SOUTHERN MUTUAL CHURCH
INSURANCE COMPANY

Cybersecurity Checklist

In today's electronically connected world, anyone with a computer is vulnerable to cyber attacks. Here are a few basic steps you can take to protect your church and its members from theft and loss of privacy:

Accept that your church is at risk. Do not succumb to the temptation to believe no one would bother with your church's data. There is always someone out there who will.

Use strong passwords. It is easier to remember a simple password—but also easy for thieves to guess. Avoid letter combinations or religious words that would be obvious for a church to use.

Do not leave passwords out in the open. You may find it helpful to keep yours written on a sticky note, but a thief will too.

Never reuse passwords. That's the easy route, and the easier it is, the more vulnerable to a hack.

Use antivirus protection. This is basic, but it needs to be said. Make sure you have a state-of-the-art antivirus program running on your system at all times.

Keep software updated. This includes all programs, not just your security software. The threats are always changing, and you need to keep up with those changes. You need to make sure you keep up with updates for ALL your software, including such basics as Microsoft Office.

Train staff and volunteers. It is not enough for the pastor and church secretary to be security-conscious. Anyone who connects to your network needs to be on guard.

Make sure you have a working firewall. It can be as important as the lock on your church office door.

Block spam to reduce phishing emails reaching end users. And remember: Just because an email seems like it's from someone you know doesn't mean it is.

Employ dual authentication procedures. A two-step login procedure makes you more than twice as secure.

Encryption. If you store personally identifiable information, such as banking information for electronic tithing, you must make sure your database stores that information in an encrypted format.

Develop a response plan. No matter how careful or smart you are, breaches can occur. You need a plan in place to react and minimize the damage when intruders get into your system.