

Congregational Disaster Preparedness Guide

*It wasn't raining
when Noah built the ark.*



Lutheran Disaster Response
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Purpose

This booklet is a tool to help you begin your congregational disaster preparedness planning designed by your Upstate New York Synod Lutheran Disaster Response Leadership Team. LDR is a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Lutheran Disaster Response brings God's hope, healing and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.

What is a disaster? *A disaster is defined as an event beyond the control of those affected, which causes great harm, suffering, and damage and for which those who are affected need outside assistance in order to sustain and rebuild their lives.*

This manual is provided to assist congregations in preparing for disasters. It asks questions such as:

- * Is your facility ready in case of a disaster?
- * Does your congregation have a plan?
- * What can your congregation do to prepare to care for members and others in your community in response to disaster?

A more comprehensive congregational planning tool developed by LDR,

LDR Congregational Disaster Preparedness Guidebook

can be found on the ELCA website at

***[http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/
Congregational_Disaster_Preparedness_Guide_Lutheran_Disaster_Response.pdf?
_ga=1.43841061.1050170733.1417047527](http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Congregational_Disaster_Preparedness_Guide_Lutheran_Disaster_Response.pdf?_ga=1.43841061.1050170733.1417047527)***

Members of our LDR Leadership Team are available to speak with your church council, adult Bible study groups, confirmation classes, or other congregational groups on how to prepare for and respond to a disaster. Please give us a call. We are ready and willing to serve congregations in this important ministry focused on bringing help and hope to those impacted by disasters.

Gary Roller, LDR Volunteer Coordinator

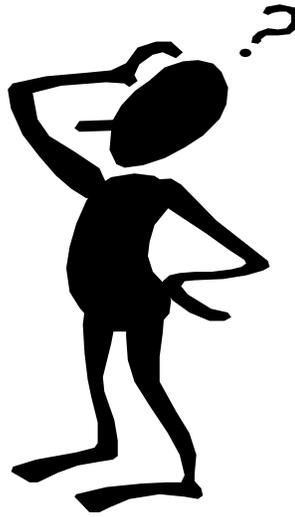
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<http://upstatenysynod.org/category/disaster/>

How do we begin getting prepared?



Pray for God's guidance

Develop a team of interested persons

Do your homework to assess:

- + Your area's disaster potential**
- + Your people & material resources**
- + God's call for you in this ministry**

Develop a plan & practice

Get training

Network/collaborate

Assessing Our Needs

Ready, Set, Go: there are three focus areas to look at as you begin your disaster preparedness & response planning.

Ready—Preparing ourselves, our families, our congregations for disaster. Questions to ask:

- What kinds of disasters might happen in our community?
- How will I take care of my family in a disaster?
- Does my family/congregation have a disaster plan?
- What role might our congregation play in a disaster?
- What resources does our congregation have to prepare and respond in a disaster?
- How would we need to care for our members/our pastor/our building following a disaster?
- Who in our congregation has skills to help us in planning?
- What resources does our synod/district have to help us?

Set—Caring for our own needs following a disaster to free us up to help others, provide resources, etc. Things to do:

- Provide information to our members about family disaster planning. Local Red Cross chapters have resources.
- Recruit people to look at congregational planning needs.
- Pray and seek God's guidance as to what your congregation is being called to do in disaster ministry.
- Assess your church building's disaster risks—are you next to the river? Are your important documents secure?
- Develop a congregational disaster plan.
- Network with other community disaster responders and denominations.

Go—Caring for the needs of the wider community following disaster. Once your own personal and congregational plan is in place, you are prepared to be a part of God's caring people responding to the disaster related needs of your community, both locally and across the nation.

Consider:

- How will we respond beyond our congregation? Examples include fundraising, developing work teams to go to disaster impacted areas, serving as a Red Cross shelter.
- Who are our community partners? Examples include Red Cross, Salvation Army, emergency management people, and other volunteer organizations/denominations active in disaster.

Emergency Phone Tree

Please notify Pastor _____ at _____ or the church office at _____ of any emergency. They will notify the three people listed at the top of the columns. Please call the person listed immediately below your name. If no one answers, leave a message and call the next person until you have reached someone who can continue the chain.

Name: Number:

Council Member: Number:

Council Member: Number:

Name: Number:

Disaster Scenarios:

(Assess your congregation and fill in the blanks)

In the case of a fire in the church building, while people are inside, we will

1. Evacuate the building to the designated "space spot"
2. Call 911 and relay all vital information to dispatcher
- 3.



In the case of a fire in the church building, while empty, we will:

1. Contact the Pastor/Church Council Members
2. Leadership will meet at the designated Emergency Meeting house/facility as soon as possible
- 3.

In the case of flooding in the church building we will:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



In the case of flooding in our community we will

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

In the case of a blizzard we will

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Other Community Partners to Work with after a Disaster

(Identify and fill in contact information as relevant)

Congregations/facilities/groups with mutual agreements to share Worship and/or Building Space: (Include name & contact information)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Congregations/facilities/groups with mutual agreement to share Emergency Shelter Space: (Include name & contact information)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Local American Red Cross Contact Info:

Person:

Phone Number:



Local Salvation Army Contact Info:

Person:

Phone Number:



Local Emergency Management Agency Contact Info:

Agency:

Person:

Phone Number:

Local Lutheran Disaster Relief Contact Info:

Person:

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Lutheran Disaster Response

Upstate New York Synod

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Yearly Congregational Check-List

(To be completed annually by the Church Council, Property Committee or Disaster Planning Team)



Task

Date Completed

1. Insurance Policy is current and updated once a year. _____
2. Important Church Files are protected in a fire-proof container and copies located off site in a secure location i.e. safe deposit box. _____
3. Computer backups are made of important files and stored in a secure location including off site. _____
4. Fire extinguishers are checked and recharged annually. _____
5. Emergency Contact Phone Tree is updated, and distributed to the appropriate people in the congregation. _____
6. Local Emergency Support Contact Information is updated and posted next to every church phone. _____
7. First Aid and CPR classes are taken advantage of by as many congregational members as possible every year. _____
8. Emergency response procedures are reviewed and exercised annually to ensure that all team members understand. _____
9. Congregational Disaster Kit is full and items replaced if Necessary (first-aid kits, flashlights, blankets, water, food) _____
10. Local LDR coordinator is contacted at least annually for any new training materials/resources/information or questions. _____

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I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Philippians 4: 13