.

Our Outreach



Five local universities collaborated to present Take Back the Night in October. Hundreds of students from Dillard University, Loyola University, Southern University, the University of New Orleans, and Xavier University gathered to rally against sexual violence. We were there with lights and literature, giveaways, snazzy mugs, and bowls full of snacks.

At Silence Broken, we do not seek to evaluate our impact because God's work cannot be measured. But we do measure our outreach, with the desire to continually do better. From June through December, 2024:

- We participated in four structured events with a combined estimated attendance of 1300.
- Director Mary Brown preached at four Louisiana Methodist churches, sharing the message of hope and freedom for survivors and for all others.
- We mailed 270 monthly support postcards to ministers.
- We have sent weekly e-newsletters for the past six months.

Looking Ahead

For 2025, our intention is to “plan the farm while scattering seeds.”

We will focus on establishing a solid foundation for growth, shaping a structure to work with pastors as they develop ministry for adult survivors of child sexual abuse. At the same time, though, we cannot ignore the immediate spiritual needs of survivors. With these twin emphases in mind, we will:

- Continue meeting with individual pastors
- Expand our reach to visit other UMC annual conferences, in addition to returning to the Louisiana Conference in Baton Rouge
- Strengthen our community network by exploring collaborations with likeminded organizations
- Continue writing and distributing materials for pastors and survivors
- Develop our internal structure in preparation for growth
- Explore the possibility of offering online training sessions and seminars



Participants at our January planning meeting, who brought a wealth of experience, wisdom, talent, and expertise: (L to R) Jay Hogewood, Gary Innerarity, Chelsea Porché Creel, Lynn Coatney, Eva Silvestre, Mike Coatney, Michelle Mathew, Heather Schwartz, Mary Munger. (Mary Brown served as photographer.)



Baby Cat, Silence Broken's mascot and Chief Morale Pawficer, offers a motivational corner in every Joyful News. Baby experienced trauma as a stray cat before she was adopted, and (in the words of a regular reader) is "wise beyond her years."

Thank You

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*(BoD = Board of Directors,
 AB = Advisory Board)*