

Emergency Action Plan for Saint Joseph Church



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Introduction

This emergency action plan consists of six categories of incidents:

1. Tornado / Severe Storm
2. Fire
3. Medical
4. Intruder / Shooter
5. Threats (Suspicious people, unruly people, bomb, etc.)
6. Chemical (truck or railroad spills)

The church building is utilized by many people and groups in both a formal organized function and non formal visits, all of which may occur in various areas and rooms in the building; typically between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Individuals leading the activity may not be familiar with the building and full time church staff may or may not be present. Therefore an emergency action plan cannot address every situation during every day of the week or every hour of the day. This emergency action plan is written to address various emergency scenarios during typical Saint Joseph Church organized activities.

Emergency Action Plan (EAP) Oversight

Oversight of the EAP is the responsibility of the EAP Committee/Parish Administrator subsequent to coordination and approval by the Parish Council.

EAP committee and Parish Administrator Responsibilities.

The EAP committee and Parish Administrator are entrusted with the responsibility to take the actions necessary to ensure the following:

1. The designated fire numbers adjacent to the 6th Ave. entrance are clearly visible and are reflective to facilitate rapid identification of our address by emergency responders.
2. The perimeter lights are functioning properly and illuminate all entrances to the buildings and eliminate shadows in which intruders can hide.
3. The shrubs adjacent to the buildings are maintained to make it difficult for intruders to hide.
4. Trees close to the buildings are trimmed to a height that permits proper illumination and do not significantly block visibility of the building.
5. The entrances on the front and sides of the building which form alcoves are lighted to eliminate shadows in which intruders can hide.
6. Ensure fire extinguisher, detector and alarm maintenance contract is in place to comply with state fire code regulations.
7. Coordinate fire drills and periodic inspections by the De Witt Fire Department and the Clinton County Sheriff's Department / De Witt Police Department.
8. Facilitate annual refresher and EAP review with church ministries and non church groups that frequently use the facility. This also includes an open invitation to interested members.

Training

Church leaders, administration, committee chairs, ushers and leaders of non church groups who regularly use the church facility (all collectively referred to as “leaders”) must be required to read the emergency action plan. At least annually, a review refresher should be held with the leaders and the plan updated to address concerns, changes in logistics, organizational structure, demographics, etc. It is recommended that representatives of the fire department and law enforcement be involved for input.

EAP must be distributed to all Religious Education teachers prior to the beginning of classes, as well as frequent users of Harness Hall.

Leader Knowledge of EAP

In the event of an emergency, leader responsibilities may include the following:

- Knowing how to correctly respond to and summon help for a medical emergency.
- Knowing how to correctly report a fire, smoke or gas leak emergency using the 911 emergency numbers.
- Knowing the locations of the manual fire alarm pull stations in their area.
- Knowing how to correctly respond to a fire warning alarm.
- Knowing the facilities lock-down/shelter in place procedure.
- Knowing designated shelter areas and precautions to take in the event of a tornado emergency.
- Becoming familiar with exit routes and knowing alternate exits to correctly respond to a call for an evacuation.
- Closing all opened doors as they evacuate an area.

Tornado / Severe Storm

The National Weather Service has developed a method of identifying storm conditions that foster the development of tornadoes. The classification and definitions of storm conditions are:

- Severe Thunderstorm Watch
- Tornado Watch
- Severe Thunderstorm Warning
- Tornado Warning

A Severe Thunderstorm Watch - This is issued by the National Weather Service when conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms in and close to the watch area. A severe thunderstorm by definition is a thunderstorm that produces one inch hail or larger in diameter and/or winds equal or exceed 58 miles an hour. The size of the watch can vary depending on the weather situation. They are usually issued for a duration of 4 to 8 hours. They are normally issued well in advance of the actual occurrence of severe weather. In the event that a **Severe thunderstorm Watch** has been issued by the National Weather service during a Church event, such as a Mass, no immediate action needs to be taken by the Ushers or occupants of the Church. The Ushers or church occupants will need to maintain monitoring of the situation with either their personal cell phones tuned to a local weather service or the NOAA Weather alert radio located in the Gathering Space. During the watch, people should be prepared to move to the designated storm shelter locations.

A Severe thunderstorm Warning - This is issued when either a severe thunderstorm is indicated by radar or a spotter reports a thunderstorm producing hail one inch or larger in diameter and/or winds equal or exceed 58 miles an hour; therefore, people in the affected area may need to seek safe shelter indoors immediately. The ushers/leaders may need to move the building occupants away from exterior windows and move to interior locations of the building or move to the designated storm shelters. Severe thunderstorms can produce tornadoes with little or no advance warning. They are usually issued for a duration of one hour. They can be issued without a Severe Thunderstorm Watch being already in effect.

A tornado watch - This is issued by the national Weather Service when conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes in and close to the watch area. They are usually issued for a duration of 4 to 8 hours. They normally are issued well in advance of the actual occurrence of severe weather. During a **Tornado Watch**, no immediate action is required, but people should be prepared to move to a place of safety if weather conditions change and threatening weather approaches.

A tornado warning - This is issued when a tornado is indicated by radar or sighted by spotters; therefore, people in the affected area should seek safe shelter immediately. A Warning can be issued without a Tornado Watch being already in effect. They are usually issued for a duration of around 30 minutes. In the event that a **Tornado Warning** has been issued by the national Weather Service during a Church event, such as Mass, the Mass Ushers or event leader will

alert the church occupants to the situation and ask everyone to move to the designated tornado shelters until further notice and an all clear is communicated. **DO NOT RUN** and stay calm.. Ushers or other Church Parishioners may need to assist disabled or elderly people to the shelter areas.

Storm or Tornado Shelter - Usher/Leader responsibilities will be needed to direct everyone to designated shelter areas and hold inside doors open to areas of shelter. In the event of severe weather or tornados the following areas have been designated as storm shelters.

- School lower hallway
- School locker rooms
- School lunchroom

If disabled or elderly can not be moved that far, then the following can be used:

- Gathering Space Restrooms located in the SE corner of the Gathering Space
- Parish office copier area
- Coat closet area next to Gathering space

Diagram of bad weather shelter on page 1 of Appendix.

FIRE

If you detect smoke and/or fire:

- Activate the manual fire alarms (Pull Stations are located at most Exits)

NO PULL STATIONS AT DOOR #1A,7D or10D

- Initiate evacuation procedure for any occupants of the affected area.
- Call 911 (move to a safe area before making this call).
- Give your name, telephone number, and location.
- Describe the situation.
- Do not use the elevator.
- If you know how to use and are physically capable. Decide if the best course of action is to attempt to extinguish the fire. Locate an extinguisher (9 locations are noted in EAP) and without risking injury attempt to extinguish the fire.
- Isolate the fire by closing doors in area affected after evacuation is complete.

If the Fire Alarm Sounds- Immediately initiate evacuation procedures

- Evacuation areas are color coded and designated areas are specified by which door is exited.
- **Door 2A,3B,4B, & 5B are RED, Door 6C is GREEN, Door 1A,7D, 8D,9D, & 10D is BLUE.**

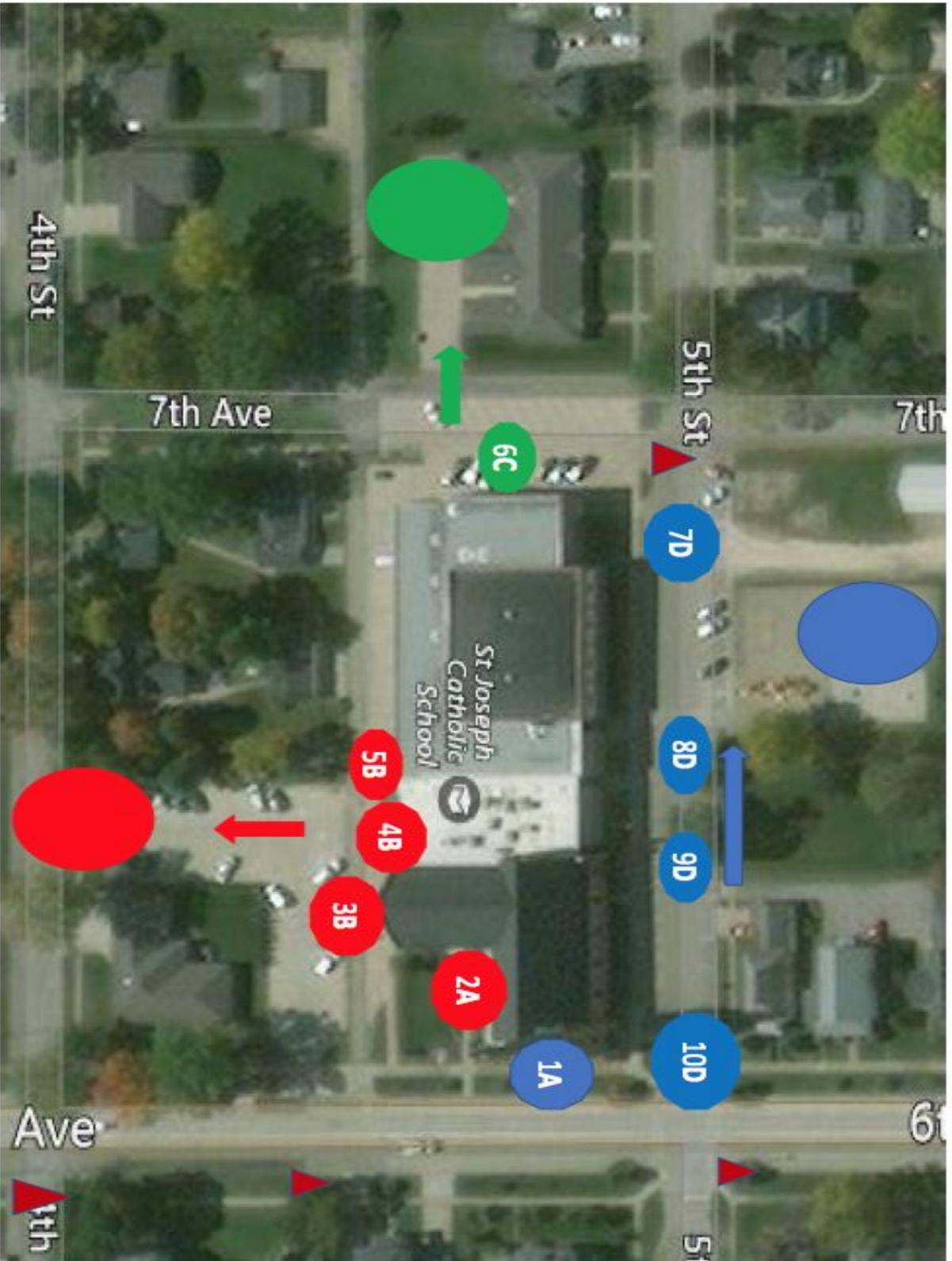
See next page for EAP Plan for Fire staging locations

- Assist Children, Disabled and Elderly in your area.
- All rules of fire safety apply, if you encounter smoke, short breaths through the nose, drop and crawl if possible. If disoriented find a wall and stay close to it. (Rescue personnel are trained in search techniques based off the walls).
- Feel all doors before opening them. Use the back of your hand. Do not open hot doors.
- If the door is cool, open slowly. Always open a door that you are behind to give you additional protection in case you need to shut it quickly.
- Proceed out the building to your designated staging color coded staging area.
- No one is to move or leave in their automobile. This can hinder Emergency Vehicle Operations on scene. (Emergency Personnel may ask for vehicles to be moved after arriving on scene)
- Stay in your staging zone until cleared by Emergency Personnel.
- No re-entry is allowed until an "All Clear" is determined by Emergency Personnel.

Diagram of Fire Extinguishers locations is in the Appendix .

FIRE

NORTH



W
E
S
T

E
A
S
T

SOUTH

Medical (diagram of location of First Aid Kit & Automatic External Defibrillator shown in Appendix as blue triangle and green square).

Call 9-1-1. Be prepared to give the following information:

- Name and phone number.
- Location.
- Number of people involved.
- Nature of injury or illness.
- Remember to stay on the line until help arrives, if at all possible.

Note: Treat minor injuries from supplies in the **first aid kit**. The kit is located in the gathering space coat closet on the shelf with the AED. (a sign outside the closet marks the location)

While waiting for professional help do not move the ill or injured person, unless safety considerations necessitate movement or transportation to a safer location. When professional help arrives:

- Allow responding units to take control of situation.
- Medical Emergency response team members may stand by to assist as needed

Heart Attack / Defibrillator

The Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) is located on a shelf in the gathering space coat closet. (a sign outside the closet marks the location)

- The AED shall be used only by an individual that has been trained on the proper AED use procedures.
- Any person who uses the automatic external defibrillator shall request emergency medical assistance (call 9-1-1) as soon as possible.
- Any person who uses the AED shall report the use of the device to the church office.
- The AED shall not be placed back into the cabinet until properly inspected for reuse.

A Medical Emergency Response team has been identified for each regular Sunday Mass. These same team members should respond if there is a medical problem during a Daily Mass, Funeral Mass, Holy Day Mass, Wedding Mass, or any other event held in the church or Harness Hall when they are in attendance.

The members of the Medical Emergency Response team should make themselves known to the ushers so that they would know who to call on if there is a Medical Emergency.

A list of the members of the Medical Emergency Response team is in the Appendix on page 18 and should be updated as new members are recruited and as members leave the team.

Intruder/Active Shooter Emergency Action Plan

This Emergency Action Plan cannot cover every possible situation that might occur. Nevertheless, it is a training tool that can reduce the number of injuries or death if put into action as soon as a situation develops. Time is a critical factor in the management of a situation of this magnitude.

If an intruder/Active Shooter is discovered in the building:

- Get to a safe location and Call 911 immediately and provide as much information as possible. Provide a description of the intruder and any specific characteristics (height, weight, hair color, race, and type and color of clothing) and types of weapon(s), if any.
- If possible give the 9-1-1 center the exit number that the intruder is in the proximity of or the north/west/south/east side of the building.
- Do not activate the fire alarm. The fire alarm will signal the occupants in the building to evacuate the building and thus place them in potential harm as they attempt to exit.
- Notify other staff / offices as discreetly possible.

Evacuation versus seeking area of refuge

Discretion is necessary to the option that is least likely to draw attention to you. Evacuate if you can! Be cautious as there may be surprises outside. Seek immediate refuge in enclosed offices or classrooms that have the ability to lock the door from the inside if you cannot evacuate.

- Close, lock and barricade room doors if possible.
- Close windows and window treatments.
- Turn off the lights to that area
- Remain calm, as quiet as possible, and out-of-sight.

Stay in the locked/barricaded room, but be ready to fight and or escape if the intruder enters the room. Remain in the room until informed by Police personnel that it is safe to come out of the area. Individuals with cell phones may establish contact with local 911 personnel of the situation.

When a hostile person(s) is actively causing physical or deadly harm or the imminent threat of deadly harm (weapon / shooting), or is barricaded within a building, the following procedures may be followed:

- Lock yourself in the room you are in at the time of the threatening activity.
- Don't stay in open areas.
- Lock the window and close blinds or curtains.
- Stay away from windows.
- Turn all lights and audio equipment off.
- Try to stay calm and be as quiet as possible, and be prepared to fight or run if the intruder enters the room.

A) You can try to hide, but make sure it is a well hidden space or you may be found as the intruder moves through the building looking for victims.

B) If you think you can safely make it out of the building by running, do so. If you decide to run, do not run in a straight line. Keep any objects you can between you and the hostile person(s) while in the building. Use trees, vehicles or any other object to block you from view as you run. When away from the immediate area of danger, summon help any way you can and warn others.

C) If the person(s) is causing death or serious physical injury to others and you are unable to run or hide, you may choose to play dead if other victims are around you. Please note, this action may also make you an easy target.

D) The last option you have, if caught in an open area, may be to fight back. This is dangerous, but depending on your situation, this could be your best option for survival.

E) Once law enforcement arrives, obey all commands of law enforcement. Remember, they will not know who the intruder(s) is/are so will need to be cautious of everyone. This may involve your being handcuffed or made to put your hands in the air. This is done for safety reasons, and once circumstances are evaluated by law enforcement, they will give you further directions to follow.

F) If you are able to get the weapon from the intruder/shooter, **DO NOT** hold it in your hands any longer than you have to. Law Enforcement may believe you are the Intruder/Shooter. Place the weapon from the Intruder/Shooter in a trash can to carry it away from the suspect or out to law enforcement. Notify law enforcement when you encounter them, that you have the Intruder/Shooter's weapon in the trash can.

This is not threatening to law enforcement. Make sure to follow their instructions, and answer any questions they have, as they will need to rule you out as a suspect.

Observing / Following Suspicious People

- If a leader believes that a person is on St. Joseph's Church property to cause harm or to cause a disruption the leader should immediately make that observation know to other leaders.
- The suspicious person should be watched as discreetly as possible in order to ascertain the actual intentions of the person/persons.
- If it becomes obvious that the person/persons plan on causing a disruption, at least **TWO leaders** together should make the decision as to what level of action to take; these should include but are not limited to, following the person/person; overtly, asking the person/persons to leave, and calling the police.
- If there is suspicion or evidence that the individual's actions or emotional state are related to a domestic controversy or dispute involving a spouse or children, contact the police.
- Try to steer the individual away from making contact with who they are looking for.

Threats

- In the event that there is a threatening phone call to St. Joseph Church, (i.e. bomb threat, armed assault, custody issues). **REMAIN CALM**
- **Do not hang up!** Obtain as much information as possible:

Exact Time of Call: _____ Date: _____

Words of caller:

Caller's Voice: Male Female Adult Youth

Accent: Hispanic Asian African Middle Eastern Other

Demeanor of caller: Calm Agitated Drunk Nervous Other

Was voice familiar? Yes or No If yes in what way?

Background Noise: Music Bar Children Machinery Cars/Trucks

Note: In the event you receive a threat of any type call 911 immediately or have someone else do it while you are on the phone.

Chemical Spills

Being in close proximity to a major railway and an agricultural business, a chemical spill could create an emergency outside of the church premises.

If such an emergency is declared, instructions provided by local authorities will be followed.

They may include;

1. House in place/Lockdown - Local authorities may determine that the safest plan is to remain in place. If this is determined, all occupants of the church will remain inside the church. No one shall leave the building. Ushers will shut down the HVAC system and check all exterior doors and windows to make sure they are closed. The reduction of outside air entering the building is vital at this point. Only the local authorities will determine when it is safe to exit and when to conclude this plan of action.
2. Immediate evacuation - All patrons of the church will calmly proceed to the nearest exit and leave the building. When outside the church, follow all commands of the local authorities on which route to take to evacuate the church premises.

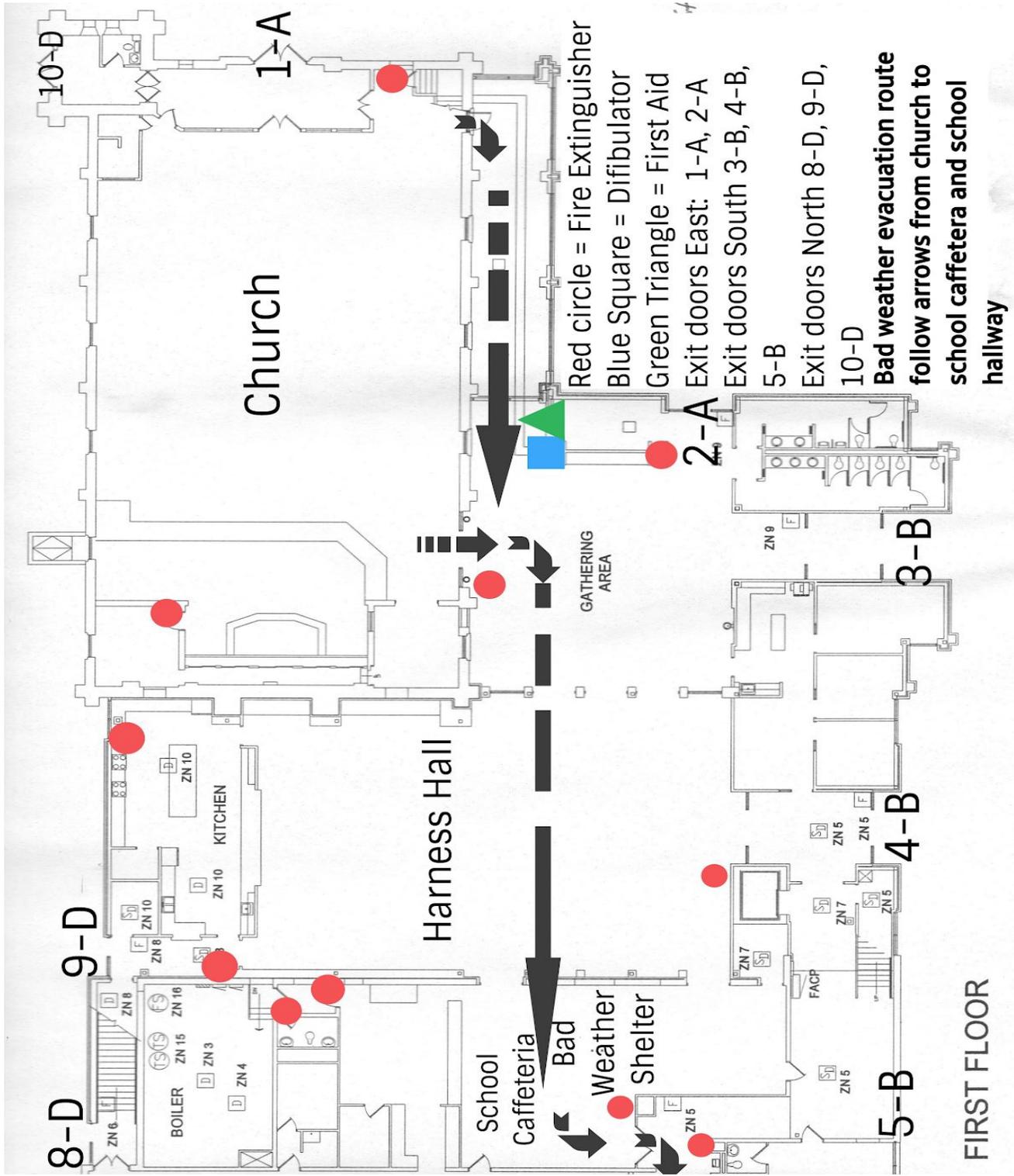
Variables such as the change in weather and wind direction can create the need to change a plan of action during a chemical spill. The local authorities will determine which plan of action is the safest and declare when the emergency has ended. All their commands will be followed.

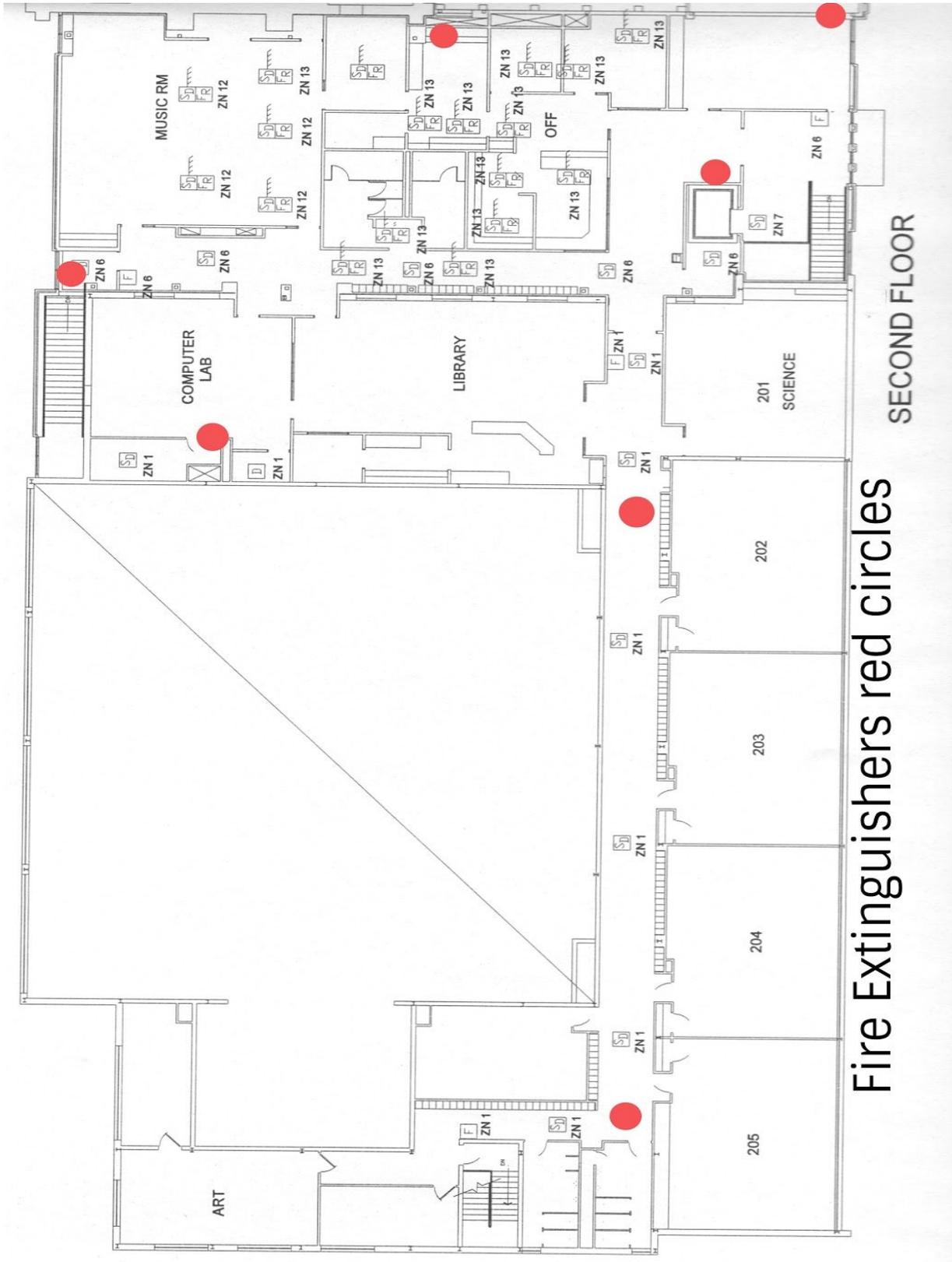
Religious Education:

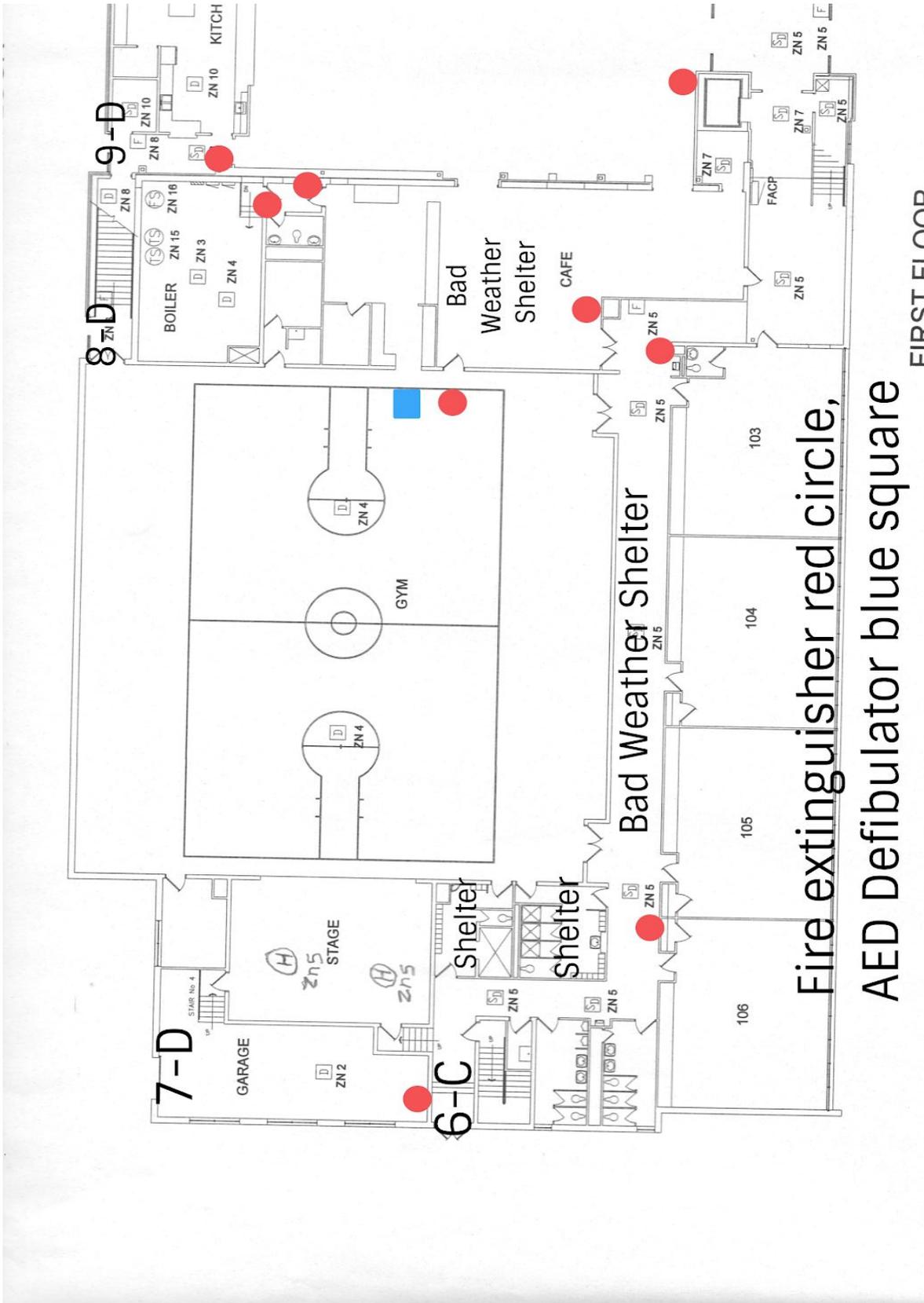
If any of the events listed in this EAP should take place while Religious Education classes are in session the Religious Education Administrator and classroom leaders should follow the EAP of the school that is in effect at the time.

The Religious Education Administrator and classroom leaders should become familiar with the EAP plan of the school and drills should be conducted so as to be ready for an emergency.

A diagram of the school first floor and second floor is shown in the Appendix on pages 2 and 3 respectively for information.







List of Medical Emergency Response Team Members

Saturday afternoon Mass:

**Joan Reynolds
Peggy McAvan
Kelsey Easley**

Sunday 8 am Mass:

**Karen Roode
Peg Thiltgen
Ed Skoff**

Sunday 10 am Mass:

**Richard Dickey
John McDonnell
Karen McWilliams**