

# ***Disasters change lives...***

The deep human needs and psychological scars left after a disaster requires a quality and measure of care beyond the restoration of physical needs. Food, clothing, medical assistance and shelter will protect and restore the body, aiding in healing many of the hurts created by the crisis. Putting one's life back together after a disaster requires real caring, hope, and love. Counseling, understanding and direction are needed to enable persons to cope with their anger, guilt, grief, tests of faith, loneliness, and turmoil.

The church is unique in being able to provide care for the "whole" person. Here are some ways to help.

## ***Listening and counseling***

A grief process follows any disaster in which significant loss has occurred. A short period of shock with emotional or mental numbness is followed by - but not necessarily in this order - reactions of anger toward God or someone in the community, expressions of guilt, and a need to talk about what has happened. You can provide and publicize a place where those affected can come and find skilled listeners who will encourage the expression of feelings while providing acceptance and stability.

Guilt feelings and other more severe symptoms commonly arise one to six months after a disaster. The church has a wonderful opportunity to provide these needed services.

## ***Volunteers***

Cleaning up after a disaster requires hard work and coordination. You can recruit volunteers to help remove debris and mud or be involved in work crews to repair and reconstruct houses. Lutheran Disaster Response can assist in organizing this effort.



## ***Advocacy***

Some persons affected by disaster do not know of the assistance and benefits for which they are eligible. The church can help such people and give them the needed knowledge. The vulnerable populations may be best served by contacting them individually.

## ***Reconstruction***

Reconstruction of a devastated community gives those persons affected the chance to improve the physical, social and spiritual dimensions of their lives. You can make sure that they have a voice in the entire rebuilding process. The vital role the Church can play is to see that health, spiritual and emotional needs are considered as strongly as physical interests. You can also, when appropriate, provide volunteers to assist in the reconstruction through LDR.



## ***Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota***

Lutheran Disaster Response/LSS is your church working with sleeves rolled up to help others in their time of need. Remembering the LDR/LSS agency and staff in private and corporate worship prayers, providing information to members in bulletins and newsletters, providing for the effort financially and with volunteer service are ways of supporting your ministry effort. Together, we can make a difference in people's lives. Call 1-800-950-2901 to see what you can do.

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# Phases of a Disaster

## ***Emergency Phase***

- Number one concern: food, shelter and energy
- Items needed immediately: call 1-800-950-2901 to ask what is needed
- Expect chaos and confusion -- those affected need to feel sure about preservation of life
- There may be duplication of aid in this phase

## ***Relief Phase***

- Those affected start directing their energy toward secondary needs; patching a roof, removing debris, cooking food, etc
- Expect the site to be more normally organized
- Those affected may feel abandonment, fearing they will be forgotten
- Relief workers as well as those affected need to be kept safe, housed and fed

## ***Recovery Phase***

- Those who have suffered losses begin to look toward the future and make decisions about:
  - Whether to relocate or rebuild
  - Whether to look for a new job
- Those affected may become angry - even at the church or volunteers. They can become severely depressed and fearful.

***After a disaster,  
One's faith may be all that's left to cling to...***

***What an opportunity for the Church to respond!***

# ***You, Your Church***



# ***in Disaster Response***

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