

August—2009

Iowa District West

Human Care

Starting a “LERT” team ministry in Your Circuit!

When a disaster occurs, whether natural or human in origin, people are affected and cry out for a compassionate, Christian response. If/when a disaster suddenly hits your community/congregation, and the shock is just overwhelming, what do you do? Who do you call?

- 1) Dial 911. Through this number, the appropriate emergency services within your community/county will be the first responders on the scene (Fire, Rescue, Ambulance, Police, etc).
- 2) If needed, your local services will enlist outside help—American Red Cross, FEMA, etc.
- 3) Call our Iowa District West—District Office (515-576-7666) and/or the IDW Disaster Coordinator—Rev. Erland Asmus—712-464-3458. I will come and help your congregational leaders assess and prioritize your rescue and recovery needs.
- 4) At this point, I can also assign a LERT (Lutheran Early Response Team) team to come and help you (clean up, debris removal, muck out, fix up, repair, etc.)

Right now, we have no active LERT Teams within our Iowa District West. My vision, however, is that we could have a LERT team that is trained and equipped to respond in these crisis situations.

The days of anonymous volunteers showing up on site are over! Local emergency services want people who are trained and able to work under their supervision and in a coordinated effort. They don't want accidents happening because untrained volunteers didn't know what they were doing. A LERT team would be a trained team, able to assist in a compassionate and correct way. Organizing a LERT team...where do we begin?

- 1) Recruit able-bodied volunteers (about 15 people) who have basic skills and the ability to work together, coordinating with each other and others in crisis situations, including a team captain, devotion leader, debriefing leader, first aid coordinator, and food coordinator for the group.
- 2) Train:
 - A) One of our trained District Disaster Responders will lead you through an 8 hour training seminar, that you will need for certification as an official LERT Responder in Iowa District West.
 - B) In addition, FEMA offers brief training courses, through their web site for certification in their National Incident Management System (NIMS).
 - C) The certification each person receives will be recognized on their personal badge, that will identify you as certified volunteers as you enter a disaster area.

What to do right now—Recruit volunteers from within your congregation. Seek congregational funding to help with your travel expenses related to your training, and future financial support related to your service. In your circuit, organize a team, that together may be trained, equipped, and ready to serve when a disaster strikes.

Then what? RSVP your reservation to me for attending one of two training seminars offered during October 2009.

Oct. 3—St. Paul Lutheran, Carroll—8 am-4 pm.

Oct. 31—Gloria Dei Lutheran, Urbandale—8 am-4 pm

“Preparing for Disaster—Congregational Preparedness

Did you know that FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) has materials which you can use on a congregational level, to help your families prepare for any emergency/disaster?

Where will you or your family be when a disaster strikes? You could be anywhere—at work, at school, or in the car. How will you find each other? Will you know if your children are safe? Your congregational convention delegate was given sample materials which can be ordered from FEMA (free) to be shared within your congregation.

These “Are You Ready” materials from FEMA can be shared within various groups within your own congregation. The materials will help you be informed, make a plan, assemble a kit, maintain your plan and kit.

If your pastor or lay delegate failed to pick up the FEMA brochures, you can get them by calling FEMA at 1-800-480-2520, or going to their websites at www.fema.gov and www.ready.gov.



Service Projects that can help Others in Need...

Are any of your groups within your congregation looking for a service project they can do? Here are a couple ideas that can be done, at minimal cost, quickly and easily in one session.

Flood Buckets—Orphan Grain Train has “Project Scrub Bucket” to assemble 5-gallon buckets filled with cleaning supplies for mucking out flood-soaked homes. Each scrub bucket holds about \$36 worth of cleaning supplies.

Basic Disaster Survival Kit— These kits hold some personal necessities that are needed when disaster strikes, including a candle, matches, purified drinking water, energy bars, first-aid items, etc, all which can be packed in a “cooler bag” available free of charge by LCMS World Relief/Human Care. For additional information, contact Rev. Glenn Merritt at 1-800-248-1930, ext. 1395.

For your questions or comments, contact:
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A prayer for your kitchen table



Lord, we thank You for Your grace,
Our needs are met here in this place.
Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest. Let these gifts to us be blest.
Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good,
And His mercy endures forever. Amen