**Newsletter from the
Disaster Response Network
of the Northeastern Iowa Synod**

FEBRUARY 2012

Lutheran Disaster Response

Bringing Help and Hope

BACKING UP RECORDS

It's business as usual if computer records are backed up

What would happen to your congregation if a disaster struck? The Disaster Response Network encourages your congregation to consider the implications of a disaster on the ability to carry out the normal business of the church. Each congregation should evaluate the important records that are necessary to return to normal functioning as quickly as possible after a disaster.

Records to Back Up
- Church council/committee minutes and minutes from annual meeting
- Membership rolls with contact information
- Leadership contact information
- Baptism/confirmation/marriage records
    - Financial records
    - Tithing-what happens if the hard drive with records of giving crashes. Do you keep backup paper reports to generate year-end reports for members?
    - Insurance
    - Policy numbers and contact information
  - Banking account information
- Photographs of church events
- Any other records that your congregation considers historically important.

In what format is the data stored? You should periodically assess how the electronic data is stored. If you have video recorded on Beta or VHS tapes, how can you access that information? Important records need to be stored in a method that is likely to be readable in the foreseeable future. Whatever method you use, backup regularly and get the backup off-site every night.

Back up computer records...

Methods to Back Up Records

- Burn to CD/DVD or flash drives. CD-ROMs are inexpensive and easy, but considered somewhat unreliable. An external hard drive can usually plug and play, and is inexpensive and easy to use.
- Store in õthe cloud.ö Free online storage is available through companies such as Dropbox and Google Docs. A review of these companies can be found at www.cloudbusinessreview.com/2012/01/09/2012-top-10-free-cloud-storages.html.
- Microfilming
- Paper backups
- A low-cost/low-tech method is to take a picture using a high resolution digital camera. These pictures can be stored digitally, or a large print can be developed.
- Companies such as CopyWorks or Kinkos can scan single page sheets up to 36 inches wide.

Where to Store Backups

The congregation should consider what types of disasters could occur and protect your backups. More than one type of backup is probably a good idea. Security of privileged information must be considered.

- Fire could destroy an entire church building and all records inside. Water damage from broken pipes can also damage records. Having an offsite location to store backup records is critical.
- Tornados or floods could damage a large region. Consider how far away backup records need to be stored. The tornado in Joplin damaged homes and businesses in a half-mile by six-mile path.
- Disruption to telecommunications systems could prevent access to information stored online. Loss of electricity will prevent computer access unless you have a backup generator.
- What would you do in case of an õIndividual Disaster,ö if something happened to the only person who knows how things are done in your congregation? The church should consider developing a õhow-toö manual with details of all the procedures necessary to return to normalcy.

Your congregation should set a goal for how quickly you can reestablish your functions following a disaster. You should carefully consider which backup method is the best for your congregation and place one person in charge of following through with a frequent backup and storage of records.

From your Northeastern Iowa Synod
Disaster Response Network.

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