

# Know what resources can help during a disaster

Congregations can plan ahead how to serve the community during a disaster.

Congregations, who are the Body of Christ, are groups of people who gather to hear the Word of God for the service of God — which is helping those in need. And there are few more tangible ways congregations can help people than by being responsive in times of a disaster.

A congregation's response begins with first identifying their resources, and then by identifying how to apply those resources to meet the needs.

*“In order for a congregation to confidently and faithfully offer its resources in the midst of disaster, the congregation itself needs to be*

*able to build resiliency to weather the storm. Intentional preparation for disaster requires attention to many details: keeping insurance policies updated, creating communication plans, encouraging members to stock emergency supplies at home, keeping the church building and grounds maintained and building community relationships.”* (from the *Congregational Disaster Preparedness Guidebook*, p. 5)

Preparation is where we need to begin. Knowing what you can do, how you can do it, and who will do it are essential in your ability to meet the needs of people whose world just got turned upside-down and then spun in circles. Being prepared will mean something different for each congregation. It won't always be linear or neat, but preparedness will grow over time as the congregational community discovers its gifts and call to preparedness.

Being prepared and knowing how you are equipped to respond results in a disaster preparedness plan. The type of plan that will benefit your congregation the most contains needed information with a clear process of action steps. Your disaster plan *“...needs to be explicit enough to clearly lay out expectations, responsibilities and*

*procedures, while not getting bogged down in detail”* (from the CDPG, p.14).

Preparedness is a process that requires intentionality; it starts with taking stock of your community's resources so that when the time arises you know what needs your congregation is already equipped to handle and how you can enact on those resources. As you meet within your congregation, you might start brainstorming resources you already have in place for events such as these. For example, do you have a kitchen which will enable you to prepare food for families? What type of professionals are in your congregation? In your community?

As this year comes to a close, what do you think about getting a couple people together to brainstorm resources your congregation has? Then, each month take on one task of the CDPG?

Starting next month I will write more about how your team can move forward, task by task, to be prepared for whatever comes our way.

You can download a full copy the Congregational Disaster Preparedness Plan (CDPG) at [www.neiasynod.org/disaster-response/](http://www.neiasynod.org/disaster-response/).

— Pastor Ron Mathews  
Disaster Response Network

