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“Be dressed ready for service  
 and keep your lamps burning.”  
 -Luke 12:35



A Newsletter of the US Disaster Program

Issue #6 - March 2011

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## A Note from Katie

To help your congregation prepare for a disaster, we've gathered great preparedness planning guides from around the country and combined them to create a template that should be useful for any congregation. You'll find three levels of plans [here](#), from basic to advanced, to help you walk your church or ministry through the process of identifying your community's risks and assets, and some steps you might want to take now to be of more service to your parishioners and community after a disaster. Please use these materials and let us know what you think.

Wishing you a blessed Lent,  
Katie

### NEWS

*2011 Lenten Cycle of Prayer is online!*

[Pray](#) for Episcopal Relief & Development's partner's and programs in the U.S. and around the world each day during Lent with the 2011 Cycle of Prayer.

*Preparedness Planning Guide online!*

## Making Preparedness a Priority in the Diocese of Easton

Suzanne Moore lived through Hurricane Isabel, which hit Maryland in mid September 2008, leaving in its wake \$948 million worth of damage. This

Use this online [guide](#) to walk your congregation through the process of disaster preparedness planning.

### **Join Ready to Serve!**

Offer your services to your vulnerable neighbors after a disaster. Sign up [online](#) to be called upon to volunteer if a disaster affects your area.

### **We are building up our resource library!**

Now you can go [online](#) to find tools and stories about preparedness planning and response programming. Do you have a document that might help another community? Do you have a story to share? Please send them so that knowledge can be shared around the country! Email Alison at [ahare@er-d.org](mailto:ahare@er-d.org).

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## **Trainings**

March 12 & 19:  
Disaster training with the Episcopal Charities of New York

May 16 - 18: Training for Diocesan Disaster Coordinators on the West Coast

May 31 - June 3:  
Training for Diocesan Disaster Coordinators in Hurricane-prone areas

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## **Current Emergency Relief Projects:**

**Pass Christian, MS**  
Oil spill recovery, Trinity Church

**Portage, WI**  
Flood recovery, St.

experience created in Moore a passion for disaster preparedness. Moore said, "When you walk outside and realize how many people have been devastated [by a disaster], you just can't walk away." That energy prompted her to begin to work with the Rt. Rev. James J. Shand in 2008 to promote disaster preparedness amongst congregations.



Dr. Lee McCabe speaking at a clericus meeting

She began her work by establishing a relationship with John's Hopkins University, which could provide training in preparedness planning and psychological first aid. Moore's job was to recruit parishioners to these trainings. She began by posting regular articles in the *Eastern Shore Episcopalian* - she thought preparedness would grow into a grassroots movement that would begin with interest from congregations. The problem was, no one signed up.

When she was unable to drum up interest through the congregations, Moore realized she would have to get clergy involved first. She first tried to interest clergy by attending the monthly clericus meetings. She attended a number of meetings, going to one herself and taking an Isabel survivor with her to another. She spoke to the clergy again after the Bishop mentioned in his remarks at Diocesan Convention that congregational disaster preparedness would be one of the diocese's four goals, and still clergy were slow to respond. The demands placed on clergy are numerous and preparing for a disaster is a lot like writing a will - it requires facing an overwhelming and unpleasant situation. At one meeting an older priest looked up at her wearily and said, "Don't you know we just don't want to deal with this?"

Because of such low interest, Moore and John's Hopkins were forced to postpone the training they had planned for the spring. But Moore continued in her quest. Bishop Shand realized that Moore needed support, and recruited a committee to aid her in this work. Next, Moore brought Dr. Lee McCabe from Johns Hopkins University to another clericus meeting. As an academic from a respected institution he could command the clergy's attention as he explained the vital role churches can play in disaster preparedness and response. He also spoke to them about psychological first aid and pastoral care, a ministry clergy are familiar with and feel is their strength. Through this discussion the clergy were able to understand their role in this larger process, especially in spiritual and emotional health, and they were interested. Disasters and preparing for them wasn't something they had to "deal with," it was a service they could provide to the greater community and they committed to supporting preparedness within their congregations.

With support from clergy, the rescheduled training finally took

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### **Current Disaster Recovery Programs:**

**The Episcopal Community Services of Louisiana (ECSLA):** supports oil spill-affected communities as they adapt to the financial, emotional and social changes caused by the oil spill through case management and supporting community resilience.

**Jericho Road:** a neighborhood-based home-building organization working to revitalize Central City, a New Orleans neighborhood recovering from Hurricane Katrina and decades of disinvestment. Jericho Road planted an [urban fruit orchard](#) in late November as part of its continuing Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts.

**The Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi:** expands home-ownership opportunities on the Gulf Coast through the diocese's Hallelujah Housing program, and provides financial education and assistance through a parish-based ministry.

**Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee:** St. Luke's Community House is now a Restore the Dream Center site and serves the neighborhood of West Nashville by supporting home reconstruction, providing case management services and care for the care-

place. Representatives from 18 out of 39 parishes attended in addition to diocesan office staff. It was a success. Now Moore and the committee continue to visit congregations, making sure they receive the support they need in order to maintain interest in disaster preparedness and helping congregations move forward with their plans. Moore said, "The work isn't over once people get trained and plans are created; churches need continued support from the diocese." This is what the committee is now trying to provide. In addition, the Disaster Committee created a video with the support of Bishop Shand that highlights the need for preparedness.

This has been a three-year long quest for Moore and a two-year long journey for the committee. For much of that time they felt like the lone voice in the wilderness. Now, their hard work is beginning to pay off and congregations around the diocese are working to become better prepared.

In early January Moore attended the Diocesan Disaster Coordinator conference for Provinces I, II and III hosted by Episcopal Relief & Development. She was able to provide an experienced voice in the training, sharing her long and difficult journey drumming up interest in her Diocese. Moore believes that dioceses newly embarking on this ministry can learn from her mistakes. First, she wants others to understand that creating interest in this ministry can be difficult. She said, "Churches have lots and lots of things on their plates, you need to be able to answer their questions and be very clear about why preparedness is important." Second, preparedness ministry needs to have the support of clergy - use your clericus, clergy conferences and other venues to get your message across. Finally, Moore said, "While this feels daunting at first - there really is life after and it's so sweet."

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## **Meeting Hidden Needs During Ice Storms in Rural North Dakota**

According to the Rev. Canon John Floberg, Canon for Multicultural and Central Area Ministries and Diocesan Disaster Coordinator for the Diocese of North Dakota, there is an important lesson to learn from winter storms: an ice storm feels like a small event - you don't see blocks and blocks of flattened buildings like you would after a hurricane. However, even though major physical damage may not be apparent, ice storms can cause considerable personal



Canon Floberg using an industrial snowblower

giver trainings.

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### Contact Us:

To add your name to the "Ready to Serve" volunteer and skills roster:

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loss when freezer contents spoil and thousands of dollars are spent running generators for several weeks.

North Dakota was hit with a major ice storm in January 2010 that left 14,000 people in the area without electricity, many for up to a month. Immediately after the storm, Floberg jumped in his truck and drove door-to-door to ask families if they were OK and if there was anything the Church could help them with. They told him that what they needed help with most was food lost from freezers that had been off, and paying for the diesel needed to power generators.

This was the case of a gentleman the Diocese was able to assist. It's common for people in this part of the country to slaughter a cow or pig to draw on for the duration of winter, so it can be a huge problem if the freezer stops working. One rural North Dakota man lost \$1,200 worth of meat when his freezer broke down due to power surges caused by ice build-up on electrical lines outside. He had no way to replace his food, but with funds from Episcopal Relief & Development, the Diocese of North Dakota was able to help him replace his freezer and restock it for the remainder of the winter.

The Diocese's response to this disaster comprised a variety of programs. In addition to helping vulnerable members of the community with unexpected costs from the storm, they also purchased an industrial snowblower. Homes and businesses in the area are usually heated with propane, and aside from comfort, a minimal amount of heat is required to prevent water pipes from freezing and bursting. However, many times people can't clear paths through the snow from the main roads to their homes, and the trucks that deliver this propane can't reach them; without the delivery, and its protective heat, the resulting flood damage can run into the thousands of dollars. In these cases Floberg and a team of volunteers accompanied propane trucks and cleared paths with the snow blower so that trucks could reach homes. Floberg and his team would set out with the trucks, stopping many times when people flagged them down and clearing paths to homes that clearly looked like they needed the help. In this way he was able to prevent worse problems for the families in these homes.

By the time three months later, in April, when a snow storm hit on Good Friday, the Diocese of North Dakota had established relationships within their community so they could find out what community members needed in the aftermath of the disaster. They also had the snowblower, and immediately got to work clearing paths for propane trucks again. A pressing concern for this storm, though, was maintaining the regular activities of the Church. One of Floberg's parishioners died on the first day of the storm, and they needed to hold a memorial service. Floberg called Lowe's and purchased a generator. Then they were able to perform the funeral, as well as use the generator for lights and heating, inviting the community members to wait out the storm with them until they had electricity again.

For Floberg, the importance of disaster response ministry lies

in the people the Church can serve. Many times individuals, especially those who are more vulnerable to the negative effects of disasters, like the poor, elderly or ill, slip through the cracks and don't receive the assistance they need to recover from disasters. Floberg said, "The Church can fill in the gaps left by state, county and tribal agencies. We can meet individual needs others can miss."

If you would like to learn more about North Dakota's January 2010 ice storm response, see ["Responding to Ice Storms in Rural North Dakota"](#) in our online resource library.

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