

Gathering Table Interim Security Policy

Preamble: Gathering Table is a community that welcomes all persons to our worship, fellowship and parish events. While this openness is part of our vision and values, we need to be diligent that all persons are safe, and that the church building and contents, as well as individual valuables are secure. The intent of this policy is to provide direction for leaders and all members of Gathering Table in safety and security matters.

Principles:

- People are to be made welcome until they do, or threaten to do, something to make themselves unwelcome.
- We have been entrusted with the church and hall buildings, and it is our responsibility to ensure these assets are protected.
- The church and buildings are private property. It is within the right of the Incumbent and Wardens to ask a person(s) to leave for cause. In their absence, any parishioner may do so. If a person(s) then refuses to leave, the police can be called to remove the person.
- As a last resort, it may be necessary to lay a trespass order on an unwelcome person by filing it with City police.

Responsibilities:

The Incumbent and Wardens will ensure the measures in this policy are implemented. This policy requires wide distribution to ensure parishioners are aware of it, and are invited to bring matters to the attention of the Incumbent and Wardens. In the event of immediate concern, parishioners will need to take measures to ensure their personal safety, the safety of others, and the security of the church buildings and contents.

Unwelcome People - During a worship service:

- If an individual is violent, threatens violence, or damages property, the police are to be called immediately at 911. The Wardens and Incumbent are to be advised of the emergency call ASAP.
- If necessary, the Sunday School teachers should escort children out of the hall building through an alternate exit and to a position/location of safety (e.g. a teacher's car).

- If an individual is disruptive, she/he should be counseled that they are welcome to stay, but must allow the service to continue and will be asked to leave if their actions continue to be disruptive. If this becomes the case, tell them to leave. If they refuse to do so, call the police at 911 and ask that the person be removed.
- Advise the Incumbent, Wardens, Greeters, and Sunday School teachers of the situation and how it is being handled. They have a role in communicating the situation with the congregation.

Unwelcome People - During any other church function:

- Cautious discretion is advised for all parishioners when answering the doors. If for some reason, difficult people enter or try to enter buildings when it has been made clear to them they are not welcome, they are to be told to leave. If persons refuse to leave or engage in harassing or threatening behaviour, the police are to be called immediately.
- All users of the buildings are encouraged to keep the doors locked - particularly at night to prevent unwanted people from entering the premises.
- At night, occupants are encouraged to leave the premises in pairs or groups.

Building Security

The church and hall buildings are equipped with sensors that detect door openings, movement and smoke, and are linked to the City Fire and Rescue Service, and Apex Security. A carbon monoxide alarm is in the furnace hall. There are fire extinguishers strategically located throughout the building. In case of fire please implement the fire/emergency plan. An emergency light is located in the washroom hall in the event of electrical outage. The door opening and movement sensors are turned off when the security code is entered into one of the two keypads, but the smoke alarms remain active. They may be temporarily turned off when cooking items that produce smoke. A responsible person such as a Warden may do this as requested.

During office hours, all exterior doors are to remain locked unless arrangements are made otherwise and the Office Administrator advised. There are camera phones at the Pearl Street and parking lot entrances. A person wishing entry will speak to the Office Administrator who will release the electric door lock if they know who it is.

The electric door lock at the parking lot door may also be opened by activating a mobile camera phone/ switch. Only those persons designated by the Wardens will use this restricted app.

Unless occupied, doors to the office, balcony, sacristy, food cupboard, basement and boiler are to be kept locked at all times.

There are exterior lights at the parking lot, kitchen and driveway entrances. If any of these are not operating at night, advise the Wardens to effect bulb replacement or repair(s).

The garage attached to the church house (226 Pearl) contains yard maintenance tools and supplies. To prevent theft, it is to be locked at all times, except when church volunteers may be present and the door within sight.

Alarm System

The first person entering the buildings either by the driveway or by the parking lot entrance will deactivate the alarm system by entering the security code. A constant tone from the system and a red light on the key pad indicates that the alarm is activated. If the alarm is already deactivated, there will be a single two tone alert. Check around to verify that someone is already there. If no one is in the building please note the date, time and alert a Warden as soon as possible. If you believe you are the last person to leave the building, please confirm that fact and check all exterior doors to ensure they are locked and secure before setting the alarm. When the alarm is set there will be a repeating tone and you have approximately 30 seconds to exit the building.

Panic Bars

Three door are equipped with panic bars: the wooden Pearl Street door, the green parking lot door and the red driveway door. These may be kept open by pushing it until the latch disengages, and inserting the small Allen key in the push bar and turning clockwise. They are to be put in the locked position upon leaving by turning the Allen key counter-clockwise.

At the Pearl Street door, the Allen key is kept on a nail by the right side coat rack as you face the door from the inside of the building. This door should be locked shortly after Sunday worship by a Greeter, when most people are in the hall, rather than the worship space.

On Sunday mornings, the Greeters (and their designated helpers, if required) will unlock all three doors equipped with panic bars to enable ready access by all. Just before worship, the parking lot door is to be locked by one of the Greeters because typically there will be no persons in the hall until the Sunday School teachers and children arrive. Persons wanting to use this door will need to activate the exterior camera phone, request entry, and the door opened with the electric door lock by a designated person with the app on their mobile device. Once worship is over, and people gather in the hall, one of the Greeters will unlock this door until the buildings are closed up for the day.

Doorbells

The red driveway door and the green parking lot door are (will be) equipped with separate doorbells. Each has (will have) a different sound. Caution should be exercised when opening the doors, particularly at night and non-Sunday events.

Security Checklist (for all persons using the buildings)

1. Alarm activated / deactivated?
2. Panic bars unlocked / locked?
3. First person in / last person out?
4. Parking lot door unlocked / locked? Designated person with mobile app?
5. Pearl Street door locked after worship?

Follow-up:

- A Warden, or their designate will prepare a report of any security incident with dates, details and people involved. The report will be reviewed by the Parish Advisory Council for review and possible follow up. The report will be filed for future reference.
- The Archdeacon should be notified of any incident where the police are called
- It may be advisable to notify other churches in the area of an incident involving an unwelcome person, as there is the possibility that the individual may go to another church

Distribution:

The Incumbent, Wardens, All Parish Advisory Council members, Greeters and Sunday School staff.

Review: The Incumbent, Wardens and Parish Advisory Council are to review this policy on a periodic basis, as should new persons who may assume these positions.

Approval: This interim policy is to be brought forward to our annual Vestry for approval.