**Violent Incident Instructions for the Congregation**

**Dr. Jack Bachman**

According to criminologist Dallas Drake, from 1980 to 2005 there were 137 incidents of church related shootings in the United States. From 2006 to 2016 there were 147 such instances. That is more in that 10-year span than the previous 25-year timeframe. In percentages, that is a 268% increase. These numbers do not include non-Christian houses of worship such as mosques or synagogues. According to church security expert, Carl Chinn, there have been 617 people killed in a deadly force incident since 1999 on faith-based properties. This does not even address the increases in church break-ins, vandalisms, arsons, fights, or other criminal activity. In 2019 there were more people killed in America through mass shootings than in any year on record. Texas has had the most incidents of deadly church shootings and the highest number of people killed in church shootings of any state in America.

Parkside Baptist Church has a trained church security team to help prevent and/or respond to all potential disruptions, threats, emergencies, violent incidents, or shootings. Several of our team members are retired law enforcement officers, active or former military, or have extensive experience in security and/or weapons. We work with our local law enforcement departments and receive regular training to continue to improve our knowledge and response as new incidents occur across America. To maintain optimal preparedness, our team qualifies in a gun range performance test five times more often than the state requires and our average accuracy scores are 70 points higher than the minimum qualification score.

Our insurance company, Brotherhood Mutual, urges all churches to have a violence response plan to help protect its pastors, parishioners, and property from such attacks. At Parkside this plan includes numerous cameras and video surveillance, locking down our buildings shortly after services begin, and armed and unarmed security. Not only is there training on what the security personnel will do in a violent incident, but also we need to include informing the congregation on what you should do as well.

1. In the event of a **fire or bomb threat**, you will be instructed and guided to evacuate the building. Please move calmly and quickly to the nearest exit and assemble in the backfield until you are given further instruction from the pastor, security team member, or emergency personnel.

Security and workers will care for evacuating nurseries and children from other rooms and your running that direction will only impede their progress.

1. In the event of an **active shooter** incident please follow the following protocol:
2. At the first sound of gunfire or the sight of any person drawing a weapon, immediately get down as far onto the floor or under the pews as you are physically capable of doing. Even lying over into the pew is better than not getting down at all. This gives you cover and forces the shooter to have to move about the room, buying the security team time and proper angles to eliminate the threat.
3. Do not get up and run unless instructed to evacuate. In so doing, you become an easier target for the shooter and an obstruction to the security team members or law enforcement officers trying to stop the assailant.
4. Be aware that in such an incident, the nurseries will go on lockdown and/or or be evacuated by security personnel until the threat is eliminated and the situation determined all clear.
5. Be aware that in such an incident, the pastor will be quickly removed by a member of the security team and secured, as pastors have proven to be a prime target in many such incidents. We will return him to the scene once the threat is eliminated. Other platform staff or security team members will give you instructions as needed.
6. If you have a permit to carry a concealed weapon and often carry at church, please inform our head of security, Dr. Bachman. In an active shooter situation, we ask that you not start firing at the shooter, as you may accidentally shoot others or become a greater target yourself. This is a very different scenario than firing at a still target with no people around the target. If the shooter individually approaches you, you may certainly defend yourself, but your shot should be at an upward angle, at very close range, and only once you have verified it is the actual assailant.
7. Remember this is different protocol than you would follow if you heard shots being fired in a different part of the building or a public place such as a store, mall, or school where you are waiting for police to arrive. In those situations, evacuate the facility immediately; or if you cannot get to an exit, hide and barricade yourself in a separate area while waiting for help to arrive.

It is our prayer that none of these protocols will ever be needed at our church; however, your being mentally and physically prepared can help limit or eliminate many injuries and/or fatalities if followed properly. In instances where armed guards, police officers, or armed security are already present when gunfire begins, these shootings usually last less than one minute; however, those seconds can be deadly to many if proper procedures are not followed.