Fire Evacuation Notes

The following is from a discussion we had on April 7th, 2014 with George Thomas from the fire department regarding how to react and evacuate a large group in our new Church in case of a fire. It is not a formal fire evacuation procedure. The formal procedure will be written and placed in the Narthex.

Pull red fire alarms are located by all exterior doors and in the balcony.

(1) Take any alarm seriously; treat it as it is real whether you see any smoke/fire or not.
(2) Stay Calm and Keep People Calm – this is the most important thing. More injuries happen in evacuations because people panic.
(3) Call 911 –
    a. At Mass this will be the job of either the Lead Mass Coordinator or Lead Greeter (assume Lead Mass Coordinator for now)
    b. In other situations, ask someone specifically to call 911 – don't say "someone call 911"; everyone will think someone else is doing it.
(4) Assess the situation before acting; there is no cookie-cutter evacuation instruction because if there is visible fire, of course you have to find another exit.
(5) Take charge, and give specific directions to people.
(6) If there is no visible fire:
    a. Center sections will evacuate through the main aisle and main entrance doors (facing the parking lot)
    b. Side sections will evacuate through the doors on either side of the altar area (toward the road and toward the Parish Center).
    c. Balcony was not addressed; out through the side door adjacent to the steps and into the breezeway and out from there seems logical.
(7) Direct people to assist parishioners with limited mobility. It may be that able-bodied people will need to help someone by carrying them.
(8) Direct people to gather in a specific area – George suggested the new end of the Parish Center where the dumpsters are. He said it is important to keep people out of the main parking lot so fire and rescue equipment can get in and around without the risk of injuring anyone.

Make sure you know where all the exits are. All doors can be opened because they all have panic bars.

There will be an emergency evacuation diagram in the narthex.