



Disaster Times

Partnering for Disaster Response

Volume 1, Issue 3

September 2006

Special points of interest:

Coleharbor on the Road to Recovery

Preparing for a Pandemic

Planning for Rise Up & Build II Moves Forward

Volunteer Coordinators needed

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Help wanted

Let it be SAID... God's people care!

*SAID Training answers important questions for clergy
and other faith leaders!*

Sign up early for fall training

Across America there is a heightened emphasis for organizations and individuals to be prepared to respond to disaster. The church has a unique role in reaching out to those in need, but often is not well informed concerning the particular dynamics of trauma and crisis.

Spiritual Accompaniment In Disaster (SAID) Training helps answer important questions for clergy, parish nurses, mental health professionals, chaplains and other faith leaders. It provides an opportunity for members of the faith community to find guidance on how to walk with people in times of disaster and crisis.

You are invited to come and learn the answers to these questions and more:

- What really happens in a disaster affected community?
- What do you say to people who ask, "How could God

let this happen?"

- How do ecumenical and secular partners work together in response?
- In the threat of pandemic influenza, what are the important first steps?
- What is the long-term role of the faith community in disaster recovery?

Training sessions are led by disaster response leaders John Wilson of Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Chicago; Greg Nelson, Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota; and Bonnie Turner, Lutheran Disaster Response, a program of Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota. They give great insight into what happens to survivors of disaster and how to walk with them through the after effects. After training, all attendees are eligible to apply to the SAID Network. Those involved will take the

following roles when called upon in a disaster: helping survivors draw upon their own spiritual/religious resources; providing respite for clergy and other spiritual caregivers; offering assistance in coping with grief, loss and stress; and working cooperatively with federal, state and other emergency service organizations.

Seating at SAID training is limited, so be sure to register early. Call for more information about training session dates.

Friday, Oct. 6, 2006
Helena, Montana
(406) 761-4341 or
(406) 945-9949

Thursday, Oct. 19, 2006
Aberdeen, S.D.
(800) 950-2901

Friday, Oct. 20, 2006
Sioux Falls, S.D.
(800) 950-2901

Thursday, Nov. 2, 2006
Jamestown, N.D.
(800) 950-2901

Friday, Nov. 3, 2006
Williston, ND
(800) 950-2901

Disaster preparation Congregations play vital role



“A failure to plan is a plan for failure.”

After a disaster, churches and their organizations may wonder, “What can we do?” Many respond with fundraising efforts on behalf of the disaster survivors. Financial support is always needed after a disaster, but there are many other ways in which a church, as well as its organizations, can help.

The key to efficient response and recovery after a disaster is to plan ahead. While one can never be fully prepared for a disaster, there should be a plan in place regarding what to do should a disaster occur. A failure to plan is a plan for failure.

Plans need to be well thought out, organized, and discussed by church leadership. Each task should have an assigned person in charge and be carefully considered (for example, “Do we have the resources to undertake this task?” “How

will this be beneficial to survivors?”)

Churches are in a unique position during disaster as they can respond by demonstrating the love of Christ as they meet the needs of survivors. An unprepared church may miss this opportunity to minister to local people.

When preparing a disaster plan, consider the following points to determine how the church can be involved in response and recovery.

If the church is near the disaster, the kitchen could be used as a meal distribution center. Other options, regardless of location, could include using the facilities for a communication center, childcare center, shelter, distribution center for clothing or bulk food items, an information staging area for volunteers or work units,

or an information center for other organizations. Contacting the local government, American Red Cross chapter and The Salvation Army is essential to avoid duplicate efforts and to stretch organizations’ limited resources.

Volunteers, another important aspect of church preparedness, will be needed to follow through with the disaster plan. With training, the congregants can provide the church with many ready and willing hands. Consider having volunteers fill out skill surveys to keep on file so when they are needed, you know who to call for each task.

Most importantly, remember that all disaster survivors respond in different ways. Being there and listening to their story is sometimes the greatest gift you can give.

Coleharbor Recovering from storms



Two days after the storm a lot of clean-up had already taken place. Yet scenes such as this were still seen throughout the community.

On Wednesday, July 12, 2006, the small rural community of Coleharbor, N.D. was hit with a summer storm. Some believe they saw a tornado that night. What is certain is that straight-line winds of up to 96 mph ripped through the area, leaving virtually no building untouched.

Damages left by the storm vary greatly from place to place. Some suffered roof damage while others have caved in walls or suffer structure damage from fallen trees. Still others, such as the town’s only restaurant, are uninhabitable, as are a trailer home that was pulled from its foundation, and a motor home that was ripped open

like an aluminum can.

The storm has left many families devastated and several homeless, but friends, family and neighbors brought hope. As is common in North Dakota, this rural community has pulled together to support each other in a time of need.

A call for help was put out for Coleharbor and the response was incredible. Organizational and individual donations have poured in steadily from many communities throughout the state of North Dakota. Lutheran Disaster Response North Dakota has received many of these donations through contact with denominational

partners and congregations on behalf of Coleharbor. A local fund set up by the Underwood Ministerial Association at First Security Bank in Underwood has also been receiving donations, and will hold the funds raised at the August 26 benefit event in Coleharbor.

On behalf of the people and city of Coleharbor, we would like to thank all of you who were so generous with your time and donations to this small rural community. The effects of the storms will be lasting in their memories, but so will your kindness and generosity as they rebuild and look to the future.

Wildfires rise in numbers

A reason to take precautions

While necessary to the regeneration of many ecosystems, the very word “wildfire” generally brings to mind thoughts of out-of-control destruction. Since 1996, an average of 4.9 million acres of United States woodlands have burned in wildfires every year. That number almost doubled this year, with more than 8.6 million acres burned by September. To date, Montana alone has had 829,624 acres burned in wilderness fires.

While wildfires ignited by natural (lightning or drought, for instance) and human

(campfires, cigarettes, litter) causes can oftentimes be controlled, it is important to remember that they are still fires. They can spread rapidly due to wind and dry vegetation and can be unpredictable. Even when contained, one should be prepared for wildfires and put safety precautions into practice. For those living near woodlands and areas susceptible to wildfires, here are some safety precautions to consider:

- Use landscaping to defend your property by thinning trees and brush within 30 feet of your home.
- Stack firewood at least

30 feet from your home and other structures.

- Store flammable liquids, materials and solvents in metal containers outside of the home, at least 30 feet from structures and wooden fences.
- Post home address signs that are clearly visible from the road.

Taking these safety precautions could prevent the damage or loss of your home in a wildfire. Listen to the news and fire crews; if it is necessary, evacuate the area. Do not take the risk of waiting out a wildfire that may be out of control.

For more information on wildfires and safety tips,

visit:

www.nifc.gov

www.usfa.dhs.gov

www.firesafety.gov

Pandemic Influenza

Prepare for worst, pray for best

Many have heard about the H5N1 virus, more commonly known as a type of bird flu. Currently, there are no cases of this type of virus in birds or humans in the United States.

However, scientists expect that, eventually, it will spread worldwide and may result in a pandemic. A pandemic is a global disease outbreak in which a new virus emerges that humans have little or no immunity to. Without immunity, the virus begins to cause serious illness and soon is able to spread easily from person-to-person.

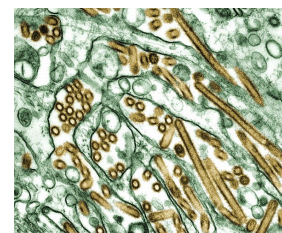
There are, of course, preventative measures you can take as with any other flu—avoid contact with people who are sick; sneeze or cough into the crook of your arm instead of using

your hands (your hands come in contact with more surfaces and will spread germs more easily); wash your hands often or use waterless sanitizers; stay home if you are sick. While you may be able to easily get a seasonal flu shot, it will not protect you in a pandemic. Scientists are currently working with new technologies to develop vaccines that would be cross-protective against variant and highly virulent strains such as the H5N1 virus.

Should a pandemic occur, you will have not only the virus to think about, but social and public disruptions, as well. It may be necessary to make changes to your routine to minimize the risk of infection, so be prepared as your life may change

significantly, even if you do not become ill. Here are some things to consider when planning: usual services may be interrupted at hospitals and health care facilities, banks, stores, restaurants, schools, places of work, government offices and post offices. Have a back-up plan ready—stock up on nonperishable food as the supermarkets may close, keep some extra cash at home in case ATMs don't get restocked, think of those you may provide care for who have special needs—what would you have to do to continue their care?

Be as prepared and precautionous as you can, and find out what your local services have planned as well.



Bird flu has not yet reached the United States, but scientists believe it will eventually spread worldwide.



For more information on pandemic and how to prepare, visit www.pandemicflu.gov or www.cdc.gov



www.ldr.org

Lutheran Disaster Response is a program of



Online: www.lssnd.org

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



Mission: Lutheran Social Services of Montana is a ministry of caring people and congregations responding to God's love in Jesus Christ by serving children, families and individuals through counseling, education, adoption and specialized ministries.

Online: www.lssmt.org

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Thinking ahead Get ready for *Rise Up & Build II*

Thanks to the hard work of the volunteers, the first *Rise Up & Build* was a resounding success. Their dedication put forth an enormous effort that changed the lives of hurricane survivors, as well as the lives of the volunteers.

As successful as last year's missions trips to Biloxi, Miss., and Winter Haven, Fla., were, there is still the need for more disaster reconstruction in these locations and others. Rebuilding is just starting in some areas. Due to the great need, plans are being made for *Rise Up & Build II*.

One location being considered is about 11 miles from Biloxi at Camp Victor in Ocean Springs, Miss. Camp Victor was started by Christus Victor Church after Hurricane Katrina. The church became a disaster response center for

communities along the Gulf Coast in 2005. They are still responding to the needs of the Hurricanes Katrina and Rita survivors from an old garment warehouse that has been converted into Camp Victor.

Currently, Camp Victor has finished with the mucking out stage and is doing rebuilding work on 70 houses—from sheet rocking to roofing. They plan to rebuild 300 homes! While construction work by volunteers is a constant need, there is plenty of other work to go around, as well. Data entry and working in the distribution center, filling orders for survivors who still come for food and personal items— are just a few of the opportunities to serve. There's a task waiting for any willing volunteer.

Rise Up & Build II is tentatively planned for mid-

January through February 2007. Interested in becoming a part of *Rise Up & Build II*, or contributing to the effort? Contact Lutheran Disaster Response at (800) 950-2901 or check for updates at www.ldrnd.org.

"Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me ... And they said, 'Let us rise up and build.' So they strengthened their hands for this good work."
Nehemiah 2:18

Help wanted to lead volunteers

Are you thinking about coming on the 2007 *Rise Up & Build II* mission trip? Are you someone who understands rebuilding or has a background in construction? Well, then we have a job for you!

Lutheran Disaster Response is looking for volunteers to go with *Rise Up & Build II* and be a volunteer coordinator. We are looking for someone who:

- has a construction background or understands the rebuilding process
- likes working with people
- is open to leading

teams of volunteers. The individual who accepts the role of the volunteer coordinator for *Rise Up & Build II* will be in the Gulf Coast for two weeks handling volunteers. This person also should be willing to take the team approach as they will be working with the previous week's coordinator during their first week. The second week, this person will be the one to show the new volunteer coordinator around and brief them. The person who becomes the volunteer coordinator will also be invited to attend a training session sometime in October.

This is a great opportunity to be a leader in

helping those in need. If ever there was a time when you received help rebuilding your life or your community, now is your chance to give something back.

If you would like more information or are interested in becoming a volunteer coordinator for *Rise Up & Build II*, please call (800)

The job could also be done in a team effort by a couple, with one handling logistics while the other works with the volunteers.