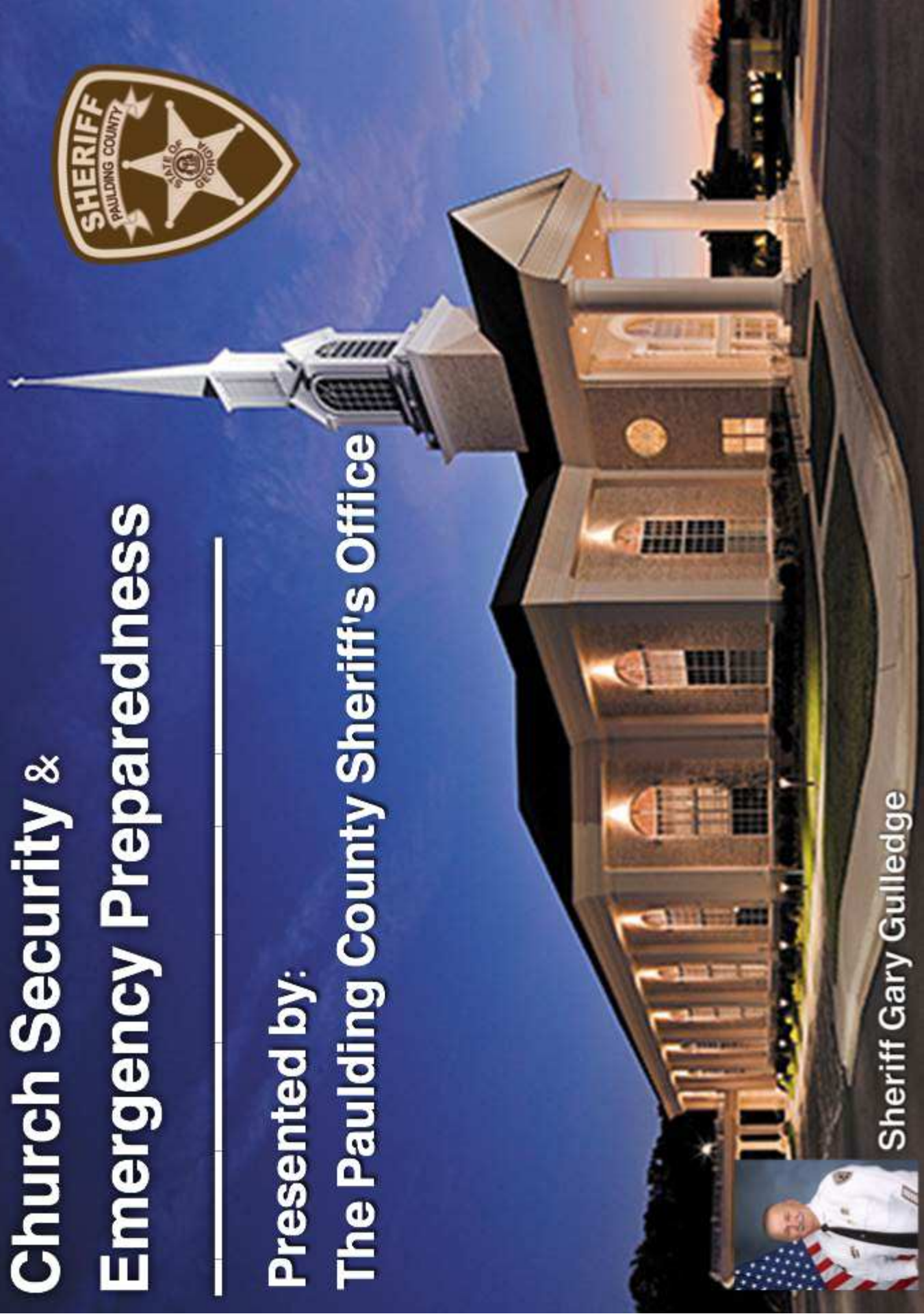


Church Security & Emergency Preparedness

Presented by:
The Paulding County Sheriff's Office



Sheriff Gary Gullledge



Why Do We Need Church Security?

“Security should not be the main focus of any church, but providing adequate security will help create an environment where people don’t fear violence and it does not hinder them from attending church.”

-Jimmy Meeks (Church Security Expert)



Churches.... A Rising Target for Attack

Violent Incidents Are Nothing New

- Violent incidents/attacks are nothing new to Churches, but are ever increasing.
 - In the past 15 years
 - 960 Violent incidents at Churches or Religious Events*(Suicide, Murder, Robbery, Rape, Assault, Kidnapping)
 - 295 Occurred inside the Church*
 - 665 Occurred on the property or during an event*
 - There have been 335 people killed during these incidents*

* Reference www.carlchinn.com

Church Violence History

- In 2009, Pastor Fred Winters of the First Baptist Church in Maryville, Illinois was shot and killed during the Sunday morning service. The suspect walked in, brandished a firearm and shot the pastor at point blank range. The suspect was subdued by Church goers until the police arrived.

Church Violence History

- In 2007 a man walked into the First Congregational Church in Neosha, Missouri shooting and killing two deacons and the Senior Pastor.
- In 2008, a gunman walked into a Church in Knoxville, Tennessee, during the performance of a children's musical. He proceeded to shoot eight people, killing two, before he was overpowered by congregation members and subdued.

Church Violence History

- In 2015, a 62 year old woman was robbed at gun point while walking from her car to the front door of the Word of Restoration Church in Albany, Georgia.
- In 2015, nine people were killed when a gunman opened fire on them during Wednesday night Bible study at the Emanuel Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

The Reality of Violence at Church

- While rare, acts of violence do occur at Churches.
- Violent acts may include robbery, murder, rape and assault.
- The majority of attacks are carried out by someone with some connection to the Church.
- Shootings are the most common violent act at Churches.
- Most Churches are unprepared for a violent event or its aftermath.

Who is at Risk?

- No Church is immune to the risk of a violent episode occurring.
- Churches of all sizes, locations, and resources have the potential to experience acts of violence.



Who is at Risk?

- Many radical groups are now targeting Churches that speak out on social issues.



How to Improve Security

- Have A Plan
 - Church leadership should have a basic plan in place for dealing with security issues.
 - The plan should address the following:
 - Disruption of services
 - Violence
 - Natural Disaster
 - Medical Emergency
 - Missing Child
- The plan should clearly define procedures to handle a variety of situations.

Have Someone in Charge

- A Church security team led by one person who is in charge of operations is usually the best way to improve security.
 - The person in charge needs to be someone with command and control experience.
 - Current or retired law enforcement officers or experienced military personnel are usually the best choices.

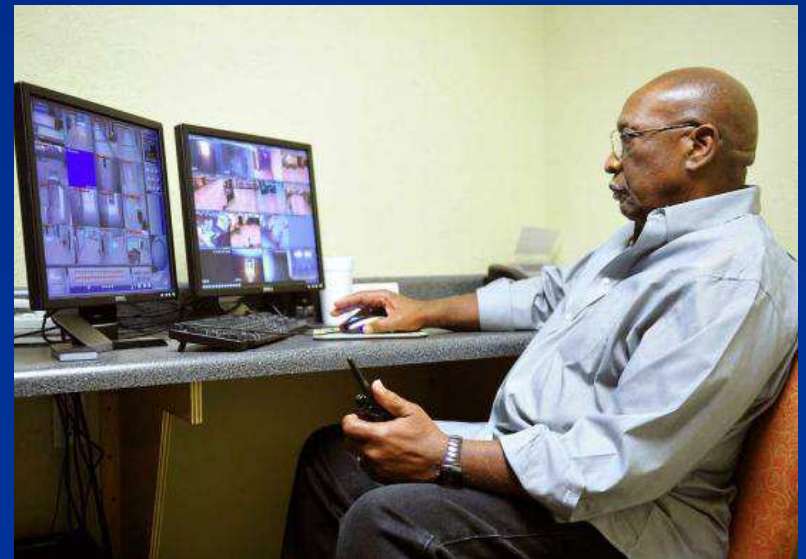


Security Assessment

- Conduct a security assessment to identify any vulnerabilities.
 - Ideally, this assessment is conducted in conjunction with local law enforcement or other security professionals.
- Develop a security plan with guidelines that include defined roles for all staff. This includes greeters, ushers, and other frontline workers.

Security Recommendations

- Surveillance
 - Surveillance and observation are critical to avoiding and minimizing harassment and threats.
 - Ideally, Church staff or volunteers need to confront any potential issue in the parking lot rather than inside.
 - Video systems are also very helpful.
 - Cameras not only act as a deterrent, but also preserve evidence for later analysis and prosecution.



Security Recommendations

- Use Multiple Layers of Security
 - Train all greeters, ushers, and other staff to recognize and act on threats even if it is simply calling 911.
 - Have volunteers patrol or watch parking areas.
 - Ushers and greeters usually know most people who attend and should be trained on how to deal with threats or unruly persons.



Security Recommendations

- Conduct Training of your Security Team.
 - The more the better.
 - If your congregation has law enforcement members or military personnel they should be recruited to assist in training and help with security.
 - Have local law enforcement assist in training.



Security Recommendations

- Communication is essential to church security.
 - Have a plan to quickly communicate with security teams and church leaders if an incident occurs.
 - Have a system in place to alert Sunday School teachers and child care/nursery staff if an incident occurs.
 - It can be any of the following methods:
 - Two way radios
 - Intercom
 - Text Messages
 - Phone Calls

Security Recommendations

- Be Ready to Lockdown Child Care/Nursery
 - Have procedures in place for lockdown of sensitive places, such as child care/nursery.
 - Procedures need to be in place for notifying the child care/nursery staff of any disruption or security threat.
 - The child care staff should immediately lock all entrances into the child care/nursery area, allowing no entry until the incident has been resolved.

Security Recommendations

- Check-In System for Child Care/Nursery
 - You need a tested and effective system for child care/nursery check-in and check-out. Allow no deviations from the system.
 - Volunteers and workers need to be trained to question anything that doesn't "look right".
 - Prepare to deal with complaints about the inconvenience.
- Conduct Background Checks On All Child Care/Nursery Workers



Security Recommendations

- Act Quickly and Calmly
 - Church security and/or ushers should become visible at the first signs of a disruption or trouble.
 - They should place themselves between the disruptors and the congregation.
 - This will help people remain calm, and will help isolate the disruptors early and prevent them from moving freely within the Church.
 - Someone on the Church staff should reassure the congregation that the situation is being handled and the service will resume momentarily.

Security Recommendations

- Medical Emergencies
 - Have a list of Doctors, Nurses and Paramedics in your congregation who would be willing to help in a crisis.
 - Have a first aid kit readily available.
 - Have an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) on the property and easily accessible with volunteers trained to use it.

Security Recommendations

- Other Tips For Security Improvement
 - Control access points, use only necessary entrances and exits. “Necessary” is the key word and should not be replaced with “Convenient”.
 - Have greeters at all entry doors.
 - Church keys, who has them?
 - Staff and volunteers should not work alone especially at night.
 - Conduct opening inspections to be sure the property is secure.

Security Recommendations

- Make sure lighting is sufficient and shrubbery is maintained to limit hiding places.
- Conduct closing inspection to make sure all windows and doors are secure and that someone is not left in the facility.
- Ensure that the inside of the facility is properly lighted and exits are marked.
- Have an emergency plan in place and periodically practice it. When it becomes necessary, revise and update the plan.
- Maintain an inventory of all expensive or easily stolen items and perform a periodic audit to ensure all items are present.

Disruptors

- Isolate or Remove
 - Churches have the right to remove disruptive individuals.
 - Verbally communicate to the disruptors that they are trespassing and they must leave.
 - If they refuse to leave, it may be best to keep them contained and wait for law enforcement to arrive unless they pose a physical threat.
 - To the extent possible, move congregants who are in close proximity to another part of the sanctuary.

Disruptors

- Keep Potential Disruptors Out
 - Courts have held that Churches have the right to keep people out of the Church.
 - An individual does not have a legally protected right to enter and remain on private property.
 - If you know a person is a security threat or potentially disruptive, you have the right to keep them from entering.

Active Shooter

Having an active shooter in the church is an unlikely scenario for any church but you need a plan.

- Follow protocols rather than improvising.
- Reduce provocation. Set guidelines for denying access to people who are unstable, agitated, angry, or intoxicated.
- Alert the entire security team and call 911.
- Have a security team secure any child care/nursery areas.
- Evacuate worshippers when possible and secure doors.

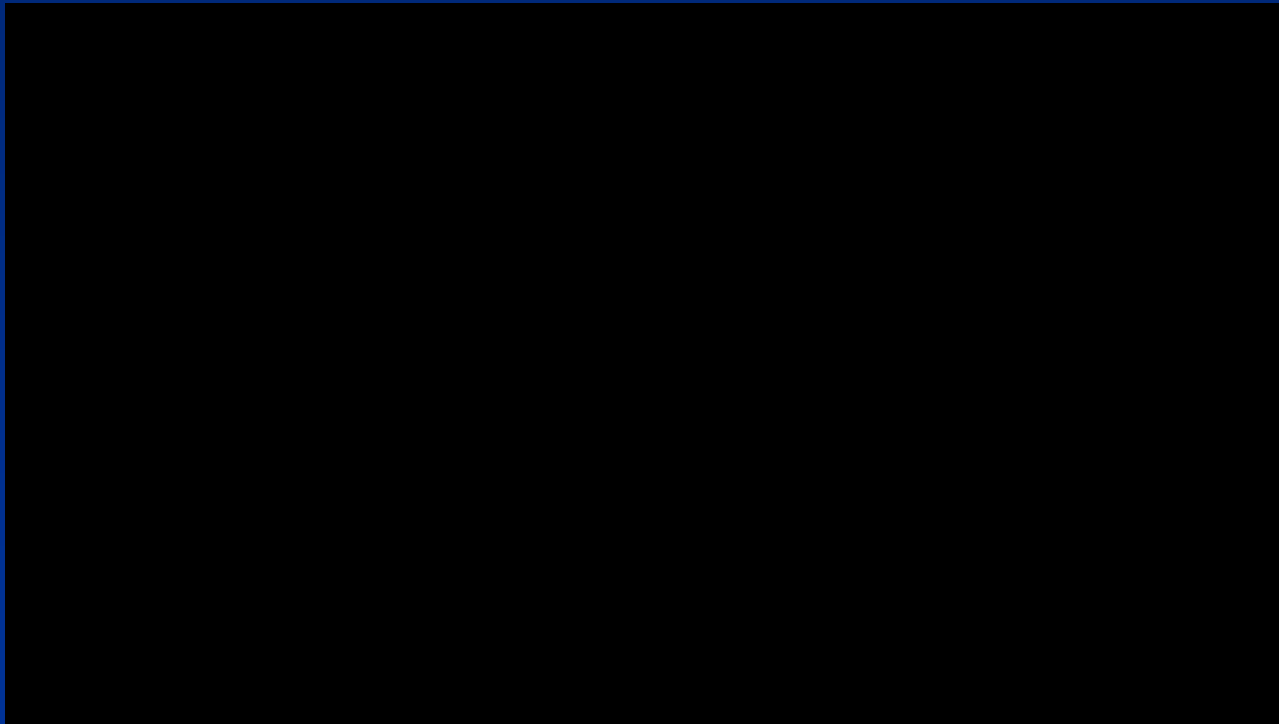
Active Shooter

- If an active shooter engages the congregation:
 - Direct confrontation is essential
 - This is dangerous, but you can improve your chances by distracting the shooter.
 - Weaken his shooting ability by throwing hymnals, yelling from multiple directions, and tackling him from behind.
 - Use weapons of opportunity
 - » Fire Extinguishers
 - » Candelabras
 - » Hymnals

Active Shooter

- Have the security team approach and overwhelm the shooter by any means necessary
 - Armed off duty law enforcement/military should be trained to deal with this type of threat

Run, Hide, Fight



Responding to Transients

- Helping the poor is central to the church's mission. But that does not mean this help should be provided thoughtlessly or without concern for the welfare and safety of those who work with the needy.
- To avoid problems, the church staff needs training and guidance in responding to transients as well as other individuals seeking help.

Responding to Transients

- Define each staff member's role with respect to the church's ministry of caring for the needy.
- Provide training to church secretaries and other staff members on how to respond to transients.
- Tell people what you can do rather than what you cannot do. Keep coming back to "Let me tell you what we can do." This may mean you can only make a referral for the individual.

Responding to Transients

- Establish procedures to enhance personal safety in responding to the needs of transients.
 - When a secretary is working alone at the church, the building should be locked.
 - Electronic lock
 - Doorbell
- If a secretary or other church staff is working alone at the church:
 - Do not indicate this to a stranger or over the phone
- Have a voucher system rather than giving out cash.

Working Alone

- If someone is working at the church alone:
 - Let others know your schedule.
 - Keep all doors secured.
 - Do not allow strangers to enter when alone.
 - If at night, call someone and let them know you are leaving and driving home.
 - Have adequate lighting around parking areas and walkways.

Call 911

- Don't hesitate to call **911** immediately if you feel an unsafe situation is developing.
 - The caller should stay on the line until law enforcement arrives
 - The manner in which the call is made and the information given is important, so do not downplay the event.



Georgia Firearms Laws

- Georgia Weapons Carry License (GWCL)
 - Paulding County Probate Court (770) 443-7541
 - Cost: \$79.25 (Valid 5 Years)
 - Open Carry or Concealed Carry



Firearms In Churches

- OCGA 16-11-127(b)(4)
 - It is illegal to possess a long gun or pistol in a place of worship, unless the governing body or authority of the place of worship permits the carrying of weapons or long guns by license holders.

Firearms In Churches

Summary

- It is illegal to have firearms in church unless:
 - The governing body/authority allows it
 - If it is allowed, the individuals carrying must have a valid GWCL on their person
 - If allowed, weapons can either be carried concealed or open carry
 - It is recommended that the pastor and/or leadership team know exactly who is carrying a firearm inside the church and limit that to those who are highly trained

Remember

- The best security is awareness.
- Have a plan in place and practice it.
- Prepare for the worst case scenario.
- Good security can be in place with minimal intrusion to the congregation.
- There is no assurance that a violent episode can be avoided. By taking responsibility for the safety of your Church, you will have done the best thing to prevent it.

References and Resources

- www.paulding.gov/sheriff
- www.safechurch.com
- www.carlchinn.com
- www.sheepdogsafetytraining.com
- <https://www.fema.gov/protecting-houses-worship>
- Thomas O. Duvall Georgia Baptist Convention Attorney

Questions/Comments

Presented By

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Sheriff's Office