A Note from Katie

I was in the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama last week, meeting with church leaders who have been involved with the tornado response ministries. It's an amazing effort, with different parishes all over the diocese using the gifts and strengths they have to reach out to their impacted neighbors. The responses look different in each of the communities, but they're all doing impressive work. They're still looking for volunteers, so if you can help, please contact them. For other volunteer opportunities around the country, see the right side of the page below.

Earlier in January, I got to be in Houston with our Partners in Response team. This is a group of Episcopal experts in disaster response who are available to assist church leaders, congregations and dioceses newly impacted by disaster as they begin to plan for what comes next. The Partners in Response can help these communities assess their assets and needs, and create a vision for sustained recovery. They also help impacted
Providing spiritual care after a disaster

caregivers take care of themselves and their families, to be able to continue their ministry over the long-term. The Partners in Response team meets once a year for training and discussions about new trends in the field of disaster response. This year's meeting was held in mid-January in Houston, TX at the offices of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. The team has grown to include nine members from all over the country, and the topics covered at the conference ranged from how to support caregivers to how long-term disaster recovery functions. This year, members of this group have supported congregations in dioceses all over the country, including North Dakota, Vermont and Bethlehem, and helped the local partners envision new long term disaster response programs that will be up and running throughout the coming year.

As I look back on the past year, I hope you're as proud as I am of the work we've been able to accomplish together, and are excited by the possibilities in the coming year. I thank you for everything you do for this ministry and invite you to join us in this calling in the year ahead.

Peace,
Katie

Care for the Caregiver

After disasters, opportunities for ministries abound for congregations: whether it be meeting immediate food and water needs, assisting with clothing and shelter, helping people wrestle with questions about why such events occur, or in the long-term, supporting emotional and spiritual recovery. Such assistance does not come without a price. Clergy in major disaster areas experience 75-100% turnover following disasters. First, clergy rightly experience serving those in need as their calling, but too often clergy take on the role of "Superman," overextending themselves physically, emotionally and spiritually. The outcome ranges from exhaustion, burnout and loss of personal faith - impairing their ability to continue supporting the disaster victims or their congregations - to conflict with their congregations, marital or family problems, substance abuse and suicide.

Volunteer Opportunities:

- **Diocese of Alabama**
  Tornado recovery

- **Diocese of Louisiana**
  Home rebuild program

- **Diocese of North Dakota**
  Flood recovery and home rebuild program in Minot

- **Diocese of Texas**
  Home rebuild program in Bastrop

Upcoming Trainings:

- **FEBRUARY 12-15, 2012**
  Conference for diocesan disaster coordinators on the West Coast

- **MARCH 5-8, 2012**
  Conference for diocesan disaster coordinators in Provinces I and II

- **MARCH 24, 2012**
  Disaster preparedness and response training in the Diocese of Upper South Carolina

- **MAY 2-5, 2012**
  Conference for diocesan disaster coordinators in the Midwest

- **MAY 20-23, 2012**
  Conference for diocesan disaster coordinators in Province III

- **JUNE 4-7, 2012**
  Conference for diocesan disaster coordinators in the Southeast and Gulf Coast in Atlanta, GA

Current Emergency Relief Projects:

- **HELP NOW!**
  Flood Response
  Diocese of Western Massachusetts - Williamstown, MA

Current Disaster Recovery Projects:

- **HELP NOW!**
  The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota
  All Saints Episcopal Church in Minot is winterizing flooded homes and creating the infrastructure to rebuild come spring.
How Disaster Chaplaincy Changed my Ministry

By the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia, the Rt. Rev. Greg Rickel

I use the skills I learned as a disaster chaplain every day. Pastorally speaking, every crisis is a disaster for the person who is sitting there in front of you. Some disasters happen on a community-wide or global scale and others are more personal.

Disaster Chaplaincy is not something I always knew I wanted to do. I was surprised to find that I loved it. Shortly after my chaplaincy training, an American Airlines flight ran off the runway in Little Rock, AR. On the way to the hangar where they were originally sending me, I got the call that both a parishioner and dear friend were on the flight. I was re-routed to the hospital as their priest, and though both survived, it was life-changing for me. I have carried these stories into the work I do now as a bishop.

Read more about how disaster chaplaincy influenced Bishop Greg Rickel in How Disaster Chaplaincy Changed my Ministry | Diocese of Olympia in our online resource library.

Contact Us:
Add your name to the "Ready to Serve" volunteer and skills roster at volunteer@er-d.org
Katie Mears, Program Manager kmears@er-d.org
Alison Hare, Preparedness Coordinator ahare@er-d.org
Confirm that you like this.
Click the "Like" button.

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