

# ***Your Congregation's Ministry WHEN DISASTER STRIKES...***

## **Rescue Stage**

Often a disaster strikes without warning, leaving in its wake a community thrown into turmoil, families separated and normal communications generally disrupted. Immediately governmental emergency management units go to work and hospitals put emergency plans into operation.

### **The church's main concerns at this stage are:**

- If there are **casualties or deaths**, your pastor may need to be at the hospitals and/or temporary morgues.
- **Survey the staff and members** of the congregation to determine those affected by the disaster. What are their immediate needs? Start with the most vulnerable people such as the elderly, shut-in and disabled.
- Inspect the **congregation's facilities** and make temporary repairs to protect them from further damage or looting. Call your insurance representative.
- **Contact Lutheran Social Services of ND - Lutheran Disaster Response** and your District or Synod Office to report on your facilities, staff, and members.

## **Relief Stage**

In the days following a disaster, many groups will descend upon the area and many people will offer help in all forms. An important fact to remember is that during these first few days your congregation has an important role to play.

- **Contact Lutheran Social Services.** As Lutheran Disaster Response we can assist you and your congregation to respond.

- Many extra **volunteers** are needed to work at clean up, at feeding centers, and Red Cross shelters. Encourage all persons not affected by the disaster to be volunteers.
- Provide a **listening** ear to persons affected by the disaster. People need to tell their story over and over again to help them through their trauma and grief. Church members need to be listeners.
- **Discourage rumors** that start. Often rumors escalate during this time. Do all you can to share accurate information.
- Encourage all persons affected to **apply for assistance** offered. *It is not charity.* See that the disaster assistance help number is publicized. Assist persons to apply if needed.
- Start plans for the **long-term recovery**. Coordinate with other Lutheran congregations and other denominations through Lutheran Disaster Response/Lutheran Social Services of ND in the formation of a cooperative response and recovery plan.
- Publicize and **receive special offerings** for Lutheran Disaster Response/LSS to be used to help those persons affected. Contact the local Thrivent representative, asking them to be involved in this fundraising.

## **Recovery Stage**

It is important for Lutheran Disaster Response to stay in a disaster response ministry for several months and sometimes even longer than a year. This long-term effort is usually best done through a cooperative approach of the faith-based disaster recovery agencies. Working together, duplication and waste are minimized. The persons affected by the disaster have a single place to access help.

## Emergency Contacts

### Lutheran Disaster Response

Fargo .....(701) 271-3288  
Or toll free (located in Fargo) .....(800) 950-2901

### Synod and District Contacts

#### LCMS District

North Dakota.....(701) 293-9001  
Or toll free ..... (877) 526-7633

#### ELCA Synods

Eastern North Dakota .....(701) 232-3381  
Western North Dakota .....(701) 223-5312

### Local Numbers

Police .....

Fire.....

EMS .....

Red Cross.....

United Way .....

**Lutheran Disaster Response** is a Ministry of the ELCA and LCMS through Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota.

**Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota**  
1720 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave N  
Fargo, ND 58102  
email: bturner@lssnd.org

*“Guided by God’s love and grace,  
Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota  
brings healing, help and hope.”*

***Your Congregation’s  
Ministry  
When Disaster Strikes***

