

Have A Plan - Ushers and Greeters.

Deterrents to preventing an active shooter:

- Inform, help and train your greeters and ushers to be on the lookout for anyone that might seem suspicious.
That doesn't mean they need to be trained to tackle somebody they think is suspicious.

However, many times just asking, "Can I help you? Can I get you help? Is there something I can do for you?" can offset what could be a more dangerous situation.

The way you would equip your greeters will probably be very different from how you would equip your congregation, which is also different from how you would train your staff. It's about having key people in the know, and the rest of your congregation informed enough to follow direction.

2. Develop an active shooter Plan and Hold a drill of the plan.

Churches need to make sure they recognize that "Having a plan" doesn't necessarily mean that they are prepared.

- choose a day and practice that plan

A plan, until you put it into practice, is just a piece of paper.

1. RUN TO SAFETY -
2. HIDE
3. FIGHT

Practicing the plan allows everyone time to realize that there may be a problem in the plans application. Your committee may have to make new choices and test out that new plan, and then make the safest room known to the congregation. *If they thought, This room is the safest, without realizing it had no locks, in the case of a real emergency, others might think the same thing. Your attendees need to know where to hide, and where not to hide.*

3. Use the resources at hand.

Contact your local police chief, fire department, or even the emergency management, for advice. Many of those groups will actually come to your church and help you walk through developing a plan.

4. Make the plan known.

Clearly communicate your plan to others, and make sure that they're paying attention. I was having lunch last week with a friend who worked at a church, and he introduced me to his pastor,

who happened to be sitting by us at the restaurant. We started talking, and he said to me, "I've been wanting to contact you because I've been at this church now for five years, and we just had our annual staff meeting and somebody talked about our church's shooter response plan."

And my other friend said, "Wait a minute. This is the first time I've ever heard about this church plan."

"Oh no," replied the pastor. "We cover it every year in our staff meeting."

What they realized was about half of the members had no recollection that this ever even gets talked about in a church. If your core staff doesn't even know about a plan, it's likely the rest of your congregation doesn't know how to respond either. Make plans, and then make sure they're available to others. Doing so just might save lives.

Dr. Jamie D. Aten