



EARLY RESPONSE IN A DISASTER

Diocesan Disaster Leadership

- A. An initial assessment must be made as to (1) whether the event is a disaster and (2) what scale of disaster is it likely to be.
- B. This initial assessment can be made by any senior staff member of the Office of the Bishop but ideally ought to include the Director of Communications (Mike Orr), the Canon to the Ordinary (The Rev. Canon Ruth Woodliff-Stanley), and/or the Bishop in communication with the Disaster Director (The Rev. Canon Carl Andrews).
- C. At the time of the initial assessment, a decision should be made about the initial response from the Office of the Bishop. Although there may be gradations requiring judgment, the following options are most likely:

Major and/or regional disaster event:

Establishing an Incident Command Center and daily (or twice-daily) conference calls with affected congregations and communities should be initiated. (Example: floods of 2013; a major fire which is causing loss of a significant number of homes)

Serious but not major event:

Beginning with daily or every-other-day conference calls, tapering quickly to weekly or twice-weekly check-ins, is an appropriate first step. (Example: Fires in more rural areas without loss of a large number of homes but including evacuations.)

Significant but essentially local event:

Establishing regular communication with the local congregation(s) directly involved would be the appropriate first step. (Example: A serious fire in one church; a shooting incident in one community.)

In every disaster and potential disaster, there needs to be a near-continual “loop” of assessing the needs, evaluating what is a helpful response, and mobilizing resources. Whatever the initial assessment, there needs to be a quick check-in with participating clergy and church leaders during each call or contact to assess: Is the level of response helpful? Is more needed? Less? Are things returning to normal? Are other, more local resources now available which meet most of the needs?

Local Church Leadership

- A. Local clergy or lay leadership should touch base with Office of the Bishop staff as soon as possible after a potential disaster or other event.

The order of contact should be to:

1. Mike Orr, Director of Communications, 303.818.5587 mobile
 2. The Rev. Canon Carl Andrews, Disaster Director, 720.635.1245 mobile
 3. If you can't reach these people, call the main diocese number 303-837-1173
- B. Local clergy or lay leadership should begin immediate action in accordance with the disaster plan previously developed by the church.
- C. In the event that you do not have a disaster plan in place: First priority is the safety of all people in the church and around the church. Second priority is making the resources of the church available to affected people and the community in appropriate ways. Third priority is physical protection and safety of the building and other church assets.
- D. Ongoing communication with Office of the Bishop leadership is strongly encouraged. Establishing and maintaining communication with other affected parishes and with other groups within your community is also strongly encouraged.