

Dear Rostered and Lay Leaders of the Northeastern Iowa Synod and the Iowa Synods,

In every community, crisis can arrive unexpectedly. Congregational conflict, fires, tornadoes, floods, community tragedies, and other disruptive events create a need for trained leaders who can offer a faithful, compassionate, and coordinated response.

In partnership with Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR), we are inviting rostered ministers and lay leaders to participate in a 4-hour Disaster Response Volunteer Information and Training Session designed to build a network of leaders equipped to serve across our synods and communities.

Disaster Response Volunteer Training Cohort

Date: Tuesday, October 6, 2026 Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Cedar Falls, Iowa
Time: 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

During this session, participants will:

- Learn about opportunities to serve as trained disaster response volunteers.
- Explore the role of congregational and community disaster response teams.
- Receive an introduction to LDR's emotional and spiritual care training pathway.
- Learn about additional disaster response and preparedness courses available through Lutheran Disaster Response and partner organizations.
- Gain practical tools for responding to:
 - o Congregations experiencing conflict or crisis
 - o Community and congregational fires
 - o Tornadoes and severe weather events
 - o Floods and natural disasters
 - o Community trauma and critical incidents
 - o Recovery and resiliency support following disasters

Our goal is to develop a network of trained volunteers who can be called upon to provide emotional and spiritual care, support local leaders, assist response efforts, and accompany nearby communities through recovery.

Whether you have previous disaster response experience or simply feel called to serve neighbors in times of crisis, we encourage you to attend and learn more about this important ministry.

Together, we can strengthen our capacity to respond faithfully and compassionately when disaster impacts the congregations and communities we serve.

Registration details will be shared soon.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Jen Thomas Assistant to the Bishop for Shared Ministry and Development
Northeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA

"Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)