



# “THE CLOAK OF HOLINESS: HIDING ABUSE IN PLAIN SIGHT”

**A WEBINAR FOR SURVIVORS AND THOSE WHO CARE FOR THEM**  
**Monday, April 27 6:30-8:00pm CDT**

Abuse can and does happen in a wide range of organizations, industries, and other settings: from schools and sports clubs to secret societies, the armed forces, high-flying tech and finance companies, homes and families, and more. Accompanying cover-ups occur in all of these spaces as well, and experts estimate that only a fraction of actual sexual abuse cases ever come to light. But there is something distinctive about sexual abuse when it occurs at the hands of religious leaders whom children and adults alike have been taught to trust unequivocally as the bearers of divine truth. That is, when a priest or pastor (for example) believed to be God’s specially elected representative abuses someone whose spiritual wellbeing has been entrusted to him (or her), the violation does damage of a specific kind to that person’s core sense of safety and truth. This webinar explores what is distinct about religious abuse and why it is that sacred settings so often enable abusers to hide in plain sight.



R. Marie Griffith is the John C. Danforth Distinguished Professor in the Humanities at Washington University in St. Louis and served 12 years as director of the John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics and editor of the Center’s journal, Religion & Politics. She previously served as a professor of religion at Princeton University and later as a Professor of New England Church History at Harvard Divinity School. She is the author or editor of several books, and she is a frequent media commentator and public speaker on current issues pertaining to religion and politics. Her current project analyzes the sexual abuse crisis in the US Catholic church and various Protestant denominations as well as independent churches.

For more information contact **Paula Kaempffer**, Coordinator for Restorative Practices & Survivor Support for the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, at [kaempfferp@archspm.org](mailto:kaempfferp@archspm.org).

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