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SEND TO FRIEND



Lamplight

A Newsletter of the US Disaster Program



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

Issue #18 | July 2013

A Note from Katie

I've just returned from a trip to North Dakota, where [a quarter of the homes in Minot flooded in 2011](#). The diocese and a local parish have partnered with us to respond to those in greatest need in that community. In another part of the state, the diocese and another local parish have been are developing a program to work with the [Spirit Lake Nation as it responds to widespread flooding that's been worsening over the past decade](#).

The media primarily focuses on disasters immediately after they occur. But it was striking to me, once again, how important the Church's work really is after the news cameras go home. That's true in North Dakota, but also in New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Texas and now Oklahoma as well. Our congregations are part of their communities for the long term, and we remain in partnership with them for the long term.

Volunteer opportunities for mission teams take months to develop, so Oklahoma is not yet ready for out-of-town volunteers, but the Hurricane Sandy-



In this Issue:

Oklahoma City, OK
Tornado Response in the Diocese of Oklahoma

News:

Episcopal Relief & Development response during tornado season

Episcopal Relief & Development is working alongside dioceses in Oklahoma and Texas to meet the needs of their communities during tornado season. [Read about how the response has progressed.](#)

Join "Ready to Serve"

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

impacted areas. Please be in touch with the [Sandy regional volunteer coordinator](#) for more information about how your parish might be able to serve.

Peace,
Katie

The Diocese of Oklahoma Mobilizes in the Aftermath of May's Tornadoes

In the wake of May's tornadoes in the Oklahoma City metropolitan region, the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma and its congregations are tapping into a vast network of outreach ministries and relationships to connect the Church's many gifts to the community's recovery needs.

Between May 20 and May 31 the region experienced a series of tornadoes and storms that took nearly 50 lives and destroyed thousands of homes. Episcopal Relief & Development sent the Rev. Deacon Elaine Clements and Rev. Tamara Torres McGovern to the Diocese of Oklahoma in June to help diocesan leadership determine how best to support recovery in the region. Clements said they found a diocese already heavily mobilized in meeting the needs of the region's most vulnerable, with plans to organize a coordinated long-term response.

"In Oklahoma, I have learned, the ethos is about neighbor helping neighbor, and everybody pulls in and helps who they can," said Clements, who is part of Episcopal Relief & Development's Partners in Response team.

In the days after the storms, the diocese had already organized volunteers to help clean out homes and clear debris from the cemetery in Moore. Clergy held a funeral service for pets and livestock lost in the storm. One local rector, with support from the diocese, had been making daily visits to a local shelter to check on residents. She handed out gifts cards and helped meet other needs from securing rental assistance to replacing dentures.

At *Santa Maria Virgen*, an Oklahoma City parish with more than 600 Hispanic members, parishioners have already begun to seek out vulnerable neighbors who might have difficulty accessing storm recovery resources because of documentation issues or language barriers.

Clements said *Santa Maria's* many assets make it particularly poised to respond. Its connection to the Hispanic community, existing outreach activities, such

upon to volunteer.

Current Emergency Response Projects:

Tornado Response
Diocese of Oklahoma

Volunteer Opportunities:

Diocese of Bethlehem

Volunteer opportunities include indoor and outdoor repair of flood-damaged homes in the diocese of Bethlehem, PA. Contact the [Rev. John Major](#) for information on how to sign up.

Dioceses of [Easton, Long Island, Newark, New Jersey, New York](#)

Volunteer information and registration for Hurricane Sandy-impacted areas now online.

Diocese of [North Dakota](#)

All Saints Episcopal Church in Minot, North Dakota, is looking for volunteer groups to rebuild homes. Contact the Rev. Mary Johnson, the volunteer coordinator, to schedule your trip [now!](#)

Diocese of [Texas](#)

Home rebuild program in Bastrop

Current Disaster Recovery Projects:

[HELP NOW!](#)

Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem

Trinity Episcopal Church in West Pittston is working with ecumenical partners in Northeast Pennsylvania to support neighbors affected by flooding as a result of Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee in September 2011.

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 can not be repaired.

as feeding ministries and an English as a Second Language program, and parishioners' skills in building and construction, make it uniquely suited to take a lead role in the recovery, she said. Episcopal Relief & Development is partnering with the Diocese and *Santa Maria Virgen* to provide immediate assistance for those struggling to access other systems, including temporary housing, food and medical supplies.

Emmanuel Episcopal Church in the town of Shawnee, already had a considerable outreach to the sizeable homeless population in Pottawotamie County. The parish, with a worshipping congregation of about 125, offers a bag lunch program five days a week and is a food distribution site. It also works in cooperation with a number of other churches to house homeless families and provide them with case management services. In the wake of the tornadoes, the church is planning to work with community officials to hold community dinners in order to attend to people's emotional well-being and to connect them to social services and other supports.

Clements noted that the diocese's participation in a strong ministerial alliance, its history of advocacy on behalf of marginalized people and its relationships with community members and political leaders will serve it well as it continues to develop its plan to help the wider region face the long-term task of recovery.

Staying Safe in Stormy Weather

With tornado and hurricane season upon us, it's time to prepare for stormy weather. And that means having a plan in place to keep you and your family safe should the weather get severe.

According to the National Severe Storms Laboratory, about 1200 tornadoes hit the United States each year. While they can strike anytime, tornados are typically most prevalent during May and early June in the Southern Plains, throughout the spring in the Gulf Coast and in June and July in the upper Midwest.

Meanwhile hurricane season runs from June 1 to November 30 in the Atlantic and from May 15 to November 30 in the Eastern Pacific.

To be prepared, everyone is encouraged to keep a kit of emergency supplies, food, water and cash; to make a plan for reaching emergency contacts, and to have access to reliable storm information.

Get a kit

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 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 are working with parishes statewide to identify those falling through the cracks and creating parish-based programs to meet needs following Hurricane Sandy.

Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota

All Saints Episcopal Church in Minot is coordinating with volunteers to rebuild flooded homes.

Episcopal Diocese of Texas

The diocese and Calvary Episcopal Church is working with its ecumenical partners in Bastrop to rebuild homes destroyed by the fires in the fall of 2011.

New Resources for Disaster Relief:

[Working with Children After a Disaster: Tips for Parents and Teachers](#)

[The Sunday After a Disaster](#)

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- Dedicate a box to useful items such as a first aid kit, extra keys, a flashlight and batteries, sanitation supplies and a multi-purpose tool.
- Overstock your pantry with about three days' worth of non-perishable food.
- Keep on hand about a gallon of water per person in your household.
- Tuck away three-days' worth of cash, including bills in small denominations and some change. Don't rely on ATMs, which may be out of service in the aftermath of a storm.

Make a plan

- Make sure you and your family members memorize the phone number of someone outside your immediate area, whom you can call in case of an emergency. Don't rely on the data stored in your cell phone, which can be lost or out of commission during a storm.
- For additional important numbers and information, make a card to carry in your wallet, and provide copies for your family members.
- Master the art of texting. Even when cell phone calls won't go through, text messages often keep working.

Be informed

- Keep a radio and fresh batteries on hand for picking up news on a storm when the electricity goes out. Be familiar with the name of your county and surrounding communities so you can track news of the path of the storm.
- Sign up to have weather alerts texted to your cell phone. [The National Weather Association website](#) provides a list of organizations that offer the service.

For more lists and tips on how to prepare for an emergency, download a copy of [Tips and Lessons: Family Preparedness](#) from [Episcopal Relief & Development's Resource Library](#).

But make sure you do it before the electricity goes out.

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