

Lamplight

A Newsletter of the US Disaster Program



"Be dressed, ready for service and keep your lamps burning." — LUKE 12:35

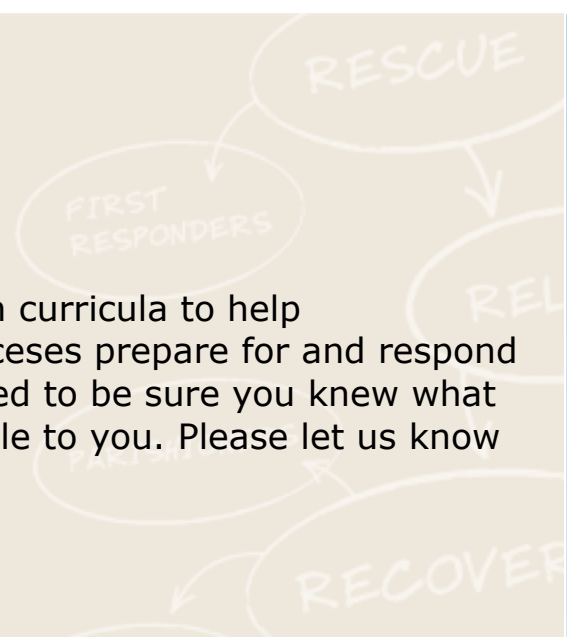
Issue #24 | January 2014

A Note from Katie

Hello everyone,

We've been working on curricula to help congregations and dioceses prepare for and respond to disasters, and wanted to be sure you knew what resources were available to you. Please let us know what you think!

Peace,
Katie



New Year's Resolutions for Disaster Preparedness and Response

If a disaster such as a devastating storm or an unprecedented act of violence struck your community this year, would your congregation be able to restore its ministries and help its vulnerable neighbors recover?

Episcopal Relief & Development's US Disaster Program is ready to help with resources to help you prepare for and respond effectively to crises in 2014. Download them for free from our Resource Library, episcopalrelief.org/resourcelibrary, and use them to adopt a few of these New Year's Resolutions for 2014:

1. Create or update a disaster plan for your congregation

An effective parish disaster plan explores how a congregation's many physical and human assets can be mobilized to respond to the needs of vulnerable people throughout the lifecycle of disaster. Episcopal



In this Issue:

Diocese of Maryland: Offering hospitality during a police emergency

Join "Ready to Serve":

[Sign up here](#) to offer your services to your vulnerable neighbors after a disaster.

Current Disaster Response Projects:

Blizzard Response
Diocese of South Dakota

Flood Response
Diocese of Colorado

Flood Response
Diocese of Pittsburgh

Volunteer Opportunities:

Easton, New Jersey and New York
Find volunteer opportunities and registration information for Hurricane Sandy-impacted areas at relief.episcopalny.org.

Diocese of Bethlehem
Volunteer opportunities include indoor and

Relief & Development's *Preparedness Planning Guides* help a parish committee plan and practice an all-hazards disaster response strategy. Resources including:

[The Comprehensive Preparedness Planning Guide For Congregations and Parishes:](#)

Includes steps for inventorying, protecting and mobilizing physical and human assets; identifying vulnerable people; anticipating response activities, and testing the first steps of a response.

[Facilitator's Guide for the Comprehensive Planning Guide:](#) Packages the work of the comprehensive guide into four meetings, with suggested language for facilitators.

[Silver-Level Preparedness Planning Guide:](#) A more abbreviated version that collects less information.

[Bronze-Level Preparedness Planning Guide:](#) Gathers only the most basic information to use after a disaster.

2. Create or update a disaster plan for your diocesan office

If a diocesan office is directly affected by a disaster, valuable records can be lost and the ability to communicate with parishes and guide response can be hampered. Diocesan staff can use Episcopal Relief & Development's [Preparedness Planning Guide for Diocesan Offices](#) to protect documents, property and people, and make plans for continuing diocesan activities should the diocesan office be relocated.

3. Be prepared to minister to young people and adults in the first days after a disaster

Children, youth and adults who have been through a disaster experience unique emotional and spiritual needs in the first days after the crisis. Episcopal Relief & Development's *Ministering After a Disaster* curricula provide age-specific lesson plans, activities and tips for developing church-based programming that provides spiritual and emotional support during those crucial early days. Reproducible handouts for parents and teachers are also included. Modules include:

- [Ministering to Children After a Disaster \(Grades K-5\)](#)
- [Ministering to Youth After a Disaster \(Grades 6-8\)](#)
- [Ministering to Teens After a Disaster \(Grades 9-12\)](#)

outdoor repair of flood-damaged homes in the Diocese of Bethlehem, PA. Contact The [Rev. John Major](#) for information on how to sign up.

Current Disaster Recovery Projects:

[HELP NOW!](#)

Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut

The Diocese of Connecticut is supporting Ben's Lighthouse, a ministry of Trinity Episcopal Church in Newtown, which is working to promote the long-term health of the community's children, youth and families and to nurture a culture of non-violence and caring.

Episcopal Diocese of Easton

The Diocese of Easton is hosting volunteer groups to repair homes damaged by Hurricane Sandy and construct new ones where existing homes cannot be repaired.

Jericho Road

A neighborhood-based, home-building organization is working to revitalize Central City, a New Orleans neighborhood recovering from Hurricane Katrina and decades of disinvestment.

Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana

Case managers are supporting affected communities as they adapt to the financial, emotional and social changes caused by Hurricane Isaac and the oil spill.

Episcopal Diocese of New York

The Diocese of New York is working with volunteers and young people from Episcopal Service Corps to rebuild homes on Staten Island following Hurricane Sandy.

Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey

The Diocese of New Jersey is working with parishes statewide to identify those falling through the cracks and creating parish-based programs to meet needs following Hurricane Sandy.

Resources for Disaster Preparedness and Response:

Visit Episcopal Relief & Development's on-line [Resource Library](#) for numerous case studies and best practices in disaster

4. Send volunteers to help communities recover

Once responders have left the scene and those affected begin to rebuild their lives, volunteers are often essential in helping vulnerable people apply for resources, rebuild homes and establish a new normal. Use our [Ready to Serve with Compassion](#) curriculum to prepare volunteers from your congregation to respond with understanding, empathy and sensitivity to the needs of people recovering from a disaster. This adaptable curriculum is appropriate for a teen or adult volunteer group responding to a disaster in a distant community.

5. Learn from other Episcopal congregations and dioceses

Check out the best practices section of our [Resource Library](#) for success stories from congregations like yours. Downloadable 2-3 page handouts feature stories, tips and best practices from US Episcopal congregations and dioceses that have responded to disaster. More are added each month.

Offering food and calm in a potentially violent police standoff

When a Baltimore-area man barricaded himself in his house after threatening other occupants, nearby St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Towson, MD, found itself the staging area for the police response. In the hours that followed, the church also became a location for the man's family and friends to gather, as well as a place where parishioners could offer compassionate presence to those involved. The daylong crisis on Dec. 18, 2013, ended without violence after the man turned himself over to police.

Sharon Tillman, diocesan disaster coordinator for the Diocese of Maryland, described St. Thomas' response as "an example of being open and available when something happens in your neighborhood, not necessarily something you plan for."

"The staff of the church was in a position to have their space utilized in an emergency situation," she said. "The offering of hospitality to those involved - victims, police, emergency workers - is sometimes all that is needed in response to a crisis, but means so much to those involved."

The Rev. Loree Penner, rector of St. Thomas'



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Healing a hurting world

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Episcopal Church, described it as "quite a day."

"I am very thankful that we were able to offer hospitality and the ministry of presence to both the family and the police," she said. The day after the incident, Penner shared with parishioners her first-hand account of how St. Thomas responded.

Offering Hospitality: "The Gift of God's Love and Welcome"

Yesterday I was on my way to a graveside service at Druid Hill for someone tangentially related to St. Thomas. As I sat in the hearse on Interstate 695, I received a message from our parish administrator. She told me that our parking lot was full of police cars, a SWAT vehicle, and ambulances. She had opened the fellowship hall for the police and rescue personnel, and the Fire Department Auxiliary was serving hot food and drinks.

There was a man who had barricaded himself into his house on Gypsy Lane. Before he did that, he had attacked his mother. She and the landlady, who lived upstairs, were rescued by the police and brought to St. Thomas.

By the time I got here, the siege had been going for a few hours. The parish administrator and I remained in the Fellowship Hall the rest of the day until the evening. Five family members and friends of the young man, including his rescued mother and landlady, were stuck here until the situation was over.

Police came and went as they got hamburgers for their coworkers who were staked out in the woods between here and the house, or for those who were stopping traffic on Providence Road and Hampton Lane.

John Windsor, our lay pastoral associate, came by to see if we were okay, and ended up staying here, talking with the family and running errands for them.

Those who were negotiating with the young man needed a place to go that was private, so they went to my office - the only warm place in the building that was available. They were there until about 5:00 or 5:30 when the young man finally gave up and came out.

We sat with the family giving thanks for the peaceful solution to what could have ended in a terrible way. The family was here, and then at a parishioner's house, until about 8:00, when they were finally able to go home and get some things, including the family

dog.

If you were to have been here about 6:00 last night, you would have seen nearly 50 police officers in the Fellowship Hall, some of them part of the SWAT and K-9 units. They came, ate, had coffee, and relaxed a bit before heading home after a very long and tense day.

St. Thomas ended up being the hub of a very different kind of ministry than we do on Sunday mornings, but ministry all the same. Whether it is offering communion on Sundays or hamburgers and hot dogs to hungry, tired policemen, we are offering hospitality - the gift of God's love, and welcome to strangers. I count it a privilege that God entrusted us with such an event.

[Click the link](#) for an unabridged, printable copy of this article, which can also be found at episcopalrelief.org/resourcelibrary.