

## **Evacuation Plan for Sunday Mornings**

August 19, 2024

The fire evacuation plan is designed to provide the optimum exit strategy for attendees of church and RE programs if the fire detection system is activated. It seeks to evacuate the church in a minimum amount of time by assigning exit paths to evacuees based on their location in the building and avoiding congestion at any exit.

Directions will be provided by “Monitors”. Monitors are staff, worship associates, ushers, and Sunday school assistants. Directions provided by the monitors should be obeyed without hesitation. The monitors’ primary goal is to protect attendees from physical harm and, secondarily, to minimize psychological trauma created by the fire.

### **Distribution of Information**

This document must be provided to all staff, RE teachers, worship associates, and Sunday school assistants and periodically publicized to the congregation at large.

### **Designated Meeting Spot**

In case of an emergency evacuation of the building on Sunday mornings during the service, everyone should gather in the playground. Parents and children in RE will be reunited at the playground, not in the building.

### **Emergency Signage**

Every room in the building has a diagram of the building which shows the location of exits and the most likely emergency exit route for that room. It also identifies the playground as the designated meeting spot.

### **Sanctuary Evacuation**

The Minister will initiate the evacuation by telling the congregation to remain seated and ask the ushers to open the doors to the sanctuary to facilitate the evacuation. Ushers should open both the doors to the lobby and the doors to the balconies on the front and back of the building. While they are doing that, the Minister and the Worship Associate should ascertain the location of any people who may require assistance evacuating the building and delegate the task of helping these individuals to an usher or appropriate congregation member. [See “Those with Special Needs”.]

When the pathways are clear, the minister should instruct the congregation, in approximate thirds, to exit through the nearest entrance to where they are sitting. Congregants should file out the doors in an orderly way and proceed directly to the playground area. Parents should be informed that they will be reunited with their children in the playground and should **not** go to the classrooms to get them.

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With the object of optimum evacuation of the church paramount, no one is to return to his or her seat to collect objects left behind or to late relatives or friends inside the church. Parents should be reassured that their children are already on their way to the playground, and they need to be there to meet and reassure their child of mutual safety.

The Minister and Worship Associate should be the last to leave the Sanctuary and ensure that no one else is left in the sanctuary or upper lobby area.

### **Religious Education Classes**

The Director of Religious Education and the Sunday School Assistant will initiate the evacuation of the children's program. Teachers should have already been informed of the procedure during their orientation. They should be familiar with the nearest exit path and be aware of a secondary path should that one be blocked by fire, smoke or other impediments.

Teachers should take attendance at the beginning of the class and take the attendance sheet with them to the evacuation site in the event of an evacuation. Upon reaching it, they should check the sheet to ensure they have all children. Parents must check each child out with the teacher, which should be marked on the attendance sheet.

Teachers should tell the children to remain calm and that they will calmly exit the building and go in an orderly fashion (perhaps with younger children holding hands) to the playground, where they will be reunited with their parents. Children exit without extra time to gather belongings such as coats or toys.

The DRE will make a final sweep through the classrooms and bathrooms to verify that everyone has been evacuated appropriately.

### **Those with Special Needs**

These fall into two categories:

Those in the sanctuary with mobility issues:

- The minister will have assigned an usher or other appropriate to assist those with mobility issues.
- Those who may slow down the evacuation should wait until others are out. This may sound cruel, but it actually is the safest method for everyone, as people naturally tend to start panicking and pushing if the evacuation does not proceed as quickly as they expect it to.
- People with mobility issues should be exited to the deck area on the church's front side beside the minister's office. From that spot, they can be easily identified by emergency personnel and assisted in further exiting.

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- If the front deck is unavailable, they can be evacuated to the deck off the back side of the church. By pushing the emergency notification button on that deck, emergency personnel will be informed when they arrive that people are on that deck needing assistance.

Those toddlers and infants in the nursery and cradle room:

- The number of toddlers and infants in the cradle room may exceed the designated two childcare workers. Sunday School Assistants should be aware of the number of children in the nursery on any given Sunday and aware that extra assistance may be needed to evacuate these small members of the community.
- In the event of an evacuation, one of the teachers who is teaching the class nearest the nursery may be asked by either the Director of Religious Education or the Sunday School Assistant to help evacuate the nursery. If necessary, another responsible person may be assigned that duty.
- Childcare workers should have attendance/sign in sheets for any given day and should take these with them to the evacuation site.
- Toddlers and infants should be calmly reassured of their safety, explained the situation, taken either by hand or carried to the playground to reunite with their parents.

### **Notification to Emergency Personnel**

If the fire alarm goes off, the Central Station dispatch automatically calls the fire department. If this is a false alarm, the Minister, Worship Associate, or a staff member should contact the Central Station dispatch to verify our account and passcode to cancel the fire department.

For all other emergencies, the Minister, Worship Associate, or staff member should call 911 to notify them of the emergency.

### **Dismissal of Evacuated Persons**

All evacuees should wait in or near the playground until Emergency Personnel (fire or police) or the Minister tells them to either return to the building or go to their cars and leave the area.

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**Adoption of the Procedure**

This procedure by vote of the board is hereby adopted.

UUCDC By Marilyn Huff  
[Name of Congregation] President

and John Davies  
Vice President

Dated this 19th day of August, 2024.