



Disaster Response – Success Stories

Ice Storm in Kentucky

At the end of January in 2009, Kentucky was hit with an ice storm described by Gov. Steve Beshear as the state's largest-ever natural disaster. A few days later, President Barack Obama declared 93 of Kentucky's 120 counties to be Major Disaster Areas. In the first days after the storm, most of the state was without electricity, water and heat. Roads were impassible and communication was difficult. No one was unaffected.

The Bishop of Kentucky at the time, the Rt. Rev. Ted Gulick, needed to know the extent of the damage – how parishioners were doing, how the churches and their clergy and staff had fared, and what state communities were in. The Bishop asked the Rev. Karl Lusk, then vicar of St. Thomas, Campbellsville, now rector of the Church of the Ascension in Bardstown and the Diocesan Disaster Response Coordinator, to help him. Within days of the storm they called all diocesan congregational contacts for an initial evaluation of the damage sustained by the different churches and communities around the state. Then, as soon as roads were passable, Bishop Gulick and the Rev. Lusk drove through Kentucky for a “windshield assessment” of the situation and to meet with their contacts, to see first-hand the kind of issues that were affecting communities. They needed this assessment to better inform their planning for response activities around the diocese and for proposals to fund these activities.

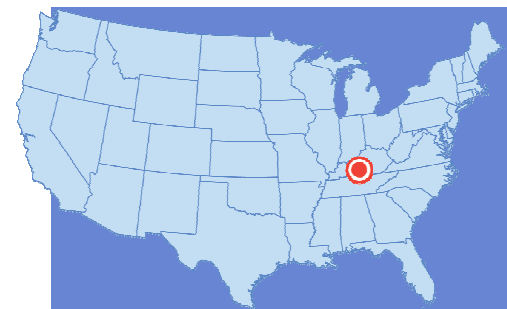
Not only did they talk to their local church contacts, but over the years Lusk had built a network of people and organizations involved in disaster response in Kentucky. Gulick and Lusk drew on these people for information as well. After he and the Bishop had spoken to both their church contacts and Lusk's networks, they knew damage was extensive and that the government had its hands full with clearing roads and trying to get public services working again.

They decided the diocese should support parish response programs and partnerships around the state to provide services to the most vulnerable in the affected communities.

For the Rev. Lusk there were two important aspects to the diocesan response effort. The first was that they tapped into their existing networks to get a better understanding of what was happening so as to better inform the program they wanted to create. The second was that they focused on helping those people



All Saints' Episcopal Center,
Leitchfield, KY



Fast Facts



DIOCESE:
Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky
DIOCESE SIZE:
approx. 9,500 baptized members
LOCATION: Kentucky
POPULATION: Approx. 4,300,000
DISASTER TYPE: Ice Storm
PEOPLE DISPLACED: 8,000

DISASTER RELIEF:
Managing church partnerships to provide aid for communities affected by the 2008 ice storm

