



Policies and Procedures for Public Event Safety and Security

Purpose and Guiding Principles

The purpose of these policies and procedures is to implement the following principles:

- St. Augustine's in-the-Woods is committed to being a welcoming and inclusive church. "All are welcome" is a motto we live by.
- St. Augustine's in-the-Woods prioritizes safety and emergency preparedness in taking steps to ensure that events are both welcoming and safe.

Purpose and Scope

These policies and procedures apply to public events sponsored by St. Augustine's (such as the Holiday Market, Trash and Treasure, and MLK Jr. commemoration) and those public events held at St. Augustine's with building use approval (for example, Whidbey Island Music Festival concerts). These are events where there are large numbers of attendees including those who are not regular attendees of church services.

A similar set of practices (outlined elsewhere) guide our regular worship services, church meetings, and small groups who regularly use our facility.

Policies and Procedures¹

1. At each event there shall be a **Church Designee** identified and authorized in writing by the Rector or a Warden to make decisions in the moment. The Designee shall be an officer of the church, member of staff, or member of the Vestry. With the approval of the Rector and/or Wardens, a member of the congregation who is not currently a Vestry member or officer of the church may be assigned as Designee.
2. The Church Designee should not be a person who is staffing the event so that she/he is free to respond to needs that arise. Event organizers will be notified who the church designee is in advance of the event and ensure the designee is welcomed for assisting through this role.

¹ These policies and procedures were developed following a meeting with the Island County Deputy Sheriff responsible for South Whidbey on 1/5/24. They represent his guidance for best practices for safety and security for events held at St. Augustine's.



3. Access and open doors to the building should be assessed according to the needs of the event. If the event does not include use of the undercroft, the lower doors should remain locked unless there is a greeter at the door.
4. Event staff and event performers are encouraged to park in the lower parking lot so as to reduce traffic through the lower doors. Those with mobility issues can be dropped off at the main entrance.
5. The Designee should have access to a building key (“A” key), know the location of the AED and fire extinguishers, and have a mobile phone with them should emergency services need to be called. It would be helpful if the Designee has the cordless landline phone for faster 911 identification of location.
6. In the event of a disruptive or threatening presence, the Church Designee is empowered to decide if intervention is called for. Examples of disruptive or potentially threatening actions may include the following: Erratic behavior due to intoxication or drug impairment, using threatening or abusive language, destruction of property, and open carry of a weapon².
7. If the Designee determines a disruptive or threatening presence exists, the Designee is authorized to do the following:
 - a. If the threat is imminent or the individual(s) is causing damage, call 911.
 - b. If the individual(s) is determined by the Designee to be disruptive to the event (but not posing an immediate threat), the Designee is authorized to approach the individual and outline the expected action (see attached protocol for approaching an individual and de-escalating conflict Appendix A). If the individual fails to comply, the Designee should call 911 and request assistance.
8. In the event the Designee calls 911 from the church landline, the call will be received by Island County dispatch with the location. If calling from a cell phone, Island County dispatch will only have the location of the cell tower carrying the call. It is possible for a cell call to be received by an adjacent county, but when the information is relayed, the call will be transferred to Island County dispatch. The caller should be ready to provide:
 - a. Location is the first and most important thing. **5217 Honeymoon Bay Road**
 - b. What is occurring.

² St. Augustine's In-the-Wood vestry balanced the antithetical views on firearms in a place of worship. In an effort to be inclusive the vestry balanced and recognized the passionate belief in the 2nd Amendment right to bear arms against those affected by and concerned with the societal impact of weapons. The vestry balanced these beliefs and concerns in deciding that “openly carrying a firearm” is presumptively disruptive.



- c. Description of the people involved.
 - d. Vehicle info or license if possible, in case the person(s) is leaving. Don't endanger yourself in getting that information.
9. The Designee should carefully document in writing all circumstances and actions in the event of an emergency or disruptive situation requiring intervention either by the Designee or law enforcement.



Appendix A

Protocol for approaching an individual and de-escalating conflict at an event

The Church Designee is informed by the two guiding principles of our *Policies and Procedures for Public Event Safety and Security*—**Welcome and safety**.

If one or more people engage in words or actions that disrupt the event, threaten others attending the event, or create a risk of harm to event attendees or church property, the Church Designee is authorized to decide if intervention is appropriate. Examples of disruptive or potentially threatening circumstances that may warrant intervention include: Erratic behavior due to potential intoxication, drug impairment, or mental illness; using hostile, menacing, or abusive language toward event attendees or participants; throwing, removing, or otherwise harming property; or open carry of a weapon.

Important: The Church Designee is not acting as law enforcement and should prioritize de-escalation and personal safety.

If the Designee determines a disruptive or threatening presence, the Designee is authorized to do the following:

1. If the threat is imminent or the individual(s) is causing damage, call 911.
2. If the individual(s) is determined by the Designee to be disruptive to the event (but not posing an immediate threat), the Designee is authorized to approach the individual and outline the expected action as follows with best practices for de-escalating situations:
 - **Always remain calm and even in your demeanor.**
 - **Watch that your own body language is communicating calmness and non-aggression (e.g., do not stand with arms crossed). People will respond to how you represent yourself.**
 - **Be clear what your expectations are for the circumstance and communicate it clearly and firmly. Example language: “As the Church Designee for this event, your (describe behavior) is causing a disruption. I am asking you, please, to... (describe your expectations such as leave the building, secure your weapon in your car, etc.).**
 - **Provide an opportunity for the individual to comply with your direction, but don’t engage in an argument. Repeat your expectations clearly and calmly.**
 - **If the individual fails to comply, the Designee should state to the individual that the Designee will call 911 and request assistance.**
 - **Draw a distinction between property damage and people damage. Is this an instance you need to intervene, or should you summon law enforcement and let them deal with it?**



- **It can be useful to engage in productive “what if” conversations in your head. The idea is to help clarify your plan of action and alternatives.**