

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND ACTION PLAN

for

**First Baptist Church on Fifth
Winston-Salem, North Carolina**

Developed by the Leadership Council
Spring 2026



**FIRST BAPTIST
ON FIFTH**

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BOLD LOVE. BOUNDLESS COMPASSION.

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Developed in 2026 by the Leadership Council and a group of professionals in the fields that touch the need for emergency action, the First Baptist on Fifth Emergency Preparedness and Action Plan (EAP) describes the policies, procedures, and practices related to the emergency preparation, response, and aftermath of our church. Upon the development of the EAP, the congregation will receive copies of this plan and further training on its implementation.

Throughout the EAP, the reader will find references to a number of people representing different roles in the church. These are defined as follows:

- **Staff** – the pastors, administrators, and managers who are appointed by the congregation to serve.
- **Safety Hosts** – church members who have volunteered to implement the EAP through preparation and response, and who aid the safe flow of members and guests in and out of the church house when the congregation gathers. These members serve on the Safety Team.
- **Medical & Mental Health Professionals** – church members who are professionals in the medical and mental health fields.
- **Concealed Carriers** – church members with a concealed carry permit who choose to carry a weapon at the church house and notify the senior pastor about it.

While this manual is intended to be comprehensive, certainly there may be emergencies that arise and fall outside the parameters listed here. In that case, we trust the Safety Hosts, pastors, and leaders to use common sense and initiative to address the need at hand.

Thank you for your engagement with the Emergency Preparedness and Action Plan! Your attention to this shared work enhances our church's capacity to gather at the church house with care.

I. Preparation

First Baptist Church on Fifth has worked hard to ensure that we are well-equipped for the gathered life of the church and community when in our church house. At the time of this EAP's construction, we have undertaken a series of audits and reviews

to tighten our policies, strengthen our tools, and broaden our scope to ensure people's safe gathering onsite. They include the following:

Policies, Best Practices, and Trainings

- Background checks required for all staff, anyone working with minors, and Safety Hosts
- CPR/First Aid training for staff and lay leaders every four years
- Mental Health First Aid training for staff and lay leaders every four years
- Sexual harassment and abuse prevention training for staff and lay leaders every four years
- Policies for sexual harassment and clergy sexual misconduct created and implemented by the Personnel Committee
- Protocols developed, implemented, and trained for the following related safety issues: how to engage an unhoused neighbor onsite, how to respond to ICE intrusion in the church house, what to do if a member is detained

Building-Specific Tools and Resources

- Security cameras around the house and grounds
- Door entry system that requires manual entry for guests and temporarily-assigned codes for members. All building doors remained locked throughout the week. Doors relock on Sunday mornings starting at 11:10am, and any latecomers must enter through the front door/narthex. This system allows for staff and safety team lead to set all the doors in emergency lockdown or evacuation mode.
- Alarm system to alarm the building at night
- Panic buttons around the building and inside the elevator to contact security if needed
- Walkie-talkie radios to be used by Safety Hosts around the grounds
- AED (located beside the elevator on the second floor), first aid kits (beside the elevator on the second floor and in the children's loft), a wheelchair (in the narthex)
- Emergency exits designated and exterior doors named
- Regular monitoring of existing alarm systems, panic buttons, defibrillator, first aid kit, and cameras around the building to ensure their continued use
- Fire extinguishers and evacuation plans on each floor, and fire alarm system around the building

- Interior locks on the majority of doors inside the building
- Outdoor lighting to illuminate all the grounds and discourage any long-term loitering around the property
- Signage to be completed by the end of 2026 to aid in safe, thoughtful movement around the grounds
- Communications tools (texts and emails) to ensure smooth, fast messaging to the congregation
- Emergency plans in red binders around the building for ease of use

Safety Hosts

- Safety Hosts can be identified on Sundays or times when the congregation gathers by the blue vests, walkie talkies, and nametags that they will be wearing.
- On Sundays before, during, and after our gathering, Safety Hosts are positioned outside the building to welcome members and friends to the building and assist in their safe arrival, and inside walking the building to keep a watchful eye out for anything that seems out of the ordinary and assist if needs arise.
- Safety Hosts utilize the Training Manual for Safety Hosts to describe their work in more detail.

Employing a Law Enforcement Officer on Sundays

At the time of this EAP's compilation, the Leadership Council recommends not employing an officer every Sunday, but reserving the option to do so on special occasions and for special services. This recommendation comes, in part, because of the robust work of the Safety Team, the close location of the WSPD Downtown Bike Patrol office to the church house, the officers staffing on Sundays a block away at Centenary United Methodist Church and two blocks away at First Presbyterian Church, and the number of experienced concealed carriers in the Sanctuary on a Sunday morning. The Leadership Council will review this recommendation after the church moves into the new space in our back lot upon completion in August 2026.

II. Response

We acknowledge that emergency responses are situational and reliant on the unique context of each particular emergency. Yet we hope that these best practices will offer pathways for faithful, focused responses.

Medical Crises

Though we have a congregation full of helpers and people who move through the world with deep compassion, in the event of a medical emergency, please do not step in to assist. Rather, if you witness an emergency, find a medical professional, pastor, or Safety Host who are all trained to respond in a particular way.

First Baptist on Fifth is fortunate to have a deep bench of trained medical and mental health professionals who are available, willing, and ready to lead in the occasion of a crisis. These professionals are the first line of response in the instance of a crisis, and are trained and ready to act. Careful preparation has readied them to respond, including collecting needed supplies at the church house, completing regular trainings on procedures and equipment, and meeting together about how they will attend to the person in need in the event of an emergency.

Examples of medical emergencies that may occur at the church house include heart attack, stroke, seizure, fainting, choking, vomiting, bleeding, illness, injury, or a fall. It is likely that the emergency will be of a nature that the medical professional hears or sees the one in crisis and responds quickly themselves.

If not, it is the responsibility of the Safety Host or one of the pastors to take the following steps:

1. Immediately assess the severity of the need. If the person is in severe distress or unable to breathe, call 911 and then call for assistance on the radio.
2. If the emergency is non-life threatening and occurs outside of worship, call for assistance on the radio and be sure to identify your location. Stay with the person in need until the medical professional arrives.
3. If the emergency is non-life threatening and occurs during worship, call straight to the ushers in the narthex on the radio, who have a list of medical professionals and know where to find each one in the room, and report the problem.

4. If the emergency is life-threatening and requires CPR during worship, the Sanctuary will be evacuated and the livestream feed ended. Safety Hosts will assist in smooth and orderly evacuation of the space.
5. As much as many in our congregation will want to help, the emergency is best assisted by giving space to the medical professional and keeping others back while the professional is attending to the person in need. Please do not record the incident on your cell phone.

Mental Health Crises

Should a member of our community or a visitor experience a mental health crisis while at the church house, trained mental health professionals, chaplains, pastors, and members who have completed the Mental Health First Aid training will be ready to respond.

It is likely that the crisis will be of a nature that the mental health professional hears or sees the one in crisis and responds quickly themselves.

If not, it is the responsibility of the Safety Host to take the following steps:

1. If the emergency is non-life threatening and occurs outside of worship, call for assistance on the radio and be sure to identify your location. Stay with the person in need until the mental health professional arrives.
2. If the emergency is non-life threatening and occurs during worship, call straight to the ushers in the narthex on the radio, who have a list of mental health professionals and know where to find each one in the room, and report the problem.
3. The mental health professional may need assistance in relocating the one having a crisis to a safe, quiet space for a conversation. Be ready to assist as needed.
4. Should there be a need to call for additional security, make the call to the BEAR (Behavioral Evaluation and Response) Team (336-705-3668), the non-emergency line of WSPD (336-773-7700), or the Suicide and Crisis Hotline (988).

List of Medical and Mental Health Professionals

Each of the professionals listed below has consented to assist if the need arises. This list is posted around the building.

Medical

Roper Halverson
Dean Culler
Jamie Dellinger
Olivia Blake
Stacey Sword-Halsey
Sara Sinal

Certified CPR & First Aid Instructors

Karen Brown
Amy McClure

Mental Health

Anna Harris
Dana Patrick
Charlie Patrick
Joanne Henley

Behavioral Interventionist

Beth Sabbagh

Mental Health First Aid Certified Leaders

Members of the Pastoral Care Ministry Team, Deacons, & Safety Hosts
Pastors

Natural Disaster or Building Emergency

In the event of a natural disaster or building emergency, it is likely that the congregation will employ either an evacuation plan or shelter-in-place. If an evacuation is needed, Safety Hosts and pastors will make their way to the exits, remaining calm and assisting in the smooth relocation of members and guests. Quick connection via radio allows for Safety Hosts to spread out and extend coverage. Pastors will work closely with the Safety Hosts to locate members with higher needs, mobility challenges, or vulnerabilities to ensure their safe evacuation or security.

In the event of a natural disaster, efforts to remain connected to local news will ensure as up-to-date information as possible. Should there be a need to send a mass text to the congregation, the staff will manage this.

These plans are as follows:

Tornado or Hurricane

The congregation quickly assembles in Kelly Auditorium. Safety Hosts and pastors will make their way to the exits, remaining calm and assisting in the smooth relocation of members and guests.

Earthquake

Because earthquakes are uncommon in our region and over quickly, the congregation will stay in place.

Flood

Because floods in our region are unlikely to happen quickly or immediately, the chances of this happening when the congregation gathers are low. In the event of a flood, the congregation will move to the 3rd and 4th floors.

Fire

Fire alarms will notify the fire department of the emergency. The congregation evacuates to the very back of the parking lot. Safety Hosts and pastors will make their way to the exits, remaining calm and assisting in the smooth relocation of members and guests. Anyone on the third or fourth floors will evacuate via the fire escapes on the back of the building. Nursery workers are trained on how to get babies and toddlers out of the building quickly, and parents will be reunited with young ones outside.

Building Issue

- Electricity – Should the power go out, the building's emergency lights will come on. Because power outages are generally connected to a storm (of which there are other sheltering plans) or brief, no evacuation is needed.
- Water – Should there be a break in a water line or main, the staff will handle shutting off of the water in the building.
- Elevator failure – In the event of a power outage, the elevator will not be working, and any recess from the building for folks needing the elevator will take place on the ramp. Should the elevator stop with people inside, there are call buttons inside to be used.
- Gas leak or chemical issue – Practices to evacuate the building as if there was a fire will be utilized.

Adversarial or Human-Caused Threats

Active Shooter

In the event of an active shooter situation at the church house, Safety Hosts will provide vital leadership in a fearful situation. Because the precise circumstances of the event may change the response plan, here are actions to take:

1. Call 911 as soon as possible. Inform the dispatcher where the shooting is taking place.
2. RUN. Assist members in leaving belongings and exiting the premises immediately.
3. HIDE. Assist members in getting below pews, behind doors or heavy objects, and away from windows and doors if possible. Turn off lights and cell phones, and secure the doors if available. Do your best to remain quiet and calm.
4. FIGHT. There are a handful of members who have concealed carry permits, carry a weapon at the church house, and have discussed their response to an active shooter situation with the senior pastor. Though these individuals intentionally do not have a formal, coordinated response, they may act as they see fit. Any work to disarm or distract the shooter allows law enforcement more time to arrive on the scene. If the shooter is subdued and their weapon secured, when law enforcement arrives, anyone holding a firearm should place it in a secure location out of sight and not hold it as police enter.

Hazardous Weapon

In the event that a weapon or suspicious package is found onsite, or a bomb threat is reported, the Safety Hosts will:

1. Call 911 and report the issue. Do not attempt to assess the situation yourself.
2. Initiate movement and assist at the exits as the congregation shelters-in-place in Kelly Auditorium. If 911 first responders instruct to evacuate, follow protocols of a fire emergency and evacuate to the back parking lot.

Aggressor Disturbance

In the event that a person enters the building in an aggressive manner intending to disturb the gathering, the Safety Hosts or ushers will:

1. Call the non-emergency WSPD line (336-773-7700).

2. If alone, call for fellow Safety Host assistance on the radio and be sure to identify your location. Once another person arrives, if needed, move the aggressor to a quieter location.
3. Tell the aggressor that they are welcome to join for worship, but if that is not their intent, they should leave the property or the police will be called.
4. If the aggressor does not leave, call 911. Do not physically engage the aggressor.
5. Other than the Safety Hosts and any additional leaders assisting, church members should avoid speaking with or physically engaging an aggressor.

Armed Robbery or Forced Entry

In the event that a person forces their way into the building with a weapon and the intention of stealing (not shooting) when the church is gathered, the Safety Hosts will:

1. Remain calm and do not resist. Assure the robber of your cooperation and take no action that may jeopardize your safety, including quick or unexpected movements.
2. Follow the robber's directions, but do not offer more than what they request. Don't argue, and if you must move to fulfill a request, tell them what you are going to do and why.
3. Pay attention. Make mental notes of the robber's appearance for use later in filing a report. This includes features like: age, height, race, hair and eye color, clothing, scars or tattoos, weapon if they have it, vehicle that they arrive in if you see it. Notice what the robber does, who accompanies them, what they discuss, where they move and touch so the police can check later for fingerprints.
4. After the robbery or during, if safe to do so, call 911. Do not proceed with this step until you feel secure. Move to a different location and try not to touch anything. Keep people nearby for comfort and assistance.

Vehicle Accident

In the event of a vehicle accident in our parking lot or immediately around our property when the church is gathered, the Safety Hosts will:

1. Ensure everyone involved in the accident is accounted for and responsive. Call 911 immediately and call for one of our medical professionals if need be.
2. Assess if the vehicle can safely be occupied and/or moved.

3. If the vehicle cannot be moved, call 911 and wait for assistance. Safety Team members will wait with the participants in the accident until first responders arrive. Turn on the car's hazard lights while waiting.
4. If the vehicle can be moved, move it to a safe location near the accident site ensuring safety of participants and anyone nearby. Turn on the car's hazard lights.
5. If the accident involved two or more people, exchange the following information: name, address, phone number, insurance company, policy number, driver's license number, license plate number for the owner of each vehicle, as well as the year/make/model/color of each car. Take pictures of the accident's effects on other cars or property, being sure to note the exact location of the collision and how it happened.
6. If the accident involved one car into church property, the Safety Host should collect all the information stated in #5. Take pictures of the accident's effect on the property, being sure to note the exact location of the collision and how it happened.
7. The Safety Host will send any collected information and pictures to the pastor for the purpose of filing with the church's insurance ASAP.
8. If a vehicle needs towing, please call Pat's Towing at (336) 396-7981.

III. Aftermath

First Baptist Church on Fifth understands that there are critical learnings which take place after an emergency event. These learnings strengthen our preparations and enhance our capacity to respond to emergencies.

In the event of an emergency, the following steps will be taken to ensure the event has been fully debriefed and assessed:

On the Day of the Event

- In the immediate aftermath of an event, church members will be sure to direct any media inquiries to the pastor, ensuring a singular voice speaking on behalf of the church after an emergency.

- Communications will be sent out to the congregation with a brief description of what happened, what steps were taken, and if any action is needed by the congregation.
- Leaders involved with the response will meet to debrief and continue any other immediate response needed.
- If appropriate, security camera footage will be reviewed.
- The Accounting Manager will be notified about the event to report to our insurance company if needed.
- Pastors and leaders will, where appropriate, follow up with the person in crisis.

In the Weeks After the Event

- Related leadership groups (staff, Deacons, Leadership Council, Safety Team, etc.) will meet to assess response and make notes of any changes needed.
- Any needed changes will be implemented.

In the Next Quarterly Church Conference

- The Safety Team leader will present to the church a brief report outlining the event, our response, and any takeaways or changes identified.

IV. Appendices

Emergency Services Contact List

911

988 (Suicide and Crisis Lifeline)

BEAR (Behavioral Evaluation and Response) Team
336-705-3668

Daymark Mobile Mental Health Crisis Team
866-275-9552

WSPD Non-Emergency Line

336-773-7700

WSPD Downtown Bike Patrol
336-727-2177

Winston-Salem Downtown Fire Department
336-727-8000

Winston-Salem Department of Public Health
336-703-3100