

Safety at Binkley

Safety Working Group Report

January 13, 2019

History of Safety Working Group

The Safety Working Group was organized in February of 2018 in response to increasing violence across the country directed at individuals, schools, businesses and religious organizations.

The group was asked to review the safety needs and concerns of the church and recommend corrective actions where needed.

This report brings you up to date on the activities and actions of the working group.

Binkley Safety Working Group

Margie Billinger	Gary Stutts
Lillian Lee	Sonnie Van Sant, ex officio
Marcus McFaul	Jim Wilde
C.L. Morton, Chair	Don Willhoit
Janet O'Neal	Drew Baker, Consulting Member

What needs are we addressing?

- Improved safety for our Ministers and staff during office hours
- Improved safety for the various groups using Binkley facilities
- Dangerous situations and threatening behavior requiring Sanctuary evacuation
- Fire in the Sanctuary/Narthex/Office area and safe exit plans
- Theft of church property

What Have we been up to?

- The Safety Working Group formed in February 2018 – meets bi-weekly
- Identified the Sunday 11am Worship service as most critical safety point
- Chapel Hill Police Department consulted for safety suggestions
- Handled our first security/safety incident on Sunday April 8, 2018
- Coordinated with CHPD on follow up of church property theft in April

What have we been up to? (cont'd)

- Attended a Church Safety and Security seminar sponsored by Church Mutual
- Compiled a list of over 50 action items relative to safety issues. Thirty-two have been completed or are in progress.
- Met with external user groups to emphasize need for building security
- Upgraded the automated door control system and distributed over 225 new access fobs

Proposed Safety Procedures

- Implement an 11:15am door schedule to automatically lock the building entry doors (access by fob still enabled for these doors)
- Manually lock the M.O.W. doors at 11:15am
- Manually lock the Fordham Blvd doors at 11:15am (access by fob still enabled for one of these doors)
- Manually lock the Narthex Courtyard doors at 11:15am, unlock at 11:55am
- No backpacks allowed in Sanctuary during Sunday services
- Establish a team of Safety Coordinators
- Develop and implement Fire and Active Shooter evacuation procedures

Future Plans

- Add the doors at the Meals on Wheels entry to the automated system
- Implement the proposed Sunday morning Service door control schedule
- Select and train a team of Safety Coordinators to provide guidance during emergencies and coordination with CHPD/CHFD when necessary
- Acquire 2-way radios for use by Safety Coordinators
- Install video cameras at key entry/exit points

What do we need from you?

- Your feedback and questions about safety issues
- Your support in establishing the Safety Coordinator team and procedures
- Your awareness of facility exits and evacuation plans that we document
- Your ongoing financial support of the safety programs
- Your ongoing vigilance in identifying potential safety threats

End of Presentation

Notes from the January 13, 2019 Safety Working Group Update to Congregation

The meeting began with covenant reminders from the Reference Team covenant adopted by Binkley with regards to decision making for church projects and programs.

Sonnie Van Sant, Moderator gave the welcome and introduction of the Safety Working Group.

Gary Stutts began the presentation with the history of committee activities:

- Roy Brock's initial concern for risk management
- Committee began to meet biweekly in February 2018
- Meetings with police chief and lieutenant
- Walk through assessment including identification of 32 external entry/exit doors and other Building risk factors
- Desire to balance safety with welcoming environment
- Attended church safety seminar
- Began updating door security with distribution of new key fobs
- Met with every user group who welcomed increased security
- Learned from the April theft and also person with suspicious behavior during worship
- Consulted with fire department and worked on fire evacuation plan
- Reports to council and communication with staff

Gary continued the presentation and entertained comments and questions:

- Statements were made regarding accessibility: 1) A member with very limited mobility couldn't get in because of nonworking access and difficulty getting to his fob; 2) comments that accessible doors at both entrances are unreliable and regularly not working.
- Statements about the Narthex/courtyard entrance doors: concern that people who don't know how locks work would do better in emergency with crash bar for exit. Gary commented we are getting estimates to adapt crash bars to the doors or possibly replace the doors with a newer safety design.
- Discussion of backpack restriction in sanctuary: we will not allow backpacks in the Sanctuary during services. Generally people agreed there was a need for searching or for storage of the backpacks if someone does not want to return the backpack to their car. Discussion of who should do the search. Comments were made supporting storage (on site or preferably in car) to avoid having to do a search.
- Comment that we have no interest in searching people we know but also don't want to be unwelcoming to guests by searching them. Better to have a no backpacks in worship policy. "Check your backpacks".
- Question raised about what to do if you find a weapon with response that we hope to have safety coordinators with communication devices who could quickly contact emergency services and initiate safety procedures.
- It was commented that there would need to be training in how to identify a bomb
- Member commented that getting backpacks and large bags out of church also had the benefit of a safer egress especially for those with limited mobility.
- Question if other churches are doing this. Response is yes and that many have gun carrying safety teams. Binkley does not plan to allow guns and that has been strongly reinforced by police who do not want guns in the church.

Notes from the January 13, 2019 Safety Working Group Update to Congregation

- Support expressed for having a no weapons policy for Binkley with comment that this needs to be in church policy if not already there.
- Response was very limited when Gary asked if people knew how many and where emergency exits are for sanctuary. (There are six doors)
- What about Sunday school? Current target for planning is 11:00 worship but there will be more discussion and training about other needs.
- A member spoke of attending a memorial service at another location where an unknown visitor presumed to be a "street person" was surrounded and escorted away. Turned out to be a friend of the deceased. Member expressed desire to avoid overdoing security.
- Evacuations: where do people go? Gary mentioned there is an evacuation plan and will share at another time. The area for evacuation would take into consideration leaving space for emergency vehicles.
- Meeting concluded with thanks for participants input.