



Church Leader Training

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE



FAMILY LEADERSHIP
INITIATIVE

Welcome

Our church is our sanctuary. But unfortunately, it is not immune to the realities of our world. From tornadoes and fires to acts of violence and vandalism, it can feel overwhelming just thinking about your church building or congregation being affected by a disaster or attack. But please know your work here today is crucial. During this session you will learn:

- **The importance of emergency preparedness.** *Page 4*
- **How to develop a church emergency response plan.** *Page 6*
- **Guidelines for testing and assessing a plan's effectiveness.** *Page 11*
- **How to prepare for and respond to violence.** *Page 13*

Please remember that no matter the situation, God walks with us and is a source of refuge and strength.





The Importance of Emergency Preparedness

As a church leader, you're responsible for the safety of those who come into the church building. This can feel like a daunting responsibility. And while you cannot stop a disaster from happening, you—along with your congregation—can be prepared to handle the situation.

Preparation can save time during an emergency, when every second may count. The steps you take now can minimize the impact of a disaster on your church and, in turn, enable your congregation to support others within the wider community who have also been affected—demonstrating and sharing God's love and hope.



Scripture SUPPORT

**For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power,
and of love, and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7**

A Collaborative Process

Emergency planning works best when efforts are aligned with local, state, and national practices. So reach out to your local emergency management agency and community partners (think first responders, public health officials, and mental health officials). Collaboration makes more resources available and helps ensure coordination of efforts. Ask your local emergency management agency for copies of state and/or local risk assessments. These assessments contain information regarding potential threats and hazards within the community. For information specific to Grand Rapids:

Kent County Sheriff's Office

Emergency Management Division

(616) 632-6255

www.accesskent.com/Sheriff/emergency.htm

Greater Grand Rapids Hazard Mitigation Plan

www.accesskent.com/Sheriff/pdfs/GGRHazMitPlan_2017.pdf

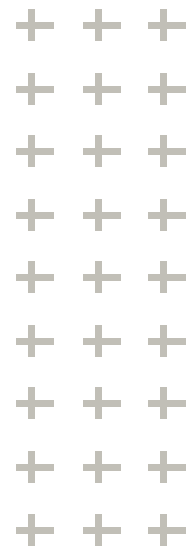
Risk assessments are a helpful tool when considering the probability and magnitude of specific emergencies happening in your area and the potential impact on people, property, and the ministry. Potential hazards include:

NATURAL	HUMAN
Severe winter weather (Temperature, snow, ice, blizzard)	Arson
Thunderstorm (Hail, lightning, wind)	Bomb threat
Tornado	Active shooter
Flooding	



Identify the Team

Form a planning team to begin the process of creating your church emergency response plan. The team should include church leaders, congregants, first responders, as well as others who have roles within the building. Many congregations include first responders and people with emergency planning experience. Tap into their expertise when developing, implementing, and refining your plan. Consider including diverse representation— individuals with disabilities and the elderly—on the planning team.



Creating an Emergency Response Plan

A comprehensive emergency response plan addresses a spectrum of threats and hazards. But for today’s session, we will focus on creating a response plan for severe storm or tornado. We’ll consider:

- 1 Preparation **before** the emergency.
- 2 Actions to take **during** the emergency.
- 3 Response **after** the emergency.



DID YOU KNOW?

Kent County had **33 tornadoes** between 1950–2015.

Michigan averages **15 tornadoes** every year.

What surprises you about the statistics above? Do you feel your church is adequately prepared for a tornado?

1 Preparation **BEFORE** the emergency

- **Identify safe places for people to go in the event of a tornado or thunderstorm warning.**

Where are the safest places to shelter in during severe weather?

How many people will each area hold? If you do not know, who can help figure this out?

- **Gather emergency supplies.**

What supplies will be needed in each safe place?

- **Register to receive text alerts or emails from local media or a weather app.**

2 Actions to take **DURING** the emergency

- **Seek shelter in a designated safe place and listen to weather reports.**

How will people move to a designated area? Consider accommodations that need to be made for children, individuals with disabilities, and seniors.

If the primary route to a safe place is blocked, what is the secondary route?

- **Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls.**

Broken glass and projectiles cause more deaths and damage than collapsed buildings.

3 Response **AFTER** the emergency

- **Stay inside for 30 minutes after the last time you see lightning or hear thunder.**
- **Reunite families.**

What is the process for reuniting children with parents/caregivers?

- **Watch for downed power lines.**
- **Only drink chlorinated or bottled water.**

Assigning and Communicating Responsibilities

As you develop your church emergency response plan, assign specific disaster-related responsibilities to church staff, leadership, and congregants. Clearly identify who is responsible for what. Determine backups in case someone is out of town or unable to carry out their responsibilities.

Create a contact list of those with disaster-related roles. Having this information readily available is essential when facing an emergency situation that requires immediate communication.

Emergency Contacts

Church Emergency Response Leadership

NAME	TITLE/ROLE	PHONE	MOBILE	EMAIL

Internal Communication

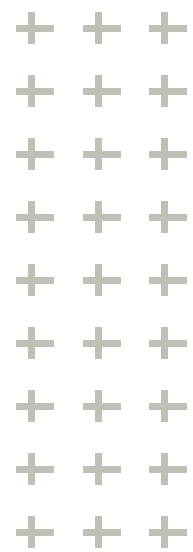
NAME	TITLE/ROLE	PHONE	MOBILE	EMAIL

External Communication

NAME	TITLE/ROLE	PHONE	MOBILE	EMAIL

Notes

Church Leader Training



Practicing and Assessing the Plan

After your church emergency response plan has been established, it's time for practice! Provide church staff, leaders, and congregation members with training to familiarize them with the plan. Practice exercises, from basic fire and shelter-in-place drills to full-scale community-wide drills, will help everyone to understand roles, responsibilities, and expectations during a real emergency. Training can also identify gaps and weaknesses in the plan, which can lead to improvements for a more effective response.

To continue refining your church emergency response plan, consider GET READY! Kent County. The 12-month program focuses on a specific area of emergency preparedness each month and is available to download at <https://www.accesskent.com/Sheriff/getready/>.

Topics include:

- **Sheltering vs. evacuation**
- **Recovering after disaster**
- **Life without power**
- **Hazard awareness**



If you would like to continue expanding your knowledge, consider these resources:

- **Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship by FEMA, 2013**
https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Developing_EOPs_for_Houses_of_Worship_FINAL.PDF
- **Kent County Severe Weather Awareness**
<https://accesskent.com/pdfs/SevereWeatherPacket2016.pdf>
- **Best Practices Securing Houses of Worship**
<https://www.asisonline.org/globalassets/get-involved/councils/documents/best-practices-securing-houses-of-worship.pdf>
- **Developing EOPS for Houses of Worship**
<http://prep4faith.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Essential-Readiness-for-Houses-of-Worship-and-Faith-Communities.pdf>
- **Big Book of Checklists**
<https://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/resources/safety-library/publications/the-big-book-of-risk-management-checklists/the-big-book-of-risk-management-checklists/>

Please note, these resources are only available in English.

Preparing for Violence

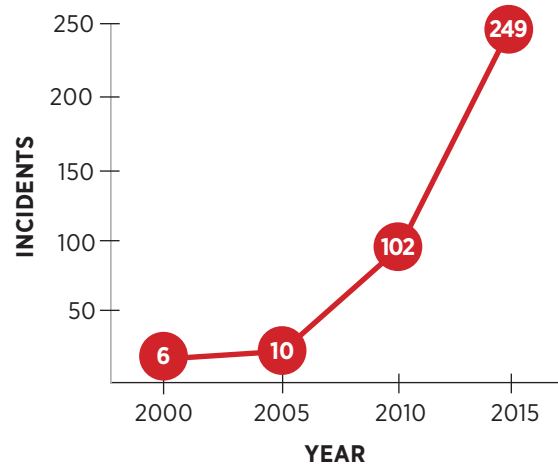
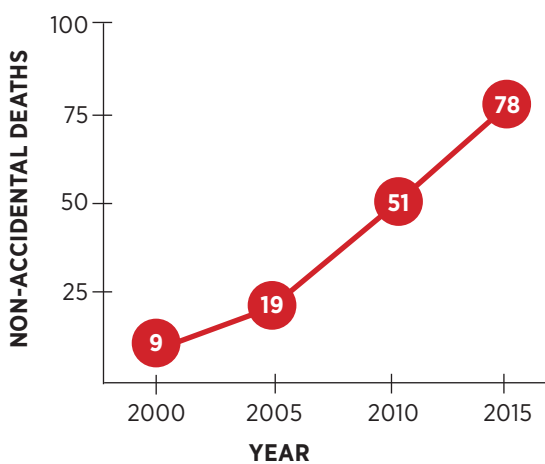
In the past, emergency preparedness for churches meant planning responses to severe weather and fire. Today's reality is that church leaders and congregations must also have plans in place to prevent and respond to a violent intruder or active shooter. Consider these statistics:

Violence in Faith-based Institutions

Visual

Prior to 1963, there had never been a mass murder (4 or more dead from any one attack) associated with a faith-based property. The Pittsburgh Tree of Life Synagogue attack (October 27, 2018) was the 15th mass murder attack since 1963. The total number of deadly force incidents in faith-based institutions from 1999–2017 was 1,706, resulting in 813 deaths. The following charts demonstrate increases from 2000–2015.

Deadly Force Incidents at U.S. Faith-based Institutions



Church affiliations with the highest percentage of reported incidents of deadly force from 1999–2017 are Judeo-Christian denominations.



22% Baptist

14% Catholic

7% Methodist

Source: Carl Chinn, Faith Based Security Network

What strategies are currently in place at your church to identify a potential threat or respond to an active threat?

Identifying Unusual Behaviors

No profile exists for an active shooter. However, research indicates there may be warning signs.

Emotional Indicators

- Anger or rage.
- Crying.
- Unusual laughter.
- Nervousness or evasiveness.
- Fear or panic.
- Out-of-control or wild-eyed.
- An unusual absence of emotion.

Potential Unusual Behavior Indicators

- Standing or sitting in a vehicle for an extended length of time.
- Taking unidentifiable items out of a vehicle.
- Walking up to the door and looking around, as though on the lookout.
- Running up to the door.
- A person being dropped off, but car stays idling.
- Two or more unknown people entering together and then going in different directions.
- Obviously trying to go unnoticed—furtive or looking for concealment
- Confrontational—angrily questioning or arguing with another.
- Asking for monetary or other assistance.
- Asking about a church member or the pastor.
- Talking, muttering, fidgeting, or moving excessively.
- Indicating self-hatred or disgust with self.



A frequent action of those who have a concealed weapon, explosives, or drugs is to touch the area or keep a hand in the pocket or bag where the item is hidden.

- A grin or smile inappropriate for the situation.
- Intoxicated, drugged, flustered, or confused.
- Responding with anger to greetings or questions.
- Staring in an exaggerated way, especially when moving toward someone—fixated.
- Standing very still when others are moving forward.
- Seeming to stall for time.
- Standing alone or facing the congregation in the sanctuary instead of sitting.
- Doing something that does not fit with the service at the time.
- Going into areas of the building/property when no one else is present.
- Spending excessive amounts of time in the bathroom.
- Attempting to get the usher or someone else away from a specific area.
- Walking awkwardly, as though having concealed weapons.

Clothing or Characteristics Linked to Potential Problem Behavior

- Wearing unusually inappropriate clothing for a church environment.
- Wearing military, hunting, or camouflage clothing without a reason.
- Menacing appearance—hat pulled down, dark clothing, long coat, etc.
- Wearing clothing with wording or pictures that convey a hostile message.
- Noticeably dirty, disheveled, or having an offensive or unusual odor.

Source: Rowe, Tina Lewis. Worship Without Worry: Safety and Security for Places of Worship. 2015.

Team Leader

Some churches require a team leader be present in the church building whenever it's open. Consider this policy:

During any activity in the church, a Team Leader is to be present. This person knows how to handle difficult situations if something goes wrong.

A Team Leader will:

- Know the location of all restrooms.
- Know the location of all exits, emergency and otherwise.
- Know all evacuation routes and designated gathering locations.
- Know where all fire extinguishers and AEDs are located.
- Be able to give the church's street address to 911 operators from memory.
- Be able to initiate emergency communication procedures.
- Know designated shelter-in-place locations and have access to them. (Keys, etc.)

Emergency Preparedness Checklist

Discovery

YES NO N/A

Has the church developed an emergency response plan?

Have emergency evacuation diagrams been developed and posted throughout the building, identifying all exits, evacuation routes, safe assembly spaces, fire extinguishers, and first aid kits?

Are natural disaster drills and fire evacuation plans practiced regularly?

Have safe shelter areas been identified and marked in the church; the staff and congregation members made aware of the locations; and a basic disaster supply kit provided in each safe shelter area?

Is there a pre-appointed, qualified spokesperson to field all questions from the media and investigators?

Has the church compiled a list of important phone numbers, accounts and addresses?

Has an itemized inventory list of all items, equipment, and other valuables within the church (along with photographs and video recordings of items within the church's interior) been completed?

Have backup files of computer data and important records been made, along with copies of vital paper records and the disaster recovery plan; and is all this information kept at a secure offsite location?

Have arrangements been made ahead of time for an alternative meeting space and use of equipment?

Has the facility been inspected to determine how safe and secure it will be in the event of a disaster and modifications made, if needed, such as trimming of tree limbs, keeping roofs maintained, etc.

Do you have a designated individual to be the security director?

Have policies and procedures been developed on how to handle violent situations?

Have ushers and greeters been properly trained on how to handle violent situations?

Continued on next page.

Emergency Preparedness Checklist

Discovery

YES NO N/A

Have local laws been consulted to determine requirements for using security personnel?

Have security guards been properly screened, trained, and supervised? Do they hold appropriate licensing, permits, etc.

If hired security services are used, has the church verified that the service has the appropriate licensing, entered into a hold harmless agreement with the security service, and been named as an additional insured on the service's insurance policy?

If armed security guards are used, have consultations with an attorney, local law enforcement, and insurance agent been done to determine the feasibility of using such services? Are armed guards properly licensed, hold necessary permits, and only carry legal and authorized weapons?

Have a medical leader and medical person within the congregation been chosen?

Has basic medical emergency training been provided, including how to respond to medical emergencies, CPR, first aid, and AEDs (if present)?

Is a basic first aid kit provided? Is it fully stocked?

Are medical emergency procedures practiced on a scheduled basis?

EXITS

Are all routes of egress from the building free from obstructions?

Are all emergency exit signs visible and in good condition?

Are all exit signs illuminated and working?

Are all emergency lighting units being tested and properly working?

Are all exit doors in good working order Do they open outward?

Source: GuideOne Insurance

Based on your responses, what are five items you and your team need to work on immediately? These items need to be done within the next 1-2 months.

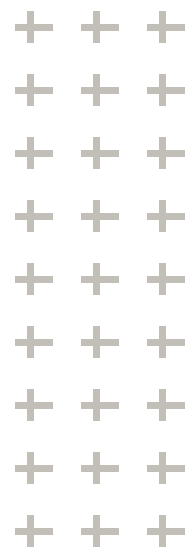
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are five items that are important, but are not as critical as the previously noted items? These items should be addressed within 6 months.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What are the other items that your church needs to handle within the next year?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Appendix

Violence

If a violent incident occurs at your church, the first priority is to protect the people in your congregation. To do this, follow these steps:

- 1 Call 911.**
- 2 If there is an opportunity to keep the invader out by locking doors and/or closing off areas of the church, do so.**
- 3 If there is an opportunity to remove all members and guests from the premises, do so as quickly as possible.**
- 4 Quickly control panic situations. By doing so, you will be more likely to conduct a sequenced evacuation, if possible.**
- 5 A leader, such as the pastor and/or security director, must take charge and provide orders to follow.**

All orders must be clear and direct, such as the following:

- “Ushers, secure the building.”
- “(Fill in name), contact the police.”
- “(Fill in name), secure the nursery.”
- “Everyone, take cover on the floor.”

Source: GuideOne Insurance

Bomb Threat Checklist

Most bomb threats are received by phone. Consider a bomb threat serious until proven otherwise. It is important to act quickly, but remain calm. Follow the steps below and use the checklist to obtain as much information as possible

- 1 If your phone has a display, copy the number and/or letters on the window display.**
- 2 Listen carefully. Be polite, show interest, and try to get as much information as possible. Keep the caller on the line for as long as possible. DO NOT HANG UP, even if the caller does.**
- 3 If possible, write a note to someone in the church to call the authorities or, as soon as the caller hangs up, immediately notify them yourself.**

Questions to Ask

When is the bomb going to explode?

Where is the bomb right now?

What kind of bomb is it?

What does it look like?

Why did you place the bomb?

What will cause it to explode?

What is your name and address?

Date: _____

Time: _____

Length of call: _____

CALLER

Male Female Age: _____

CALLER'S VOICE

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calm | <input type="checkbox"/> Angry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excited | <input type="checkbox"/> Slow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loud | <input type="checkbox"/> Laughter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crying | <input type="checkbox"/> Normal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distinct | <input type="checkbox"/> Slurred |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nasal | <input type="checkbox"/> Stutter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lisp | <input type="checkbox"/> Raspy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clearing throat | <input type="checkbox"/> Deep breathing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cracked voice | <input type="checkbox"/> Disguised voice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accent | <input type="checkbox"/> Familiar |

LANGUAGE

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Well spoken | <input type="checkbox"/> Incoherent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foul | <input type="checkbox"/> Irrational |

Emergency Contacts

Church Emergency Response Leadership

NAME	TITLE/ROLE	PHONE	MOBILE	EMAIL

Internal Communication

NAME	TITLE/ROLE	PHONE	MOBILE	EMAIL

External Communication

NAME	TITLE/ROLE	PHONE	MOBILE	EMAIL

Concealed Weapons

No one should bring a firearm on the church property unless they are a law enforcement official acting in a legal capacity or someone who has been approved by the Safety and Security Team.

To be approved by the Safety and Security Team, a candidate must be one of the following:

- Police officer
- Retired police officer
- Reserve police officer
- Someone with military training
- Someone who has a CPL and is asked by the Safety and Security Team

A person with a CPL and no police or military training must meet the following requirements before bringing a firearm on church property:

- Safety and Security Team application
- Background check
- Reference checks
- Have regularly attended this church for at least six months
- Interview with the Safety and Security Team
- Qualify on a firing range with at least two current members of the Safety and Security Team

Michigan Law Regarding Concealed Weapons at Church

Act 372 of 1927 Section 28.425

Subject to subsection (5), an individual licensed under this act to carry a concealed pistol, or who is exempt from licensure under section 12a(1)(h), shall not carry a concealed pistol on the premises of any of the following:

- A school or school property except that a parent or legal guardian of a student of the school is not precluded from carrying a concealed pistol while in a vehicle on school property, if he or she is dropping the student off at the school or

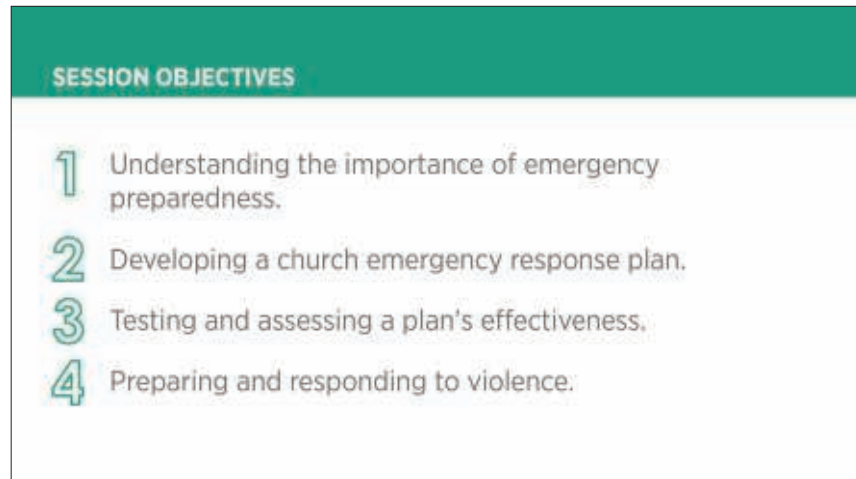
picking up the student from the school. As used in this section, “school” and “school property” mean those terms as defined in section 237a of the Michigan penal code, 1931 PA 328, MCL 750.237a.

- A public or private child care center or day care center, public or private child caring institution, or public or private child placing agency.
- Any property or facility owned or operated by a church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or other place of worship, unless the presiding official or officials of the church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or other place of worship permit the carrying of concealed pistol on that property or facility.

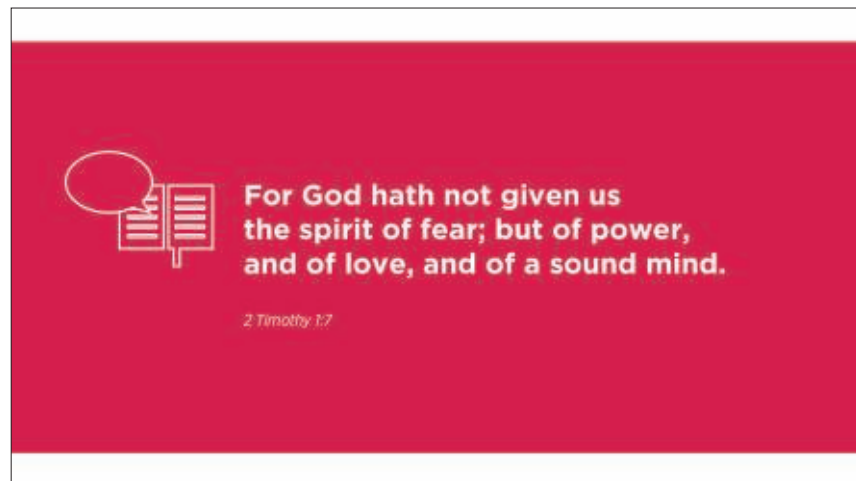
Slide 1



Slide 2



Slide 3



Slide 4



Potential Hazards

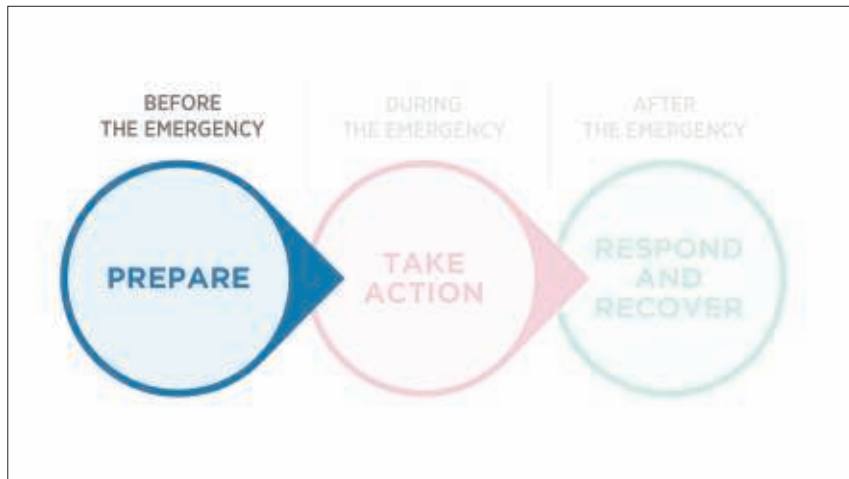
NATURAL

- Severe winter weather (Temperature, snow, ice, blizzard)
- Thunderstorm (Hail, lightning, wind)
- Tornado
- Flooding

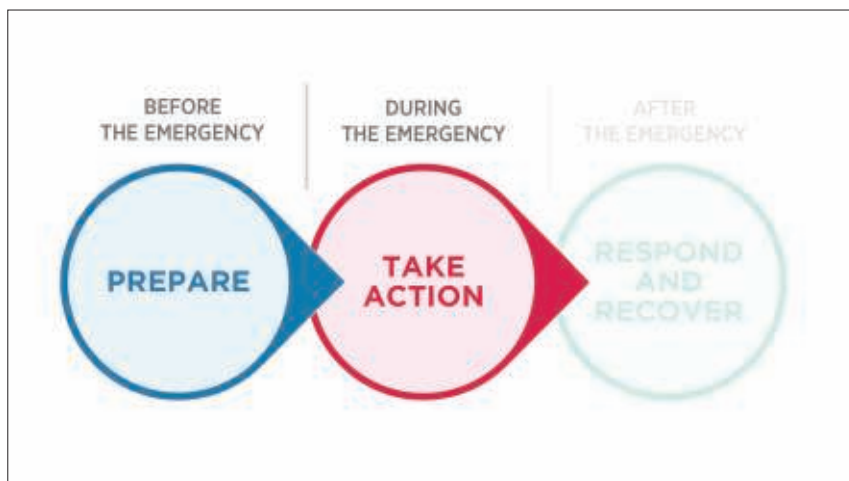
HUMAN

- Arson
- Bomb threat
- Active shooter

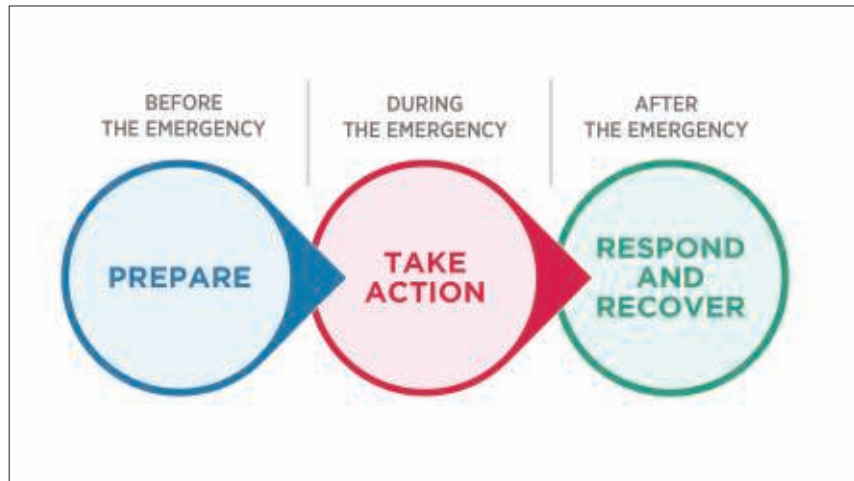
Slide 5



Slide 6



Slide 7



Slide 8

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

NAME	TITLE/ROLE	PHONE	MOBILE	EMAIL

Slide 9

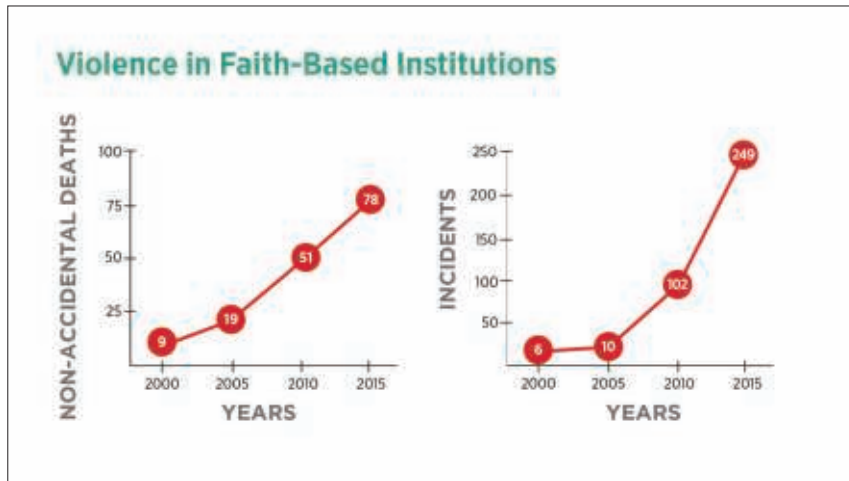
GET READY!
KENT COUNTY

A 12-month Emergency Preparedness Program

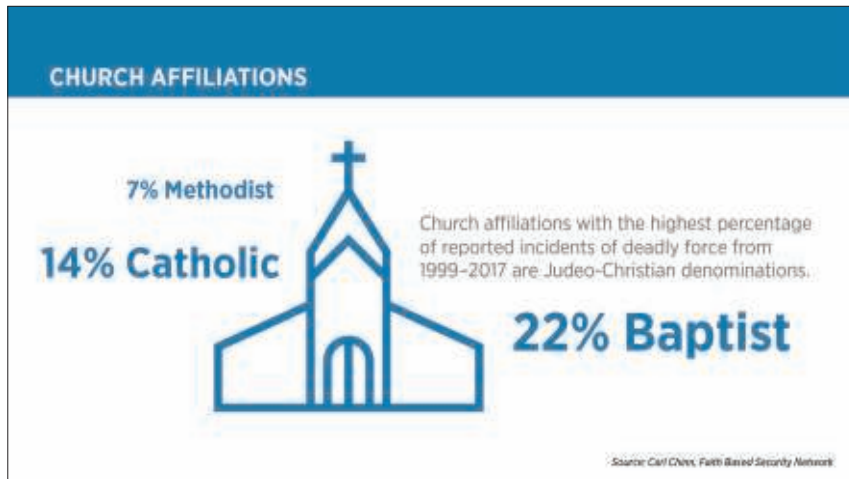
Topics include:

- Sheltering vs. evacuation
- Recovering after disaster
- Life without power
- Hazard awareness

Slide 10



Slide 11



Slide 12

No profile exists
for an active shooter.

Slide 13



EMOTIONAL INDICATORS

- Anger or rage.
- Crying.
- Unusual laughter.
- Nervousness or evasiveness.
- Fear or panic.
- Out-of-control or wild-eyed.
- An unusual absence of any emotion.

Slide 14



Use Reasonable Judgement

Occasionally, a person's emotions, behavior, or appearance will be a cause for concern. Usually, there is no harm in finding out more about the person. Your effort to establish a positive relationship may change the mind of someone who was going to create a problem.

THE BEST RESULT IS YOUR EXTRA OBSERVATION ASSURES YOU THERE IS NO REASON FOR CONCERN.

BUT REMEMBER TO TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS. YOUR REASONABLE JUDGMENT IS USUALLY ENOUGH TO HELP YOU DECIDE WHETHER TO CALL 911 OR TAKE OTHER NECESSARY ACTIONS.

Slide 15

TEAM LEADER

Team leaders should be able to handle difficult situations. A Team Leader will:

- Know the location of all restrooms.
- Know the location of all exits, emergency and otherwise.
- Know all evacuation routes and designated gathering locations.
- Know where all fire extinguishers and AEDs are located.
- Be able to give the church's street address to 911 operators from memory.
- Be able to initiate emergency communication procedures.
- Know designated shelter-in-place locations and have access to them. (Keys, etc.)

Slide 16





FAMILY LEADERSHIP
INITIATIVE