

## Old St. Paul's Service Disturbance Scenario

**Setting:** 10 AM Easter Worship Service, 15 minutes into the service, Pastor Sain has started his sermon. Attendance at service is 120. Team 1 is on duty with 2 people in the sanctuary, with 1 person on cameras and 1 person in the parking lot. Weather is sunny and warm.

**Event:** Minutes into the sermon a visitor sitting 3 pews from the back on the right hand side of the sanctuary starts to say "Amen" in a loud voice to everything the Pastor says. The SST Team Leader is notified of situation by radio and the Team Leader request that the deacon on duty speak with the man and ask him to hold down his verbal praise. The deacon approaches the man and whispers the request to him. The man exchanges words with deacon and becomes belligerent and argumentative in a loud voice that is disturbing to the service.

### Event Actions:

- Pastor stops his sermon
- The SST duty and off duty members inside sanctuary approach the situation
- SST members clear the pew next to the man and the pews in the front and rear, as the deacon continues to try and calm the disruptive and quarrelsome visitor.
- The SST Team leader has eyes on event by camera and calls 911 for police assistance.
- The Deacon ask the visitor to leave the sanctuary and the man becomes confrontational and refuses to leave.
- SST members surround man with 1 team member in front, 1 member behind and 1 member standing off on each side.
- The Deacon lightly grabs man by left elbow to try and direct man from pew.
- The man becomes combative and swings a fist at the deacon and strikes him on the right shoulder.
- The SST Members converge on the man taking him to ground inside the pews.
- The man continues to struggle, uses profanity and continues to fight with SST members.
- Church Members start leaving sanctuary
- Police arrive on site and the SST Team Leader directs officers to the sanctuary disturbance
- Newton Police officers handcuff the man and remove him from the service still argumentative and using profanity.
- Once the man is removed from service the Pastor ask everyone to continue worship.
- The worship service continues

### **Results of Action:**

- Man is placed in police custody and charged with assault & trespassing.
- 3 SST team members are bleeding from cuts and abrasions. They are treated by a nurse on site.
- 1 SST Team member has a sprained wrist. Goes to doctor the following day for treatment.
- 35 church members leave service and do not return. Many children in the congregation are crying. Most of the congregation is upset at event that just happened.
- The Radio Broadcast is cancelled for the day

### **Aftermath:**

- DA drops all charges against man.
- All SST Team members involved in the confrontation are bruised or have sore muscles for days following the event.
- SST "Use of Force" decision is questioned by some members of the congregation.
- Several church members tell SST that man was mumbling to himself prior to the worship service beginning. They did not feel it was anything they needed to communicate to the SST or deacons.
- SST Debrief:
  1. No SST Team member had any Pepper Spray on Hand at time of event.
  2. Handcuffs were on scene but were not needed due to timely arrival of Newton Police.
  3. SST members agreed that it was hard to control a combative person in the pews.
  4. "Use of Force" used by SST was justified when assailant became combative and struck the deacon.
  5. All off duty SST members properly responded to the situation.
  6. The 3 Duty SST members remained at their post outside the sanctuary to maintain proper surveillance and camera monitoring.

### **Liability & Facts:**

- Church Liability was minimal. The membership in pews adjacent too and in front of and rear of confrontation suffered no consequences due to SST moving people out of harm's way. No church member or visitor was injured by incident.
- SST did not have to assume liability of handcuffing the individual.
- The use of pepper spray would have deescalated the confrontation faster
- Injury's to SST personnel were at a minimum