Recent Violence at Worship Centers

Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management & Homeland Security
Recent Violence at Worship Centers

• 7/27/2008 – Knoxville Unitarian Universalist Church
  • Gunman entered church during youth performance of *Annie*
  • 2 dead, 7 injured
  • Politically motivated; shooter wanted to kill liberals and Democrats

• 8/5/2012 – Sikh Temple of Wisconsin
  • Gunman opened fire approx. 10:25 a.m.
  • 6 dead, 4 injured
  • Racially motivated; shooter was a white supremacist
Recent Violence at Worship Centers

- **6/17/2015** – Emanuel AME Church, Charleston, SC
  - Gunman entered church around 8:00 p.m., sat in on a Bible study/prayer meeting for 1 hour before opening fire
  - 9 dead, 3 injured
  - Racially motivated; shooter was a white supremacist

- **1/29/2017** – Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City
  - Gunman entered mosque shortly after the scheduled 7:30 p.m. prayers began; started shooting at worshippers lingering in the mosque after the prayer
  - 6 dead, 19 injured
  - Shooter was a white nationalist with anti-Muslim views
Recent Violence at Worship Centers

- **9/24/2017 – Burnette Chapel, Antioch, TN**
  - Gunman entered church from the rear at 11:15 a.m., shooting as he walked through the sanctuary
  - 1 dead, 7 injured
  - Racially motivated; shooter was a black supremacist, seeking revenge for Charleston, SC church shooting

- **11/5/2017 – First Baptist Church, Sutherland Springs, TX**
  - Gunman entered church at 11:20 a.m. during Sunday service, shooting worshippers as he walked up and down the aisle
  - 26 dead, 20 injured
  - Shooting was not motivated by racism or prejudice against religion; gunman was motivated by a dispute with his mother-in-law
Recent Violence at Worship Centers

- **10/21/2018** – Tree of Life Congregation Synagogue, Pittsburgh, PA
  - Gunman entered building at 9:50 a.m. during scheduled Shabbat morning services and opened fire. Between 60 and 100 people in the building at the time.
  - 11 dead, ranging in age from 54 to 97; at least 6 injured, including 4 policemen.
  - Gunman was motivated by extreme anti-Semitism

- **3/15/2019** – Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre, Christchurch, New Zealand
  - Gunman began shooting at Al Noor Mosque at 1:40 p.m. during Friday Prayer, and continued at Linwood Islamic Center at 1:55 p.m.
  - 50 dead, 50 injured
  - Gunman was a white supremacist and alt-right extremist; livestreamed first attack on Facebook Live
Challenges Faced by Worship Centers

• Targeted Acts of Hate and Violence
• Open Access
• Mass Gatherings at Scheduled Times
• Limited Security Budgets
What is Montgomery County doing?

- **Security At Our Worship Centers** presentations
  - OEMHS – Securing Physical Infrastructure
  - MCPD – CRASE (Citizen Response to Active Shooter Events)
  - MCFRS – Response to Suspicious Packages and Bomb Threats
  - Jewish Foundation of Greater Washington – Security Challenges of Worship Centers

- Faith-Based Facilities Security Operating Grant
  - $200K one-time grant to assist houses of worship in enhancing security staffing and planning
  - Grants awarded in March to twelve houses of worship in the County

- Additional Support and Assistance Offered by OEMHS and Montgomery County Police