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|  | Preparedness and Resilience Planning GuideFor Congregations and Parishes (For small congregations)  A Resource Tool  for Ministry |  |
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Introduction

Dear Church Leaders,

This template has been developed to provide some guidance to small congregations who are developing safety and preparedness plans. The Episcopal Diocese of Colorado and the Rocky Mountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) have collaborated in developing this template as part of a broader collaboration to develop stronger ecumenical relationships.

Although we don’t always like to think about it, one of our roles as churches is, in the event of disaster or emergency, to be good stewards of the safety and security of our members. And as a church in the community, we are called to be prepared to be of assistance after a disaster. We plan for a number of basic reasons:

* To be able to respond effectively and care for our people in the event of an emergency;
* To mitigate damage to our church community’s buildings and belongings;
* To be able to resume the business of the church as soon as possible post-disaster;
* To support our parishioners in times of crisis;
* To assist to our vulnerable neighbors after an emergency.

The purpose of this document is to provide a tool to assist you in developing your congregation’s capacity. We hope it will help you prepare for hazards that might affect your communities, as well as mitigate the impact of those disasters and help the vulnerable make a full and sustained recovery.

The Preparedness Planning Guide for Congregations and Parishes is designed to help a congregation plan for a disaster, from taking inventory of physical and human assets to determining its niche in assisting vulnerable people in the larger community. This version, intended for small congregations, includes necessary basic information to protect parishioners and church property in times of disaster or emergencies, and also lays the foundation for congregations interested in responding to their most vulnerable neighbors after a disaster. The series of templates includes one for mid-size congregations and also a full-blown plan for large congregations. We particularly thanks St. Gabriel’s Episcopal Church for sharing the hard work they have done in developing a model preparedness plan, which can be found at <http://www.dioco.org/disaster-preparedness.html>.

At the national level, both the ELCA and the Episcopal Church have groups that work with synods and dioceses around the country to help them be better prepared for emergencies. That includes training and supporting Diocesan Disaster Coordinators, who have been appointed by their bishops. A list of Diocesan Disaster Coordinators can be found on the web at

* [www.episcopalrelief.org/usdisasterprogram](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/usdisasterprogram); and at
* <http://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response/>

These coordinators should be your first support and resource through this planning process.

Thanks for all you do in this important work,

The Right Reverend James Gonia The Right Reverend Robert O’Neill

Bishop, Rocky Mountain Synod Bishop, Diocese of Colorado

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America The Episcopal Church

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Note: “tk” in the template mean “To Come,” i.e. to be completed once your draft is done.

## Disaster Leadership Team:

## Contact Information

Instructions: Fill out the following form with contact information for your Congregational Disaster Coordinator and the Disaster Leadership Team. Even if your team consists of two people, capture their contact information.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Congregational Disaster Coordinator:** | * **Landline:** |  |
| * **Cell Phone:** |  |
| * **Email:** |  |
| * **Name:** | **Role/Designated Tasks:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **Landline:** |  |
| **Cell Phone:** |  |
| **Email:** |  |
| * **Name:** | **Role/Designated Tasks:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **Landline:** |  |
| **Cell Phone:** |  |
| **Email:** |  |
| * **Name:** | **Role/Designated Tasks:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **Landline:** |  |
| **Cell Phone:** |  |
| **Email:** |  |
| * **Name:** | **Role/Designated Tasks:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **Landline:** |  |
| **Cell Phone:** |  |
| **Email:** |  |
| * **Name:** | **Role/Designated Tasks:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **Landline:** |  |
| **Cell Phone:** |  |
| **Email:** |  |
| * **Name:** | **Role/Designated Tasks:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **Landline:** |  |
| **Cell Phone:** |  |
| **Email:** |  |

Setting your goals is the first step in developing your Safety & Preparedness Plan. Consider what you are trying to accomplish, and how this may relate the the mission and other goals of your congregation.

## Safety Goals

(NOTE: You may customize all Goals to fit your needs)

While not every scenario of danger can be anticipated and planned for, our goals are:

* **To ensure the safety of all participants in our ministries**
* **To select and train individuals in basic safety procedures, e.g. first aid, CPR, use of AEDs, Heimlich maneuver, safety awareness**
* **To be sure that items needed for safety have been purchased and installed**

## Preparedness Goals

All preparedness, response, recovery and hazard mitigation work can be can be categorized into four goals:

* **Resume congregational life as quickly and smoothly as possible**
* **Protect the church’s assets**
* **Support impacted parishioners to recover**
* **Reach out to vulnerable neighbors**

If your congregation is prepared, it will be able to achieve these goals more quickly and efficiently after an emergency.

Congregational Goals

This is an exercise to think of who you are as a congregation and what you want to accomplish after a disaster. This is a definition of what you will strive to accomplish after a disaster, the specific steps to accomplish these goals will be defined later in the guide.

Examples of goals may include:

* Ensure the safety of older and disabled members of the congregation
* Provide an effective relief ministry to the local community after a disaster
* Protect valuable liturgical assets
* Reestablish Sunday services as soon as possible post-disaster

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1) | *(Example)* ***Reestablish Sunday services as soon as possible.***  *You don’t need to identify the specifics of how that will be done (i.e.- worship will be held at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church)* |
| 2) |  |
| 3) |  |
| 4) |  |
| 5) |  |

## Brainstorm Likely Disasters and Emergencies

First, make a list of all potential disasters/emergencies that your congregation or ministry may confront. Examples of common emergencies may include: weather and fire-related events, vulnerable adults, lost and missing children, medical emergencies, intruders, etc. Also consider even the most extreme possibilities: chemical spill, fire, mass violence, etc.

After you have created the lists, go through and rank the top 5 that you think are most likely.

## Major Disasters Local Emergencies

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * *Flood* | * *Ice Storm* |
| * *Tornado* | * *Apartment fire in the neighborhood* |
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Consider whether your top five events in both columns would be the type that occur with some warning, such as a hurricane or spring river flood, or would happen suddenly, such as a chemical spill. Place them in the appropriate box below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Major Disaster with Warning | Major Disaster with No Warning | Local Emergency With Warning | Local Emergency with No Warning |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
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## Identifying Groups that Include or Serve Vulnerable People

People with special needs will be at higher risk during a disaster. Take the time to identify those people within your congregation, and brainstorm what problems they may face and how you could help with those problems as a congregation.

Instructions:List the groups in the parish that are either comprised of or serve people who might be especially vulnerable after a disaster. These might include senior citizens’ groups, groups for new mothers, and religious education programs that include children with special needs. List the contacts for each group, so that they can be contacted after a disaster to help assess needs and facilitate the response.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **Contact** | **Types of needs members might have.** |
| *The Senior Citizens Club is comprised of parishioners aged 65 and older.* | Betty Jones | *Difficulty evacuating. Medical conditions.* |
| *The Lay Eucharistic Visitors have a current list of people who are home-bound or who are in the hospital.* | Deacon Williams | *Difficulty evacuating. Medical conditions.* |
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## Insurance Information

Make a list of all your insurance information and contacts. Be sure to have a copy of this information in a **secure place off-site** and have another copy that someone can take with them if your community is evacuated. Note: if your church is insured through Church Insurance Company, you can call 800-223-5707 to report claims immediately.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * **Policy Number:** |  |
| * **Policy is with:** |  |
| Phone: |  |
| Address: |  |
| * **Agent:** |  |
| Phone: |  |
| Address: |  |
| * **Original Policy is kept:** |  |
| Address: |  |
| * **Copy of policy is kept offsite:** |  |
| Address: |  |
| * **Policy Type:** | *(Example – Replacement value type)* |
| Total Value: |  |
| * **Policy covers:** | *Earthquake, hurricane, robbery, fire, breakage, etc.* |
| * **Other policies:** |  |
| * **Policy review:** |  |
| When: |  |
| By who: |  |

## 

Be sure to note where off-site copies are kept and who can access them.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Off-site Copies** | |
| * **Where:** | *(Ex: Diocese has a copy)* |
| * **Who:** | *Susan Wu* |
| Phone: | *xxx-xxx-xxxx* |
| Cell: |  |

**Identify who is taking what in a time of an emergency evacuation.**

## Secure Storage of Archives and Records (print and electronic)

Appropriate protection of records is essential. If your paper files are charred or water-damaged, or your computer files are lost, you may need to hire professional recovery companies in addition to rebuilding the data. Archival items by nature are irreplaceable.

Refer to the “Records Manual for Congregations” published by the Archives of the Episcopal Church for a list of records to retain and the time to retain them. You can also find this information at: <http://www.episcopalarchives.org/Records_Manual_for_Congregations.pdf>

1. Every congregation needs a fireproof, waterproof, quake-proof lockable box or safe[[1]](#footnote-1) (or safety deposit box). Seldom-used/historical items, valuables and the following should be kept in the safe:

* Parish registers and service books – at all times when not in use
* Confidential records: personnel files, documents displaying social security numbers, and confidential counseling records.
* Contracts, mortgage or loan papers, titles and deeds, other legal documents, etc.
* Routine back-ups for computer files on a CD, DVD or USB

1. Paper records and files

* These could include your administrative, financial, and ministry files, and copies of print newsletters or bulletins. Store them in metal file cabinets, preferably not on opposite walls from windows. Photocopy irreplaceable files to store offsite.

1. Archives

* These are best stored in temperatures between 65-68 degrees, with 45% humidity, in metal cabinetry or shelved in acid-free boxes, in a closed room with no windows. If the room is fireproofed, even better. After fire, water and mildew are the worst enemies.
* Inventory your archives carefully and keep a copy offsite.

1. Software and electronic files

* Keep anti-virus and spyware protection up to date, establish protocols for office computer use including password protection, and use a surge protector
* Back-up your office files regularly and keep back-ups in your safe or another secure location off-site. Place a copy in the “Go Kit.”
* Keep your original software CDs in the safe.
* Make backups of your website. Make sure your web-hosting provider regularly backs up their servers and protects the data. Consider a web-hosting service with multiple servers in various locations nationally.
* Keep lists of passwords and usernames for all computers in the church safe/safety deposit box/off-site. Make sure passwords are kept in at least 2 places, and there is a copy in your “Go Kit.” This will help to ensure access to them after a disaster

1. Diocesan archive storage

* Provide copies of your architectural drawings and asset inventories to the diocesan archives.

## Goals and Response

This is a good moment to revisit the goals defined on pg. <TK> and identify the necessary steps and resources to ensure that those goals are met. This is the moment to decide what activities are needed to accomplish those goals, what preparation is needed before a disaster, who shall lead each activity and what is needed to do so.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Goal** | **Preparation** | **Person Responsible** | **Activities Post-Disaster** |
| *(Example) Reestablish Sunday services as soon as possible after a disaster* | * *Put together “Go Kit”* * *Establish relationship with St. Luke’s Lutheran Church – ask if they will offer space for alternate worship site* * *Inform congregation: in case church is affected by emergency, services will be held at alternate site* | *Paula Shriver (Senior Warden) and Rev. Smith* | * *Communicate with St. Luke’s* * *Inform parishioners via email, phone and note at our parish that services will be held at alternate site* * *Provide priest with the implements for service from the “Go Kit”* |
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## Synod Office Contact Information

**(For Lutheran Congregations:)** Change, remove and add titles as relevant to your conference. Ensure to update contact information monthly. The Synod Office Staff contact information can be located at: <http://www.rmselca.org/index.html>

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * **Bishop**   Name: Jim Gonia | Address: | 7375 Samuel Dr  Denver, CO 80210 |
| Office Phone: | 303-777-6700 |
| Cell Phone: |  |
| Home Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| * **Assistant to the Bishop**   Name: Ron Roeschke  *Shared Ministries* | Address: |  |
| Office Phone: |  |
| Cell Phone: |  |
| Home Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| * **Assistant to the Bishop**   Name: Kent Mueller  *Administration & Technology* | Address: |  |
| Office Phone: |  |
| Cell Phone: |  |
| Home Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| * **Administrative Staff**   Name: Cheryl Almquist | Address: |  |
| Office Phone: |  |
| Cell Phone: |  |
| Home Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| * **Administrative Staff**   Name: Janice Ladd-Horkey | Address: |  |
| Office Phone: |  |
| Cell Phone: |  |
| Home Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| * **Administrative Staff**   Name: Maria Sutton | Address: |  |
| Office Phone: |  |
| Cell Phone: |  |
| Home Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |

## Diocesan Contact Information

(**For Episcopal Congregations**:) Change, remove and add titles as relevant to your diocese. The current staffing at the Office of the Bishop can be found at <http://www.dioco.org/contact-us-staff-list.html>

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * **Bishop**   Name: | Address: |  |
| Office Phone: |  |
| Cell Phone: |  |
| Home Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| * **Canon for Stewardship/Administration**   Name: | Address: |  |
| Office Phone: |  |
| Cell Phone: |  |
| Home Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| * **Assistant to the Bishop**   Name: | Address: |  |
| Office Phone: |  |
| Cell Phone: |  |
| Home Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| * **Assistant to the Canon**   Name: | Address: |  |
| Office Phone: |  |
| Cell Phone: |  |
| Home Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| * **Diocesan Disaster Coordinator**   Name: | Address: |  |
| Office Phone: |  |
| Cell Phone: |  |
| Home Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| * **Communications Director**   Name: | Address: |  |
| Office Phone: |  |
| Cell Phone: |  |
| Home Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| * **Other**   Name: | Address: |  |
| Office Phone: |  |
| Cell Phone: |  |
| Home Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |

## Church Staff Contact Information

Instructions: Make this contact information available to your parishioners.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * **Role/Job Title:**   **Name:** | Address: |  |
| Home Phone: |  |
| Cell Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| Emergency Contact:   * Relationship: * Phone: |  |
| * **Role/Job Title:**   **Name:** | Address: |  |
| Home Phone: |  |
| Cell Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| Emergency Contact:   * Relationship: * Phone: |  |
| * **Role/Job Title:**   **Name:** | Address: |  |
| Home Phone: |  |
| Cell Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| Emergency Contact:   * Relationship: * Phone: |  |
| * **Role/Job Title:**   **Name:** | Address: |  |
| Home Phone: |  |
| Cell Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| Emergency Contact:   * Relationship: * Phone: |  |

## People with Financial Authorization Approval

Instructions: Keep a copy of this information in a safe place off-site.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * **Name** | Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| Address: |  |
| * **Name** | Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| Address: |  |
| * **Name** | Phone: |  |
| Email: |  |
| Address: |  |

## Congregation’s Emergency Contacts

Partner congregations can serve as a center for communications, an evacuation site, or a source of relief volunteers, among other things. Partnering with another congregation within the Synod/Diocese provides an opportunity to both serve others and receive services in an emergency. A relationship with a congregation located in a separate region not susceptible to the same emergencies at the same time as your congregation should also be established as a possible evacuation site.

It may also be a good idea to keep a complete set of keys to the church at one of these locations, or at your diocesan offices – in case yours are lost.

Partner Congregation – Local

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Partner Congregation:** |  |
| **Contact Person** |  |
| * **Landline:** |  |
| * **Cell Phone:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |

Partner Congregation – Outside your area

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Partner Congregation:** |  |
| **Contact Person** |  |
| * **Landline:** |  |
| * **Cell Phone:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |

## Partnership Vicar – Contact info if needed

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Partnership Vicar:** |  |
| **Home congregation of Vicar:** |  |
| * **Landline:** |  |
| * **Cell Phone:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |

## Outside Users of the Building (add as needed)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **Contact** | **Phone** | **Email** | **Building Use** |
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1. The safe should have a rating of 4 to 5. If the safe is on a basement floor, it’s recommended that you keep it 6-8 inches above the floor on a concrete or durable slab. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)