

Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church
DISASTER RESPONSE



LOCAL CHURCH
DISASTER PREPAREDNESS
MANUAL



Bishop LaTrelle Easterling

BISHOP, WASHINGTON EPISCOPAL AREA

REV. MAIDSTONE MULENGA *Assistant to Bishop*

JOYCE A. KING *Executive Assistant to Bishop*

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Friends,

In times of disaster response, our dirty hands are often our prayer. Our sweat and tears, poured out for our neighbors, are a call to worship; and our shoulders, lent for people to lean on, are a litany.

United Methodists are known for their outreach in times of crisis and disaster. We arrive early and stay for a long time, sometimes years, until the rebuilding is done and wholeness is restored.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is the denominational organization that connects us across the globe. But locally, every congregation can also play a role. If, God forbid, a local or man-made disaster strikes this area, preparedness will be the key to our successful response.

I encourage leaders in every local church to establish and maintain relationships with first-responders in their communities. I also encourage you to become familiar with this manual on disaster preparedness. The time to read it and get ready is not when a disaster is looming or has just struck. Rather, it is always better to plan and prepare well-before being confronted by the chaos that accompanies any disaster.

This can be a profound ministry. I pray we will all be like the wise builder in Matthew 7:24, building his house upon the rock, as we claim and strive to live as Christ, the rock of our salvation. Our readiness is essential.

Even amid the tumult,
Grace and Peace,

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling

"Becoming fully alive in Christ and making a difference in a diverse and ever-changing world."

Maryland Office | 11711 East Market Place, Fulton, Maryland 20759 | phone: 410-290-7300 | fax: 301-498-2023
D.C. Office | 110 Maryland Avenue, NE, Suite 501, Washington D.C. 20002 | phone: 202-546-3110 | fax: 202-546-3186

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PREFACE

The Baltimore-Washington Conference Response Plan

The Emergency Operation

The police, fire and rescue units are responsible for locating and saving survivors. The American Red Cross has been mandated to be the first voluntary unit on site. (UMCOR has an agreement with the Red Cross that follows this preface.) The Red Cross will arrange for temporary shelters, feeding stations, damage assessment, etc. A role for the local church may be to be used for temporary shelter, feeding station, working facility for the Red Cross, etc. A good first step is for the local disaster response coordinator to get acquainted with the local Red Cross. Red Cross provides emergency training courses at little or no charge.

After the Emergency

While the emergency phase may last for only several days, the relief and rebuilding efforts may take months and years to accomplish. In the relief phase, debris needs to be cleaned up, temporary repairs made, and property protected. In the rebuilding phase, permanent repairs are made and complete houses may be replaced.

City/county, state, and federal governments have agencies that can help with these phases. Also, private insurance companies will play a role. Much depends on the severity of the disaster. The local disaster coordinator needs to identify the governmental agencies. The local phone book will give a starting point in the governmental section.

Where does the UMC fit in? There is always much to do. Pastoral counseling by both clergy and laypersons is needed. The victims need friendly words and assurances that we care. Children especially need support. Volunteers are always needed to help with cleanup. If you identify yourself as church related volunteers, the police will usually let you into the disaster area. Finally, there are those people who do not have insurance or qualify for governmental assistance to make repairs. Here is a place for the Volunteer In Missions (VIM) teams to operate.

Volunteers Needed

The time to prepare is now. Each district and congregation needs at least one person who is identified as a Disaster Response Coordinator. That pastor or layperson should study the part of the enclosed plan that pertains to them. Local church volunteer names should be passed to the District Superintendents and to the Conference Coordinators.

Maryland VOAD

VOAD -Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. Nearly every state has a VOAD organization. The VOAD function is to be a coordinating agency for all efforts being devoted to disaster assistance. The Baltimore-Washington Conference is a member. Through this VOAD agency we can be more effective. Each organization will list their available services so that duplications

and confusion can be reduced. See Baltimore-Washington Conference Website - www.bwcumc.org

Conclusion

The victims of a disaster need to be reassured of the love of God and Jesus. As Disciples we are called to provide this witness. What a challenge, but what a joy. Who knows? Someday each of us may be a disaster victim and, by the grace of God, someone will be there for us.

INTRODUCTION

A. **The Purpose of this Local Church Preparedness Manual** is to serve as an immediate resource when preparing for and responding to any type of disaster. The most effective way to deal with a disaster is to have a “plan” that gives specific tips and instructions on what to do first, second, and third.

DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN

Now that the disaster is at your doorstep,
the first thing to do is....

Next.....

Then.....

The reason most communities are never prepared to deal with the trauma associated with disasters is because they do not have a plan. Through preparedness and planning, disaster response can be effective and organized. BUT, planning is part of an ongoing process, which serves to remind us that caring for persons affected by a disaster is continuous – even when the immediate crisis has subsided.

Our Annual Conference is committed to providing planned care to our brothers and sisters during their time of crisis. This means that every local congregation, clergy member, District Superintendents, and the Bishop all have a part to play in bringing relief.

Disaster is Everyone’s Concern!

Members of Local Congregations

Clergy Members

District Superintendents

Bishop

The availability and familiarity with a Disaster Response Plan is the first step to recovery when a disaster strikes – regardless of the severity of the disaster or the number of people affected. We all must be prepared to respond in an organized and effective manner to a disaster.

This plan is an attempt to provide the means for United Methodists to respond to human suffering in the most appropriate way.

Every crisis is loaded with opportunities for ministry. As United Methodists we are called upon to respond to the serious needs of the community when they experience a disaster. A Holistic Disaster Cycle includes opportunities to:

EDUCATE and build awareness about (1) the different kinds of disasters (e.g. fire, flood, explosion, tornado, toxic waste contamination, earthquake, hurricane, hazardous spills, etc.) and (2) measures to prevent, mitigate and prepare for disasters.

PREVENT the disasters that can be prevented in the first place, such as human-caused technological disasters like toxic waste contamination.

MITIGATE or take steps to lessen the danger wherever and whenever possible. Examples of ways to lessen the danger range from such simple steps as anchoring the water heater in our homes to community efforts dealing with building codes and developmental regulations.

PREPARE for when (not “if”) a disaster will happen, including the recovery of survivors and communities - not only physically but *spiritually and emotionally as well*. It is imperative to deal with the WHOLE person and WHOLE community.

RESPOND to those affected or stricken by disaster – not just “our own” but anyone - especially those who are most vulnerable: children, the elderly, those with disabilities, the impoverished and anyone else with special needs. Effective response is key to proper and adequate preparation.

INTEGRATE INTO DEVELOPMENT a planned response into the ongoing development of your community or region. Avoid running counter to the community or region so as not to cause any further disruption. We (as individuals and churches) are not islands, but part of the main. We may see ourselves as not being “of the world,” but we are certainly in it and always have to relate to others of God’s creation.

We should always remember that when we implement a Disaster Response Plan, we offer our finest efforts to those who are affected by the disaster.

B. Definition of a Disaster (according to UMCOR) is a severe disruption of personal and community life, involving a significant number of people and causing spiritual, emotional and social crises to which the church can respond with God’s love and help. A disaster is an event, which in a matter of seconds, minutes, hours, or days damages the ability to sustain life without assistance. **Examples of a Disaster:**

Tornados and hurricanes
Floods, fires and earthquakes
Explosions and toxic spills
Nuclear accidents and civil unrest
Terrorism

C. General Information

Some disasters are considered “large” while others are described as “small.” Still some people are convinced that “a disaster will never occur in my area.” It is true that some communities are not located in the midst of a tornado alley or on the paths taken by hurricanes. Nevertheless, every community is vulnerable to large or small disasters. For example, keep in mind that every day:

- ❑ All kinds of hazardous materials crisscross our states;
- ❑ Potential danger is linked to the various nuclear installations;
- ❑ At least 800 of 38,000 chemical dumps pose an active threat to nearby communities;
- ❑ Floods, forest and range fires, earthquakes and hurricanes continue to strike.

Just because UMCOR deals with what might be termed “large” disasters that involve a significant number of people, it does not suggest that we should lessen our response to “small” disasters that might affect individuals or single families. The local church must continue to minister in the name of Jesus Christ to the needs of those affected by small and large disasters.

The primary focus of the local church Disaster Preparedness Plan is to:

- ❑ Maximize our Christian ministry and response;
- ❑ Use our connectional structure in responding to human suffering;
- ❑ Respond to disaster regardless of size or type;

D. Categorizing Disasters is, at best, an inexact science. For our purposes, we will consider four categories related to size and severity of disasters:

1. **INDIVIDUAL DISASTER** would be a single family or apartment fire, where the damage is limited to a small number of people. It is best handled by neighbors, family, friends, the local church or a local relief agency. Care should be taken to help the persons affected since they will experience the same emotional and spiritual reactions as the general public experiences in a larger disaster.
2. **LOCAL OR LOCALIZED DISASTER** may include such events as an isolated tornado or sudden flooding over a limited geographical area. These type disasters can best be handled by a local town or its churches and relief agencies.

Providing relief assistance may be greater than the abilities of a single church, which means that the local churches:

- ❑ Must notify their District Superintendent when the relief effort exceeds the local congregation's resources;

- Work with the District Disaster Response Coordinator who can help provide guidance and resources to include the use of ecumenical resources, either locally or within the Districts where the need dictates.

3. A PRESIDENTIALLY DECLARED DISASTER is usually regional in scope, political in nature, and involves major disasters relief efforts (such as emergency housing, feeding and medical facilities) and the displacement of families. Presidentially declared disasters are of such magnitude that they are beyond the ability of local churches to respond.

When a presidential declaration is made, there will be federal relief assistance in addition to the usual array of non-governmental relief agencies. In all major disasters (declared or not):

- Conference Disaster Response Coordinator becomes involved without a call for help. The coordinator maintains close communication with the Bishop and the District Coordinators assist their respective District Superintendents in organizing the Districts response;
- All districts should help the affected districts. Furthermore, the Conference Coordinator, along with the District Coordinators and pastors of local churches, should work together to provide advice and counsel to the local churches in the affected area and become acquainted with other helping agencies and coordinate the work of all the churches within the framework of the relief effort;
- District Superintendents, District Coordinators and/or the Bishop should survey the affected area in order to make an assessment. Based on the assessment the Bishop may make an episcopal appeal for relief funds from the Conference and UMCOR.

4. **CATASTROPHIC DISASTER** results in a large number of deaths, injuries, extensive damage/destruction of facilities that provide and sustain human needs; an overwhelming demand on state and local response resources and mechanisms; a severe impact on national security facilities and infrastructures; a severe long-term effect on economic activity; and severe effects on state, local and private sector response initiatives and activities.

Immediately upon a catastrophic declaration, martial law goes into effect. A catastrophic declaration limits access to the disaster area to all persons and it puts into operation the governmental planned response for the affected FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Assistance) Region.

State and local governments are most likely to perform Emergency Support Functions (ESF):

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Transportation | 5. Damage Information and Assessment |
| 2. Communications | 6. Mass Care |
| 3. Construction Management | 7. Resource Support |
| 4. Firefighting | |

- 8. Health and Medical Services
- 9. Urban Search and Rescue
- 10. Hazardous Materials

- 11. Food
- 12. Law and Justice
- 13. Energy

Each ESF has a primary agency who is responsible for coordinating the responses of other agencies which have a measure of expertise in some part of that ESF. While church members may have specific responsibilities in the event of a catastrophic disaster, the church response in general falls under the ESF category of "Mass Care" and, as such, any organized church response comes under the direction of the American Red Cross, which is the Primary Agency for the Mass Care ESF.

ESF Organization	
Categories	Primary Agency
Mass Care (churches, non-profit centers)	American Red Cross

The General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church, on behalf of the National Division and UMCOR, signed a "Statement of Understanding" (SOU) with the American National Red Cross in January 1977. The SOU reemphasizes the spirit of cooperation between the UMCOR and the American Red Cross in rendering service to disaster-stricken people throughout the nation.

In accordance with the SOU with the American Red Cross, the following guidelines should be honored:

A. Conference Disaster Response Committee to respond to disasters by:

- Establishing a network within the conference to respond to the suffering of persons caused by a natural or civil disaster
- Establishing a connection with UMCOR for communications and requesting assistance during a disaster.
- Identifying specific locations where local church property and church-related property have suffered damage
- Working with ecumenical and other denominational, government and non-government relief agencies in responding to natural and civil disasters.
- Maintaining an updated Conference Disaster Response Manual and a Local Church Disaster Preparedness Manual.

B. The Conference Disaster Response Committee should have the following members:

- VIM Coordinator
- Disaster Response Coordinator
- One District Superintendent

- Two Reps from Communications
- One Local Pastor
- One SPRC Chair
- One District Disaster Response Coordinator
- One Rep from the Bishop's Office
- One Rep from Finance
- Two Reps from Connectional Ministries.

C. **Responsibilities/Roles** of the Conference Disaster Response Committee Members:

The Conference Disaster Response Coordinator is the chair of the Conference Disaster Response Committee:

- He/she is the point of contact for coordinating disaster response and disaster-related efforts at the conference level.
- Provide coordination of the annual training for disaster response coordinators and others who would be involved in disaster work.
- Maintain the list of disaster coordinators which is to be update regularly and distributed to each district superintendent, and disaster response coordinator.

The Director of Connectional Ministries:

- Assist the Conference Disaster Coordinator in any way possible.
- Assist the Bishop and District Superintendents in any way possible.
- Assist the Director of Communications in any way possible.

Conference Volunteer in Missions Coordinator:

- Coordinate Administrative Support for the incident.
- Maintain the list of and communicate with the persons who are willing to assist in disaster work.
- Consult with District and Conference Disaster Coordinators to find out where resources are most needed.
- Work with Director of Communications to assist with press releases on how and any way volunteer and resources will be needed.

Director of Communications:

- Gather information about the event.
- Coordinate releases both externally and internally; prepare public statements for release by the Bishop.
- Prepare media kits for the press.
- Prepare info on how to give resources and funds to the project.
- Train and advise support staff on how to handle calls, maintain files and media information on the event.

Conference Treasurer:

- Maintain adequate records of the disaster response income and expenditures.
- The existing Conference voucher system will be used to record and track expenditures.
- The Finance Director has the authority to designate a person or persons to sign vouchers.
- The CDRC will also keep adequate records of purchases and expenditures for audit trail purposes.
- The Finance Director is ultimately responsible for the record keeping.

Each District of the Annual Conference should have:

- A District Disaster Preparedness Coordinator (8 people)
- The District Disaster Response Coordinator will be responsible for communications to the districts.

The District Disaster Preparedness Response Coordinator is responsible for:

- Understanding that, especially in the case of catastrophic events, "preparedness" is an essential part of their mission, and that each District Coordinator is responsible for communicating this message to each local pastor and Board of Trustees.
- Providing training for local churches for Disaster Preparedness using this manual.
- Providing pertinent information and an assessment of immediate needs to the Conference Disaster Response Committee.
- Being thoroughly familiar with all American Red Cross Chapters within the District.
- Establishing a network of volunteers to identify and respond to the suffering of persons caused by a natural or civil disaster within the district
- Identifying specific locations where local church property and church related property have suffered damage in the district.
- Coordinating disaster response efforts with local VOADs or ecumenical groups in your district.

Each Local Church in the Annual Conference shall:

- Maintain a copy of the Local Church Disaster Preparedness Manual and provide training annually for the church Disaster Preparedness Committee.
- Be encouraged to maintain an inventory of their:
 - Physical plant facilities;
 - Human resources and skills.
- Be encouraged to contact the Chapter Manager (or other designee) for their nearest American Red Cross Chapter to determine the areas where the local congregation can be of help in the event of a disaster.

Theology of Disaster Response

Those affected by a disaster will ask many difficult questions, some of which may have no easy answer. Some may ask, "Why did this occur?" "Is this God's judgment upon us?" "Are we to blame?" "Must I have done something wrong to deserve this?" "Is this the work of the devil?" "Is God to blame?"

It is best to counsel people not to blame themselves, other people, or God. Some may blame God for creating the disaster. By such logic, Henry Ford and the Wright brothers could be blamed for the great personal disasters resulting from their respective inventions of the automobile and airplane. A disaster, as a phenomenon of nature, is NOT an "act of God."

Elijah, standing at the mouth of a cave, witnessed a wind so strong that it "rent the mountain, and broke in pieces the rocks." But God was not so much revealed in the power of the wind, earthquake and fire as in the "sheer silence." Now there was a great wind. Yahweh was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but Yahweh was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but Yahweh was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence." (I Kings 19:11b-12, NRSV)

The remark that seems to be most fitting was one made by a pastor who simply said, "These are things that happen." There's a lot of healing in that statement. Instead of trying to figure out who we can blame for a disaster, (God, the devil or ourselves for incurring the wrath of either), it seems to be much healthier to accept the fact that it occurred and move on. *The important thing after a disaster is how we respond to that which has happened!*

People need to express their emotional response to someone who can listen with understanding. People who have experienced loss will be involved with grief work, and others will begin putting their lives back in order. Spiritual and emotional healing needs to begin with understanding, patience and prayer.

We believe that God is faithful: God is and will be with us; that nothing can separate us from the love of God; that God can fetch good out of evil and work through those who are responding to the disaster, whatever their creed; that "God can make the valley of trouble a door of hope and the flood of ill a fountain of blessing."

Christian Responses to Disasters

The Church has a unique ministry during and after a disaster of any kind. Disasters provide some of the greatest opportunities to minister to the needs of the community. The Church's involvement or lack of involvement speaks volumes and leaves a lasting imprint upon the lives of those directly affected by disaster. The religious community is represented in every county of our nation (this is almost true of The United Methodist Church as well). These faith communities are a permanent part of the wider community and will continue to be in the community long after the outside helping agencies have completed their disaster-related tasks and left.

We, the Church, are there before, during and after the disaster. We are one of the community "constants" that can provide a liaison between the disaster needs of a local people and the goodwill and resources of people across the country. We can connect people in need with people who care. It is also important to understand that the local church or congregation is the primary contact for all religious community assistance in a disaster. National denominations work through the local leadership in order to provide a need-oriented and flexible response that can be tailored to meet the specific needs of any given community. Most other relief agencies (particularly when nationwide in nature) are politically oriented and more rigid. Each agency in disaster response has a charter with specific policies for use of staff and material resources within well-defined parameters. They are equipped to be active in certain aspects of disaster response and not others. Local agencies are more flexible because they can change policies more easily to meet specific needs.

For this reason, national denominations rely upon the local leadership of a church or interfaith organization as their connection with the local affected community. In addition, this policy of denominational agencies also helps to enhance the credibility and mission of the local church or interfaith organization.

These kinds of policies and the resources of denominational agencies enable the local church and/or interfaith groups to do far more than they could do unassisted. Denominational staff members and volunteers (particularly in The United Methodist Church) are available to assist at the request of the local church or community interfaith. When financial help is provided, it is disbursed to the community through the local church and the community Interfaith.

The witness of Christian love and concern can reassure victims of the love of God at the very time when that love is both questioned and needed more than ever. To this end, the church must address the following needs in any disaster:

- 1. Spiritual:** Questions of life and death will arise, as well as other questions: "Why me?" or "Why not me?" or the love and/or wrath of God, as well as questions of basic values. Worship is an important opportunity, focusing on the assurance of God's love and care. Liturgical churches need to provide some informal time for individual sharing. Non-liturgical churches need to provide as much familiar structure in a service as possible. Special study classes discussing spiritual questions may help.
- 2. Emotional:** The church is important in providing a caring presence; it can provide emotional support and help to re-establish a sense of community. Pastors and other trained people with expertise in counseling are always needed in disasters. By being present with those who are survivors, the Church provides emotional support and helps to re-establish a sense of community. People know they are not alone in the crisis.
- 3. Physical:** Local churches can provide volunteers at every stage and also for many tasks. Some of these are transportation, interpretation of the help that is available, assisting affected people through the "red tape," clean up, reconstruction and repair.

4. Facilities: Church facilities can be used for shelters, temporary offices for relief activities, meeting space, food preparation and/or mass feeding and housing for volunteer workers from the outside.

UMCOR'S ROLE

To prevent confusion, here is a list of what UMCOR can and cannot do:

What UMCOR Can Do:

- Provide pre-disaster training and counsel to annual conference and district Disaster Response Committees, and others who might work in your disaster operations. This training includes information on what to expect in the relief and long-term recovery phases, and how you might organize an effective United Methodist response. Emphasis is on special long-term needs of children, youth, and adults; organizing for relief and recovery; management of volunteers and donated goods, as well as casework management.
- Provide cash grants.
- During disaster response, provide consulting services to your committee and response personnel. Upon your request and at UMCOR's expense, volunteer mentors and advisors can be sent following a disaster. These persons have special skills in response management, ministry of caring, case management, logistical support, donations and distribution center management, public relations and communications, and coordination of volunteers. They can provide computer advice as well as technical consultation on rebuilding.

Our specialists remain on site only a brief time, on average a few days, at most a week or two. They are there to share experience and insight on disaster management. In a pinch, they can work in some functional areas to provide an "extra pair of hands" to buy you time as you recruit workers from within your conference for those tasks. However, our volunteers will not take the place of local workers.

After departure, all UMCOR staff and volunteers are available for telephone consultation. They can return to the site, should it be necessary, if approval is given by the UMCOR Network Manager.

- Lend power washers and generators. (Chain saws are not available to loan). Borrowed equipment must be returned to the UMCOR Sager-Brown Center in Baldwin, Louisiana, when no longer needed. This includes equipment you may purchase locally, if the invoice is sent to UMCOR for reimbursement.
- Use its Depot (or other warehouse space UMCOR might rent) for receiving, processing, and shipping donated items from across the church sent in response to a disaster.

- Provide a long-term loan of personnel with skills in case management, rebuilding, and coordination of volunteers to work under the direction of a community-based recovery organization.
- In conjunction with other participating denominations, assist with the formation of a community-based interfaith recovery organization. United Methodists are asked to participate in an interfaith context whenever possible.
- Make its nationwide toll-free numbers available for information, and the registration of volunteers and donations.
- Send UMCOR's volunteer disaster management specialists, for a maximum of 28 days, to run some or all response functions in the relief phase. This service will only be provided for Level III or IV disasters (described below) where members of the conference disaster response leadership are immobilized by the scope of the disaster and/or are themselves victims of the tragedy. An invitation by the resident bishop is required. The conference is expected to assume full responsibility for the relief and recovery operation as soon as possible within the 28 days.

What UMCOR Cannot Do:

- Send personnel without an invitation from the bishop.
- Send funds or material resources without a request from the bishop.
- Administer or perform the work of a disaster-recovery operation. This responsibility rests with the annual conference (*except as described above*).
- Allow its funds to be used for the repair of damaged church property. There is a Churchwide Appeal, which clearly States that the money is to be used for property repair along with the relief of human need. (See section on use of UMCOR funds.)

NOTE: The designation "UMCOR" is exclusively reserved for its staff and volunteers. A conference response team should identify itself as being from the affected conference or by the more generic term: "United Methodists in Disaster Response." The general population probably knows of The United Methodist Church and wants to see it working among them. The public has no knowledge of and little interest in the acronym "UMCOR. " It tells them nothing. Don't use it to describe our Conference work.

STAGES AND LEVELS OF DISASTERS

The evolution or "life cycle" of a disaster is best described as an ebbing and flowing series of disruptions to a community. But to understand how a response might be organized, UMCOR arbitrarily divides disaster into three phases: emergency, relief and recovery. We also divide them into four degrees of magnitude: Levels I through IV (see below). United Methodists respond at all levels and are most active during relief and recovery, with our greatest strength in the last of the three: long-term recovery.

Relief and recovery operations are organized and staffed differently, as are the responses we make to each level.

NOTE: Each stage is usually, but not always, 10-times longer than its predecessor. For example, if the rescue phase lasts three days, relief will be 30 days, and recovery will take, on average, 300. Knowing this will assist the conference with long-term planning.

Emergency Phase

This stage begins at impact, or with evacuation if there is forewarning, and continues until all persons have been accounted for, the danger of continued destruction ends, and shelter is available for survivors.

Although state and local officials are responsible for rescue, protection of life and property, the main actors on this stage are local people caring for each other. The American Red Cross and other agencies, such as the Salvation Army and the Seventh Day Adventists, open shelters, feed and clothe victims, and provide emergency medical care. In this phase, United Methodists do neighbor-to-neighbor caring, often as fire department, American Red Cross, or Salvation Army volunteers.

A CAUTIONARY NOTE: In a crisis, local churches are often tempted to use their facilities as a shelter. Congregations should be very careful about opening a shelter on their own. UMCOR advises against doing so unless the congregation has a written agreement that the American Red Cross will sponsor the shelter. The agreement must include a statement that the Red Cross and its insurance will cover provider liability and the cost of repair for damage incurred. Without this agreement, the local church and its officers assume all liability for everything happening in that shelter.

Relief Phase

This fast-paced phase is the "M.A.S.H. unit" of disaster response, designed to temporarily patch things together for survivors, buying time until longer-term survivor recovery strategies can be set.

The American Red Cross and other agencies maintain assistance centers and distribute vouchers to help with their most urgent needs. Spontaneous volunteers and those from recognized disaster response organizations appear on the scene to help with debris cleanup. If

the disaster is large, the governor may request and receive a partial or full presidential declaration of disaster. Partial declarations are usually made to enable public assistance, which narrows the use of federal money to infrastructure repair: roads, bridges, streetlights, etc.

Some disasters also include individual assistance, which opens aid to families and individuals, usually in the form of low-interest disaster loans to homeowners, rental assistance, limited financial grants to certain eligible persons, disaster unemployment compensation, agriculture crop and livestock assistance, and other help. If individual assistance is granted, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) coordinates the application/damage assessment process for those who register during a 60-day period following the date of declaration.

If there is no presidential declaration, the impacted local community must rely exclusively on state and charitable groups for help. Most disasters in the United States do not warrant federal intervention. Because state aid is usually designated for infrastructure repair, volunteer groups provide assistance to individuals in non-declared disasters.

Recovery Phase

Many secular disaster response agencies will have completed their work. This leaves the various church organizations to do the hard work of long-term recovery. United Methodists make their greatest investment in the long haul. As the last to leave, often we are the ones who "put out the cat, turn off the lights and lock the door." In Level II disasters and higher, rarely is recovery work completed within a year.

Fortunately, the majority of disaster survivors recover without complication. They have sufficient insurance, as well as strong financial, family, and community support. Although life isn't the same as before, they get on fairly well with creating a new one.

However, about 10 to 15 percent (sometimes even a greater percentage depending upon the demographics of a community) have a substantial struggle. Even if they receive a grant from FEMA, these are the ones who have genuine need that can only be resolved by agencies specializing in the latter phases of disaster response. Certain "at risk" populations have a harder time with recovery. These include: some elderly persons; children and youth; middle-class persons who have resources but never lost anything nor had to ask for help before; minorities in predominantly majority communities that are not inclusive; the poor; relatives of those killed in the; disaster; persons with insufficient coping skills; and those with inadequate support systems.

There are also secondary and hidden victims. Secondary victims include those whose homes may not have been damaged, but whose work places do not reopen. They are now jobless. **Hidden victims** are often community leaders and government employees who are over-stressed from trying to restore their community after the disaster. These include bankers, public works employees, and utility workers.

Resource Sharing

Because headlines all but disappear in this last phase (along with the donations they generate), and the survivor's unmet needs are complex and increasing, cooperation and sharing of resources among aid groups is vital. Long-Term Recovery Committees (formerly called Unmet Needs Committees), made up of casework representatives from community-based recovery organizations, are crucial.

Long-Term Recovery Organizations

Most long-term recovery work is done by these community-based, social service recovery groups. Often faith-based, and named for the community in which they work, the recovery organization usually represents a number of the religious bodies active in the community. (See UMCOR's "Casework in Disaster Response and Recovery" and "A Caring Ministry in Disaster" manuals for further information on community-based recovery organizations).

THE FOUR LEVELS OF DISASTER

Geography and the amount of devastation determine the extent of response. (Remember, although relief and recovery are organized differently, the management functions mentioned later in this section remain the same for both phases and for all levels.)

- **Level I** - A small local disaster such as a toxic spill, explosion, air crash, tornado, or limited flooding affecting one to roughly 30 households. Determining factor: Is this within the ability of the local church(es) to respond to with little or no conference and UMCOR assistance? If so, this is a Level I event.

Relief: Initially the local community will need some help from the district and perhaps from the conference. Someone from the conference disaster relief group should be dispatched to local clergy for assessment and consultation on disaster management functions. Volunteers come from within the community and from nearby churches to assist with crisis counseling, cleanup and emergency repairs. The conference may want to request that its churches take a special offering. One or two conference UMVIM Early Response teams might be deployed to work alongside local volunteers.

Recovery: Along with other community leaders, one or two persons from the local United Methodist community could perform all the management functions, i.e., provide ministry of caring, manage cases, and coordinate other parts of recovery, such as volunteer management, donations, and networking resources. Often one or two volunteers from the community are willing to donate (with expenses reimbursed) from three to six months of their time to assume a leadership role and work closely with local pastors.

- **Level II.** A medium-sized disaster (affecting 40-150 homes), which could be caused by localized flooding, a moderate earthquake, a small hurricane, or a tropical storm. Determining factor: Is this beyond the ability of the local congregations and community

to respond? If conference and UMCOR resources are needed, then consider this disaster at least a Level II.

Relief: The conference should solicit an offering from its churches as soon as possible. A segment of the conference disaster relief group is mobilized for assessment and management. Local churches must have assistance. Site management of volunteers must be in place as soon as possible for crisis counseling, cleanup, and emergency repairs. This requires that case management strategies be in place early on to determine who has genuine need that will not be met by other agencies. VIM Early Response Teams are needed, if available.

Recovery: An interfaith or United Methodist-run recovery agency is necessary, with a paid director (or a skilled, long-term volunteer whose expenses are reimbursed) to administer the operation, assisted by volunteers and a two-thirds-time paid office manager. Active local clergy *cannot* take on the long-term management of a Level II disaster; they are needed in other roles. The director assumes management of all functions, caring ministry, casework supervision, and administration of the office. Trained/skilled volunteers might do the ministry of caring and casework management under the director's supervision. Information and Referral (I&R) workers might be required to make the first personal contact of survivors. (See UMCOR's manual, "Casework in Disaster Response and Recovery, I" for detailed information on the role of I&R workers.) The director should work under supervision of a community board of directors (if an interfaith organization) or the conference Disaster Response Committee (with local community United Methodist representation), serving as board of directors (if solely a United Methodist operation). In whatever way accountability is structured, the director should be protected by adequate supervision.

- **Level III.** These large disasters (in terms of geography-and/or severity) are usually eligible to receive a presidential declaration with government help. Examples include widespread and/or long-term flooding, severe earthquake, tornado or hurricane with significant damage. A disaster this size requires full mobilization of the conference disaster relief group.

Relief: Resources from the conference and UMCOR are essential. All personnel will perform operational functions described in the ICS section of this manual. A conference-wide appeal must be made for funds, appropriate in-kind donations and volunteers. UMCOR money will also be required. UMCVIM Early Response Teams are needed, as are information and referral (I&R) workers.

Recovery: Paid staff for community-based recovery organizations and conference-wide coordination is necessary. Roles include: director, volunteer management, casework supervisor (and usually hired case managers), and office manager. A chaplain/pastoral counselor and other staff could be long-term volunteers with expenses reimbursed. Information and referral workers will

probably be required at various times. A part-time bookkeeper is essential. Numerous teams of short-term volunteers for repair and rebuilding are important and will be needed for a year or more.

- **Level IV.** A Catastrophic Disaster is defined by Public Law 93-288: *"An event resulting in a large number of deaths and injuries; extensive damage or destruction of facilities that place an overwhelming demand on state and local response resources and mechanisms; a severe impact on national security facilities and infrastructures that sustain them; a severe long-term effect on general economic activity and severe effects on State, local and private sector initiatives to begin and sustain initial response activities."* Martial law will be declared and access to the area severely limited. A number of people in conference leadership positions will probably be victims themselves.

Relief: The entire conference response organization must be mobilized. UMCOR mentors may be necessary to fill slots of those in conference disaster response leadership who are unable to function. A conference-wide appeal for funds, appropriate in-kind donations, and volunteers are necessary. UMCOR money will be required. Perhaps a denomination-wide special appeal will be made. UMCOR Early Response Teams are necessary, as are I&R workers. Many volunteers will come from outside the conference.

Recovery: As above, hired staff for leadership positions are needed rather than utilizing long-term volunteers. Again, I&R workers would be necessary. Numerous teams of short-term volunteers are required over a period of several years.

WHAT IS IT LIKE IN A DISASTER? HOW DOES THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY REACT?

What it is like

Each disaster is unique — unpredictably so. However, as spelled out in the introduction, disasters do share three phases: Emergency, Relief, and Recovery. Most of the material in this guide relates to responsibilities in those phases and how those responsibilities change as the affected community moves to the next phase.

In the Emergency Phase, it is not an overstatement to say that chaos prevails; the more intense or widespread the disaster, the longer the phase and more intense the chaos.

This is the period in which Fire and Police personnel find and rescue victims. The dead are taken to temporary morgues. As quickly as possible, the Red Cross sets up shelters (initial shelters also may be temporary) to receive surviving persons who have been severely impacted. First Aid and EMT personnel are busy doing triage and tending to injured people.

The next most immediate needs are food, emotional support and some personal items such as hygiene kits, clothes, etc. Again, with the help of the Red Cross, attempts are made to re-establish contact with family and friends. Contact with relatives outside the affected area is attempted on any communication medium that may be available.

Amid the chaos, there is an odd mix of emotions and emotional responses. For many, there is an emotional high from the excitement of having negotiated a flight from danger. Others are numb and almost zombie-like in their behavior and movements — the shock has almost literally paralyzed them. It does not take too long, however, before reality sinks in. Despair, disbelief and denial are common, and with some, it becomes difficult to remember even the most common information, like one's own telephone number. Those familiar with the grief process will pick up a variety of signs: some will maintain a facade of strength; others will fly into a rage over the slightest aggravation or frustration. Most, whether consciously acknowledging it or not, will realize that they are no longer in charge of their lives. This loss of control can be devastating for many.

Rescuers and emergency personnel also experience an emotional high. Their work demands peak performance and a high-energy output as they render a vital service. For many, even after expending tremendous effort for long periods of time, it is hard to relax after their work shift; the adrenaline is still flowing. It is also then that their minds can begin to play games. In reflecting on the catastrophe they have witnessed, they may question if they did all they could, or could they have worked faster or better.

It may also seem that even the normal response agencies are in disarray and are confused about what they are supposed to do (and sometimes they are). It may even appear that no one is in charge. Coordination between agencies may be difficult to achieve; "turf" battles may even erupt.

Overall in the emergency and the immediate aftermath, time seems to move slowly and the chaos seems to be interminable. But the reality is that time does move, and little by little, the frenzy and uncertainties begin to subside. A calming presence in a shelter or with a work crew can help to restore a sense of saneness amidst the turmoil. How this works is a mystery. It does not necessarily come from a pastor; perhaps that presence is, in reality, the Presence.

One matter that has not yet been discussed in detail is the opportunity for a worship experience on the heels of a disaster. This can be a most memorable experience, especially for those who have been impacted, because worship helps to re-connect them with an orderly and caring reality, which was anything but evident in the turmoil of the emergency and its immediate aftermath. This is the time to call forth other parts of our identities: the other "us" that is not "victim."

Have worship! There are very few disasters which make worship totally impossible. The church building may be gone, but the parking lot remains, or maybe just "the back forty," but gather and, as the community of faith, worship.

This first worship after a disaster needs to provide at least two things:

1. The assurance of the continuity from the stability of the past through the present experience of the disaster on into a future of recovery; and
2. An opportunity to share experiences, thoughts, feelings and wants. This is a time for the members of the community of faith to minister to each other and to reach out to one another.

Worship allows a focus on an eternal Presence in the middle of a great crisis. This gathering of your faith community celebrates not only a sense of continuity, but it can also promote a sense of healing. The local church is a stabilizing presence in crisis, a visible witness of the message that disasters come and go, but faith and caring abide.

In preparing for such a worship service it is important to recognize that even though faith and caring abide, there have been changes — changes not only in the community, but changes in lives and relationships as well. Therefore, it is suggested that a standardized form of worship not be rigidly followed. As stated previously, it is important to include some familiar form or liturgy to maintain touch with that which is familiar, but at the same time, this worship should be balanced with times of informal, spontaneous expressions by either clergy or the worshippers. The importance of music in this worship cannot be overemphasized, nor of the Psalms, the hymns of our forbearers in the faith. The Book of Hymns and the Psalter are full of deep calls to the spirit within us and can speak eloquently when words may fail us. The important part is to provide a setting and an opportunity for sharing. Sharing may be done in a variety of ways, but it is always a vital component of community life after a disaster.

As the scene shifts from the Emergency Phase to the Relief Phase, the faith community continues to have a significant role. It is important to remember that the church's involvement

or lack of involvement speaks volumes about our faith and provides a significant witness in the lives of those affected by disaster than any torrent of words or eloquent speech.

A religious response to disaster is need-oriented and flexible. Most other response agencies are (and must be) policy-oriented and more rigid. Those agencies have charters with specific policies for use of staff time and material resources. Those of a national scope must be more resistant to policy changes than local agencies because those changes have more widespread implications.

The local church or congregation (or an interfaith agency composed of local congregations) is the point of contact for all religious community assistance in a disaster. National denominations or fellowships work through local leadership to provide a need-oriented and flexible response they could not do on their own. Policies and resources of the denomination or its agencies (like UMCOR) are designed to help the local church do far more than it could do on its own.

It is important to note that after the disaster has occurred and people move into the initial stages of the Relief Phase, there is a “high energy” level, accompanied by an exertion of great effort to bring themselves and their community out from the ravages of the disaster. There is high expectation that the effects of the disaster will soon be over. It usually takes five or six weeks before persons are willing to stop and really look at their situation. Doubts begin to creep in, and questions begin to flood the consciousness.

As the physical fatigue, frustration and anger increase, many will begin to look around for someone or something to blame. Anything or anyone can become the target, especially the federal government, or the American Red Cross disaster response programs, or the local government. Feeling levels of persons and communities surge in the aftermath of the disaster, but then begin to fall shortly after entering the Relief Phase and continue to fall on into the Recovery Phase.

Part of the reason for the downward course of the emotional curve as people move from the Relief Phase to the Recovery Phase is due to the fact that recovery continues to plod along slowly and hesitantly at the outset. Where people have tried to use their own resources for recovery, most find that they have come up short. Emergency needs for food and shelter can drag on into a long-term experience. Living arrangements during the long rebuilding process are almost always substandard.

Loneliness becomes a major source of emotional distress. So often it may appear, to those who have been affected, that others are doing more and seem to be recovering more quickly. There is still a need to talk about problems and frustrations, but it often seems that neighbors and friends are so deeply involved in their own pain that they have no time to listen, or are tired of hearing about troubles. Personal isolation contributes to a feeling of despair and this can apply to whole communities as well as individuals.

Then there are the economic woes and the social needs. Long-term recovery is expensive. There is a limit to the resources of the federal government, the Red Cross and the other relief

agencies. In truth, there is never enough money to do all that needs to be done, and there will still be many with unmet needs.

When we speak of social needs, we refer to those who are most powerless in society: ethnic communities, refugees, mentally or emotionally disabled persons, physically-impaired people, homeless individuals and families, undocumented people, unemployed and under-employed people, non-English-speaking persons. As time moves into the Recovery Phase, the powerlessness of these people seems only to be intensified.

The Recovery Phase brings with it heightened spiritual concerns as well. Questions of life and death, good and evil, God's love and God's wrath will arise, perhaps with even greater intensity.

But the good news has been, is and will continue to be, that at its best, the faith community is the leaven in the loaf that can help to level off and then turn upward that feeling-level curve.

A great asset of local churches and congregations is their presence. But beyond that, as has been mentioned before, the agencies of the local churches can be flexible enough to meet emerging unmet needs and to change policies to fit developing local circumstances. The religious community is in position to identify these problems and to fill in the gaps where and when they are discovered. Besides the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs, the religious community may also be in a position to provide some financial help. But here caution is to be exercised. While it has been mentioned before that there are people who do "fall through the cracks," it is important that the religious community's use of funds should be seen as a course of last resort. This is not being hard-nosed, but rather a call for careful handling of funds contributed for the recovery. Good case management and the coordination of volunteers are essential. In addition, voucher and purchasing arrangements with local merchants can help stretch the available funds and help multiply their effectiveness.

During the long term of the Recovery Phase, people need strength for perseverance, but they also need to have signs of progress lifted up and, with that, opportunities to celebrate the progress. They also need opportunities to call on God and God's people for help. While the disaster may fade for some, the passage of time may bring more pain for others. Each person has a unique schedule of grief. Worship is a time to be reminded about reality — the reality of God's loving presence and the reality of human suffering. During the Recovery Phase, there are many opportunities for the lived message of reconciliation, healing and wholeness, as well as the proclamation of that message in a liturgical setting.

THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY REACTS ECUMENICALLY

Decide on a Response

During and immediately after the Emergency Phase, local churches begin their disaster response efforts as individual congregations, looking after the needs of their own members and constituents of the local church as they learn of their needs. These independent efforts are quite effective and appropriate for the first few days after the disaster. The extent of the damage and the availability of resources will determine the need for a more intentional and coordinated response.

As the severity of the disaster damage increases, so does the need for increasingly greater cooperation among the members of the faith community in a coordinated response. The escalation looks like this:

Do Nothing. If the impact of the disaster is quite limited and no local church members were seriously affected, the inclination may be to do nothing. The thinking is that this is a matter that can be handled by the Fire and Police Departments, and maybe even the Red Cross. If, however, the disaster has stricken a significant number of families, including some from the local congregation, this is an option that soon is going to be seen by many as irresponsible (or perhaps even as callous unconcern).

Care for Members Only. In some disaster areas, there might be a clear need for some form of response, but the local churches may also feel that they are themselves capable of an effective response simply by caring for their own members. If most of the people or families who have been stricken are associated with one particular congregation, this might be a viable option. However, if several local congregations have overwhelming numbers of families with recovery needs, or there are many affected persons or families without local church affiliations, this option becomes untenable. To choose such an option in the face of so many unmet needs sends a signal to the religious community, and the wider community as well, that the church prefers to be isolated and alone.

Network Informally with Other Local Churches. There are certainly cases when the need for the organization of a formal disaster response is not evident. An intentional response may be called for, but informal networking could appear to provide adequate coordination and cooperation. In this situation, religious leaders decide to maintain contact and share with each other any information they may have about disaster-related needs and resources. They might decide to meet regularly for educational purposes or for mutual support. They probably would decide to do casework separately, but to share patterns of unmet needs. They would also share successful ideas and coordinate contact with other agencies.

Set up Formal Organization with Other Local Churches. In many major disaster areas, the needs are clear and the problems are overwhelming. It soon becomes apparent that a long-term, unified effort in disaster recovery is necessary. In such instances, local churches and congregations can decide to work together, to pool their skills and to share both human and material resources. They also recognize that local leadership for recovery is needed and that

local faith groups can be unique participants in a response process that is locally sensitive. The most compelling impetus for this decision is when it becomes obvious that an effective response for disaster-stricken people and families can only happen when there is assistance from the outside; when the local faith community leadership knows that an informal networking system cannot possibly handle the casework load and deliver sufficient material and human resources to bring relief.

Early in the Relief Phase, the local religious community (not only Christian congregations, but those of other faiths as well) should meet to evaluate the community response needs and the kind of casework that will be required. Normally, it would probably be the local Ministerial Association or Interreligious Council that would be the convening group for this evaluation process. Every local religious leader who can be identified should be invited (it is better to open this up to any leader of any faith group; if any are to be excluded, let them make that decision themselves. Remember, this is to be a community response, for all and by all). If the disaster is Presidentially declared, this gathering may be facilitated by a Consultant from Church World Service. Representatives from regional or denominational offices can also provide valuable guidance in this evaluation process. Someone of the local leadership may want to take the initiative and make certain that such leadership is invited to participate.

Steps in Forming a Formal Response Organization, or Interfaith

When disaster strikes, the religious community is called to respond appropriately. Leaders of the local faith community can be prepared to work closely with any consultants, which may come into the community from Church World Service or any of the other denominational agencies if they are familiar with the following steps:

- Decide how to respond.
- Organize the appropriate structures.
- Operate the response system.
- Review progress regularly.

Interfaith Decision

Decision is the first step in developing an intentional response project. The larger the disaster, the more there is involved in making the decision. Every community that experiences a major disaster must respond, even if the response is independent. There is no real choice when crisis makes a continuation of normal life patterns completely impossible. The only decisions involve deciding upon the dimensions of the response.

The key to opening the door is assessed need. Disasters leave in their wake two basic classes: those who have been stricken, and those who have survived. How many have been stricken will not always be apparent, nor will the degree to which they have suffered loss. Another question that cannot be answered immediately is how many will still have unmet needs after the federal, state and private agencies have completed their processes? FEMA receives application for assistance at the Disaster Application Center(s) (or DAC). The American Red Cross (ARC) opens

cases on from 25 to 50 of FEMA applicants for additional casework. The religious community then finds from 10% to 20% of the ARC cases still have unmet needs.

The dimensions of the response project created by the religious community for those with unmet needs must be large enough to hold them all. Planning to meet these prospects then requires that basic decisions relating to the length, width and depth of the response be made as you organize.

Length: *Self-contained vs. Connected Response.* If there are enough resources within the local area to fully sustain the recovery, then there is no need for outside resources. However, if there are not enough available, it is essential to go to greater "lengths" to find the assistance needed, sometimes going to infinity and beyond. The length of response can extend to state, regional and national agencies. Seeking a fully connected response option secures resources from greater lengths than self-contained responses.

Width: *Denominational vs. Interfaith Response.* If denominational disaster response programs are already highly developed and if these programs are seen to be sustainable for the duration of the recovery, it may be decided that an interfaith organization is not needed. However, if these denominational programs are not that highly developed or are responses too narrow in scope to fit your community's needs, then an Interfaith organization is needed.

Depth: *Focused vs. Comprehensive Response.* A focused response identifies specific needs and zeros in to attend to those needs. A Comprehensive Response scans the whole scene to identify what are the unmet needs and the methods necessary to satisfy them. The religious community is one of the few groups willing or able to provide a comprehensive response program. A comprehensive response is designed to catch those unmet needs, which remain after the focused programs have done their work.

There are many combinations of length, width and depth, which will sustain the needs of a community in crisis. No combination is right or wrong; each disaster is unique in its requirements, and each disaster community is unique in its ability to respond. It is important as a community begins to structure its response program that all options that can be anticipated are discussed. Flexibility is the key that can allow sudden unexpected needs to be cared for.

Biological Weapons

Biological weapons are weapons that cause disease in people. There are many diseases but the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) has designated six as the most likely to be used as biological weapons. These were chosen because they are the most likely to cause real terror. They are all deadly and three of the six are contagious, meaning that the disease could be passed from person-to-person. The weaponization of the diseases causes them to act like a fine powder that is invisible unless it is clumped together. The main way a disease would gain entry to your body is through breathing it.

The six diseases are: anthrax, tularemia, botulism, pneumonic plague, smallpox and hemorrhagic fevers.

Anthrax is caused by bacteria. It is not contagious. Inhalation anthrax begins with flu-like symptoms of fever, fatigue, malaise, and cough. Untreated, it has almost a 100 percent fatality rate. The incubation period is usually 1 to 6 days, but could be as long as 6 weeks. If there were an attack, it would be important for the people who were exposed to receive medication to prevent getting the disease. A release of weaponized anthrax could also cause infections of the skin.

Tularemia is caused by bacteria. It is not contagious. Pulmonary tularemia begins with flu-like symptoms of fever, fatigue, headache, malaise, and cough. Untreated, the fatality rate could reach 60 percent. The incubation period is usually 3 to 5 days, but can range from 1 to 14 days. If there were an attack, it would be important for the people exposed to receive medication to prevent getting the disease. A release of weaponized tularemia could also cause infections of the eyes, skin and throat.

Pneumonic plague is caused by bacteria. It is contagious. Pneumonic plague begins with a gradually increasing fever, headache, malaise, and then a dry cough, which becomes progressively more productive and bloody. It is the bloody cough teeming with bacteria that spreads disease. There may also be gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain. The incubation period is usually 3 to 4 days but can range from 1 to 6 days. Untreated, pneumonic plague has an almost 100 percent fatality rate. If there were an attack it would be very important for any exposed people to receive medication to prevent getting the disease.

Botulism is caused by botulinum toxin. A toxin is a chemical substance made by a biological organism. It is not contagious. Prior to the 1950's, botulism had a case fatality rate of 60 percent. Initial symptoms are double vision, difficulty swallowing and difficulty speaking. There is medication to prevent botulism but it is in very short supply.

Smallpox is caused by a virus. It is contagious. Smallpox begins with high fever, malaise, chest and back pain, and then a rash develops that over a few days forms firm nodular bumps that could be described as fluid filled, then pustules. The rash is different from chickenpox in that it heavily involves the face, arms and legs, with more pox on and near the hands and feet than closer to the body and some of the pox may be on the palms and soles. It is believed that the

person is contagious as soon as the rash begins. Smallpox has an incubation period of 12 to 14 days with a range of 7 to 17 days. The disease is spread by respiratory secretions such as coughing, sneezing, and perhaps talking. Smallpox has a fatality rate of 30 percent. If there were an attack it would be important for people exposed to get vaccinated to help prevent the disease.

Hemorrhagic fevers are a group of diseases caused by viruses, which cause the body to bleed. Some examples are yellow fever, Ebola, and Marburg. Some of the diseases are very contagious such as Ebola and Marburg. They seem to be spread by contaminated body fluids. Some of the illnesses have low case fatality rates such as Omsk hemorrhagic fever at 0.5 percent; others have high case fatality rates such as Ebola, at 90 percent. There is no medicine to prevent the illness in anyone exposed.

It is unlikely that you would realize that you were in the middle of an attack because you could not see the weaponized disease material and no one would show any symptoms for several days. If you did happen to realize it, you should cover your nose and mouth with any clothing available. A T-shirt would be good and it would be even better if it were moistened. You should then move at right angles to the wind. Walk. Don't run! Just as in a fire, panic kills.

Once you have gotten out of the area you should take off all your clothes and shoes and place them in a large plastic bag. Then wash your hair and body with soap and lots of water. Be sure to also gently rinse your eyes with water as well. The weaponized material can get on your clothes and body and then with just a small amount of movement become airborne again. Also, anthrax and tularemia can attack the skin if there is even a tiny opening.

You can aid the authorities in alerting them to an attack if you see a lot of people becoming sick. If you would see people coughing up blood you know that pneumonic plague was released. If you saw people, adults especially, with chickenpox like rashes you would know that smallpox had been released. The authorities could then decide if it truly is an attack and give you instructions.

These are difficult times. The aim of the terrorist is to cause panic and chaos. Education is our primary weapon against the terrorist. In this way, we will know what to expect if it occurs so that we can minimize the loss of life and minimize the terror. For more information, you might look at the Textbook of Military Medicine, Part I, Medical Aspects of Chemical and Biological Warfare, which may be found on the web at:
www.nbc-med.org/SiteContent/HomePage/WhatsNew/MedAspects/contents.html.

Chemical Weapons

The first major use of chemical weapons took place at Ypres, Belgium, in World War I. On April 22, 1915, the Germans released chlorine gas against the Allies. The effect was devastating. Estimates run from 800 to 5,000 dead, and 2,500 to 3,000 incapacitated. Phosgene was used

by the Germans in May, 1916, while the French used cyanide about two months later. In July 1917, the Germans began using mustard gas and shortly afterward the Allies did as well. Even though mustard gas was introduced late in the war, it was responsible for an estimated 80 percent of the chemical casualties. Most of these casualties were not fatal although they frequently required long hospital stays.

There are several types of chemical agents; four of the more important ones are: Pulmonary, Vesicant, Blood and Nerve agents.

Pulmonary: examples: phosgene and chlorine. These agents affect the lungs predominately. However, at high concentrations they can also affect the eyes, mouth and upper respiratory system.

Vesicant: example: mustard (called this because sometimes it smells like mustard). Vesicants are agents that cause blisters — these agents form blisters on the skin as well as attack the eyes and respiratory tract.

Blood: example: cyanide. Cyanide works within the body depriving the cells of oxygen to cause death.

Nerve: examples: sarin and VX. The nerve agents are very potent. Only a small drop of liquid VX can be fatal. They interfere with nerve signal transmission causing an over-stimulation of the nerves.

Characteristics of the agents: Many of the agents are liquids at room temperature; for example, mustard and VX. They may consequently persist in an environment once they are distributed and slowly "off gas" — that is, emit a dangerous vapor. Some of the gases, like the nerve agents, show an immediate effect, while others like mustard have a period of several hours before an effect is visible. Some of the agents gain entry to the body only through breathing, such as chlorine, while others such as mustard may also gain entry through the skin. In fact, mustard gas can go right through your clothes to get to your skin.

Protection: There is not a lot you can do to protect yourself against a chemical attack but that doesn't mean there is nothing you can do.

First, be careful with safe rooms sealed with duct tape and plastic. It is very difficult to seal a room from a gas and if you are successful, remember that you need oxygen to breathe. If it is truly sealed, no oxygen can get in either. In addition, don't make your safe room in the basement. Gases such as chlorine, phosgene and mustard are heavier than air and so would fill up your basement first just as they sank into the recesses of the trenches in World War I.

Second, don't rely on gas masks. Only the military gas masks would protect you and then only if they have been carefully fitted to you and you have been trained in wearing them—there can be no leaks. They make breathing very difficult and consequently can be dangerous for many of us.

Gas masks would only protect you if you were wearing the mask before and during the attack and it is very unlikely that you would ever know of an attack ahead of time.

If you find yourself in a chemical attack you should immediately try to breathe through some clothing, like a handkerchief or T-shirt that is moistened if possible. These are gases so this will not protect you but it might decrease your exposure a little. While you are doing this, you should try to leave the area. Walk, don't run! Don't panic. Just as that is important in a fire, it is important here.

If you have been through a chemical attack or you believe that you have, then you need to remove your clothes and shoes and place them in a large plastic bag and seal it. Some of the agents can get on your clothes and continue to expose you to the vapor or liquid. You need to wash your body and hair with soap and lots of water. You also need to gently rinse your eyes with a lot water. If you have a specific area of your body that you know has had liquid agent on it, you should wash that area before you do anything else.

Remember: the aim of terrorism is fear. Fear is overcome with knowledge. We must learn what we can about these agents so that we can effectively deal with them to the best of our ability if the time comes.

For more information, you might look at the Textbook of Military Medicine, Part I, Medical Aspects of Chemical and Biological Warfare, which may be found on the web at: www.nbcmed.org/SiteContent/HomePage/WhatsNew/MedAspects/contents.html

THE DISASTER RESPONSE COMMUNITY AND WHAT IT DOES

It is critical for people to understand that in a disaster they are not alone. This refers not only to the presence of the Almighty, but also to a legion of folks who have prepared and are preparing for the day when disaster strikes, whatever the magnitude and wherever it may be. Every community has some of these people to a greater or lesser degree. And, there are a number of "ports of entry" for others to join, even folks with few special skills in this area, but people who are committed to helping others and who are willing to learn and to train.

Again, the Disaster Response Community is a varied lot, with different skills and responsibilities as well as differing time frames within which they ply their trade (or avocation). Some of the members of the Disaster Response Community are well known. Others work without much publicity and have minimal name recognition (see the Appendix for a listing of most of the groups involved in disaster response).

Early Preparation

In the period before a disaster hits, or the Preparation Phase, all relief agencies are in the process of getting ready for the next disaster, but there are several specific agencies which

should be singled out for mention because they are common to most communities and are available relatively easily for a variety of services. Most obvious are the fire and police (or sheriff) for they are the first line of defense and the immediate responders. They not only fight fires and keep the peace, but are also involved in rescues, first aid, and help with the initial stages of evacuation when it is warranted. In the Preparation Phase, many fire departments (or their EMT personnel) will conduct CPR classes and would be available to local churches for such training opportunities through United Methodist Women or United Methodist Men groups. Many fire departments have volunteer fireman programs for which individuals may register if they are willing to expend the time and energy necessary to serve their community.

During the Preparation Phase, the American Red Cross is active in many communities (through the local or area Red Cross chapter) conducting classes on a wide range of disaster response courses ranging from first aid to shelter management. Your area chapter will have a schedule of the courses offered and a list of the fees, which are quite modest. Another preparatory activity is the selection of potential shelter and feeding sites in the event of disaster, the inspection of those potential sites to see if they qualify, and then the signing of all necessary agreements and contracts.

Beyond general fire and police services, each county in Maryland and the District of Columbia have an Office of Emergency Management that coordinates resources and facilitates the response and recovery efforts of local, state, federal and private agencies in emergencies. Each County office offers a TEXT Alert system which serves as the official emergency communications service for the County. During a major crisis, emergency or severe weather event, County officials send event updates, warnings and instructions directly to you on any of your devices. They offer important phone numbers for emergency services in your area, emergency preparedness information for your home and business including hazards that may affect your specific county. There is a list of evacuation locates and guidelines plus special instructions and plans for National emergency situations.

Another important group in the Preparation Phase is the VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster), which is currently composed of 23 national member organizations who have as a part of their normal function a commitment of resources (personnel, funds and equipment) to meet the needs of people affected by disaster without discrimination as to race, creed, gender or age. A listing of the national member organizations of NVOAD (one of which is UMCOR) is found in the Appendix. The networking and cooperative function of NVOAD is carried out regionally by state VOADS.)

The United Methodist Church is entitled to membership in any state VOAD through both the UMCOR and Church World Service membership in NVOAD. At the county level in some states, United Methodists have an opportunity to be a part of their county's Disaster Assistance Council because of our denomination's participation in a state or regional VOAD.

During the Emergency Phase

Each State and the District of Columbia also has an Emergency Management Agency that serves as the centralized emergency management office with direct links to local, county, state, federal and voluntary emergency service professionals for the state. This office is responsible for assuring the state's readiness to respond to and recover from civil, natural and war-caused emergencies and for assisting local government in their emergency preparedness, response and recovery efforts. They are prepared to respond to an emergency whenever alerted by a county or counties or at the direction of the Governor.

The State plan outlines the organizational structure for state management of any type of disaster. Integral to the state plan is a statewide system of mutual aid in which each local jurisdiction relies first upon its own resources, then calls for assistance from its neighbors, city-to-city, city-to-county and county-to-county.

The State Emergency Management Agency collects disaster intelligence data, which is used to analyze the situation and determine appropriate and necessary actions. It regularly briefs the Governor and the Legislature, to both keep them updated as well as determining the necessity of a gubernatorial declaration of a state of emergency, and if warranted, a presidential disaster declaration.

Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

Primary here, as mentioned above, are the police and fire departments which are usually first on the scene of a disaster unless a disaster is of such magnitude to make it impossible to cover all points of impact at once. Fire and police personnel are the eyes and ears of the local government and, by extension, the county. Fire departments conduct search and rescue operations, administer first aid, manage potentially hazardous situations including hazardous materials (Haz-Mat) spills or events. Police set up, coordinate and manage evacuation routes and help in the planning of mass evacuations.

There are other community-based organizations, which have their own unique, non-profit charters. Food banks, thrift shops, homeless shelters, consumer affairs agencies, community action councils, United Way, fraternal organizations, business associations, service clubs, legal assistance services, agencies serving those with handicapping conditions and special needs, immigrant and refugee services, senior citizen services, mental health associations, crisis intervention and counseling agencies all can provide valuable services in disaster response and can coordinate their response appropriately through the county.

American Red Cross (ARC)

The American Red Cross deserves prominent mention because it is required by Congressional charter to provide relief activities, to mitigate suffering caused by disaster, and to carry out preparatory measures to prevent suffering. The Red Cross disaster program meets the urgent and immediate needs of victims including food, shelter, first aid, clothing, and other basic

elements of survival and comfort. The Red Cross, along with the Salvation Army, is usually the first voluntary agency on site during or immediately after a disaster.

The immediate involvement of the ARC is usually in providing mass-care facilities for evacuees. Schools and churches are primary among safe havens called upon to provide facilities and volunteers during the first hours after a disaster for feeding, housing and as a base for material distribution. As soon as possible, trained ARC shelter managers and a registered nurse will be on site to continue and manage shelter activity.

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is also one of the earliest responding agencies, coming on site with mobile mass feeding facilities. Its nationwide services also include clothing and some provision for shelter as well as other emergency services. Trained volunteers provide these services and involve local volunteers as well.

Denominational Agencies

Some denominational agencies do provide disaster services during the Emergency Phase (such as the Southern Baptist Brotherhood's 18-wheeler, mass-feeding vans), but where and when these efforts exist, they are usually coordinated with those of the Red Cross, Salvation Army and CBOs.

The National Guard

In times of dire emergency, the National Guard may have to be called out to help with rescues and transportation. Most often, however, they are responsible for maintaining the peace and securing damaged buildings and property. The governor calls out the Guard. In a catastrophic disaster, the Guard and federal troops enforce martial law and control the movement of people in and out of the affected area(s).

During the Relief Phase

All of the agencies named as responding in the Emergency Phase are still on hand, but as the affected community(ies) shift(s) into the Relief Phase, many of the responsibilities of those agencies also shift to different areas or modes of operation.

State Division of Emergency Management

The State works with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at Disaster Application Centers (DACs) where individuals and businesses may apply for assistance from a variety of federal, state and voluntary agencies. A Disaster Field Office (DFO) is set up to serve as an administrative office and to address programs for the private sector.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is the arm of the U.S. government responsible for the administration and coordination of federal assistance in affected areas following a Presidential or Catastrophic (National) declaration. They become the most pivotal agency in the disaster response, and, as such, often become the lightning rod for people's anger if things don't go as they (the people) think they should (or quickly enough). FEMA brings a

small army of workers from around the country when they enter a response. These workers then help FEMA with the complicated task of coordinating local state and federal programs for those who have been impacted by the disaster.

A federal coordinating officer is responsible for coordinating activities in the DAC (or DACs). From FEMA's Disaster Field Office (DFO) the whole disaster response community is supplied with damage information from on-site inspectors. In addition, FEMA administers a temporary housing program, which may include temporary housing units or trailers or lodging vouchers as well as limited home repairs, mortgage and rental assistance and household kits.

FEMA and the agencies it coordinates gather data and take applications either in person at a DAC or by tele-registration through 1(800) 462-9029. There may be many forms to fill out, and even though it takes a bit of time to apply, FEMA has worked diligently to speed the process and deliver services more quickly. If a client does not agree with the response they receive, there is an appeal process available. The most successful appeals are usually those that provide additional verifiable information that applies to the case in question. Funding and program policies are strictly followed.

Individual Family Grants (IFG) This program provides financial grants from a federal program operated in conjunction with and by the state on a shared basis (75-25 percent). This provides funds for individuals and families for building and repair, household furnishings, medical needs, burial, clothing and other necessities destroyed by the disaster. These grants are given with one limitation as set by law: If one is compensated for disaster-related losses from any source, including private insurance, one cannot receive financial assistance from the government for the same loss.

Legal Aid Society Provides for legal counseling through the Young Lawyers Section of the American Bar Association.

State/County Department of Health Gives advice and guidance on potential sanitary problems caused by the disaster.

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Provides mental health crisis counseling and referral services.

American Insurance Association (AIA) Provides insurance claim counseling.

Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Provides physical rehabilitation for disaster injured individuals.

The American Red Cross (ARC)

In addition to the responsibilities covered in the section of agency actions in the Emergency Phase, the ARC continues in the Relief Phase. When mass-care facilities are no longer needed, the ARC provides financial assistance to those impacted by the disaster. While the ARC does not routinely replace all items destroyed or damaged by the disaster, they do, in consultation

with the family, determine the items most needed to meet basic needs and provides for them alone.

Food. The ARC provides assistance for one-week's food and grocery supplies. This includes non-food items that may be purchased normally in a grocery store (e.g. paper towels, dish detergent, etc.). The amount granted allows for a restocking of staples. Following this initial food order, a second week's food order may be issued with a supervisor's approval.

Clothing. The ARC provides assistance for emergency clothing needs. The prices for a total loss of clothing are calculated to provide one set plus one change of clothing for mild and summer weather. When a disaster strikes during the winter months, appropriate outer garments are provided.

Laundry and Dry Cleaning. Laundry and dry cleaning allowances may be given for coin operated laundry, home laundry and dry cleaning if there is salvageable clothing or bed linens and the family needs such assistance.

Emergency Transportation. When it is necessary, public transportation or gas moneys are provided for a period of two weeks for each family member that needs to get to and from work, to nearby shopping centers or to hospitals and other medical facilities.

Toilet Articles. Prepackaged comfort kits are usually available.

Cleaning Supplies. Often the ARC has prepackaged cleaning kits available. If not, assistance is provided for cleaning supplies such as mops, brooms, buckets, detergents and cleaners.

Emergency Housing. The ARC assists families in meeting emergency housing needs in one or a combination of the following ways:

Referral to a shelter; if any shelters are still open;

Referral to FEMA temporary housing;

Provide rent;

Lodging in commercial facilities, such as a motel or hotel;

Minor home repairs.

Household Accessories. The ARC will provide assistance in replacing such essential household accessories as bed linens, towels, wash cloths plus cooking and eating utensils.

Household Furniture. The ARC provides furniture so that families can resume living in their own homes or in alternative housing, including beds and appliance repair, if needed.

Health Needs. The ARC provides for emergency health needs, including replacement of eyeglasses, prescription and non-prescription drugs, dentures, prosthetic devices.

Personal Occupational Supplies and Equipment. The ARC provides replacement tools, special uniforms, heavy-duty boots or hard hats that will enable a wage-earner to resume his or her job.

ARC Additional Assistance (AA)

The ARC Additional Assistance program serves as the primary agency when there is no Presidential Declaration. When there is a Presidential Declaration, it then provides additional assistance as the secondary agency for needs that have not yet been met after IFG funding.

Salvation Army (SA)

The army is still around during the Relief Phase, shifting from mobile mass feeding (when it is no longer needed) to helping meet a large variety of unmet needs.

Church World Service (CWS)

Church World Service contacts a disaster-stricken community through existing, ecumenical and interreligious councils immediately after a disaster. Contact will be attempted with local, county, regional and/or state councils until a response community is identified. CWS is committed to utilizing and strengthening ecumenical and interreligious groups as a part of disaster response. CWS can advise local churches, pastors, church coalitions and interfaith groups about the management of disaster relief and short-term recovery operations. CWS can provide a liaison with FEMA and ARC on a national level to assist in establishing and maintaining good working relationships at a disaster site. CWS, although not a major source of funding in a disaster, can help local leadership to identify possible funding sources.

Church World Service CAN:

1. Assign a trained CWS consultant to assist in decision-making.
2. Send a small, emergency, one-time grant to the interfaith community.
3. Facilitate blankets and/or clothing to be sent to the disaster site when local/regional resources are exhausted.
4. If an interfaith response is planned, CWS can receive the program and budget plan and send it with a CWS Disaster Bulletin to the CWS Unit Committee, which includes member communions of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA.

Church World Service CANNOT:

1. Make decisions for the disaster-stricken community.
2. Fund the disaster recovery project.
3. Suggest amounts or goals which national agencies or denominations might contribute.
4. Usurp the role of the judicatory or regional denominational executives in keeping their national offices informed of local church participation in disaster recovery, nor interrupt the denominational pattern of grant making.

Denominational Agencies

It is in the Relief Phase that Denominational Agencies come into their own and provide the most service, especially when their specialties are coordinated in a complementary way by working through a local community interfaith and in conjunction with the ARC, SA and CBOs.

Many denominations begin fund raising campaigns among their own churches according to their structure and polity, and use those funds raised to assist in the disaster response. In most cases, denominations prefer to send financial support to local community interfaith groups

upon receiving a project services budget of the Interfaith, accompanied by the assurance that no one will be denied assistance by the Interfaith due to race, creed, gender or age.

Many denominations stand ready to send crews of volunteers to assist in debris removal, cleanup, building repair and construction, as well as other specialties. A more complete description of denominational agencies and the services they render will be listed at the end of this section.

Community Based Organizations (CBO's)

Community Based Organizations continue to render their specialized services (as mentioned in the description under the Emergency Phase) into the Relief Phase and on into the Recovery Phase. They are very good at providing services, which are highly focused in one or two specific areas. When their services are connected (as when CBOs are part of County Disaster Assistance Councils) they provide a wealth of needed materials and skilled workers, both professional and volunteer. By coordination and cooperation, they avoid waste, duplication and confusion.

During the Recovery Phase

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Rarely is FEMA around when the disaster-impacted community or region begins to progress to the Recovery Phase, but this does not mean that they have lost either touch or interest in the progress of recovery — the DACs and the DFO may be closed, but they are still in touch and tracking the programs that have been started. When they have done their job, all the necessary things to bring relief and recovery by this time are already in place; the major responsibility the rest of the way rests with the affected community or region(s). There are exceptions, of course, especially when the disaster is so extreme that it is categorized as a catastrophic (or national disaster). On those occasions, FEMA may maintain a Disaster Field Office (DFO) and operations a bit longer, continuing to render all the services as described in the Relief Phase as long as is necessary.

Even when they have moved off-site (as alluded to above) they are still available for some services either in conjunction with the state or through telephone liaison people.

American Red Cross (ARC)

The same is true for the ARC, except that any remaining problems or needs related to the impact of the disaster are now handled by the nearest Red Cross local chapter.

Salvation Army (SA)

Like the ARC, most Salvation Army services in the Recovery Phase are conducted by local or area Salvation Army Headquarters.

Church World Service (CWS)

When the CWS consultant has left, all contact is handled through the Disaster Resource Consultant (DRC) for the state, and this is usually through the director(s) of the local Interfaith(s). However, CWS continues to help interpret the needs of each Interfaith to the various judicatories who may be expected to furnish ongoing financial support to the Interfaiths as long as they need to assist persons on a case-by-case basis to recover from the disaster. Again, the management of the recovery is in the hands of the local Interfaith. CWS will offer support, where possible, under their guidelines and restrictions, but will not manage or direct the recovery.

Denominational Agencies

Many denominational agencies will still be helping during the Recovery Phase, but doing this primarily by providing support to local Interfaiths. An important exception, however, is in the field of furnishing volunteer labor to assist local recovery. In this instance, some denominations are able to furnish teams of volunteers from large personnel pools that are organized and coordinated in such a way that sufficient numbers with the skills required are available so that they can be scheduled to be on site when needed and replaced as they complete their tour (usually no longer than two weeks). This is an important component that denominational agencies can organize and marshal for the duration of the Recovery Phase. Usually, the only thing required of the Interfaith is that they set up the programming and make their request as specific as possible relative to tasks to be accomplished and the time frame in which to do it.

Another important task for denominational agencies is to continue to seek funding to support the recovery programs of the Interfaith(s).

Community Based Organizations (CBOs)

CBOs continue to render their normal services on into the Recovery Phase, although the frequency of disaster-related needs lessens as time goes by.

SUGGESTIONS FOR LOCAL CHURCH CLERGY ACTION

The ability of any clergy person to respond when a disaster strikes will vary, according to many circumstances, which cannot possibly be predicted for anyone. These guidelines, are given in the hope that they will provide some help to the degree that a pastor is able to respond. If followed, they should help your response be more effective.

A. Early Preparation

1. The Broad View

Get to know who the relief agencies are in your own area (American Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc.). Find out who the law enforcement and county emergency management personnel are in your area who will have authority in a disaster. These are valuable contacts both for you and for them when a disaster strikes.

2. Community Care

Are you familiar with existing community services for the needy? Is the local ministerial association or church council involved? Do they have a plan to help the needy in a disaster as an extension of their normal services?

3. Church Resources

Involve your local Board of Trustees in an inventory of your church physical facilities to see if they could be of help in an emergency response to disaster in your community. Regarding working cooperatively with the American Red Cross, this is a good project for whatever group in your congregation deals with social concerns. Remember, the human resources within your congregation: their interests, skills and talents regarding opportunities for volunteer work in the event of a disaster. Encourage any who might have an interest in emergency response.

4. Personal Planning

Plan to protect yourself and your family should a disaster come. The American Red Cross can supply you with information on personal and family preparation for a disaster of whatever magnitude. Your Conference Coordinator for Disaster Preparedness and Response can provide you with other referrals.

5. Local Community Agencies and Resources

No two local communities have the same agencies or resources. However, you will find striking similarities, and much closer coordination, at the county level, for this is where the greatest impact of the state structure is felt. Your knowledge of existing city and county agencies will prepare you to meet disaster-related needs. Not only should you know these agencies, but you should be known to them, especially if you have a special skill that can be utilized in time of a disaster. This is another link in an overarching network that leads to effective disaster response.

It is strongly suggested that you schedule a visit to as many of these agencies as possible, taking with you a contact sheet, so you can make notes about the scope of each agency's work in time of disaster, its needs, how it uses volunteer help (if applicable), and what it feels are possible unmet needs within the community should a disaster strike. The more you know about the existing agencies and their work and areas of expertise, your ability to assist in crisis-resolution increases (because of proper referrals) and you will not feel that you have to bear the whole load.

6. Local Community Needs

Local pastors know about the existence of situational life-crises in every community. There are always deaths to deal with, illnesses, accidents, crime victims, loss of employment, moves to another community or culture, etc. There are also developmental life crises in the parish with which pastors must deal: childhood, adolescence and puberty, marriage and divorce, career development, parenthood, mid-life nudges and changes, older adulthood, retirement, etc.

But how well do *you* know the crisis profile of your community? This becomes important in a disaster setting, because disaster events are even more traumatic to those people who are already experiencing either situational or developmental crises. Any combination of life crises

can magnify stress levels to the point of being life threatening. Sensitivity to these crises and their effect on recovery is helpful in planning for response.

Get to know you community patterns of crisis: Is there above average unemployment? Are there refugees and immigrants? What is the community age profile and ethnic composition? Its economic profile? Discuss these characteristics with community leaders and planners and with others in the religious community and then plan on methods of responding to these special needs with on-going programs when disaster strikes.

Potential Local Agencies	<u>Possible Special Needs</u>
County Dept. of Emergency Management	Disaster Counseling
Police & Sheriff's Office	Ethnic Communities
Fire Department	Refugees & Immigrants
County or Area Red Cross Chapter	Unemployed & Underemployed Homeless
County Human Services	Children & Adolescents
County Mental Health	The Elderly
County Health Services	Persons with Special Needs and Handicapping Conditions
Salvation Army	Geographically isolated populations or communities
Area Association of Churches or Ministerial Associations	
Volunteers of America	
Local Food Banks	
Women, Infants & Children's Services	
Refugee & Immigrant Services	
Area Housing Assistance Programs	
Area Employment Offices	
Area Refuges or Missions	
Senior Citizen Services	
Crisis Telephone Services	

B. Preparation when a Disaster is Imminent

I. Monitoring

If there is an early warning of an impending disaster, pay heed. Listen to the radio; track websites and social media from accredited sources; follow any instructions issued by your County Emergency Management Agency or the National Weather Service. If you are advised to evacuate, GO! As a leader in the community, you are looked to for guidance. People who stay

when ordered to evacuate risk not only their own lives, but the lives of emergency personnel who must go in to save them.

2. Evacuation

If you must evacuate, take only what you must to survive. If you can carry more, focus on small items of personal rather than monetary value (photographs, insurance papers, wills, etc.). If you know that you are going to a shelter, take your own bedding; cots will probably be in short supply. Notify your District Superintendent that you are going and where.

3. Personal Safety

THIS IS IMPORTANT! See to the needs of your family first! Do not abandon them for the sake of the parish. No matter what your level of involvement in disaster response, you will *not* be effective if you are not certain of the safety of your household. What you do for them will be an example for others to follow with their own families.

4. Shut-ins

If you know of a shut-in who needs to be evacuated, notify the nearest law enforcement person or rescue worker and let them handle the actual evacuation.

5. Interim Ministry

If there is enough time, gather essentials for ministry (a Bible, church directory, maps, disaster plans, portable communion set, etc.). Take only the essentials that will help you respond with pastoral care and/or disaster-related ministry that has been prepared in advance.

C. During the Emergency Phase of the Disaster

1. Personal Assessment

Assess your own damage first. See if anyone in your household is injured. Unless it is unsafe to remain, stay with your family and property until emergency personnel get to you. If you have material in the international triage colors (red, for a life threatening condition; yellow, for an injury, but not life threatening; green for “all is well”), display them at your front door, at the entrance to your driveway or on your roof. This enables emergency personnel to get where they are needed the most as quickly as possible.

2. Personal Judgment

Do not rely upon your own judgment if you are a victim. Do not rely on the judgment of other victims, either. Listen to emergency personnel and follow their instruction.

3. Stay Alert

You can monitor the damage to your parish first by listening to news reports. Do not interfere with any ongoing relief efforts where you are not previously trained or qualified to be. Stay at home until the danger is past. It will be easier for the District Superintendent and/or parishioners to contact you at home during this phase.

D. During the Relief Phase of the Disaster

1. Parish Assessment

Check to see if anyone in your church(es) has become a victim. Notify other clergy if you know of members of their church who are victims. Work closely with law enforcement personnel to get an idea of the damaged area, but try not to interfere with any ongoing relief efforts; take care not to gawk or be a "tourist." If a parishioner is a victim, be a presence to that family as you would in any other emergency. Your presence will provide some comfort.

2. Damage Assessment

Determine the amount of damage in your area and attempt to identify who the victims are. Do not be surprised if you are in some shock at what you see. Expect others to be in shock as well.

Victims and near-victims will want to tell their stories over and over. Be prepared to use your training as a listener; this is an important function you can fill.

3. Communication

Inform your District Superintendent about your situation plus that of your church's physical plant. If you are not a victim, it is important that the DS know that. Offer your services to assist clergy who may be victims or who have many victims in their parish. If there is damage in your area, be prepared to take your District Superintendent and/or you District Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator on a tour. Be ready to provide either the Conference or the District Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator a place they can use as "headquarters" while in your area.

4. Your Work with Early Assistance

If some or all of this early preparation has been done, begin some or all of the following as applicable:

- a. See if your church can provide some early assistance to relief workers or disaster victims. Organize "clean-up" crews to be ready to go into areas where you are permitted to assist (do not begin any clearing until the damage has been assessed; you can be too good of a neighbor if your premature assistance winds up lowering the amount of settlement awarded to a victim). Concentrate first on opening accesses and protecting personal property.
- b. Do not give money at this stage. Help meet basic needs. Money given directly at this stage will lower the amount of assistance the victim(s) will receive from other agencies. Find out what kind of aid can be expected and the kinds of bills that will be paid by the Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc. Be aware that the types of assistance will vary according to the category of disaster. Emergency relief organizations (such as those mentioned above) are prepared to handle early expenses of victims. Church moneys (or grants) are usually made later, in most cases after all other forms of help are exhausted and media attention has ceased (the big exception here, of course, is with regard to those who for some reason do not qualify for the more conventional and usual assistance - those who "fall through the cracks" - usually the elderly, the poor, or folks with handicapping conditions).

5. Cooperation and Coordination

"Lone Rangers" are of little value in the aftermath of a disaster. When you can report something of a substantive nature to your District Superintendent, let him/her know whether or not you and your community need help. If help is needed, be prepared to set up a meeting of your church members with the District Superintendent, the District and possibly the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinators. If such a meeting is planned, be sure to invite other community religious leaders to attend. Why? As United Methodists, we are committed to ecumenical efforts. As servants of God, we will accomplish much more in the matter of relieving human suffering working cooperatively than alone.

Help your community begin its recovery process more quickly by assisting the community leadership to take "ownership" of its disaster. District Superintendents and Disaster Response Coordinators can provide useful advice on how this process can be begun, how relief and recovery efforts can be organized, but they will not do it for you or your community. Other pertinent information is available from the Church World Service National Disaster Response Program Manual and the UMCOR Training Kit for United Methodists in Disaster Response.

6. Keep a Journal

Keeping a journal of your activities or what has been happening to you in the course of a disaster can be helpful both to you and to the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Committee both during and after the disaster.

E. During the Recovery Phase of the Disaster

1. Personal Initiative

Assistance is available, but no one will come in and do the job for you. If you, as the pastor, are not involved, your church will not be involved. People in your church and in your community will not receive assistance unless and until you request it.

2. Personal Involvement

The effects of a disaster remain for a long time. You may expect to be heavily involved for two to four months, and a little bit less involved after that for as much as a year or more, depending on the severity of the disaster. While your involvement is urged, be careful that you do not burn out yourself early. As you give care to others, remember that it is important for caregivers to receive care as well. Your Bishop and District Superintendent are well aware of this and will help to see that assistance is available to you. In the meantime, pace yourself and seek help when your stress level goes up.

3. Interfaiths and Networking

If there is a major disaster in your area, don't try to do it all. Work with the other churches in your area and the Annual Conference. When major disasters occur, an interfaith organization is recommended as a preferred way to work at recovery by pooling the resources of all the churches. Very often such an Interfaith, once organized, can hire a local director (either full or part-time for a limited period) to coordinate the recovery effort on behalf of the churches. Your

District or Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinators can advise you with organizational details. Such an Interfaith is the most common agent for the distribution of various denominational aid.

4. Capitalize on Strengths

Focus on those things where your church is proficient. Whatever your strength may be, bring it to the fore during the recovery phase. Not every church can handle every type of relief. Whatever you are willing to try, the Conference Committee on Disaster Preparedness and Response will help you with the organization, and give you some of the benefit of its experience in the past, even though no two disasters are alike.

5. Monetary Considerations

As has been mentioned before, disasters create many needs, not the least of which is money for various things. Promote offerings for disaster relief after a disaster. Even if a disaster occurs in your own community, don't hesitate to promote such an offering. There will be members of your congregation who were not directly affected, and this may be the best way they can respond in love to the suffering and needs of others. In all cases, channel all funds received through the office of the Conference Treasurer. Allow other relief agencies to solicit for their needed funds as they will; many people have no church affiliation in our communities. The other relief agencies can use their support. Whatever you give for disaster relief in our Conference is used to support you and other churches in disaster relief within our Conference.

6. Help

Do not be afraid to ask for help. No one expects you to be able to handle disaster relief on your own. Should you try to do it all, you will become a victim as well.

LOCAL CHURCH ACTIONS

A. General Provisions

1. The Local Church

- a. The local church is the point of contact for all church assistance in a disaster. The Conference will not move in and take over this role. In addition to helping those directly affected by a disaster, the Conference and its agents seek to enhance the credibility and mission of the local church in the community. If the local church is not involved in disaster relief, neither is the Conference. Policies and resources are designed to help the local church do far more than it can do alone. Volunteers will be available only if they are requested by either the local church or the community Interfaith in which the local United Methodist Church is involved. Likewise, any monetary assistance will be disbursed to the community through the appropriate fiscal officer of the community Interfaith.
- b. As the Conference depends upon the local church to prepare for disaster relief, it does not expect the local church to know everything about disaster relief nor how to do it without assistance. Neither does the Conference expect the local church to exhaust its resources in disaster relief. To do so would make the local church a victim as well.

2. Conference Support

The Conference will do all it can to learn the location of the damage and make its resources and that of the General church available as needed. This is the purpose of the organization of a Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Committee and its members. Still, the local church must be involved before the Conference can help. This section provides the guidelines with which the local church may deal with what is at best a difficult situation, and to be able to do it effectively and with compassion.

B. Early Preparation

1. Planning

If there is a committee within the local church that deals with the needs of your community, this may be the place to start to develop a plan for dealing with a disaster. Most of the preparation involves learning about how your county plans to deal with disaster response (contact the county Emergency management office). Learn how a plan is supposed to work, and how the local church can fit in or help. If your church has no committee, which envisions disaster response as part of their task, perhaps there are several laypersons who would be willing to assume responsibility for the effort when a disaster strikes.

2. Mass Care and Shelter

- a. Have your Board of Trustees determine if your physical plant is a potential shelter for either mass care or feeding. The first step is to contact the nearest chapter of the American Red Cross. They will inspect your building(s) and determine suitability and

certifiability. Remember, opening an unofficial shelter involves liabilities that could easily be beyond the ability of a local church to withstand. If your church can be certified, be certain that you understand *all* of the provisions of the resultant contract proposal before the Trustees sign the contract.

- b. Even if your church cannot qualify as a shelter (or chooses not to), there are other ways it may be used to be helpful (office space for the relief effort, rooms for meetings, etc.), you should take care to be certain that your building is ready for an emergency. Emergency exit signs and fire extinguishers should be in working order. Keep all exits clear. Are there flashlights on hand? Have the Trustees check for vulnerabilities.
- c. Other Considerations — The Board of Trustees must consider local church liability in relation to use of buildings. It should do an annual review of insurance needs. Providing services in disaster response can incur additional liability unless and until that coverage is provided by the Federal Government or the Red Cross (only possible if there is official certification of buildings for disaster usage).

Timely maintenance is essential. Church property that is regularly and properly maintained comes through disasters better than those where maintenance has been deferred. The Board of Trustees is responsible for an up-to-date inventory of church property and contents. This should include a safe repository for valuable records plus duplicates in safe places away from local church buildings. Property and content inventories are backed up best by narrated videotape records of each room with an accompanying printed list. All computer files should be duplicated on back-up discs also stored in a safe place.

In preparing church property for disaster use, draw floor plans of building(s), showing dimensions, rest rooms, handicapped access, kitchen facilities, etc. specify areas not to be used by others. Make certain any limitations or restrictions are understood by all concerned in advance.

3. Committee Tasks

a. Membership and Evangelism

It is essential that there be some method of checking on the members of the church when a disaster strikes. Your Membership Secretary can assist the Church Secretary in developing a **telephone tree**. Other people that could help on an every member contact would be such groups as prayer chain or a shepherding organization. Be sure to check on shut-ins first. Notify the local rescue squad if there is a call for evacuation, giving all pertinent details.

b. Church and Society (or Outreach, etc.)

This committee could arrange for people (volunteers) to serve as companions for victims. Companions should be prepared to listen, run errands, make phone calls; anything to help victims feel more comfortable and ease the anxiety. If a Disaster Application Center (DAC) is set up, a companion may be needed to accompany a victim to the DAC and assist with the

application process. If you have people with skills in signing for the hearing impaired, translators are usually needed at shelters and Disaster Application Centers (DACs).

c. Global Ministries (or Missions)

This committee could plan to receive volunteer teams from outside the area who come in to help. Most outside volunteers will be most helpful toward the end of the Relief Phase and the onset of the Recovery Phase. Such volunteer teams will need a place to stay, but should be self-sufficient otherwise. It should be the responsibility of the district Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator and the Conference Volunteers in Mission Coordinator to make arrangements with the volunteer teams, and not that of the local church.

People who are bilingual or are translators are also needed at shelters and Disaster Application Centers (DACs) to assist non-English speaking people. This relates to the ethnic profile of your community. This can also apply to varying cultural patterns in your community as well; anticipate areas where increased sensitivity may be needed to help put people with special needs at ease in an already traumatic situation.

d. Other Local Church Organizations

United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, United Methodist Youth (and other ad hoc groups) can perform some of the following services if they train for them and have made arrangements with the proper Emergency management people: Assist in the feeding of volunteers; light lunches and snacks, etc.

Form teams of volunteers to clear debris and clean up. Different types of disasters require different clean-up methods. However, DO NOT DISTURB a disaster site until it has been inspected for damage. Those impacted should not be kept from receiving their due by volunteers who may be well meaning, but who act too quickly. Remember: appearances may be deceiving; some places may not seem to have sustained damage; make no assumptions — wait until after inspection to do any clean up.

e. Child Care

If your local church does not have a person or persons who have received the UMCOR training in working with children and/or youth in disasters, the best preparation for this need is to contact either your District or Conference Coordinator and schedule a training session for some of your local congregation members who work with children and/or youth (plus people from other local churches who might be interested). This is an important area because children and youth are affected by disasters just as adults, but may react in different ways. They need safe, secure and compassionate places to be after a disaster and people who are trained to listen to them and meet their needs and help to allay their fears.

f. Pastor (Staff) Parish Relations Committee (PPR or SPR)

Among all the other duties of this committee, it should be kept in mind that in the event of a disaster there will be additional demands made upon the pastor's time and energy. A pastor

could "burn out" if the church is not prepared to provide some relief. Any such relief for the pastor should be in the form of time away above and beyond the normal vacation.

g. Food and Clothing

Often the "second disaster" is the glut of food and clothing that is sent into an area where there has been a disaster. Make no appeal for either food or clothing; you'll get it, and with it the problem of adequate storage space and refrigeration. The Red Cross, Salvation Army and Adventist Community Services specialize in helping those affected by disasters in these respects. If you already have a food pantry and clothes closet, they will be most valuable in the latter stages of the long-term recovery if there is an economic downturn in the local economy.

C. Preparation When a Disaster is Imminent

1. Monitoring

If there is an early warning of an impending disaster, pay heed. Listen to the radio; monitor websites and accredited social media channels; follow any instructions issued by your County Emergency Management Agency or the National Weather Service. If you are advised to evacuate, GO!

2. Precautions

Look to the needs of your households first. If there is time, then and only then, see what can be done to secure the church building(s). Remove swinging signs; board or shutter windows; and secure church records.

3. Opening Shelter

If your church is a certified shelter, follow the instructions of the American Red Cross and prepare to open. If you evacuate to another location, try to identify other members of your church. Volunteer to help with shelter operation. Form a prayer group. Be ready to calm the anxiety of others.

4. Shut-ins

Remind the rescue squad of shut-ins. If they are not at home, advise the rescue squad where they may be found.

D. During the Emergency Phase of the Disaster

1. Minimize activities.

The church does not usually function as such during this phase. Individuals should seek shelter or have already been evacuated. The only organized church activity would involve operating the church as a shelter, or to sponsor church activities in shelters.

2. Rescue efforts

After the danger has passed, concentrate on rescue efforts and moving to safer areas, if necessary.

- a. Do not interfere with rescue or emergency personnel. Volunteer your services, but avoid situations for which you are untrained.

- b. Stay with any victims you find and give them whatever assurances you can until emergency personnel arrive. If you are trained, provide first aid as needed.
- c. Keep others from crowding too closely to the dead or those who have been hurt. Make certain rescue workers are able to get to those who have been severely impacted by the disaster.

3. Security

Sadly, there are people who will take advantage of people who have suffered loss in a disaster, by looting property that is exposed or undefended. Victims need to gather their belongings without fear of having property stolen. The following are ways to help:

- a. If a home is damaged and there are no police around, help your neighbors by keeping an eye on their property.
- b. Discourage outsiders from entering the area. Report suspicious individuals to the police; note license plate numbers of suspicious vehicles. Even relatively innocent onlookers can cause emotional distress by turning personal misfortune into a spectacle.
- c. Don't give information to strangers unless they are representatives of a known relief agency. If they are, they will have identification and will be wearing it. Look for badges or insignia before you give names of victims to anyone. Find out why they want to know. If in doubt, report them.

4. Communications

Communications may be complicated by downed telephone lines and cellphone towers, and power outages. Follow the instructions of emergency personnel.

5. Local Church Communications Center

A Local Church Communications Center is best planned before there is the threat of imminent disaster as part of a preparedness process. The Conference Communications Director has done this for the Conference, but some preparation at the local level will greatly enhance the ability of the conference to network with the local level. Some sort of communications center at the local level will need to be developed with whoever is available and with whatever resources are available. The Local Church Communications Center should be available to the local community Interfaith organization.

The Local Church Communications Center provides centralized and coordinated management of in-coming and out-going communications. Disasters produce confusion and a proliferation of rumors. Communication of verified disaster information and a quashing of rumors helps to reduce some of the trauma and stress. People want to know what is happening and need a reliable source of information. They want to know how their neighbors and friends are. They want to know how the wider community has been impacted. They want to know what services are available and where they may be found.

Thus, the Local Church Communications Center is an information clearinghouse for disaster-related issues. When pre-disaster planning has been done, church members

can have prior notice of where the center will be, when it will be staffed, what information would be helpful as well as what information will be available to them. Prior planning for such a center can also lead to better ecumenical and community-wide communication and be a resource for an Interfaith response effort not only in the Emergency and Relief Phases but long into the Recovery Phase of any disaster.

The Composition of a Local Church Communication Center

A. The Disaster Information Team

The Disaster Information Team is responsible for establishing and operating the Communications Center in the event of a disaster. It is made up of local church leaders who are in positions to receive and distribute critical information about disaster damage and recovery. They have a central place to receive verified disaster-related information and then share with others. The Disaster Information Team has a manager to coordinate its clearinghouse activities.

B. The Disaster Information Team Manager

This person manages the Communications Center for the church and/or the local Interfaith (if and when one is formed). Among other duties are the receipt of information (and doing the verification), sorting of the information into appropriate categories, compilation of reports and the coordination of information distribution.

C. The Pastor

In the normal course of pastoral care calls, the Pastor becomes a conduit of pertinent information, some of which may need to be shared through the Communications Center. The Communications Center likewise feeds the Pastor with new information of situations requiring other pastoral care calls. Information to and from the religious community may also be funneled through the Pastor.

D. The Board of Trustees Representative

The Board of Trustees Representative is included to gather data on any damage and the status of church-owned property, and arranges for inspection if needed.

E. Program Directors

These persons are essential if disaster-related programs have been developed by any of the program related work areas (or commissions) of the church. As they implement any of the programs they have developed, any information regarding their work with local church members and in the wider community needs to be passed on to the Communications Center.

F. The Church Secretary

The Church Secretary compiles information from local church members and friends as they call. The Secretary also may help with data processing and distribution, all the time providing a semblance of the continuity of normal church functions. A newsletter editor could help to process data into text for distribution.

G. Location

The Communications Center should be located at the local church, unless it has been damaged and deemed unsafe or unusable. In preparation for this eventuality, at least one alternate site should be identified. If the local church facility is badly damaged, there is an even greater urgency to have a Communications Center as a means of maintaining contact with the church community /family.

H. Implementation and Hours

The criteria for having the Center become operative depends on local church and community needs. Generally, whenever there is a need for evacuation, there is also a need for accurate information. A general schedule of hours of operation can be anticipated before a disaster strikes, but be prepared to change them as required by developments. The same people who are responsible for the activation of the Center would normally decide on its closing.

I. Staffing

Very soon after opening the Communications Center a staffing schedule should be drawn up, and responsibilities delegated among the participants with regard to frequency of reports and updates plus the establishment of shifts and hours.

J. The BIG Question

Is this another committee for the local church (and its Nominating Committee) to fill? Most of the tasks outlined above seem to be many of the elements of what an active Membership and Evangelism Work Area does anyway. This is just a twist on those responsibilities in the context of disaster to meet the special demands of the emergency. It would be helpful for Membership and Evangelism to enlist (or recruit) a person for the specific job of being the Disaster Information Team Manager.

Types of Information the Communications Center Handles

Many types of information will be filtered through the Communications Center from a variety of sources. Consider the source. Anything of a non-official nature must be verified ("Official" information would include any dispatches or notices from Federal, State, County or local governmental agencies plus Conference or District communiqués.) Verification of other news or information is necessary to avoid the spread of misinformation or rumors. In a disaster setting, there is fertile ground for rumors and misinformation, and they serve only to heighten the confusion and sense of chaos. Rumor control is a prime responsibility of the Communications Center. To the extent this can be managed effectively, the credibility of the Center will be established.

Initially, the most important information will concern members and constituents of the local church. This data will be of particular importance to the pastor and other church caregivers who are involved with those who require help. Matters of pastoral care always carry a higher priority than church property, but property concerns are also important, for church property does support the ministry of the local church as a base of operation. As the Communications Center becomes related to the local Interfaith (and if a local church is prepared enough to have a

Center established) the Center will soon become a pivotal communications link for the local religious community, if not the whole area. It will then receive information relative to the whole community; the amount and location of damage, effects of the disaster on the community infrastructure, services that are running, location of relief services, etc.

Examples of this type of data are:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Local Church | Relief Agencies |
| Deaths and Injuries | Mass Care Shelters |
| Evacuation Information | Feeding Stations |
| Member Property Damage | Health Care Stations |
| Wider Community | Disaster Application Centers |
| Deaths and Injuries | Location(s) |
| Evacuation Information | Hours of Operation |
| Private Property Damage | Personal Inf. to take to DAC |
| Public Facility Damage | Teleregistration Phone |
| | Number 1 (800) 462-9029 |

Communications Center Equipment and Resources

In a serious disaster, the Communications Center may become an important link for the community for days. Care should be taken to see that it is both functional and comfortable and is situated in such a manner that regular church business can be conducted with a minimum amount of disruption to the workers of either the Center or the church.

Building Facilities

Telephone lines (2 or 3)
Food and water availability
Cooking facilities
(Optional, but advised)

Building Equipment

Telephones
Battery-operated radio
Portable lighting
Typewriters (may need manual backup)

Sleeping accommodations

CB radio (optional, but advised)

(optional, but advised)

Portable Generator (this is a major

Extra blankets

capital outlay, and must be

Cellular Phone

installed by a licensed electrician
according to local regulations)

Office supplies (optional)

Lanterns and/or flashlights

Emergency phone numbers

Operational Needs:(optional
advised)

Medical Supplies

Office furniture

Large Newspaper tablets

Television

Marking Pens

Maps

Building floor plans

Member directory

Disaster program information

Operational Tips

Since it is impossible to provide for all contingencies in advance, there are several things to keep in mind:

1. Maintain contact with the Conference Communicator.
2. Because of the possibility of power outages, it would be helpful to have someone with amateur radio experience and equipment as part of your Disaster Information Team. Both of these can be helpful in dire emergencies; they are your links to the outside world and may well be the pipeline through which assistance may become available quickly.

E. During the Relief Phase of a Disaster 1. Preparations

Unless your church has planned ahead, there is very little it will be able to do in the relief phase. Without prior planning, churches normally take the entire relief phase to get organized.

2. Get organized

Coordinate all activities with the Chair of your Council on Ministries (or Administrative Council) and your pastor. Ask your District Coordinator for Disaster Preparedness and Response for assistance in the organization process.

3. Ecumenical Cooperation

Enlist the aid of other area churches in disaster relief. An ecumenical effort is always more effective and efficient. Again, your Conference and District Coordinators for Disaster Preparedness and Response can assist in this effort. Very often local ecumenical efforts arising in a disaster can evolve into something more permanent in dealing with community needs later.

4. Financial Assistance

Emergency living expenses for those directly affected by the disaster are normally handled by the American Red Cross. Victims can receive vouchers for temporary housing, food and clothing. If your church or your community's ecumenical interfaith group picks up these expenses early, they might not be reimbursed and the people helped could be in jeopardy of receiving further aid in the amount for which they would normally qualify. Generally, it is a good idea to let those who have suffered loss use the assistance that is available through the government and the American Red Cross before going to the church or interfaith group. There will be ample need for church and interfaith funds during the recovery phase.

5. Clean-up

If your church is involved in any clean-up effort, the following guidelines may prove helpful:

- a. Do not perform any repairs until government and insurance companies have assessed the damage. Early repair may interfere with reimbursements.
- b. Concentrate on collecting important papers, photographs, valuables, securing property and opening access ways.
- c. Compile a list of property damage in your area. Relief agencies will not usually give out this information unless your church has a prior arrangement and role in relief work. Your pastor, the District Superintendent and District Coordinator for Disaster Preparedness and Response may tour the area and any information you can give them will be helpful. At that point, it need not be detailed or complete.

6. Keep Journals

Keeping a journal of the activities of the church in the relief phase can be helpful to the committees of the church that are involved in the relief effort and to their successors in the future, as well as to the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response

Committee both during and after the disaster. Encourage each worker to keep a record of their activities and select someone to make a composite report.

7. The Disaster Application Center (DAC)

If the disaster receives a Presidential Declaration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will open a Disaster Application Center (DAC) near the area that has been hit the hardest. The DAC will be a large enclosed area (gymnasium, National Guard Armory or the like), where victims can go to declare the damages they have suffered and to apply for assistance. If a DAC is opened in your area, your church should consider doing any or all of the following:

- a. Providing transportation to and from the DAC for those who have suffered loss and who are unable to provide their own transportation.
- b. Offer to accompany those who have suffered loss to the DAC. This is a traumatic time for those directly affected. A friend can help. Government workers are focused on dealing with damage and loss; this does not imply any callousness, but is a recognition that they have a tremendous workload and must concentrate on the areas over which they have control and where they can help. Remember; victims need to tell their whole story; it helps to have a sympathetic ear. We of the church can express our care by being good listeners.
- c. Very often it is possible for a church (or group of churches) to have a table or area in the DAC to provide an opportunity for those directly affected to deal with spiritual concerns. Again, the ability to be a good listener is key. Only persons who can provide comfort should be used here; certainly no one who tends to be judgmental should be used in this sensitive post.
- d. See if your church can provide childcare for the families of those who have suffered loss as they go through the DAC. Usually this is taken care of by the Church of the Brethren, who specialize in this, including guided play/therapy that helps children through the trauma they, too, experience. Your church should only help in this area after there are persons who have been trained to handle the special care needed by children who have been through a disaster.

8. Understanding the Experience of Those Coming to a DAC

- a. Many victims understate their damage in the period just after a disaster. This may be psychological reaction or a denial of the overwhelming loss, which they find hard to accept. They may need encouragement or to be reminded to declare all damage they received.
- b. Some people who have suffered loss assume that their losses are or will be fully covered by insurance. Too often there is a rude awakening later on. They should declare all their losses, not just those, which they think, are excluded from insurance coverage. (In this regard, note that persons suffering losses should be advised not to settle too quickly with their insurance companies. Most insurance companies would prefer to write a check on the spot based on preliminary estimates. Help them see the importance of waiting at least until they know the true cost of replacement).

- c. Some who have suffered loss may be surprised that the initial government assistance is a loan; that grants go to those who cannot qualify for a loan. While this may be a disappointment, the loan interest rates are lower than that which they would receive from a bank. If they were going to take out a loan anyway, or withdraw savings that pay higher interest than the government loan charges, they should be encouraged to seriously consider going with the government assistance.
- d. Those who have suffered loss may learn of other types of relief, such as tax credits, that they may not have considered before. The IRS always has a desk at a DAC to help on such matters. Encourage anyone suffering a loss to go to the DAC, whether they feel they are eligible for assistance or not. The only cost for a visit to a DAC is one of time. The time to judge whether the trip was worthwhile or not is after they are gone.
- e. Those who suffer loss can forfeit eligibility for assistance by failing to fill out the forms on time. There is a deadline they must meet in order to be considered. They should take time to truly assess all of their losses, but the forms should be completed on time. Remind them of this and offer to help by checking prices or providing them with assistance in filling out the form.

E. During the Recovery Phase

1. Local Church Initiative

Assistance is available, but no one will come in and do the job for you. If your church is not involved, the Conference will not be involved. People in your church and in your community will receive no assistance unless and until it is coordinated through the local church.

2. Duration

The effects of a disaster remain a long time. As stated in the Introductory Section, the Recovery Phase will last from 200 to 400 days, or more. You will be heavily involved as a church for two to four months, and somewhat involved for the balance of the recovery time after that. Therefore, do not burn yourself out in the early going.

3. Interfaith Agencies and Networking

If there is a major disaster in your area, don't try to do it all. Work with the other churches in your area, and the Annual Conference. When major disasters occur, an Interfaith organization is recommended as a preferred way to work at recovery by pooling the resources of all the churches. Very often, such an Interfaith, upon organization, can hire a local director (either full or part-time for a specified, limited period) to coordinate the recovery effort on behalf of the churches. Your District and Conference Coordinators for Disaster Preparedness and Response can help you with organizational details. Such an Interfaith is the most common agent for distribution of various denominational aid. In fact, sometimes a denomination's aid will only be given through such an Interfaith.

4. Capitalize on Strengths

Focus on those things in which your church is proficient. Whatever your strengths may be, bring them to the fore during the recovery phase. Not every church can handle every type of relief. Whatever you are willing to try, the Conference Committee on Disaster Preparedness and Response will help you with the organization, and give you some of the benefit of its experience in the past, even though no two disasters are alike.

5. Monetary Considerations

As mentioned before, disasters create many needs, not the least of which is money for various things. Your church should be prepared to ask for contributions for disaster relief after a disaster. Even if the disaster is in your own community, it should be promoted, and your church should encourage the other churches of the community to do likewise, especially if there is an Interfaith, or the organization of one is pending. There are always church members of the community who have not suffered loss; this may be the best (or only) way in which they can respond to the needs of others in Christian love. In all cases, remember to channel all funds received by your church through the office of the Conference Treasurer.

Allow other relief agencies to solicit for their needed funds as they will; many people in our communities have no church affiliation and the other relief agencies can use their support. Whatever you give for disaster relief in our Conference is used to support you and other churches in disaster relief within our Conference.

6. Help

Do not be afraid to ask for help. No one expects your church to be able to handle disaster relief on its own.

7. Advocacy

The disaster recovery process does have bureaucratic hang-ups and some red tape. Persons who are already traumatized can be further traumatized by a complex and confusing process, which has rules, and regulations designed for the big picture and does not always appreciate some specialized circumstances. Sometimes all someone needs is a sympathetic listener/companion who can make telephone calls, personal contacts, run errands, search for records, etc. Other times the advocacy may require the special help of a trained person or legal counselor. It would be helpful to have someone in your church that could serve in this capacity voluntarily.

8. Support Groups

Those who have been impacted by disaster need to be able to tell their stories to someone who both understands their plight and can listen. Support groups can be effective in this part of recovery. A trained counselor would be an excellent facilitator for this kind of a group. In this type of a group people can grow through their trauma as they share their own feelings and those of others similarly affected; new courage grows and hope begins to develop where there was only despair before.

SUGGESTED ORDER TO FOLLOW AFTER A DISASTER STRIKES

Questions to Ask

1. What is the disaster response plan of:
The conference?
Interdenominational/interfaith organizations?
Governmental organizations?
2. What happened?
3. What was the scope of the damage?
4. Are the relief agencies in place, and what does the church need to do to supplement their work?
5. Pull together the disaster response committee and the district superintendents of the affected areas to adjust existing plans for handling this disaster.
6. Determine how United Methodists can work together with interfaith/ecumenical organizations.

Things to Do

1. Contact the district superintendent, the bishop, and the UMCOR response network manager.
2. Once the above are notified, begin to assess the potential resourcing needs for the emergency stage.
3. Inform the people in item 1 of this assessment.
4. Get the information necessary for relief and rehabilitation:
 - Has the site been declared a disaster area by the President?
 - Which other relief agencies are responding and what are their resources?
 - What information needs to be publicized to encourage victims to apply for available aid?
 - How best can the spiritual and emotional needs of victims and relief workers be met during this time?
7. Investigate whether there are disaster-related needs not being met (e.g., pastoral care or long-term recovery with children and youth) that can be addressed by United Methodists.
8. Find out what resources are needed from the United Methodists (UMCOR) beyond the annual conference.
9. Maintain a constant flow of information with the district superintendent, the bishop, the UMCOR disaster network manager, and the UMCOR Office for Disaster Response.



Family Emergency Plan



Prepare. Plan. Stay Informed.



Make sure your family has a plan in case of an emergency. Before an emergency happens, sit down together and decide how you will get in contact with each other, where you will go and what you will do in an emergency. Keep a copy of this plan in your emergency supply kit or another safe place where you can access it in the event of a disaster.

Out-of-Town Contact Name: _____

Email: _____

Neighborhood Meeting Place: _____

Regional Meeting Place: _____

Evacuation Location: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Fill out the following information for each family member and keep it up to date.

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Important Medical Information: _____

Write down where your family spends the most time: work, school and other places you frequent. Schools, daycare providers, workplaces and apartment buildings should all have site-specific emergency plans that you and your family need to know about.

Work Location One

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Evacuation Location: _____

School Location One

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Evacuation Location: _____

Work Location Two

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Evacuation Location: _____

School Location Two

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Evacuation Location: _____

Work Location Three

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Evacuation Location: _____

School Location Three

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Evacuation Location: _____

Other place you frequent

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Evacuation Location: _____

Other place you frequent

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Evacuation Location: _____

Important Information	Name	Telephone Number	Policy Number
Doctor(s):			
Other:			
Pharmacist:			
Medical Insurance:			
Homeowners/Rental Insurance:			
Veterinarian/Kennel (for pets):			



Dial 911 for Emergencies

Make sure your family has a plan in case of an emergency. Fill out these cards and give one to each member of your family to make sure they know who to call and where to meet in case of an emergency.

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS & INFORMATION:

Family Emergency Plan

EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME:
TELEPHONE:

OUT-OF-TOWN CONTACT NAME:
TELEPHONE:

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING PLACE:
TELEPHONE:

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

DIAL 911 FOR EMERGENCIES

Ready

< FOLD HERE >

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS & INFORMATION:

Family Emergency Plan

EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME:
TELEPHONE:

OUT-OF-TOWN CONTACT NAME:
TELEPHONE:

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING PLACE:
TELEPHONE:

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

DIAL 911 FOR EMERGENCIES

Ready

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS & INFORMATION:

Family Emergency Plan

EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME:
TELEPHONE:

OUT-OF-TOWN CONTACT NAME:
TELEPHONE:

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING PLACE:
TELEPHONE:

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

DIAL 911 FOR EMERGENCIES

Ready

< FOLD HERE >

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS & INFORMATION:

Family Emergency Plan

EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME:
TELEPHONE:

OUT-OF-TOWN CONTACT NAME:
TELEPHONE:

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING PLACE:
TELEPHONE:

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

DIAL 911 FOR EMERGENCIES

Ready



Es probable que su familia no esté junta cuando ocurra un desastre, de modo que deben planificar cómo se van a comunicar y decidir de antemano lo que harán en diferentes situaciones.

Nombre del contacto fuera estado: _____

Número de teléfono: _____

Correo electrónico: _____

Número de teléfono: _____

Complete los siguientes datos sobre cada miembro de su familia y manténgalos actualizados.

Nombre: _____

Número de seguro social: _____

Información médica importante: _____

Fecha de nacimiento: _____

Número de seguro social: _____

Información médica importante: _____

Nomb _____

Fecha de nacimiento: _____

Número de seguro social: _____

Información médica importante: _____

Nomb _____

Fecha de nacimiento: _____

Número de seguro social: _____

Información médica importante: _____

Nomb _____

Fecha de nacimiento: _____

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Fecha de nacimiento: _____

Número de seguro social: _____

Información médica importante: _____

Nomb _____

Fecha de nacimiento: _____

Dónde dirigirse en caso de emergencia. Anote los lugares donde su familia pasa la mayor parte del tiempo: el trabajo, la escuela y otros lugares donde suelen estar. Las escuelas, guarderías, lugares de trabajo y edificios de departamentos todos deberían tener planes de emergencia específicos.

Vivienda

Dirección: _____

Número de teléfono: _____

Lugar de evacuación: _____

Trabajo

Dirección: _____

Número de teléfono: _____

Lugar de evacuación: _____

Escuela

Dirección: _____

Número de teléfono: _____

Lugar de evacuación: _____

Trabajo

Dirección: _____

Número de teléfono: _____

Lugar de evacuación: _____

Escuela

Dirección: _____

Número de teléfono: _____

Lugar de evacuación: _____

Trabajo

Dirección: _____

Número de teléfono: _____

Número de teléfono: _____

Nomb	Número de teléfono	Número de póliza



Otros números de teléfono útiles: 9-1-1 para emergencias. Cada miembro de la familia debe llevar consigo una copia de estos datos importantes

OTROS NÚMEROS DE TELÉFONO E INFORMACIÓN IMPORTANTE:

Plan de Comunicaciones Familiares

NOMBRE DEL CONTACTO: _____

NÚMERO DE TELÉFONO: _____

NOMBRE DEL CONTACTO FUERA DEL ESTADO: _____

NÚMERO DE TELÉFONO: _____

LUGAR DE REUNIÓN EN EL VECINDARIO: _____

NÚMERO DE TELÉFONO: _____

OTROS NÚMEROS DE TELÉFONO E INFORMACIÓN IMPORTANTE: _____



¡POR EMERGENCIAS LLAME AL 9-1-1!

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OTROS NÚMEROS DE TELÉFONO E INFORMACIÓN IMPORTANTE:

Plan de Comunicaciones Familiares

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NÚMERO DE TELÉFONO: _____

NOMBRE DEL CONTACTO FUERA DEL ESTADO: _____

NÚMERO DE TELÉFONO: _____

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NÚMERO DE TELÉFONO: _____

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¡POR EMERGENCIAS LLAME AL 9-1-1!

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LUGAR DE REUNIÓN EN EL VECINDARIO: _____

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OTROS NÚMEROS DE TELÉFONO E INFORMACIÓN IMPORTANTE: _____



¡POR EMERGENCIAS LLAME AL 9-1-1!

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Plan de Comunicaciones Familiares

NOMBRE DEL CONTACTO: _____

NÚMERO DE TELÉFONO: _____

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NÚMERO DE TELÉFONO: _____

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NÚMERO DE TELÉFONO: _____

OTROS NÚMEROS DE TELÉFONO E INFORMACIÓN IMPORTANTE: _____



¡POR EMERGENCIAS LLAME AL 9-1-1!

Citizen Preparedness Guide (Attribution: Ready.gov)

Do you know what to do before, during, and after an emergency to protect your family?

Please take a few moments to review the information on these pages so that you're ready for the next emergency.

Prepare Your Household

Prepare Your Children: It is recommended that you *give your children the telephone number of a family member or friend if they are unable to reach you in an emergency.*

Prepare for Your Pets: Find out in advance (in case of an emergency) if you can leave your pets with a *friend, at a local shelter, or whether certain local hotels will accept pets.*

**Keep a carrying case and any needed supplies handy. Ensure that your pet remains up to date on all of its immunizations.*

Insurance: Be knowledgeable of the kind of disasters that you are insured against and what it includes. If you are live in an area that is prone to certain disasters, take steps to protect your valuables, records and heirlooms.

Site- Specific Plans: (also known as Reunification Plans)

The Three Essentials: Every household in the Baltimore region should have *supplies to last for 72 hours after a disaster.* If you have these three essential supplies *you will be able to effectively manage the most common crises affecting our region* – weather-related power and water outages.

Buy these three essentials first:

- A ***battery-powered radio with extra batteries.*** If the power goes out, a battery-powered radio is the only way to receive information.
- ***Flashlights or battery-powered lanterns with extra batteries.*** These are essentials are good to have during relatively brief power outages. *(Don't use candles! They pose a serious fire risk.)*
- ***Water to last three days.*** That's at least *one gallon per person per day for drinking and sanitation.* Mark the date on the container, and *replace it every six months.*

Text Alerts

**Due to the dynamic status of websites and hyperlinks, please also check your state or county government for the most up-to-date resources.*

For Montgomery County - <https://member.everbridge.net/index/1332612387832009#/login>
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcg/emergency/stayinformed.html>

Arlington County: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/alerts/>

City of Fairfax: <http://fairfaxva.gov/about-us/fairfax-city-alert>

Falls Church: <http://www.fallschurchva.gov/1371/Falls-Church-Alerts>

Loudoun County: <https://www.loudoun.gov/alert>

Howard County: <https://headsuphoward.com/index.php?CCheck=1>

State of Maryland Updates: http://www.maryland.gov/pages/citizen_alerts.aspx

City of Manassas: <http://www.manassacity.org/455/ALERT-City-of-Manassas>

Prince William County: <http://www.pwcgov.org/government/dept/police/pages/emergency-alert-systems.aspx>

Washington, DC: <http://hsema.dc.gov/page/alertdc>

Baltimore County, MD: http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/emergency_prep/

APPENDIX

A GUIDE TO DENOMINATIONAL AGENCIES AND THEIR AREAS OF SPECIAL DISASTER SERVICES

Adventist Community Services (ACS) General Conference of Seventh Day Adventists

Over the years, this church's primary response to disaster has been to provide clothing, bedding, linens, household supplies. Used clothing, collected before a disaster, is cleaned, repaired as needed, sorted by item, size and gender before being packaged and warehoused in several warehouses across the country, ready to be shipped anywhere when needed. In addition, ACS also has some vans that can distribute food while others are prepared to do health screening. The ACS also provides Listening Posts and Door-to-Door Visitation, as an outreach to meet the emotional and spiritual needs of persons affected by disasters. The Door-to-Door Visitations are also used to provide information about the full range of disaster services and agencies.

American Baptist Convention (ABC) National Ministries

The office of Domestic Disaster of the ABC is mandated to operate a crisis intervention system in conjunction with Church World Service (CWS). Funds for the survival and recovery needs of people affected by disasters and their communities are made available to the Office of Domestic Disaster Response from One Great Hour of Sharing offerings and designated contributions.

American Evangelical Christian Church (AECC) Christian Disaster Response (CDR)

In the event of disaster, local AECC churches will respond (with assistance of CDR) in pretraining, training and organization for response. AECC (through CDR) will work cooperatively with ARC, SA, NVOAD, and CWS to provide volunteers for assignment in affected communities. CDR will provide mobile and fixed kitchen/feeding facilities and in-kind disaster relief supplies as needed and requested.

Ananda Marga, Inc.

Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT)

Ananda Marga is an international yoga and social service movement with origins in India. AMURT is a short-term relief and long-term development program which delivers immediate medical care, food and clothing distribution and stress management. Long-term development assistance offers sustainable economic programs to help under-privileged and disaster-affected people. AMURT is non-sectarian and does not discriminate according to gender, race, color, age, handicap, religion or national origin.

Catholic Charities USA

Catholic Charities USA is the organization that unites the social service agencies operated by most of the 175 Catholic dioceses in the United States. The mission of Catholic Charities USA is to provide service to people of all religious, ethnic, economic and social backgrounds who are in need; to advocate for justice in social structures and to call others of goodwill to do the same. In working with other emergency assistance disaster organizations, Catholic Charities US emphasizes long-term recovery services such as housing assistance for low-income families, counseling programs for children and special counseling for disaster care-givers.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

The Christian Church (Disciples) disaster response is chiefly through Church World Service (CWS). Funds for this support are raised annually through Week of Compassion contributions plus special appeals and voluntary

contributions. Volunteers in the disaster reconstruction program assist in the rebuilding and rehabilitation of homes damaged or destroyed by disaster through organized work projects which may be 2 to 4 weeks in duration.

Christian Reformed Church Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC)

CRWRC's Disaster Response Services (DRS) is essentially a volunteer force, prepared to offer several different types of service:

1. **Advocacy** - Volunteers are trained in active listening and problem solving to assist disaster-affected people to find permanent, long term solutions to their disaster-related problems.
2. **Management Consultation** - Trained and experienced volunteer disaster response managers oversee CRWRC long-term disaster recovery operations (3 to 24 months) and consult with long-term local church response programs. CRWRC-DRS has published a series of management booklets to complement this service.
3. **Assistance to Red Cross** - All DRS volunteers are encouraged to be active members of their local Red Cross chapter, especially with Emergency Assistance to Families.
4. **Trainers** - DRS volunteers are available to train and assist CR WRC volunteers to increase their competency in disaster response and prepare church-related volunteers within a disaster-stricken community to work with disaster-related persons over a long period of time.
5. **Needs Assessment** - Trained volunteers are available to assist a local church disaster response group to identify, which disaster-stricken people are in need of long-term recovery assistance.
6. **Construction** - Repair and Clean-up -Volunteers with building trade expertise ensure quality control while assisting with the total rebuild or major repair of homes affected by a disaster. Other volunteers are available to assist with clean-up and major repair work in their local area.
7. **Child Care** - CRWRC-DRS volunteers are encouraged to be trained and serve as trainers with the Cooperative Disaster Child Care Program as managed by the Church of the Brethren.

Church of the Brethren Refugee/Disaster Program

The Church of the Brethren has volunteers available for debris removal and long-term rebuilding. The availability of volunteers and the strength of the response may vary according to geographical locations, due to the location of Brethren congregations. In certain incidents, Brethren projects may be open to providing grants up to \$500 in cases of special need, but their primary contribution remains the flow of volunteers.

Cooperative Disaster Child Care

Trained personnel are available to establish child care centers following disasters (most frequently in shelters or Disaster Application Centers). Resource people are available to community agencies and educational institutions concerning the after-effects of the disaster on children as well as conducting training sessions for child care volunteers from other denominations and agencies.

Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints

Especially in Utah, the Mormons have a complete, relief program that is open to all. Recovery work is done primarily among its own people, but in recent times the Mormons have begun to participate in community-based organizations. The LDS Church has a complete disaster preparedness and response manual for its members.

Episcopal Church-Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief

In 1940, the Episcopal Church organized the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief to be the church's channel for responding to worldwide human need. During this 50+ year period, the fund has become the major disaster-relief arm of the Episcopal Church, allocating grants in the areas of relief, rehabilitation, development and medical and health services.

Friends Disaster Services (FDS)

FDS, as personnel and resources are available, provides clean-up and rebuilding assistance to disaster-stricken people. The criteria for aiding disaster-afflicted people is primarily to assist elderly, handicapped, low income or under-insured persons without regard to race, creed, gender or religious affiliation.

Lutheran Council in the USA-Inter-Lutheran Disaster Response

When a major disaster occurs, response by the board may include the following:

1. Consultants (resource persons) may be provided who have been trained to assist congregations, regional groups or agencies in response.
2. Volunteers are frequently recruited, and their efforts are coordinated to provide a wide range of assistance as may be necessary.
3. Emergency supplies or emergency foods may be provided.
4. Pastoral counseling is available through congregations, agencies and institutions.
5. Facilities, expertise and resources of Lutheran congregations, colleges, service agencies, homes for the aged, hospitals, camps, etc., are frequently available.

Mennonite Disaster Services (MDS)

The Mennonite Disaster Program, Brethren in Christ and related Anabaptist constituent churches respond through MDS, a total volunteer program, in the following ways:

1. General, immediate clean-up of disaster locations, including at times, prevention, warning, evacuation and search and rescue.
2. Repairs, temporary and permanent, to homes of the elderly and the under-insured.
3. Rebuilding and reconstruction for low-income and poverty families and for disadvantaged minorities, widows and the handicapped.
4. Mental health support programs in cooperation with the Mennonite Mental Health Centers, at regional and local levels.

National Association of Evangelicals (NAE)-World Relief

World Relief has participated primarily by contributing emergency supplies and grants through independent evangelical congregations.

National Catholic Disaster Relief Committee

Requests for assistance from the National Catholic Disaster Relief Committee should be made on behalf of local church disaster relief activity to cover the following services:

1. Personnel (nurses, social workers, doctors, religious professionals, volunteers).
2. Financial assistance.
3. Consultative assistance.
4. Provision of material (food, clothing, medicine, busses, vans, etc.).

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) responds to disasters in cooperation with Church World Service (CWS) in providing volunteers to serve as consultants as well as providing support toward the core budget of CWS. A portion of the church's One Great Hour of Sharing Offering is set aside to respond in situations where disaster creates a need requiring provision of resources that are beyond the ability of the local or regional church community.

Reformed Church in America (RCA)

The annual Reformed Church World Service (RCWS) income shall fund (among others) programs that provide relief for acute human need to emergency disasters. Thirteen percent of the RCWS budget shall be applied to administration and another 10 percent to promotion. This total of 23 percent shall be divided equally between the RCA's General Program Council and RCWS agencies, such as Church World Service.

Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP)

St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP) provides volunteer person-to-person service to those in need, without regard to color, race or creed. Some assistance is provided by parish conferences. Many councils operate stores, homeless shelters, and feeding facilities similar to those of the Salvation Army. Store's merchandise can be made available to the disaster-stricken. Warehousing facilities can be made available for disaster response in the Emergency Phase if near the disaster site.

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)-Home Mission Board, SBC Brotherhood

The principal function of the Home Mission Board of the SBC through its 37 state Brotherhood offices is to provide more than 10,000 trained volunteers. These volunteers help man more than 25 mobile (18 wheelers) feeding units that can provide more than 1,000 meals per hour. The SBC also has six state licensed child care units with trained volunteers capable of taking up to 100 children at a time.

United Church of Christ (UCC)-Disaster Response Program

The Division of World Service is charged with responding to domestic disaster on behalf of the UCC. The Division of World Service also relies heavily upon and supports the Domestic Disaster Response Office of Church World Service both by the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering, directed gifts and by offering a cadre of trained volunteers to be Disaster Resource Consultants for CWS.

United Methodist Church (UMC) General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)

In each Annual Conference or Episcopal Area there is a Disaster Response Coordinator. The Disaster Response Coordinator works in direct relationship with the Disaster Response Executive and Network Manager to assist in the coordination of UMCOR's response in his or her own Conference. UMCOR's response consists of the following:

1. Cash grants (through the office of the Conference Treasurer);
2. Volunteer Assistance (with the assistance of both jurisdictional and Conference Volunteer-In-
3. Mission coordinators);
4. Consultative Services at UMCOR's expense for up to 3 weeks; Logistical support of in-kind offerings of needed emergency commodities;
5. Pastoral care for the disaster-stricken and also other caregivers;
6. Long-term care of children impacted by disaster;
7. Repair and reconstruction teams of volunteers;

8. Availability of church buildings, institutions and campgrounds if needed and in reasonable proximity of response site.

World Vision. Inc. (WVI) World Vision Relief and Development

World Vision is relatively new to the disaster response scene and while the whole scope of their Relief and Development programs is still being formulated, they have raised funds and emergency food supplies in several recent major disasters.

Of all the above religious bodies named as part of the religious community response, some are included by virtue of their being member judicatories or affiliates of Church World Service. A listing of the Church World Service judicatories and affiliates can be found in the Appendix. Other religious bodies listed above are members of NVOAD and they are also listed as such in the Appendix as well. There are some of the above listed bodies that are members of both (such is the case with UMCOR).

Guns in Churches

Addressing Church Security Needs

July, 2013

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Introduction

Ashtabula, OH—On March 31, 2013, witnesses say the 25-year old man accused of walking into the Hiawatha Church of God in Christ and fatally shooting his father after an Easter service was yelling about God and Allah after the killing. Police say the suspect killed his father with a single shot from a handgun.

Flint, MI—On January 12, 2013, a gunman stormed into Full Gospel Church during a funeral and shot a man in the head, killing him. The subject was arrested later after a massive manhunt.

Geeseytown, PA—On December 21, 2012, at Juniata Valley Gospel Church, a woman decorating the church for a Christmas program was shot and killed. The gunman had killed several other people and was later shot and killed by Pennsylvania State Troopers.

Historically, there have been two or three fatal church shooting incidents in the United States annually from approximately 335,000 congregations. In 2011, the Christian Security Network reported that each week brings an average of two arsons, seven thefts, and 19 burglaries at U.S. churches.⁵ Jeffrey Hawkins, the founder and executive director of Christian Security Network says *"It's all about awareness... No church is immune from this kind of thing and they have to start now. There is no tomorrow."*⁶ These situations put the staff, church members, and visitors at risk.

Fatal church attacks result from a variety of issues and are not necessarily triggered from the individual who is angry with people of faith in general. Robbery was already mentioned, but domestic disputes can also prove to be tragic when an estranged husband confronts his wife and the attack results in innocent parishioners caught in the cross fire. There are incidents involving persons angry at a pastor or other types of personal conflicts. So far, these kinds of violent attacks have been far more prevalent than acts of terrorism.

"We frequently receive calls and emails from church members who are worried and frustrated that their church leadership is not more proactive about church security," says Jeffrey Hawkins of the Christian Security network. "As a society, we protect businesses, schools, banks and other institutions. Now more than ever, that same level of protection needs to be extended to churches and faith-based organizations."¹

It would be easy to simply say, "Let's look at scripture." But does scripture clearly spell out what we are to do in cases of people carrying out a violent attack in the church? For many congregations it becomes a theological or philosophical discussion. Many people and denominations believe the taking of a life in any case is wrong, Matthew 5:9 says *"Blessed are the peacemakers"*. Others believe they are called by God to take every measure necessary to thwart any attack on the church. Luke 22:36, *"He said to them, but now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one."* Exodus 20:13 says, *"You shall not murder,"* along with several other passages that point to all life being sacred. However, in Nehemiah 4:17 we read *"Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other."* They were trying to guard and protect the work of rebuilding the wall. We are commanded in 1 Peter 5:8 to, *"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."*

With all this in mind, church leaders are struggling with the best approach to address the growing issues that place their flock and themselves at risk. Some pastors feel under pressure from the urging of members to be allowed to carry concealed weapons in states that allow them. Others are feeling pressure to keep guns out of church altogether. Many leaders want to do everything they can to protect people attending church, but fear a bad incident might turn worse should too many people have guns at church.

Still other pastors and leaders have never even thought of or had a discussion regarding church violence and safety.

According to Richard Hammar, renowned expert on church safety, security, and legal matters for over two decades, *“Most churches in America are safe places. While incidents of shootings on church property are shocking, they are rare. But because of the „open access“ policy of most churches, they remain easy targets for violent acts. While such acts cannot be prevented, there are steps that church leaders can take to manage the risk.”*²

This paper is intended to address the various approaches churches are taking to address the issues of violence in churches. Next, it will introduce leaders to their state laws. Finally, it will help leaders understand liabilities and coverage issues from Mennonite Mutual Insurance Company’s perspective.

Regardless of the approach your church takes, we encourage you to make that decision based on study and prayer. Obtain clear facts, have frank discussions with your church leaders and insurance agent, and develop and adhere to clearly written policies.

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What are the options?

You will hear many suggestions, ideas, and options in response to this issue. Some of them may be good, while others may not be in the best interest of your church and people. Let’s consider the pros and cons of each option.

Option #1: **Never allow guns on church property.**

A church can adopt this approach for a couple of reasons. From a doctrinal standpoint, there is much support for believing that churches are to love their enemies, show the way of peace and be an example of non-violent resolution to conflicts. Aside from doctrine, there are practical considerations as well. Having weapons brings enormous liability to the church. The potential for accidents, unintentional injury to innocent bystanders, excessive use of force, and confusion when police arrive over who is a threat, are all downsides that can offset any benefits of additional security.

Option #2: **Hire only trained professionals.**

This can include professionally trained and equipped security agencies or off-duty law enforcement officers. Many churches in high risk areas have used this approach for years. The advantage is that churches shift liability away from themselves to the outside agency. These professionally trained security officers and off-duty officers are usually trained in such areas as crisis intervention, de-escalation, and proper non-lethal tactics. Most parishioners, even those with a concealed carry permit, do not have this level of training.

Some churches utilize uniformed security personnel while others operate in plain clothes. Regardless, such trained personnel have the best chance at stopping or minimizing violence should it occur. This option is preferred by the previously mentioned legal expert Richard Hammar, *“The exercise of reasonable care can best be demonstrated by hiring only uniformed, off-duty police officers as security guards.”*³

On the downside, to hire off-duty personnel during church events comes at a cost. Some private security personnel can cost a church \$17-25 an hour while off-duty law enforcement officers can cost \$25 per hour and up. For some churches, this is just not possible due to limited finances.

Another potential drawback is that the hired officer is not connected to your church and therefore may not represent the church like a member would. However, you may be able to hire an officer who has the personality and possibly the same beliefs as your church and can represent you well.

Option #3: **An in-house, volunteer, trained security team.**

There is a growing industry around this approach. Options are: sending a team to a training center or conference; having someone come onsite to train your volunteers; video; online training. Some organizations are comprised of current or former law enforcement officers. There are some church teams that have been trained and now want to train others.

The quality of such training can vary from company to company. Any training, regardless of who you hire to conduct it, should include emergency/crisis identification and response,

deescalation, and use of force. Ideally, it should be “hands-on” training where you can practice, be corrected, and refine your tactics. Furthermore, besides initial training, your team should have ongoing, regular situational training and meetings. A more in-depth annual training by outside professionals is ideal.

Should your church make a determination to allow concealed weapons, all personnel must have more than the basic training needed to obtain a concealed weapons permit. Shooting at a stationary, paper target and firing at a perpetrator in a crowded room are far different. Again, very few civilians are equipped with the mindset needed to engage in such a scenario.

In addition to what is described above, your training should cover other topics such as moving about and observing people, using radios or phones for communication, special considerations for the pastor’s protection, assigned areas, and the use of video surveillance.

There is debate as to whether the security team should be high profile or low profile. There are advantages to being visible; it shows people entering the building that this facility is protected. Some teams have a shirt that indicates they are safety or security, but the low profile approach also has some advantages. Visitors and parishioners may be put off by uniforms or high profile images. Secondly, it is easier to observe and get closer to people without incident if you are not seen as a “designated” safety/security person. This issue is up to the discretion of church leaders.

The downside to having a volunteer team trained is the difficulty of getting enough of the right personnel to adequately form a successful team. Some people may mean well, but may not be the types of people you need on your team. Some people do not have the skills, maturity, or psychological makeup needed to be a police officer but want to be one. These people are known as “wannabe’s”. Since they would not be hired by a legitimate police department, they’ll settle for a church security position. They may be quick to anger, see issues where there aren’t any, and live to engage someone in a negative way. Richard Hammar shares, *“Security guards with little or no training, and who are not licensed under state law, present the greatest risk of liability to a church or other employer as a result of injuries they inflict while responding to a crime or otherwise performing their duties, or injuries they fail to prevent.”*⁴

Therefore, churches should use good judgment as they select team members and determine what training is needed. This is because churches can be found liable for negligent selection and training of security team members. They should be pleasant, willing to engage people in positive ways, and have a good eye to see potential problems before they occur.

As with hiring security personnel, the in-house training option can be costly. Some churches will opt for initial training but not follow through with ongoing training. This could be a serious mistake and expose the church to even greater liability if the court finds your team

lacked ongoing training. If not trained correctly and regularly, you could regret engaging in this option.

Note: There is one option we have not advocated here—that of allowing just anyone with a concealed weapon permit to carry a weapon. Pause just a moment and ask yourself, “If there are many people in my congregation carrying weapons and something occurs, am I confident that each of them will make sound, correct decisions, and the end result will be something I can live with?” Making the wrong decision in a crisis can quickly make a bad situation worse.

Allowing or encouraging people to carry weapons into church with no written policy or specialized training creates a huge liability issue and should be avoided.

Regardless of which option is chosen, church leaders should consider posting their policy regarding weapons in and around the church building.

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How does a church decide which option to choose?

Let's be clear, no level of risk management can completely thwart a tragic incident of persons being injured or killed on church property. These incidents often happen without warning and are over very quickly. So what is a church to do? After looking at all the options and their advantages and disadvantages, investing in trained professionals is the best option available to churches from both a liability and tactical aspect. These trained, equipped, and mentally prepared professionals give you the best option to stop or minimize a volatile situation.

There are many occasions where a church may have one of these professionals attending their church. Other professionals may do it at an affordable cost because they are people of faith themselves. If the cost to hire these trained professionals is not an option, providing the proper training for individuals that are carrying concealed weapons becomes the next best option.

The following is Mennonite Mutual Insurance Company's position regarding church security policies for our policyholders:

Instances of violence in churches are few but widely reported, causing some congregations to consider allowing members with concealed carry licenses to carry weapons into church for security purposes. Ohio law prohibits carrying a gun into a place of worship but a church does have the option of giving permission to an individual to do so. Indiana law allows carrying a weapon in church unless the church has a school or day care. Pennsylvania currently does not have a law prohibiting the carrying of a concealed weapon in church.

While we hope every congregation can enjoy safety and security during church services, we think the potential liability risks associated with having guns in churches can outweigh any increase in security that can be gained from their presence. In order to obtain a concealed carry permit, many states only require an individual to be able to demonstrate competency in handling a gun, ammunition, and be able to shoot the firearm. This training does not cover likely scenarios that would be encountered in a church setting, including shoot/don't shoot decision-making, hostage situations, de-escalating tense situations and whether or not the use of force is justified.

Mennonite Mutual's guidelines do not permit churches to allow concealed carry weapons except: 1) active or retired law enforcement or military personnel with firearms training who are either contracted by or are volunteering for the church as security guards; or 2) churches that contract with outside professionals for security; or 3) security training for church personnel.

Again, if churches decide to implement a security team with firearms, the best option is to hire off-duty law enforcement professionals or security agency. Should the church opt for training a team of security personnel within their church, the church must provide training by qualified and certified professionals. Secondly, the church must offer not only initial training to the team, but show their plan for ongoing training. This should include who conducted the training, when it was done, what topics were covered, what team members were present, and whenever possible, demonstrated and documented competency on the subjects taught. These guidelines must be in place to be eligible for our church insurance program.

Summary

As leaders, you are expected to gather the facts, become informed, consult the experts, pray, and have open discussion with your members and leaders. By following this process, you can design a policy that is thought out, concise, and clearly communicated.

No one can completely stop bad things from happening, it is unfortunately part of our human condition and the society we live in. However, a well-designed plan can reduce not only the severity, but also the level of liability a church may encounter if, or when, something tragic does occur. At the end of the day, we must be able to say as good stewards, "We trusted God and did our very best to care for the people and property entrusted to our care."

- [1] Draper, Electa, "Weapons at Church? For Everything There is a Time." *The Denver Post*. Dec. 12, 2007.
- [2] Hammar, Richard. "Does Your Church Need a Security Guard?" *Church Law and Tax Report* March/April 2008, p. 1.
- [3] *Ibid.* p. 13. [4] *Ibid.* p. 15.
- [5] Yeakley, Richard, "Report says crime up at U.S. churches." *The Christian Century*. Feb. 09, 2011.
- [6] *Ibid.*

The information in this publication is intended to help ministry leaders better understand issues of weapons for church security and assist them in developing a weapons or crisis intervention policy for their churches and related ministries. No portion of this publication should be used without prior legal review, revision and approval by an attorney licensed to practice law in your state. Mennonite Mutual Insurance Company assumes no liability for reliance upon the information provided in this publication.

Where to turn for more information

There are organizations, resources, and helpful websites in the area of risk management, safety and security. It is important that you review the specific laws that pertain to your state.

Please be advised that we are not endorsing these websites or organizations. Some of them lean towards their particular view of gun laws, or have a theology or philosophy that may or may not align with Mennonite Mutual Insurance Company or your church. Use discernment when looking into these sites and organizations.

State-by-State Gun Laws –

<http://www.handgunlaw.us/>

Indiana: *May carry weapon in church unless the church has a school or day care.*

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun_laws_in_Indiana

It is illegal to carry a concealed weapon, even sporting arms, on school property (K-12 and day care) or on a school bus. Lawful gun owners may have guns in their vehicles on school property provided the driver is only transporting someone to, or from, a school event.

Ohio: *May not carry weapon on church property without permission.*

The law sets forth several places where your license does not allow you to carry a handgun. Under the law, you may not carry a concealed handgun into the following places (see Ohio attorney general website below for complete list):

- *Places of worship, unless the place of worship gives specific permission to individuals*
- *Child day-care centers*

<http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/OhioAttorneyGeneral/files/00/0014c1ed-a150-4726->

[82fc-686c9062e9d6.pdf](http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/OhioAttorneyGeneral/files/00/0014c1ed-a150-4726-82fc-686c9062e9d6.pdf)

<http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/2923.12>

Pennsylvania: *No laws against carrying a concealed weapon in church.*

<http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/058/chapter465a/s465a.13.html>

<http://www.pafoa.org/law/carrying-firearms/concealed-carry>

Where to Turn for More Information (cont.)

Businesses that provide Gun Safety and Security Training

PM Security Services, Tactical Weapons Training Group, 26355 Jelloway Road, Danville, OH 43014; 330-317-8607; <http://pmsecurityservicestwtg.com/>

OSS International, 425 S. Sandusky Street, Delaware, OH 43015; 740-363-6774; <http://oss-international.net/> **Books:**

Chin, Carl. *Evil Invades Sanctuary*, Snowfall Press; 2012

Cirtin, Robert. *Church Safety and Security: A Practical Guide*. CSS Publishing Company; 2005

Aguiar, Ron. *Keeping Your Church Safe*. Brienigsville, Penn.: Xulon; 2008

Welch, Robert H. *Serving by Safeguarding Your Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan; 2002.

Other Helpful Sites:

<http://www.churchlawandtax.com/>

<http://theresurgence.com/2010/01/12/church-safety>

<http://www.churchsecurityalliance.com/members/churchsecurity>

<http://www.christiansecuritynetwork.org>

<http://www.right2defend.com/church-security-conference/>

<http://christianfamilyservice.com/workshops/church-security-workshop/>

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