

**First Baptist Church of Jeffersontown -  
Jeffersontown, Kentucky**

**Date of Incident:** October 24, 2018

**Perpetrator:** Gregory Bush, age 51 at time of attack

**Location of event:** Jeffersontown, Kentucky

**Number of people killed:** 2

**Number wounded:** 0

On Wednesday, October 24, 2018 just before 3PM, Gregory Bush, a 51-year-old white male, shot and killed two people at a Kroger supermarket in Jeffersontown, Ky. The victims are Vickie Lee Jones, a 67-year-old black woman, and Maurice E. Stallard, a 69-year-old black man, both of whom Bush did not know. This incident was investigated as a hate crime. Bush had entered the store, walked past white customers, and targeted Stallard before shooting him several times. He then exited the store and shot Jones in the parking lot. Bush was stopped by an armed bystander, to whom he told "Don't shoot me. I won't shoot you. Whites don't shoot whites." He then fled and police were able to apprehend him on a public road nearby.

The original target was a nearby First Baptist Church, which is predominantly African American. Before the shooting, the church captured on surveillance Bush's unsuccessful attempt to enter at 2:35PM. The perpetrator had arrived to the church after a midweek service (Wednesday). There had been 70 people for the service an hour before he arrived. Eight to ten people were remaining inside. A church member sitting in her car saw Bush and called the pastor of the church, but was sent to voicemail. Bush was seen knocking on, then pulling on the locked doors. Those inside did not hear his knocking. He left after 10 minutes by car to later go to Kroger.

*Pre-incident:*

Bush has a history of violence and racism. He had been convicted of domestic assault towards his black wife and has a history of making racist comments. In May 2009, he was accused of screaming profanities at his ex-wife and threatening her. His father also reported that Bush once said "Tonight might be black death." Bush also details his struggles with mental illness such as paranoid-schizophrenia on his Facebook profile page. In 2009, he was ordered to hand over all weapons as a result of the domestic altercation; however, they were returned in 2011. Bush became very vocal on social media prior to the attack.

*Post-incident:*

The First Baptist Church had surveillance cameras for six years, having upgraded them in 2017 in light of the 2015 Charleston Church shooting (during which a white supremacist killed nine black churchgoers). After the Kroger shooting, the Baptist church planned to change security and include an intercom system. Their doors were usually unlocked during service. First Baptist administrator Billy Williams, who was one of the people left inside, stated that if he had heard Bush knocking, he would have welcomed him in to the church. He also mentioned a monitor inside the church office (connected to surveillance cameras), which would have allowed him to see anyone knocking and permit entrance.

The Sunday after the incident, on October 28, the church had a security guard outside. Williams also received permission from the pastor to ask members who work in law enforcement or have permits to carry weapons to bring their guns inside the church during services and Bible study. Those with concealed carry permits will be allowed to bring guns into the church, but they must notify church leadership.

Ron Aguiar, former safety and security director of Southeast Christian Church (a few miles away from First Baptist Church), claimed that churches must focus on training immediately. He recommended seeking out ex-law enforcement or military in congregations through bulletins, locking doors during worship services and positioning ushers at the locked doors, and allowing reputable parishioners to concealed carry if they have adequate training. The most important aspect would be to call the police for help.

#### RESILIENCE Model Integrated:

- I. Resilience: Responsibilities, Roles, and Readiness
  - a. It was recommended that ushers be responsible for locking church doors and standing there for safety.
  - b. Locking the doors after service proved beneficial for the members of the First Baptist Church.
- II. Engage Partners
  - a. Members of the congregation were allowed to carry weapons, provided they notified the church.
  - b. It was highly recommended that the church have a partnership with the police in order to call for help should a situation arise.
- III. Share Intelligence & Information
  - a. The member of the church saw a suspicious man outside in the parking lot and called the pastor.
  - b. There was little to no mention of sharing intelligence and information, except for “see something, say something.”
- IV. Integrate Intelligence, Plans, Training, Exercises and Responses with All Stakeholders
  - a. Aguiar mentioned training for these incidents, which would further preparedness. But no specifics were disclosed.
- V. Leverage Resources & Technology
  - a. The church had locked their doors following the service, which barred Bush from entering. However, their doors had been unlocked during service, which could allow anyone to enter while 70+ members prayed.
  - b. The church had upgraded their surveillance cameras after the 2015 Charleston Church shootings.
  - c. The monitor inside the church office would let people inside see who was outside and could be used to permit or deny entry into the church.
  - d. An intercom system was being considered for better communication.
- VI. Implement Best Practices & Lessons Learned

- a. Besides assigning new responsibilities and talking of training/higher security, there was little mention of implementing best practices or how to assess.
- VII. Enlist Guardians
- a. Church had a security guard stationed outside during the service after the incident.
  - b. Law enforcement (current and retired) members have permission to carry arms during service or Bible study.
    - i. Before, they were only allowed to keep them in their cars.
  - c. Anyone with training and a permit to carry arms can bring them to service (after notifying church leadership).
  - d. Ushers stand by locked doors to ensure safety.
  - e. A partnership with the police would secure help when needed.
- VIII. Neutralize Negative Mindsets
- a. Not much was done to neutralize negative mindsets. The church put more emphasis on safety and protection, thereby putting more focus on the inevitability of an incident.
- IX. Constant Communications
- a. The church member who saw Bush in the parking lot tried calling the pastor, but was sent to voicemail.
  - b. The intercom system would allow continuous communication within the church.
- X. Empowerment & Endurance through Lasting Organizational Reform
- a. No plans were made to create organizations or teams to better protect the community; however, talks were made to train the community.

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