



Emergency Preparedness and Response Committee

October 23, 2019

Dear Parochial Clergy and Parish Leaders,

Earlier this year, the Diocese re-established the Emergency Preparedness and Response Committee in response to heightened concerns about parish safety after the Tree of Life shootings. Bishop McConnell appointed Peter Balfe (St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon) and Tim Austin (St. Brendan's, Franklin Park) as Co-Chairs of the Committee, and they have assembled a small group of volunteers who are committed to this work.



Like its predecessors, this Committee will continue to serve as the point of contact for the work of Episcopal Relief and Development at the national level, and develop policies and resources for responding to possible natural disasters in our region. The Committee has also been asked to assist parishes in taking prudent steps to protect their own members, their guests, and those who make use of their facilities from potential **human acts of violence**. As rare as such occurrences are, their significance is magnified by the 24-hour news cycle and omnipresent social media. As a result, individuals of many faiths cite this particular risk as a concern when they visit their respective places of worship.

As one of several steps that the Committee has prioritized, we are collecting basic information about where each of the parishes in our Diocese currently stands in developing a security plan. We know that wardens, clergy and parish administrative staff are all extremely busy, so we are deliberately keeping this initial request for input to a bare minimum. **All we ask is that you answer a couple of very brief questions.**

[Click here to take the survey](#)

Please submit your response by November 15.

Questions may be directed to Tim Austin, Co-Chair of the Committee, at austover@gmail.com.

Please know how grateful we are for your help. We will be back in touch with an analysis of what we learn before the end of the year.

