

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

for

Saint Francis United Methodist Church

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A plan designed to help the church prepare the physical facility before a disaster strikes and then respond to the needs of the local church, community and area following a disaster.

This manual has been adapted for SFUMC from materials provided by the North Carolina United Methodist Church Disaster Response guidelines.

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INTRODUCTION

The goal of this disaster response manual is to provide an efficient means of self-sufficiency to Saint Francis United Methodist Church (SFUMC) without over extending the church's means. Following a local disaster, there are a lot of tough questions to answer when everything around the church is either in a state of destruction or normal, necessary services are not available. The key is preparation in saving much time and frustration in the days and weeks after the onset of a disaster. It is the hope that being well prepared will help SFUMC accomplish much with less frustration and anxiety.

This book will focus on steps for each of the following areas:

1. Disaster Response ... each tier has a particular focus
 - a. The church family
 - b. The community and Raleigh District
 - c. The NC Conference, NC state and national concerns
2. Securing the local church facilities before a disaster strikes

OVERVIEW OF SFUMC DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN

The SFUMC Disaster Response is designed to care for the victims of any type of disaster, including the people in our congregation and our community, in the event a disaster strikes at home or in the surrounding area. In order to do this, we will:

1. Train SFUMC volunteers in disaster response, from early responder phase through recovery phase.
2. Designate the church as a point of contact for assistance after any disaster either natural, environmental, man made or economic as long as it is structurally safe and out of danger from other influences of the disaster.
3. Immediately follow up with our congregation, identify their needs, and offer assistance from the emergency phase through recovery, paying special attention to the needs of senior citizens, persons with physical disabilities, children and youth.
 - a. This means SFUMC needs to have immediate access to families who live on specific streets or within a set of zip codes.
 - b. We will also have a calling process with assignments, questions to ask, and instructions on how to report back the results of personal contact.
4. Relay information to the SFUMC senior pastor about the needs and resources that SFUMC can provide (who passes it to the District Superintendent, and the DS then passes it on to the conference).
5. Organize volunteer teams to help feed, shelter, offer pastoral counseling, and repair teams to help secure homes in the surrounding community.
6. Cooperate with emergency response personnel and damage assessors by passing along information about needs, where the needs are and what the needs are in a particular area.
7. Cooperate with NC Conference personnel and MERCI.
8. Become a spiritual and resource hub of the community.
9. In addition to being the central worship center and gathering place, use the SFUMC facility as a feeding station, a work assignment station, a center for strategic development, a pastoral care center and other physical centers after a disaster. As a mission outreach post within an impacted area, SFUMC may be the point of contact for response teams.

10. If not impacted directly, SFUMC may be a center of mission coordination, funding, warehousing and shipping, and sending volunteer in mission teams as needed in NC.

CONGREGATION IN RESPONSE

Church Organizational Roles and Areas

Suggested support teams within the church to enable effective response:

Emergency Coordinator	* Coordination with pastor, church leaders, local governmental agencies * Communications
Congregational Contact	* Contact with every household in the congregation, identifying needs and status/situation
Administrative Coordinator	* Record keeping of services and assistance given by family, donations received * Record keeping of congregation needs and status
Supplies	* Donation Control
Pastoral Care	* Food and supplies * Prayer vigil, crisis intervention and counseling
Clean-up	* Volunteer coordination * Clean Up, salvage, and repairs
Support	* Setup for cooking and food distribution, water, sanitation, rest and recuperation
Staff Support of Pastors	* Insure the safety of the pastor and family both immediately following the disaster and during recovery.
Church Property	* Security of church property, insurance, damage/status of church property, place of worship, coordination of repairs to church property.

Emergency Coordinator:

- Notify pastor and teams of Emergency situation.
- Coordinate with all assistants and teams available.
- Coordinate with all local government and enforcement agencies.
- Keep pastor informed.
- Insure shepherds have seen to their flock and oversee administrative evacuation.
- Provide a clearinghouse for information.
- Provide guidance and support to all teams and pastor during event.

Congregational Contact

- Make contact with every household in the congregation
- Identify needs, status and situation

Administrative Coordinator

- Insure a smooth as possible operation at all times.
- Prepare and keep up to date preplans in adequate supply.
- Keep a journal of all activities.
- Help manage financial records and see to availability of funds.
- See to safekeeping of church records.
- Maintain member and shepherd records.
- Maintain video record of church and all related property inside and outside.
- Provide immediate post disaster video for insurance, historical record and public relations or call for aid.

Supplies

- Maintain pre disaster supplies and storage for food and supplies.
- Manage incoming supply trucks post disaster.
- Implement a system of distributing goods and services.
- Guard against scams and rip offs.
- Keep a journal.

Pastoral Care

- Prayer vigil for the recovery, naming congregational persons and needs
- Crisis intervention
- Counseling
- Identifying food and ongoing needs
- Follow-up with homebound persons

Clean up

- Assemble teams to clean up and put back in use all church facilities.
- Assemble teams to help clean up the community paying close attention to the elderly.
- Coordinate work teams with local agencies.
- Report any dangerous or emergency situations that arise.
- Utilize youth to gather up injured wildlife and stray pets.

Support

- Setup for cooking and food distribution.
- Setup water and sanitation.
- Setup area for rest and recuperation.
- Setup other areas as needed.

Staff Support for Pastors

- Insure the safety and housing of the pastor and family.
- Provide and insist on days off and time away for pastor and family for personal recovery and to guard against burnout.

Church Property

- Security of church property
- Coordinate with insurance companies
- Assess damage/status of church property
- Secure temporary place of worship
- Coordination of repairs to church property.

SFUMC will follow the guidelines and directives of all local authorities. We will keep a journal of everything done; record the events with picture and videos. These will be important documentation of the disaster and may be useful in obtaining more help and materials when needed. We will remember in all that we do, that God calls us to serve with our hands and hearts, following the lead of the Holy Spirit as a witness to God's love in the world.

Identify People in the Church and Community

Before a hurricane is eminent, people in the church and in the community will be identified by their ability to help, their needs and frailties rather than just where they live and whether or not they go to SFUMC.

1. A list people and their addresses will be prepared, including a city street map or a county road map handy with a numerical or alphabetical code to mark their residences or places of business.
2. Hidden resources will be named, such as the person who worked in a grocery store will know how to operate a food bank; the person who worked in retailing could help with accounting or warehousing; the schoolteacher could help with planning and the waitress could help establish a feeding station; carpenters, plumbers, mechanics, farmers, loggers. Recognize them and use these resources.
3. Lists of the resources that these people have and are willing to share during times of emergency or need. This list will include things like 4 wheel drive vehicles, tractors, heavy equipment, chain saws, food supply, generators, water supplies,

hand and power tools, commercial and/or HAM radio equipment, technical skills, mechanical skills and other various professional skills such as those who can provide basic labor.

4. Information such as the following will be available but treated as confidential:

- correct addresses and directions to residence and business
- any health problems, blood types and allergies, eye, organ or blood donor, insulin dependent diabetic
- telephone and cellular numbers
- radio frequencies and call signs
- sort list by last name, by address, by resources, by location, by skills

Example:

Jim Jones
1112 Billabong Road
Cary, NC
Single, 43
Mechanic/Logger
4WD Pickup, chain
saws, welder, 1000 gal.
water tank, generator

CareWorks for Persons With Special Needs

CareWorks ministry provides shepherding within SFUMC ... they may wish to expand their focus to include persons beyond the congregation. Their list of congregation includes:

1. Persons confined to their bed or restricted by a wheelchair or walker and persons who would need assistance in providing more than basic care for themselves
2. These individuals are assigned shepherd and an alternate, with the shepherd looking after them in times of crisis or need, including seeing that they are evacuated to where they can be cared for during a disaster.
3. Additional shepherds may need to be recruited to help with grocery shopping, doctor visits, medicine management, keeping the home clean and safe and any other tasks that the person can no longer do for themselves.
4. The CareWorks Shepherding List a process that goes on all the time and not just an emergency list for evacuation. The list does take a certain amount of responsibility off of the pastor and emergency coordinator by knowing that a responsible person is looking after those who will need caring for until family members can take over or aid in evacuation.

Identify Needs Within the Congregation

The first level of response is to the SFUMC congregation, then the community and then the state. The existing church directory is a list of the congregation and will be used by the SFUMC Disaster Response Team and SFUMC United Ministry Council members to contact all of the congregation and then report back to the Disaster Response Committee Chairperson regarding the specific needs following a disaster.

1. When hurricane warnings are issued for this area, it is recommended to contact the congregation before the storm with the purpose of identifying who will be evacuated and who will stay in the area. For those who will leave the area, contact information for their place of evacuation is important.
2. After a storm or other disaster SFUMC will concentrate on person-to-person contacts to identify conditions and needs. The calling process:
 - ii. Sections of the membership list are assigned to a leader who then contacts those persons on his/her list.
 - iii. If the person called does not answer, the caller continues until someone is reached and the list is complete. If someone should definitely be at home and there is no answer, the caller should go check on that person or family. The important part is to call until all have been reached.
 - iv. Record the person's response, noting if there are injuries, crises, and special needs and if the home is inhabitable. Use the following questions to glean a better understanding of urgency and needs:
 - Do you have any damage to your home?
 - Do you need help with hurricane related problems? What are your needs?
 - Can you continue living in your home? Do you have a place to stay?
 - Do you have access to the driveway and doors?
 - Have you contacted your insurance company and taken photos?
 - Do you know what agencies to contact for help?
 - If you are okay, are you willing to offer help to others and if so, what type?
 - v. Contact the church emergency post (at the church unless the facility is unusable) by phone or in person immediately and report your findings.

Respond to Urgent Needs

We will be prepared as early responders, to organize volunteers that can help with debris clearance, temporary safety repairs, roof coverings, food supplies, and other needs as they arise. SFUMC owns a disaster response trailer that will eventually be stocked with tools, supplies of tarps and nails, generators, mud pumps, sump pumps, ladders and various other items that will be necessary for emergency response.

For absolute minimum preparation, the trailer will be stocked with:

- 20 each 16' X 20' tarps, 10' X 12' tarps
- 4 large boxes of button cap nails
- 1000' of 1/4" nylon rope
- 6 claw hammers
- 2 wrecking bars
- 2 sledgehammers
- 2 each 4lb. Hammers
- 4 rough-cut saws
- 4 wedges
- 2 each 8' step ladders
- 2 each 14' extension ladder

All ladders will be made of fiberglass for safety reasons. Enough canned, non-perishable food and bottled water for ten people for ten days should be stored (checked every 6 months). This would be considered a minimum amount of food and water just to care for work teams if the team leaves the local area.

Volunteer teams will be organized and routed on assignments in response to the needs of the congregation and in collaboration with the District UMC churches through the Raleigh District Disaster Response Task Force. Under no circumstances will church teams be sent until the NC Emergency Management gives clearance for volunteers to be on site (i.e., power lines are no longer a safety issue).

Volunteers can bring their own chain saws for debris removal, but each volunteer must operate their own chain saw. SFUMC will not assume responsibility for persons using this type of equipment.

Volunteers must sign a waiver of liability and medical information forms, leaving a copy of their driver's license and health insurance cards with SFUMC mission director prior to being dispatched on a volunteer team.

PROTECTING SFUMC FACILITIES AND DATA

The following text on protecting SFUMC facilities and data is the recommendation of the NC Conference.

Protection of the church is imperative. It is not possible to bodily protect every board and window of the church building, but steps to protect important records and items within the building can be taken. As for protecting the building, MERCI recommends that unless SFUMC is the only structure left standing or there is some well defined strategic reason to designate it as such, one of the most important rules to follow is that SFUMC should not be designated as an evacuation shelter or relocation center.

Trustee Responsibility for Church Property:

The Board of Trustees and the appointed pastors are responsible for the local church facilities. However, it is important to assign specific responsibility for each of these areas and to protect vital church records.

- Other than the pastor, who is responsible for securing the doors and windows and shutting off the gas, water and electricity?
- Who is responsible for gathering records or valuables?
- Who is responsible for keeping inventory and insurance up to date?
- Who will check for damages after a storm? If the church is damaged, where will you meet for worship?
- Can you evacuate your people?
- How will you take care of yourself and how will you take care of others?
- What do you have to work with?
- How will you communicate and whom do you tell what you need?
- How are church records protected? Is computer data backed up and regularly stored in a safe off-site location?

Use of SFUMC Facilities as a Shelter

If SFUMC is offered to be designated as an emergency shelter, an approved agency, such as the American Red Cross, will first need to inspect the building and facilities and either accept or reject it as a shelter. If it is accepted as a shelter and if there is a disaster in the area the approving agency will take control of the church facility and after the imminent danger has passed, volunteers will take over and they will operate as they need to out of the church.

It is important to think ahead on this decision because it is possible that the pews will be removed from the sanctuary for conversion to a warehouse, a hospital, a clinic, administrative facilities or even an emergency nursing home. SFUMC will no longer have control of anything until the controlling agency decides to close up or move on to other facilities. SFUMC leadership needs to be very cautious about letting any agency have any control over the church building and grounds under our sphere of responsibility. Everyone sees the church as the central point of the community. This will be true of those who do not attend and who do not profess to believe. Regardless of the emergency, the church will be where everyone turns for help and information. If SFUMC is a reliably strong building if it has not suffered serious damage and if it is not in danger of

suffering major damage, then it may be used as an *emergency* shelter. Emergency shelter is for people who are caught out in the storm, are suffering damage to the building they are in and can get to the church or if they do not know where else they can go.

Securing Church Records

Records must be protected if there is a warning with time for gathering certain items. Computerized records should be backed up each time they are updated; three different people should maintain at least three copies of the backed up files. If a lap top computer is available and has adequate memory, download files and records so that you will have an active record system that can be set up in a remote site.

If the church system is destroyed, the importance of this simple protective measure will make an important difference. Some disasters give no warning and no area is exempt from possible destruction. This stands true even if for those who live in an area that has never been affected. Natural disasters know no direction or boundaries.

Securing Other Assets

If there is prior warning of hurricane and flooding, protect more than church files.

- Place important books and records that are too bulky to remove on top of the highest furniture available that will not easily float or upset in high water.
- Put computers and other movable electronics on the highest object that is sturdy and will not float easily if they cannot be evacuated. This will give a marginal chance of saving them if the water does not get over 2 or 3 feet deep.
- Cover every thing that is placed for protection with 6-8 mil plastic. Use several layers in case one or two are pierced or torn. Use duct tape to seal and secure the plastic.
- As a last measure, place a tarp over protected items to add one last measure of protection in case the roof is lost or windows break.
- Raise anything of value as high off the floor as possible. This includes furniture, pew pads, Bibles, hymnals and anything of value that is easily movable.
- The altar cross, candles, chalice and paten should be evacuated with the pastor or other designated person. These items will be handy in setting up a worship center if the church is destroyed or heavily damaged.

Trustees will not take chances in occupying a damaged church building until it has been inspected and you have written verification that it is safe to occupy the building. Remember, the building is only a church house. The people, the Body of Christ, are the church.

Insurance policies on the building, contents and property should be reviewed and updated annually. Many items of definite value are purchased and never added to inventory lists or covered by insurance. There should be an inventory of every thing in SFUMC that has any value. Make a photographic inventory with still or video camera. Make three copies and give them to three different responsible persons.

SFUMC AS A SPIRITUAL CENTER

If the church is not heavily damaged and is safe to occupy, it must remain open as a spiritual center. Even if the whole area is demolished, there will be a need to conduct some sort of Sunday Service. It may be for prayer, for gathering to see who and what is left standing, for information passing and for just what ever is necessary. But, the service must be held in the face of all odds, the people will need it and they will depend on it.

The church will become the local spiritual center as well as the focal point of any response/recovery efforts. The churches outside the affected area will be the rallying point for volunteers, supplies, administration, and prayer vigils. Keep the doors open to the spiritual refuge.

In the event that the church facilities are declared unsafe for any reason, the pastor and available members of the Board of Directors and or Trustees will select a site where worship can be held. If the church should fall victim to the disaster and not be safe for occupancy or remain only as a pile of holy rubble, at least find a tree, tent or awning to gather under. Set up a homemade altar and make a cross to adorn it. The pastor and the victims will need this Holy Ground to turn to at this time.

Take the time before an emergency or some disaster strikes to covenant with other churches, including other denominations, so that you may enjoy that cooperative atmosphere in the wake of some disaster. The covenant with other churches will make your program stronger and more efficient especially when outside help is days or weeks away.

DISASTERS – NATURAL AND HUMAN GENERATED

We are not invulnerable to disaster. Depending on our geographical location, we can suffer from snow, ice, flood, extreme heat, hurricane, tornado, tsunami, earthquake, fire and strong wind. We must also consider the possibility of bus, rail, aircraft, hazardous materials and nuclear accidents, electrical blackouts, droughts and other disasters such as layoffs, plant closings, loss of wages due to disasters and also bombings and school shootings. This program is not just about hurricanes and storing up some batteries, a radio, some water and a few cans of beans. This program is about response to the neighborhood and community when some disaster strikes. It makes no difference if the disaster affects 10 people or a million people, the basic preparatory methods and initial response and information gathering are the same