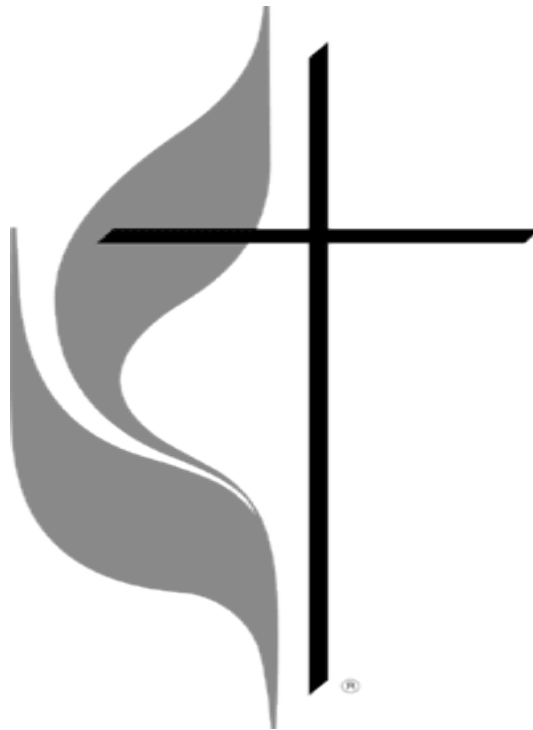


**MASTER PLAN  
FOR  
DISASTER PREPAREDNESS,  
RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY**



[www.gbgm-umc.org/disasterteam](http://www.gbgm-umc.org/disasterteam)

**PACIFIC NORTHWEST ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
OF  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

Updated and revised by Rev. Dr. L. George Abrams and  
the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference Disaster Response Team

March 2009

**MASTER PLAN**  
**FOR**  
**DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND**  
**RECOVERY**

PACIFIC NORTHWEST ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Revised March, 2009

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the Reverend George C. Brown, member of the UMCOR Catastrophic Disaster Response Committee and Elder in the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, for initial development of this master plan. The master plan was updated in 2000 by Roger and Mardel Tanquist. The most recent update was accomplished in 2009 by the Disaster Response Team consisting of Rev. Stanley Norman, Brett DeMond, and Rev. Dr. L. George Abrams et al..

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The above rights are also extended to any non-profit (501(c)(3)) group operating in the field of disaster preparedness, response, relief and recovery.

Below is a partial listing of those who have provided advice, encouragement, support and assistance.

Adventist Community Services  
The American Red Cross  
Christian Reformed World Relief Committee  
Church of the Brethren  
Church World Service  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Mennonite Disaster Services  
Emergency Management Institute  
Salvation Army  
Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management  
Washington State Department of Community Development  
UMCOR Catastrophic Disaster Team Members  
United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)  
Natural Hazards Research and Applications Center  
National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

## SECTION 1

### QUICK SUMMARY FOR MASTER DISASTER PLAN

Disasters have happened, and disasters will happen. We cannot stop them. We can prepare, and thus reduce the amount of damage and disruption that they might cause. We can plan, so that we will have an idea of what we shall do before, during, and after a disaster. We can hold onto our faith in God and our confidence in one another, that whatever comes our way, we will survive, and we will grow into a new and good future reality. We know that always God is with us. Following recovery from any disaster, things will not be returned to the way they were before, and there is some doubt that they ever really were that way.

Disasters have three phases: RESCUE, RELIEF, and RECOVERY.

- RESCUE (or Emergency) is the phase where people are being removed from danger and attempts are being made to reduce the damage due to weather.
- RELIEF (or Cleanup) is the phase where people are being cared for in shelters and fed from mass kitchens.
- RECOVERY is the phase where people are rebuilding homes and restocking cupboards and closets.

The rule of thumb is that Relief takes 10 times as long as Rescue, and Recovery takes 10 times as long as Relief. Thus, if a flood (for example) caused people to be rescued for 5 days, then at least some people would be in shelters for 50 days, and recovery would be expected to take around 500 days or almost two years.

#### BEFORE THE NEXT DISASTER

Develop a family plan, a church plan, and a neighborhood plan.  
Be aware of community agencies and their plans.  
Review the Master Disaster Plan.

#### WHEN A DISASTER OCCURS

- TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY
- EACH PASTOR should contact the office of their District Superintendent (D.S.). Keep that office informed as to the scope of the disaster in your area, for your church members, and for your facilities. Continue to keep the office of the D.S. informed as more information becomes available.
- If the District Superintendent's Office cannot be reached, contact the District Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator (DDPRC) in your District if your District has one, or the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator (CDPRC).
- Disaster donations should be sent to the PNW Conference Treasurer's Office and/or to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

## SECTION 2

### MASTER PLAN FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

#### A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to provide a reference for and guidance to the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church as it prepares for and responds to disasters of all kinds. This document is for local congregations, clergy of the Conference, District Superintendents and the Episcopal leadership. The availability and familiarity with a Disaster Response plan is the first step on the road to recovery when a disaster strikes. A Disaster Preparedness and Response plan helps provide the means for Christians who are called “United Methodists” to respond to human suffering in the most appropriate way for them when disaster happens.

Not every community which experiences a disaster will have taken steps to prepare to meet such trauma. Through preparedness and planning, disaster response can be more effective and less chaotic.

#### B. COMPONENTS OF DISASTER PLANNING

##### 1. EDUCATE

Educate and build awareness about:

- a. The kinds of disasters which are likely to happen (fire, flood, explosion, tornado, toxic waste contamination, earthquake, hazardous materials spill, or any combination of these),
- b. Measures to prevent, mitigate (or take steps to lessen) and prepare for disasters, as well as respond.

##### 2. PREVENT

Prevent those disasters which can be prevented in the first place. Beyond home and institutional safety measures, such things as human-caused technological disasters like toxic waste contamination or civil strife which unlike “natural” disasters, are fully preventable.

##### 3. MITIGATE

For those disasters which will occur, mitigate the danger wherever and whenever possible. Examples range from such simple steps at home as anchoring water heaters or heavy appliances to reduce the damage from earthquakes, to community efforts dealing with building codes and developmental regulations. During the process of recovery, we must be alert to ways to make changes so that similar circumstances in the future would not cause the same level of damage.

##### 4. PREPARE

Prepare for disaster (it is not “if” a disaster will happen, but “when” it will happen) and the recovery of survivors and communities—not only physically, but spiritually and emotionally as well; it is imperative to deal with the whole person (and whole community). Disasters immerse otherwise orderly lives into chaos; be prepared to care.

## Master Plan for Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

### 5. RESPOND

Respond to those affected or stricken by disaster – not just “our own,” but anyone so affected or stricken – especially those who are most vulnerable: children, the elderly, those with handicapping conditions, the impoverished and anyone else with special needs. Effective response is keyed to proper and adequate preparation. Plan your response (or that of your church) to integrate itself into the on-going development of your community or region, not to run counter to it or to disrupt it.

### C. DEFINITION OF A DISASTER

The definition of a disaster as adopted by the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) for the purpose of this Master Plan is “a severe disruption of personal and community life, involving a significant number of people and causing spiritual, emotional, physical and social crises to which the Church can respond with God’s love and help.”

A disaster is an event which in a matter of seconds, minutes, hours, days, etc., damages the ability to sustain life without assistance. Such disasters may include: tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, fires, earthquakes, explosions, toxic spills, nuclear accidents, civil unrest and other community-wide occurrences. These disasters may be either natural or human in origin.

### D. THE OBJECTIVES OF DISASTER RESPONSE WITHIN THE CONFERENCE

1. To establish a network throughout and within the bounds of the Conference that will enable an organized response to the suffering of persons, caused by natural or civil disaster.
2. To be the point at which work in conjunction with the United Methodist Committee on Relief may begin in the event of a natural or civil disaster and to provide pertinent information relating to the disaster and to assess immediate needs at the site of the disaster.
3. To identify specific locations where local church property and church-related property have suffered damage.
4. To assist in the dispensation of emergency aid and funds contributed by UMCOR, local churches and individuals to those persons who are the victims of natural and civil disasters, regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, or economic condition.
5. To work with ecumenical agencies and other denominational agencies plus governmental and non-governmental relief agencies in responding to natural and civil disasters.
6. To work with the Conference and Districts in the enlistment of persons to serve in the positions of District and sub-District Disaster Response coordinators and assist them in the enlistment of volunteers willing to help in the event of a natural or civil disaster.

### E. PATTERN OF DISASTERS

Every disaster has a life cycle, passing through understandable and predictable phases. The needs that arise are directly related to the progress of the persons affected by the disaster with respect to this cycle. Often, a sudden, violent technologically spawned disaster will consist of two stages: the response or rescue phase moves right into the recovery phase.

#### 1. The RESPONSE (or rescue, or emergency) Phase

This is the initial phase, and usually lasts between two and four days following the disaster event. During this phase search and rescue efforts are most pressing. Persons need emergency shelter and food. Family and friends need to be contacted. Emergency medical care is needed for the injured and spiritual counseling for those who grieve.

## Master Plan for Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

### 2. The RELIEF (or clean-up) Phase

The relief phase generally will last ten times as long as the Response Phase, or about 20 to 40 days. Victims begin to return to their homes to determine the extent of their losses and the damage to their property. The phase is characterized by the need for cleanup, making temporary repairs, and securing valuables. At this time damage and losses need to be assessed so victims can begin to plan for long term recovery. Community-wide efforts focus on the future; there is a general emotional high as initial relief efforts are launched. Ecumenical efforts to enable recovery and reconstruction to happen are organized.

### 3. The RECOVERY (or rebuilding) Phase

The recovery phase is generally ten times as long as the previous phase, or from 200 to 400 days long. It is not uncommon for recovery efforts to last as long as two years in extremely serious disasters. Permanent repairs to homes are now being made. People will begin to find things that simply cannot be repaired or replaced. As folks begin to make adjustments, learning to accept the permanent losses and changes that have occurred, deep emotional and spiritual scars begin to appear, and depression and loss of energy become apparent. Many affected persons will require help and support in order to begin to work through the anger, isolation, loneliness and losses that have occurred.

## F. CATEGORIZING DISASTERS

### 1. The Local or Localized Disaster

A local disaster is a situation where a limited number of households are involved, and may include such events as an isolated tornado or sudden flooding over a limited geographical area. Many times these are described as being within the abilities of a local town or its churches and relief agencies to provide relief, even though it may be beyond the abilities of a single church. In this situation, it is important for local pastors to advise the District Superintendent when a small relief effort exceeds the local congregation's resources. The District Disaster Response Coordinator or Conference Disaster Response Coordinator can help provide guidance on methods that can be employed for mounting an effective relief effort, ecumenically, either locally or within the District as the need dictates.

### 2. The Presidentially Declared Disaster

The presidentially declared disaster is usually regional in scope (with the possible exception of extremely severe, yet localized disasters). Usually there is widespread displacement of families. These are of such magnitude that they are beyond the ability of local churches to respond. Major disasters will receive emergency relief agencies that activate and organize emergency relief. Usually emergency housing shelters are opened and emergency feeding facilities are opened.

A regional disaster can be political in nature, which can account for some seemingly major disaster not receiving a presidential declaration while similar events do. When a presidential declaration is made, there will be federal relief assistance in addition to the usual array of non-governmental relief agencies.

In major disasters, declared or not, the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator, the United Methodist Volunteer in Mission (UMVIM) Coordinator, and the appropriate District Disaster Response Coordinator, if available, become involved without waiting for a call for help. They will be in close communication with each other and with the Bishop. The Conference Disaster Response Coordinator and the UMVIM Coordinator will assist the appropriate District Superintendent(s) in organizing the church's response and provide advice and counsel to the local churches in the affected areas. Part of their responsibility will be to become acquainted with the other helping agencies and to coordinate the work of all the churches within the framework of a general relief effort. The Conference Disaster Response Coordinator will

assist the Bishop in making an Episcopal appeal for relief funds both throughout the Conference as well as to UMCOR.

### 3. The National Response Plan

Homeland Security Presidential Directive Five identifies steps for improved coordination in response to disasters or other major events. It requires the Department of Homeland Security to coordinate with other federal departments and agencies and state, local, and tribal governments to establish a National Response Plan (NRP), now called a National Response Framework (NRF), and a National Incident Management System (NIMS).

NIMS encourages the use of the Incident Command System (ICS) and Unified Command when appropriate. ICS is a standardized on-scene emergency management construct specifically designed to provide for the adoption of an integrated organizational structure that reflects the complexity and demands of single or multiple incidents, without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.

ICS is the combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure, designed to aid in the management of resources during incidents. It is used for all kinds of emergencies and is applicable to the smallest incident as well as large and complex incidents. ICS is used by various jurisdictions and functional agencies, both public and private to organize field-level incident management operations. UMCOR has adopted ICS for its disaster response.

The Pacific Northwest Conference Disaster Response and Preparedness Team has adopted ICS for its structure. The basic ICS structure is an Incident Commander (which UMCOR calls an "Incident Coordinator") and four basic positions of Planning, Operations, Logistics, and Finance. To those positions, PNW Disaster Response has added the positions of Assistant Incident Coordinator, Pastoral Care, Communications, Interagency Relations, UMVIM Disaster Volunteer Manager, Mitigation, Volunteer Management, Case Management, Caring Ministry, and Donations Management.

Under the governmentally planned response in the National Response Framework, there are 15 Emergency Support Functions (ESF). The ESFs represent those types of federal assistance that a state is most likely to need because of the overwhelming impact of the disaster. ESF missions are designed to supplement state and local response efforts. They include (1) Transportation, (2) Communications, (3) Public Works and Engineering, (4) Firefighting, (5) Emergency Management, (6) Mass Care, Housing, and Human Services, (7) Resource Support, (8) Public Health and Medical Services, (9) Urban Search and Rescue, (10) Oil and Hazardous Materials Response, (11) Agriculture and Natural Resources, (12) Energy, (13) Public Safety and Security, (14) Long-Term Community Recovery, and (15) External Communications.

The Churches' immediate response in general falls under the ESF category six of "Mass Care" and, as such, any organized Church response comes under the direction of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) which is the Primary Agency for the Mass Care ESF and works closely with the American Red Cross.

The Church also has a major interest in ESF category fourteen Long-Term Recovery. It is through Long Term Recovery Committees or Organizations that UMCOR and other faith-based dollars are distributed to persons with unmet needs. This is done by forming a Long-

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Term Recovery Committee of local volunteers who, through the auspices of a paid or volunteer case-worker, contact the client and ascertain their unmet needs. The Committee then matches their financial and other resources with the needs. Sometimes resolving an unmet need is as simple as sending the youth group out to clean up the front yard of an elderly flood victim. Clean-up is most often done through Early Response Teams. Repairs to houses are the responsibility of UMVIM disaster teams.

### G. CHURCH RESPONSE TO A DISASTER

The church will address the following needs in any disaster:

#### 1. Spiritual

Those affected by disaster will ask many difficult questions, some of which may have no ready answer. Some may ask, “Why did this occur?” “Is this God’s judgment upon us?” “Are we to blame?” “Must I have done something wrong to deserve this?” “Is this the work of the devil?” “Is God to blame?” The remark that seems to be most fitting was one made by a pastor who simply said, “These are things that happen.” There is a lot of healing in that statement. People need to express their emotional response to someone who can listen with understanding. Additional information can be found in Rabbi Harold Kushner’s book, When Bad Things Happen to Good People.

Worship is an important opportunity, focusing on the assurance of God’s love and care.

Liturgical churches need to provide some informal time for individual sharing. Non-liturgical churches need to provide as much familiar structure in a service as possible. Special study classes discussing spiritual questions may help.

#### 2. Emotional

The church is important in providing a caring presence; it can provide emotional support and help to re-establish a sense of community. Pastors and other trained people with expertise in counseling are always needed in disasters. By being present with those stricken and survivors, the Church provides emotional support and helps to re-establish a sense of community. People need to know they are not alone in the crisis.

#### 3. Physical

Local churches can provide volunteers at every stage and for many tasks. Some of these are transportation, interpretation of the help that is available, assistance of affected people through the “red tape,” clean-up, reconstruction, and repair.

#### 4. Facilities

Church facilities can be used for shelters, temporary offices for relief activities, meeting space, food preparation and/or mass feeding and housing for volunteer workers from the outside.

#### 5. Financial

Whenever a disaster occurs, there is always the need for financial assistance. No matter how many other relief agencies there are, or how involved the federal government may be, there are usually about 10% of the needs which remain unmet due to governmental restrictions, lost opportunities or other reasons. There are always some people who “fall through the cracks” and have no place to turn, except the Church. Very often these are needs that do not appear until many of the other relief agencies have left the area. But the Church remains, and this is the primary reason the Church must be prepared to deal with disaster not only at the outset, but also for the long haul.

#### 6. Organizational

During the long term recovery, Long Term Recovery Committees or Organizations can be created in the areas of most severe damage. The Long Term Recovery Committees (LTRC) are volunteers who bring as many relief agencies as possible to the table. The LTRC may use the 501c(3) from a church or voluntary agency and may obtain the assistance of a paid or

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volunteer case-worker. The LTRCs catchment area may be anything from a single community to several counties.

As they organize with a chair, secretary, treasurer, mission statement, and regular meeting place, they will contact national disaster organizations church as UMCOR, or Presbyterian Disaster Services, Lutheran Disaster Response, the Mennonite Disaster Services, or others to respond with financial resources or construction expertise. The final task is for the case - worker to contact the person with the unmet needs and match the resources available to the needs. United Methodists have a long history of being very active in Long Term Recovery Organizations. The goal of Long Term Recovery Committees/Organizations is to return the client to a safe, sanitary and functional living situation.

### H. STRENGTHS OF THE CHURCH

United Methodists have proven their ability to deal effectively with disasters in the following ways:

#### 1. Presence

There are United Methodist churches in virtually every county. Any community without a United Methodist church is close enough to another one that our help can quickly be made available.

#### 2. Permanence

United Methodists are here to stay. When all other agencies have left, the Church will always be there. During a disaster our work may intensify by participating in relief, or long-term recovery. This is one of the faces of ministry, which is normal for the church, and each local congregation.

#### 3. Structure

As a connectional church, United Methodists have a tremendous advantage in marshaling and concentrating resources. A local church that is struggling with their own financial situation can still be a conduit for the greater resources of the Conference and the General Church. The advantage of the connection can keep the local church from being overwhelmed and assist with specialized services that would not otherwise be available.

#### 3. Interfaith Commitment

A greater effectiveness and faith witness is possible through a cooperative and coordinated response rather than having denominations and faith communities working individually. As United Methodist, we are so committed.

#### 4. Local Sensitivity

United Methodists are committed to the proposition that local community leaders know their community and its unique needs in a disaster. The religious community of any area is empowered to fashion a response which is appropriate and sensitive. We help persons and communities restore their own self-sufficiency. We serve at their invitation.

### I. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On-line courses are available through FEMA's Emergency Management Institute at no charge. Just go online to FEMA.gov for more information. The American Red Cross also offers both on-line and in person disaster services classes.

## SECTION 3

### LOCAL CHURCH CLERGY ACTION

#### A. EARLY PREPARATION

##### 1. Local Community Agencies and Resources

- i. Know who the relief agencies are in your area (American Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc.).
- ii. Find out who the law enforcement and County Emergency Management personnel are in your area that will have authority in a disaster.
- iii. Become familiar with and keep a list of the existing community agencies. Share any skill that can be utilized in time of a disaster.
- iv. Contact the local ministerial association or church council. Prepare a community disaster plan.
- v. See below a list of agencies and possible needs.

Potential Local Agencies	Possible Special Needs
County Dept. of Emergency Mgmt.	Ethnic Communities
Police and Sheriff	Refugees and Immigrants
Fire Department	Homeless
American Red Cross	Children
County Mental Health	The Elderly
Health Department	Handicapping Conditions
Ministerial Association	Persons with Special Needs
Volunteers of America	Geographically isolated
Local Food Banks	
Women, Infants, and Children	
Community Action Agency	
Elderly Services	
Crisis Telephone (211)	

##### 2. Church Resources

- i. The local Board of Trustees will develop an inventory of church physical facilities to be used in an emergency response to disaster in the area. Determine if your facilities could be used for mass shelters, feeding, or other efforts in cooperation with the Red Cross of other agencies.
- ii. List the human resources within your congregation, their interests, skills and talents with regard to opportunities for volunteer work in the event of a disaster. Encourage those who might have an interest in emergency response.

##### 3. Personal Planning

- i. Make plans to provide safety for self and family.
- ii. Emergency contacts for all single persons and for each family in parish.
- iii. Make provisions for food, shelter and clothing.
- iv. List specific medical needs for each of the family members.

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### B. DISASTER IS IMMINENT

#### 1. Monitoring

Listen to the radio; follow any instructions issued by your County Emergency Management Agency or the National Weather Service. If you are advised to evacuate, go! As a leader in the community, you are looked to for guidance. People who stay, when ordered to evacuate, risk their own lives, and the lives of emergency personnel who must go in to save them.

#### 2. Evacuation

If you must evacuate, take only what you must have in order to survive. If you can carry more, focus on small items of personal rather monetary value, i.e. photographs, insurance papers, wills, etc.. A “go box” packed ahead of time will make evacuation much less hectic. If you know that you are going to a shelter, take your own bedding. Cots will probably be in short supply. Notify your District Superintendent that you are going and where.

#### 3. Personal Safety

Protect yourself and your family first. Do not abandon your family for the sake of the parish. No matter what your level of involvement in disaster response, you will not be effective if you are not certain of the safety of your household. What you do for them will be an example for others to follow with regard to themselves, and their families.

#### 4. Shut-ins

If you know of a shut-in who needs to be evacuated, notify the nearest law enforcement person or rescue worker and let them handle the actual evacuation.

#### 5. Interim Ministry

If there is enough time, gather essentials for ministry, i.e. a Bible (pocket size preferred), Church Directory, maps, disasters plans, portable communion set, etc. Take only the essentials that will help you respond with pastoral care and/or disaster-related ministry.

### C. RESCUE (OR RESPONSE) PHASE OF THE DISASTER

#### 1. Personnel Assessment

Assess your own damage first. Unless it is unsafe to remain, stay with your family and property until emergency personnel get to you.

#### 2. Personal Judgment

Do not rely upon your own judgment if you are a victim. Do not rely on the judgment of other victims, either. Listen to emergency personnel and follow their instructions.

#### 3. Stay Alert

You can monitor the damage to your parish first of all by listening to news reports. Do not interfere with any ongoing relief efforts where you are not trained or qualified to be. Stay at home until the danger is past. It will be easier for the District Superintendent and/or parishioners to contact you at home during this phase.

### D. RELIEF PHASE OF THE DISASTER

#### 1. Parish Assessment

Check to see if anyone in your church/s has become a victim. Notify other clergy if you know of members of their church who are victims. Work closely with law enforcement personnel to get a tour of the damaged area. Do not take a camera

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(unless you are going to photograph any damage to your church's building or other parish-related property). If a parishioner is a victim, be a presence to that family as you would in any other emergency. Your presence will provide some comfort.

### 2. Damage Assessment

Determine the amount of damage in the area of your parish. Expect that yourself and others may be in shock. Victims and near-victims will want to tell their stories over and over. Be prepared to use your training as a listener – this is an important function you will offer.

### 3. Communication

Inform your District Superintendent about your situation plus that your church's physical plant. Offer your services to assist clergy who may be victims or who have many victims in their parish. If there is damage in your area, be prepared to take your District Superintendent and/or your Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response (CDPR) Coordinator or designee and your Conference United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) Coordinator on a tour. Be ready to provide either the CDPR and/or UMVIM person a place they can use as "headquarters" while in your area.

### 4. Your Work with Early Assistance

i. Organize "clean-up" crews to be ready to go into areas where you are permitted to assist. (Do not begin any clearing until the damage has been assessed; your premature assistance could lower the amount of settlement awarded to a victim). Concentrate first on opening accesses and protecting personal property.

1. Notify the nearest Early Response Team leader who can be contacted through the UMVIM or the CDPR coordinator. Provide them with a point of contact in the damaged area.

ii. Do not give money to any disaster victim at this stage. Help meet basic needs. Money given directly at this stage will lower the amount of assistance the victim(s) will receive from other agencies.

iii. Find out what kind of aid can be expected and the kinds of bills that will be paid by the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc. (Information can be obtained from Washington or Idaho Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster). Be aware that the types of assistance will vary according to the category of the disaster. Emergency relief organizations (such as those mentioned above) are prepared to handle early expenses of victims. Church moneys (or grants) are usually made later, in most cases after all other forms of help have been exhausted—during the recovery stage.

1. Money can be sent to the Conference Office and designated "For Disaster Recovery."

2. This money will be distributed by the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator, with the assistance of the Conference UMVIM Coordinator.

### 5. Cooperation and Coordination

i. "Lone Rangers" are of little value in the aftermath of a disaster. (Lone Rangers also have a high burnout rate). When you can report something of a substantive nature to your District Superintendent, let him/her know whether or not you and your community need help. If help is needed, be prepared to set up a meeting of your church members with the District Superintendent, the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response

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Coordinators or designee and/or the Conference UMVIM Coordinator or designee.

- ii. If such a meeting is envisioned, be sure to invite all of the other community religious leaders to attend as well. As United Methodists, we are committed to ecumenical efforts. As servants of God, we will accomplish much more in the matter of relieving human suffering working cooperatively than alone. Help your community begin its recovery process more quickly by assisting the community leadership to take “ownership” of its disaster.
  - a. It is appropriate to begin the formation of a Long Term Recovery Organization (LTRO) at this point.
  - b. FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaison personnel can be contacted for assistance.
6. Keep a Journal  
Keeping a journal of your activities or what has been happening to you in the course of a disaster can be helpful both to you and to the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Committees both during and after the disaster.

### E. RECOVERY PHASE OF THE DISASTER

1. Personal Initiative  
The pastor has responsibility to be involved in the disaster recovery program.
2. Personal Involvement  
Expect heavy disaster involvement for 2-4 months.
3. Interfaiths and Networking  
When major disasters occur, an interfaith organization is recommended as a preferred way to work at recovery by pooling the resources of all the churches. Very often such an Interfaith, upon organization, can hire a local director and/or case manager to coordinate the recovery effort on behalf of the churches.
  - i. A Long Term Recovery Organization (LTRO) is one type of interfaith community organization.
    1. Washington Interfaith Disaster Recovery Organization (WIDRO) is another type of interfaith community organization.
  - ii. FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaison personnel may be able to help form such an organization.

### F. AFTERMATH

Take some time to assess yourself and other’s performance during and after the disaster using the “Assessment Form” found in the Appendix.

## SECTION 4

### LOCAL CHURCH ACTIONS

#### GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Local Church
  - a. The local church is the point of contact for all church assistance in a disaster. The Conference will not move in and take over this role. If the local church is not involved in disaster relief, neither is the Conference. Volunteers will be available, but only if they are requested by either the local church or the community interfaith in which the local United Methodist Church is involved. Any monetary assistance will be disbursed to the community through the appropriate fiscal officer of the community interfaith. (This may be the treasurer of the Long Term Recovery Organization).
  - b. The Conference will assist the local church to provide disaster relief.
2. Conference Support

Following involvement of the local church, the Conference will make its resources and those of the General church available, as needed, with the help of the Conference Disaster Coordinating Committee.

#### EARLY PREPARATION

1. Planning

Develop a Disaster Plan for dealing with a disaster. Learn how your county plans to deal with disaster response (contact the county Emergency Management Office), how this plan is supposed to work, and how the local church can fit in or help.
2. Church Facility
  - a. Have your Board of Trustees determine if your physical plant is a potential shelter for either mass care or feeding by contacting the nearest chapter of the American Red Cross. They will inspect your building(s) and determine its suitability and certifiability. The Red Cross needs a broad range of building sizes and shapes. Red Cross may choose to supply your shelter with a shelter kit containing signs, registration sheets etc. for operating your shelter. Red Cross also provides training in Shelter Operations for your volunteer staff. Remember also, opening non-certified shelter involves liabilities that could easily be beyond the ability of the local church to withstand.
  - b. Your church may choose, rather than to be an emergency shelter, to be helpful in other ways (office space for the relief effort, rooms for meetings, etc.). Be certain that your building is ready for an emergency. Emergency exit signs and fire extinguishers should be in working order. Keep all exits clear. Have flashlights available.
  - c. In preparing church property for disaster use, draw floor plans of building(s), showing dimensions, restrooms, handicapped access, kitchen facilities, etc. Specify areas not to be used by others. Make certain any limitations or restrictions are understood by all concerned in advance of a disaster.

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- d. Do an annual review of insurance needs. Providing services in disaster response can incur additional liability unless and until that coverage is provided by the Federal Government (FEMA) or the Red Cross (this is only possible if there is official certification of buildings for disaster usage).
- e. Timely maintenance is essential. Church property that is regularly and properly maintained comes through disasters better than those where maintenance has been deferred. The Board of Trustees is responsible for an up-to-date inventory of church property and contents. This should include a safe repository for valuable records plus duplicates in safe places away from local church buildings. Property and content inventories are backed up best by narrated videotape records of each room with an accompanying printed list. All computer files should be duplicated on back-up discs and stored in a safe place.

### 3. Congregation Tasks

- a. **Congregation Check**  
Prepare a method of checking on the congregation of the church when a disaster strikes. i.e. developing a “telephone tree.” Check on shut-ins first. Notify the local rescue squad if there is a call for evacuation, giving all pertinent details.
- b. **Companions**  
Arrange for people (volunteers) to serve as companions for victims. Companions should be prepared to listen, run errands, make phone calls; anything to help victims feel more comfortable and ease the anxiety. If possible, arrange for persons with skills in signing for the hearing impaired, and translators for non-English speaking people.
- c. Make contingencies for providing services as soon as possible after the disaster. Consider identifying an alternate location in case the church is damaged, perhaps including a reciprocal agreement with another church. Be prepared in the event that the pastor is affected by the disaster.
- d. Determine ways existing ministries can continue in the event the church is damaged, including child care, bible study, AA meetings, etc..
- e. Identify and plan for ministries your church will engage in during a disaster, such as feeding, donations distribution, information center, etc..
- f. **Volunteers**

#### 1.UMVIM Teams

Form a committee to receive volunteer teams (UMVIM) from outside the area who come in to help. Most outside volunteers will be most helpful toward the end of the Relief Phase and the onset of the Recovery Phase. Such volunteer teams will need a place to stay, but should be self-sufficient otherwise. It should be the responsibility of the Conference Volunteers in Mission Coordinator in cooperation with the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator to make arrangements with the volunteer teams, and not that of the local church. Arrangements should be made through the Jurisdictional Volunteers in Mission Coordinator.

#### 2. Spontaneous Volunteers

Spontaneous Volunteers can be a blessing or a curse depending on advanced preparation. It is important to create a spontaneous volunteer reception center which includes a reception table, a registration table, and an assignment table.

- g. **Local Church Organizations**

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Develop a plan for United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, United Methodist Youth (and other ad hoc groups) to perform some of the following services if they train for them and have made arrangements with the proper Emergency Management people:

- Assist in the feeding of volunteers; light lunches and snacks, etc.
- Form teams of volunteers to clear debris and clean up. **DO NOT DISTURB** a disaster site until it has been inspected for damage. Those impacted should not be kept from receiving assistance from Federal, State, or Insurance companies by volunteers who act too quickly. It is not legal for government to duplicate benefits. Remember: appearances may be deceiving; some places may not seem to have sustained damage; make no assumptions—wait until after inspection to do any clean up.

### h. Child Care

Have available a person or persons who have received the UMCOR training in working with children and/or youth in disasters. Children will need safe, secure and compassionate places to be after a disaster and people who are trained to listen to them and meet their needs and help to allay their fears.

### i. Pastor (Staff) Parish Relations Committee (PPR or SPR)

In the event of a disaster there will be additional demands made upon the pastor's time and energy. A pastor could "burn out" if the church is not prepared to provide some relief. Provide rest and relief time for the pastor.

### g. Food and Clothing

Do not make an appeal for either food or clothing—you will get it, and with it the problem of adequate storage space and refrigeration. The Red Cross, Salvation Army and Seventh Day Adventist Church specialize in helping those affected by disasters with donations management. Caution—**Donations Management can become a second disaster.**

### h. Communication Center

#### i. Local Church Communications

Prepare a plan for a communication center, working with community resources. Plan where the center will be (preferably the local church), when it will be staffed, what information will be helpful, and what information will be available. Prepare alternate plans if telephone and power outages occur, e.g. ham amateur radio operator equipment. Your state Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster can be a resource and can be contacted through your Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator.

#### ii. Compose a Disaster Information Team responsible for establishing and operating the Communication Center. The Communications Manager will oversee operations, verify information, sort information into appropriate categories, compile reports, and coordinate information and distribution. The Pastor will be a conduit of pertinent information, some shared with the Center. The Center will relay information needed by the pastor for pastoral care calls.

#### iii. Public Information Officer (PIO)

Select a volunteer from the church to coordinate media relations—preferably someone with a communications background. All news releases to the media should go through the PIO.

#### iv. The Board of Trustees' Representative will gather data on damage to church-owned property and arrange for an inspection if necessary. Program Directors will implement the disaster programs they have developed and will transmit information regarding their work. The Church secretary compiles information from local

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church members and friends as they call and will assist the communication center with data processing and distribution.

### C. DISASTER IS IMMINENT

1. Monitoring  
Listen to the radio/television and monitor your county and State Emergency Management web sites for disaster updates; follow any instructions issued by your County Emergency Management Agency or the National Weather Service. If you are advised to evacuate, GO!
2. Precautions  
Look to the needs of your households first. If there is time, see what can be done to secure the church building(s). Remove swinging signs, board or shutter windows and secure church records.
3. Opening Shelter  
If your church is a certified shelter, follow the instructions of the American Red Cross and prepare to open. If you evacuate to other locations, try to identify other members of your church. Volunteer to help with shelter operation. Form a prayer group. Be ready to calm the anxiety of others.
4. Shut-ins  
Remind the rescue squad of shut-ins. If they are not at home, advise the rescue squad where they may be found.

### D. RESCUE (OR EMERGENCY) PHASE OF THE DISASTER

1. Minimize activities  
The church does not usually function as such during this phase. Individuals should seek shelter or have already been evacuated. The only organized church activity would involve operating the church as a shelter, or to sponsor church activities in shelters.
2. Rescue efforts  
After the danger has passed, concentrate on rescue efforts and moving to safer areas, if necessary.
  - a. Do not interfere with rescue or emergency personnel. Volunteer your services, but avoid situations for which you are untrained.
  - b. Stay with any victims you find and give them whatever assurances you can until emergency personnel arrive. If you are trained, provide first aid as needed.
  - c. Provide comfort to those who have been hurt. Make certain rescue workers are able to get to those who have been severely impacted by the disaster.
3. Security
  - a. If a home is damaged and there are no police around, help your neighbors by keeping an eye on their property.
  - b. Discourage outsiders from entering the area. Report suspicious individuals to the police; note license plate numbers of suspicious vehicles.
  - c. Don't give information to strangers unless they are representatives of a known relief agency. If they are, they will have identification and will be wearing it.
4. Communications  
Follow the instructions of emergency personnel. Instigate plan for Communication Center to help people know what is happening, how their neighbors and friends are, how the wider community has been impacted, what services are available and where they may be found.

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### E. RELIEF PHASE OF A DISASTER

1. Get organized
  - a. Activate your disaster groups and coordinate all activities with the Chair of your Administrative Council and your pastor.
  - b. Notify the Conference United Methodist Rapid Response Teams through the UMVIM Coordinator.
    - i. The Rapid Response Teams will need a point of contact within the Disaster area.
2. Ecumenical Cooperation

Enlist the aid of other area churches in disaster relief. Ecumenical efforts arising in a disaster can evolve into something more permanent in dealing with community needs later on.
3. Financial Assistance

Emergency living expenses (temporary housing, food and clothing) for those directly affected by the disaster are normally handled by the American Red Cross. Victims might not be reimbursed and the people helped could be in jeopardy of receiving further aid in the amount for which they would normally qualify if expenses were picked up early by the church. Generally, it is a good idea to let those who have suffered loss use the assistance that is available through the government and the American Red Cross before going to the church or Interfaith agencies. There will be ample need for church and interfaith funds during the recovery phase.

Churches wishing to donate to the disaster should be encouraged to donate to the Conference Disaster Relief Fund or the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). The Conference Disaster Relief Funds will be available for the Rapid Response Teams and the disaster UMVIM teams as well as general disaster response.
4. Clean-up

In any clean-up effort, the following guidelines may prove helpful:

  - a. Do not perform any repairs until government and insurance companies have assessed the damage. Early repair may interfere with reimbursements.
  - b. Concentrate on collecting important papers, photographs, valuables, securing property and opening access ways.
  - c. Compile a list of property damage in your area. Relief agencies will not usually give out this information unless your church has a prior arrangement and role in relief work. Your pastor, the District Superintendent and District Coordinator for Disaster Preparedness and Response may tour the area and any information you can give them will be helpful. At this point, it need not be detailed or complete.
  - d. Remember that a soiled photo or a broken plate may look like trash to you, but may be a valued connection to family history for the homeowner. Be sensitive to emotional needs. Always take time to listen.
5. Keep Journals

Journals of the activities of the church in the relief phase are helpful to the committees of the church and to the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Committee. Encourage workers to keep a record of their activities and select someone to make a composite report.
6. The Disaster Tele-registration System

If the disaster receives a Presidential Declaration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will publish the telephone number of the Tele-registration Center. FEMA and the agencies coordinate the Center by gathering data through 1 (800) 621-3362. Each family should call the toll-free number and apply for assistance. They will be sent a packet of forms. The local church should consider doing any or all of the following:

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- a. Many victims understate their damage in the period just after a disaster. They may need encouragement or to be reminded to declare all damage they received.
- b. People may need help in filling in the disaster relief forms. Help them declare all their losses, not just those that they think are excluded from insurance coverage. Small grants are available from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. For those who need additional assistance, low interest individual loans are available through the Small Business Administration. For those who do not qualify for low interest loans can apply for Other Needs Assistance—additional small grants. For those who were going to take out a loan or withdraw savings to repair the damage, they should be encouraged to seriously consider government assistance since the interest rates are lower than they could receive at a bank.
- c. Help victims fill out the forms on time. There is a deadline that must be met in order to be considered. They should take time to truly assess all of their losses, but the forms should be completed on time.

### F. THE RECOVERY PHASE

1. Local Church Initiative  
If your church is not involved, the Conference will not be involved and UMCOR's response will be seriously limited. The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) works through the connectional system. People in the church and in the community generally will receive more assistance if recovery is coordinated through the local church.
2. Duration  
The Recovery Phase will last 200 to 400 days or more. (The general rule is that the recovery phase is 100 times longer than the response phase). You will be heavily involved as a church for two to four months, and somewhat involved for the balance of the recovery time after that.
3. Inter-faiths and Networking  
When major disasters occur, an Inter-faith organization (often called a Long Term Recovery Organization) is recommended as a preferred way to work at recovery by pooling the resources of all the churches. Very often, such an Inter-faith, upon organization, can hire a local person to coordinate the recovery effort on behalf of the churches. The key to long term recovery is Case Management which can be financed by UMCOR dollars. An Inter-faith is the most common agent for distribution of various denominational aid, and some aid will only be given through an inter-faith.
4. Capitalize on Strengths  
Focus on those things in which your church is proficient. Whatever your strengths may be, bring them to the fore during the recovery phase. Not every church can handle every type of relief.
5. Monetary Considerations  
Your church should be prepared to ask for contributions for disaster relief after a disaster. Encourage other churches of the community to do likewise, especially if there is an Inter-faith. Channel disaster relief funds raised by your church through the office of the Conference Treasurer.
6. Building Repair and Reconstruction  
Teams of volunteers can be organized to do building repair and reconstruction through the United Methodist Volunteer in Missions Coordinator (or can be requested through UMCOR, Mennonite Disaster Services, Church of the Brethren, or Christian reformed World Relief Committee). The teams must be supervised by a licensed contractor familiar with the building codes of your area. In addition, the teams will need a site coordinator to

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prioritize and assign needed jobs. Coordinate with other relief agencies especially through an interfaith. DO NOT begin repairs anywhere until all inspections have been made and repair plans have been approved. People can be denied recovery financial assistance if repairs are begun too soon (either that, or what has been begun can be ordered torn down and restarted after plan approval). To maximize the assistance available to those who have suffered damage, wait for recovery funding decisions to be made before providing repair assistance. Remember, government is not allowed to duplicate services. At the same time, recognize that when time is an important consideration and the person or family has a special need, sensitivity requires a special approach and perhaps a special advocate to expedite the process.

### 7. Advocacy

A sympathetic listener/companion who can make telephone calls, personal contacts, run errands, search for records, would be helpful to have for disaster victims.

#### a. Support Groups

Sponsor a support group, especially through the community interfaith, to allow those who have been impacted by disaster to tell their stories to someone who both understands their plight and can listen.

## G. THE AFTERMATH

Take some time to assess yourself and others' performance during and after the disaster using the "Assessment Form" found in the Appendix.

## SECTION 5

### DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT ACTIONS

#### A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

The role of the District Superintendent is critical for disaster relief. These tasks include:

1. Prepare the District for disasters
2. Work closely with the District Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator and administer the District's response to disasters.
3. Encourage the active participation of local pastors in disaster relief.
4. Be available to the Bishop for consultation with regard to any appeal for disaster relief funds from your District.

#### B. EARLY PREPARATION

1. Should you decide to have a District Disaster Preparedness and Responses Coordinator, consider the following criteria in the selection process:  
In working with the District Nominating Committee, suggest that a person with the following traits be selected:
  - a. Dependability in an emergency.
  - b. Credibility with yourself and his/her peers
  - c. An interest in disaster preparedness and response and a desire to do a good job.
  - d. Initiative and willingness to do the job on a purely voluntary basis.
  - e. Time to take UMCOR and FEMA training.
2. Planning
  - a. Become familiar with the Conference Disaster Plan.
  - b. If your District is subject to frequent disasters, or if a major disaster is anticipated, consult with the District Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator about conducting a training program for the District (or in sub-District groupings as geography may dictate).
  - c. Encourage local churches to develop and use their own plans, incorporating the Conference Plan. .
  - d. For local church pastors, check for adequate insurance coverage for temporary housing in case of disaster.
3. Coordination  
Contact the Emergency Management offices in the counties on your District. Let them know who you are, the location of the churches in your District, and that you will need access to stricken areas should a disaster occur. Make certain that your District Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator does likewise. Prior coordination will allow you access to your churches and pastors which could otherwise be denied.

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### C. DISASTER IS IMMINENT

1. Monitoring  
Listen to news reports of any impending storm activity or other event that could lead to a disaster.
2. Communications  
Contact your Conference and/or District Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator and prepare for possible action should a disaster strike. Make certain that you both know each other's locations and remain available to each other.
3. Emergency Operations Centers  
If Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) have been established for counties in your District, find out their locations. Usually the main center will be close to the county courthouse or a police station. A field EOC may be set up closer to the affected area.
4. Evacuation  
If your immediate area is likely to be affected and evacuation is recommended, move out of the area, but be certain that your pastors and the Bishop know where you will be. A temporary District office might be in a church that is away from the danger zone.

### D. RESCUE (OR EMERGENCY OR RESPONSE) PHASE OF THE DISASTER

1. Personal Assessment  
Assess your own damage first. See if anyone in your household is injured. Unless it is unsafe to remain, stay with your family and property until emergency personnel get to you.
2. Personal Judgment  
If you are a victim, do not rely upon your own judgment. Do not rely upon the judgment of other victims, either. Listen to the emergency personnel and follow their instructions.
3. Monitoring  
Monitor the damage to your District by listening to news reports. Do not interfere with any ongoing relief efforts. Stay at home until the danger is past. It will be easier for pastors to reach you if you remain at home during this phase.
4. Contacts  
Contact the churches in the damaged areas. Provide pastoral care to the affected pastors and obtain a preliminary damage assessment of church owned property. This preliminary assessment should be shared with the Conference Office for insurance purposes.
  - a. Share of the names of pastors who have had their own private homes damaged with the Pastoral Care Coordinator of the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Team.

### E. RELIEF (OR CLEAN-UP) PHASE OF THE DISASTER

1. Damage Assessment Tour
  - a. As soon as possible, when it is safe, go to the affected area with your District and/or Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator. You are the "awesome presence." It is particularly important for you to visit damaged church property to reassure the pastor.
    - i. If the damage is widespread, you may want to divide your efforts. Check with local law enforcement first. Very often they will provide you with a tour of damaged sites and help you to gain entry to controlled or restricted zones.
    - ii. If you can not tour the area, make a telephone preliminary assessment of the damage and report that information to the Conference Office for insurance purposes.

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- b. Expect you and others to be in shock at what you see. Victims and near victims will want to tell their stories over and over again. Be prepared to do a lot of listening. Listen carefully to the affected pastors. Assess whether they are truly functional. Be prepared to ask other pastors to help when a pastor is a victim. Consider a substitute pastor or pulpit supply for a period of time.
  - c. Look for damage in terms of areas hit. Do not try to count the number of homes destroyed. Leave that job to the American Red Cross, County Emergency Management and FEMA. They will have an accurate count within a couple of days. Try to gain a general sense of the magnitude and severity.
  - d. If shelters are open, tour the shelters. Check to see if the church has a presence there. Is pastoral care available in the shelter? Do you expect an evacuated pastor to provide this? He/she will have enough to do looking after the needs of his/her own family.
  - e. Compile your estimates with those of the Conference and/or District Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator. This information should go to the Conference Office for insurance purposes.
  - f. Inform the Bishop of your situation. If you are not a victim yourself, let the Bishop know that you are all right. If there is damage in your District, be prepared to take the Bishop on a tour.
2. Organizing the District
- a. Review clergy and church action sections of the Disaster Plan so that you will know what your pastors and churches should be doing.
  - b. Call a meeting of the pastors in the affected area. Have your Conference and/or District Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator explain how they can respond to the crisis and the resources that are at their disposal.
  - c. Identify a specific church or location for coordinating the effort. Be certain that both the pastor and the church are willing to serve in this role.
  - d. Encourage your pastors to work ecumenically in the relief effort. Encourage them to spearhead such a joint response.
  - e. Remind them that the Conference/District Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator will be happy to be of assistance to their community in organizing a response effort.
  - f. Take the initiative to marshal the resources of the District to respond to the disaster and to assist the affected local churches. This may include (but need not be limited to):
    - United Methodist Men – Work teams to help with clean up.
    - United Methodist Women – Child Care work, feeding stations, etc.
    - United Methodist Volunteers in Mission – Professional medical services, counseling plus other specialty services.
    - Early Response Teams – Trained in clean-up and personal property preservation.
    - United Methodist Youth – Food drives (but only if these are called for), and help with clean up.
    - Health and Welfare groups – work with persons with disabling conditions.
    - District Worship leadership – provide special services for those who have suffered loss or fill in for pastors who have suffered loss themselves.
    - District Christian Education – help provide care for children and youth affected by the disaster. The trained Children and Youth in Disaster workers of the District will need additional volunteer helpers. As volunteers for this type of work become

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available, your trained District people will be able to train the new volunteers in a matter of hours.

- g. Look after the well being of your pastors. Don't allow them to "burn-out." Monitor the more heavily involved frequently; don't expect them to call you.
- h. If a pastor needs help, be sure to get him/her and the family away from the affected area for awhile, or provide them time to see to their own needs. Be ready to supply a substitute pastor to fill their pulpit until they can recover from their loss.
- i. If a pastor(s) suffer loss, make certain that the local church(es) respond with sensitivity. Check to see how much of their loss is covered by church insurance. If the parsonage is uninhabitable, be certain that the local church is providing the parsonage family with a decent place to stay. The Red Cross may be able to furnish some initial living expense money.

If the disaster receives a Presidential Declaration, make certain the pastor registers with FEMA at 1-800-621-3362.

- j. See if the pastor needs financial help.
- k. Your direct involvement during the crisis will have a tremendous impact on the pastor and his/her family. Be insistent on helping even if they resist. Most victims, especially those in the helping professions, will downplay their own needs during a crisis. Use your own best judgment, not the victims.

### 3. Keep a journal

Keep an accounting of everything you do or that happens to you in the course of the disaster. The journal will be invaluable to you and to others both during and after the disaster.

## F. RECOVERY PHASE

### 1. Pastoral Support

The most likely period for clergy "burnout" is during the recovery phase. While pastors may function well in the early stages of a crisis with long hours and heavy responsibilities, after a while it becomes clear that most of their efforts will take place when the obvious urgency is past. Therefore, local congregations may be less understanding of the time required to help victims four to six months after the event.

Several things can be done to avoid problems for the local pastor:

- a. Let the congregation know how much the pastor's work is appreciated.
- b. Don't let a local pastor "burnout." If the workload is excessive, see if there is some way a person could be hired part-time to handle parts of the program.
- c. If a local pastor has reached his/her limit, work with the Pastor (Staff) Parish Relations Committee to provide some time away.
- d. See if there is a retired pastor who could help with some of the pastoral duties and fill in temporarily.
- e. Keep in touch. Don't assume things are going well if you don't hear to the contrary.
- f. Check on the conditions of the pastor's family. Make certain they are not neglected as a result of the increased workload. If they are victims, this becomes all the more important. Pastors may have difficulty accepting the fact that they are victims. Focusing on the needs of others may be a form of denying their own needs.

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### 2. Use the System

Stay in touch with the Conference and/or District Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinators. Don't let problems fester. If there are problems with the system, let someone know right away.

### G. THE AFTERMATH

Take some time to assess yourself and others' performance during and after the disaster using the "Assessment Form" found in the Appendix.

## SECTION 6

### CONFERENCE DIRECTOR OF CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES

#### A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Using the Structure. The Conference Director becomes a key person to support the work of the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator and Disaster Coordinating Committee when disaster strikes. The Conference Director works along with the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator, the United Methodist Volunteers in Mission Coordinator, and Early Response Teams to bring together the resources of the Conference (plus those of the larger church when necessary) so that they can assist in the implementation of preparedness and be focused on the disaster response when necessary.
2. Tasks
  - a. Prepare Conference staff and leadership for response to a disaster according to this Conference plan.
  - b. Work closely with the Conference Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness and Response, and the United Methodist Volunteers in Mission Coordinator, the Bishop, and the Cabinet.
  - c. Prepare contingency plans for operation of the Conference Office should the present physical facilities be rendered unusable because of a disaster (or the effects of one).

#### B. EARLY PREPARATION

1. Work with the Conference Board of Church and Society, and the Conference Nominating Committee in the selection of a Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator.
2. See that an adequate plan for disaster preparedness and response is developed, maintained, and amended as necessary for the Conference through the Conference Disaster Committee.
3. Become familiar with this plan and keep the plan on file (and/or web site) so that it is easily retrievable when needed. Replacement copies will be kept in the Conference Office.
4. Make certain that the existence of such a Conference Plan is known to the Conference Connectional Table and the Cabinet. UMCOR will provide Disaster Response training for the Cabinet upon request.
5. Help to facilitate the coordination of the Conference staff to support any disaster response effort that may be undertaken within the Conference.
6. Prepare a map of the whole Annual Conference area that shows district boundaries, location, addresses and telephone numbers of each local church. This material shall be available, not only to Conference disaster personnel, but also for persons from outside the Conference who may come to assist in a disaster response, such as UMCOR, or Western Jurisdiction UMVIM teams. When UMCOR is invited into the Conference for assistance in disaster response, such maps shall be accompanied by a current list of Conference pastoral appointments.

#### C. PREPARATION WHEN A DISASTER IS IMMINENT

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1. Monitoring. Listen to news, weather radio, or web site reports of any pending storm activity or other event, which could lead to a disaster.
2. Initial Contacts: Contact the Conference Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness and Response, the Conference United Methodist Volunteer in Mission Disaster Coordinator, and Early Response Team Coordinator, and prepare for possible action should a disaster strike. Make certain that you all know each other's location and the ways in which you can remain available to each other.
3. Personal Safety. If your immediate area is likely to be affected and an evacuation is recommended, move out of the area, but be certain that the Conference Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness and Response and the Bishop know where you are.
4. Relocation of Conference Office. Consider possible alternative locations away from the anticipated area of damage, such as a larger church away from the danger zone that might be able to house at least a skeleton Conference operation on a temporary basis.

### D. DURING THE EMERGENCY (RESPONSE) PHASE OF THE DISASTER

1. Personal Assessment. Assess your own damage first. See if anyone in your household is injured. Unless it is unsafe to remain, stay with your family and property until emergency personnel get to you.
2. Avoid relying on personnel judgment. If you are a victim, do not rely upon your own judgment. Do not rely upon the judgment of other victims either. Listen to emergency personnel and follow their instructions.
3. Monitor the Event. Monitor the damage to the Conference by monitoring news reports on radio, television, and inter net. Do not interfere with any ongoing relief efforts. Stay in your home or office until the danger is past. It will be easier for leaders within and outside your Conference to reach you if you remain at home or in your office during this phase. Others, including the Conference Coordinator of Disaster Response and Preparedness and the district superintendent(s) of the affected area, may be on an assessment tour and you may be the one remaining person that Methodists can reach.
4. Consider a Conference wide appeal for Disaster Relief Donations to be sent to the Conference Treasurer's Office and/or UMCOR. This money can be used by ecumenical Long Term Recovery Organizations in the disaster area.

### E. DURING THE RELIEF PHASE

1. Initial Contacts  
Alert Conference staff and leaders on ways they may be of assistance to the relief and recovery effort. Some of these resources may include:
  - United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men:
    - Work teams to help with clean up
    - Child-care arrangements
    - Feeding stations, etc.
  - Volunteers in Mission:
    - Professional medical services
    - Counseling
    - Other specialty services
    - Special teams of volunteers prepared to do labor needed for clean up and repair with United Methodist church properties.
  - Early Response Teams
  - United Methodist Youth:

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- Clean-up teams
  - Elder care
  - Food drives (but only if called for)
  - Church and Society Groups:
    - Assistance for persons with disabling conditions
  - Conference Worship Leadership
    - Plan special services for those who have suffered loss or to fill in for pastors who have suffered loss themselves or who may be unable to serve temporarily.
  - Christian Educators' Fellowship:
    - With some training, numbers of these people could assist those in the Conference who have been trained by UMCOR/CDCC to work with children and/or youth recovering from disaster trauma.
2. Looking Ahead. As the scope and severity of the disaster become known, prepare the Conference for the fact that it will not be "business as usual." Prepare the Conference for the "long haul" of recovery.
  3. Using the System. Attempt to conduct the affairs of the Conference as much as possible in a normal fashion (in accord with #2 above), but realizing that some of the Conference leaders and staff may be among those who have suffered loss.
  4. Help Provide a Vision for the Conference. Besides preparing the Conference for the "long haul" of recovery, provide the opportunity for those who have not been affected by the disaster to contribute to the recovery of those who were affected. This should be done in consultation with the Bishop and the Conference Treasurer and such other Conference leadership as deemed prudent.
  5. Prepare for Outside Assistance. Prepare the Conference to receive assistance from UMCOR consultants when invited by the Bishop in consultation with the Conference Coordinator of Disaster Preparedness and Response. Often the Conference Director of Connectional Ministries can assist in providing temporary office space and equipment, or give advice on such logistical matters.

### F. DURING THE RECOVERY PHASE

1. Focusing on Recovery. Keep the focus of the Ministry of Recovery before the Conference so that all the important rebuilding of lives does not get lost among the pressures of the everyday business of the Conference.
2. Episcopal Tour. Accompany the Bishop and Conference Disaster and Preparedness Coordinator on the Episcopal Damage Assessment Tour if your presence in the Conference Office can be spared for such time as is necessary for the tour. This is a good publicity event and local press should be notified. Remember the Bishop is the "Awesome Presence" for all United Methodists.
3. Communications. Work closely with the Conference Media Center to see that the stories are told of individuals, churches and communities that have been affected by the disaster; of the Church's efforts to minister to those who have suffered loss; and, of situations where continued assistance is needed and how church members may help.
4. Recovery Updates. Keep the Conference Connectional Table informed of the progress of recovery, and how the various program areas are assisting and may assist – reminding all that the recovery work is a ministry.

### G. IN THE AFTERMATH

Take some time to assess yourself and others' performance during and after the disaster using the "Assessment Form" found in the Appendix.

## SECTION 7

### EPISCOPAL ACTIONS

#### A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

The resident Bishop brings moral and Ecclesiastical authority to any endeavor of the Church. The urgency of need in a disaster often requires the additional emphasis that only the office of the resident Bishop can bring. Direct involvement by the resident Bishop in disaster results in following:

1. Presence. Demonstrate the presence of the Church in the midst of crises through the psychological concept of “The Awesome Presence.” In other words, the Bishop’s presence includes the presence of God.
2. Church involvement. Motivate involvement of church leaders in disaster relief.
3. Cooperation. Inspire cooperation among the church boards and agencies as they contribute to the overall effort.
4. Finances. Inspire contributions for the relief of disaster victims.
5. Follow up. Motivate adjustments to the relief effort to keep mistakes from being repeated in future cases.

#### B. EARLY PREPARATION

1. Within the Annual Conference. The resident Bishop should be advised of any disaster training events for the Annual Conference. Whenever possible it would be helpful for the Bishop to attend the opening session of such an event or transmit a message emphasizing the importance of such training within the Conference.
2. General and Jurisdictional Training Events. The Bishop can encourage attendance at higher level disaster conferences.
3. Become familiar with the Disaster Plan. Keep this plan on file and/or on web site so that it is easily retrievable when needed. Replacement copies may be obtained from the Conference Office.
4. Encourage pastors and churches to use the Master Disaster Plan and to develop their own local church plans in order to be prepared.
5. Encourage all boards and agencies to cooperate in disaster relief. Use the strength of the connection as a focus on how to work together (cooperate, communicate, collaborate and coordinate).
6. Participate in State Governor’s ecumenical faith-based organization.

#### C. DISASTER IS IMMINENT

1. Stay current. Listen to news reports of any impending storm activity or other event which could lead to a disaster.
2. Initial contacts. Contact the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator, and the Conference Disaster UMVIM Coordinator and prepare for possible action should a disaster strike. Make sure that you all know the others’ location and remain available to each other.
3. Personal Safety. If your immediate area is likely to be affected and an evacuation is recommended, move out of the area and be certain the Cabinet knows where you will be. You may want to set up a temporary office in a church away from the danger zone.

## Master Plan for Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

### D. RESCUE (EMERGENCY OR RESPONSE) PHASE OF THE DISASTER

1. Personnel Assessment. Assess your own damage first. See if anyone in your household is injured. Stay with your family and property until emergency personnel get to you. If you are a victim, do not rely on your own judgment. Do not rely on the judgment of other victims, either. Listen to emergency personnel and follow their instructions.
2. Monitoring the Event. Monitor the damage to the Conference by listening to news reports, web pages, and by information forwarded to you from the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) by the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator. Do not interfere with any ongoing relief efforts. Stay in your home and office until the danger is past. It will be easier for the Cabinet to reach you if you remain at your home or office during this phase.

### E. RELIEF (CLEAN UP) PHASE

1. Initial Contacts
  - a. Contact the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator. He/she should be attempting to establish contact with the Early Response Teams, and when available, District Preparedness and Response Coordinators in the affected areas. He/she should also be in contact with the State Emergency Management to get an initial report on damaged areas. At this point, all information will be preliminary and general.
  - b. Contact the District Superintendents in the affected areas and check on their personal situations. See if they are attempting to assess the damage on the Districts if this has not been done earlier. Let them know that you are interested in what they are able to find out from their damage assessment contacts.
  - c. Tour shelter areas to see what involvement the church has in caring for evacuees.
2. Damage Assessment Tour
  - a. As soon as possible after the event, the District Superintendent(s), the Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator and the Conference Disaster UMVIM Coordinator should conduct damage assessment tours.
  - b. The general assessment should be to look for damage in terms of areas hit and church property damage. Attempt to gain a sense of the magnitude and severity. The only specific information at this point should be with regard to injuries to pastors and their families plus damage to church property.
  - c. Tour shelter areas to see what involvement the church has in caring for evacuees.
  - d. Obtain a copy of the Red Cross Preliminary Damage Assessment.
3. The Episcopal Tour
  - a. Once the District Superintendent has completed the damage assessment, he/she should report the findings to you and the Conference Insurance contact. If the damage is widespread, or if church personnel and/or property are involved, the District Superintendent should request an Episcopal tour.
  - b. The tour should be coordinated through the Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator, who will have contacts with the appropriate county Emergency Management office(s) who can authorize access of areas. The tour should not be conducted without these prior arrangements.
  - c. The focus of the tour should be to demonstrate the Church's presence and willingness to help in the affected area(s). Personal contact with those who have suffered losses should be encouraged, always with their feelings kept in mind.
  - d. The entourage should be kept to a minimum.



## Master Plan for Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

An After Action Review of the disaster should be held after the last requests for assistance or at UMCOR's request. The meeting should include all the key personnel at all levels of the relief effort to review how the effort went and how the response could be improved in the next disaster. The presence of the Bishop would be helpful, but is not mandatory.

### 2. After Action Report

A statistical overview and final report should be compiled based on the information obtained at the After Action Review with the Bishop and UMCOR receiving a copy of this report.

## SECTION 8

### DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CONFERENCE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE COORDINATOR

#### A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Be the presence of the Church when a natural or civil disaster strikes within the bounds of the Annual Conference.
2. The National Response Framework (NRF) is the master disaster plan for all disaster response in the United States.
  - a. The NRF requires the use of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) for all disaster responders in the United States.
  - b. NIMS in turn requires that all disaster responders from government, voluntary faith-based organizations be trained in and coordinated by the Incident Command System.
    1. UMCOR has a suggested Incident Command Structure for the Disaster Response Team.
3. Advise the Bishop and the Connectional Table of the extent of any disaster within the Annual Conference.
4. Be a communication link with UMCOR, Church World Service, Washington Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (WAVOAD), Washington Inter-faith Disaster Recovery Organization (WIDRO), Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), County Emergency Managers, and other governmental and non-governmental relief agencies involved in providing relief and assistance from suffering brought on by natural or civil disasters.
5. Represent or appoint a representative for the United Methodist Church on the Washington and Idaho state Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD).
6. The United Methodist Church requires ecumenical coordination, communication, cooperation and collaboration.
7. Chair the Conference Disaster Coordinating Committee.
  - a. Members shall include the Treasurer's Office, Director of Connectional Ministries, UMVIM Coordinator, Rapid Response Team Coordinator, and other representatives as needed.

#### B. EARLY PREPARATION

1. Annually update the Conference Disaster Plan.
2. Annually update the Conference Emergency Response Web Site.
3. Establish a Disaster Response Team using the Incident Command Structure.
  - a. The minimum positions should be Incident Coordinator, Planning, Logistics, Operations, and Administration.
    - i. Operations should include mitigation, volunteer management, case management, caring ministry, and donations management.
  - b. Create and update the Disaster Response Team contact list.
4. District Disaster Response and Preparedness Teams, if created, should be also be organized using the Incident Command Structure.
5. Provide training in Incident Command System, NRF, NIMS and UMCOR to all persons on your team.

## Master Plan for Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

6. Be responsible for the training of volunteers in all aspects of disaster relief.
7. Be a resource to each local church in preparing for a natural or civil disaster and assess their capacity to assist in their own communities in the event of a disaster.
  - a. Encourage local churches to become an approved Red Cross Shelter.
8. Work with the UMCOR Consultants in the development of the needs assessment which is necessary to the determination of the direction in which the response efforts need to proceed.
9. Demonstrate and promote the spirit of team effort by regular briefings for the purpose of merging their individual functional responsibilities into a coordinated overall program, respecting the observations and opinions of all of the team members.

### C. DISASTER IS IMMINENT

1. Ascertain the availability of each of the Disaster Response Team members for activation.
2. Reinforce ecumenical contacts and coordinate plans.
3. Be responsible for leading the process of problem resolution.
4. Request a meeting of the Disaster Response Committee, if it can be done safely.

### D. RESCUE (EMERGENCY OR RESPONSE) PHASE

1. Post Disaster News on the PNW Emergency Response Web Site.
2. Report damage to United Methodist churches or church-related properties to the Annual Conference.
  - a. Request assistance in damage assessment from the District Superintendents.
  - b. Notify the Conference office of any church property or church-related property damage.
3. Request that the Pastoral Care Team member contact each of the pastors whose church property has been damaged and offer psychological first aid, encouragement and advice.
4. Order flood buckets from UMCOR Depot.
5. Monitor the response and update the Disaster Response Team.
6. Post Disaster News on the Emergency Response Web Site blog.

### E. RELIEF (CLEAN UP) PHASE

1. Post Disaster News on the PNW Emergency Response Web Site.
2. Coordinate with UMVIM on the deployment of Early Response Teams for cleanup.
  - a. Each team needs a place to stay and a point of contact.
3. Monitor the clean up and update the Disaster Response Team

### F. RECOVERY PHASE

1. Administer any relief goods or funds provided by the UMCOR, Annual Conference, local churches or individuals in the event of a disaster.
  - a. Administer funds through an ecumenical long-term recovery organization or local church.
  - b. The Washington Inter-faith Disaster Recovery Organization (WIDRO) will assist in the allocation of financial assistance.
2. Assist the Disaster UMVIM Coordinator in the deployment of UMVIM teams.
3. Post Disaster News on the Emergency Response Web Site blog.
4. Assist residents of stricken communities to establish their own long-term relief assistance management programs.
  - a. Provide financing from UMCOR for Case Management and other allowable direct client services in the long-term relief organizations.

## Master Plan for Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

- b. Encourage United Methodist Pastors to take part in the Long Term Recovery Organizations.
- 5. Report to the Annual Conference through the Connectional Table how much aid was distributed, and to be accountable for records of said distribution.
- 6. Prepare an After Action Report.
  - a. Submit the report to the Bishop and to UMCOR.

**SECTION 9**

**DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CONFERENCE VOLUNTEER IN MISSION  
COORDINATOR**

## SECTION 10

### DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CONFERENCE DISASTER COORDINATING COMMITTEE

#### A. ACCOUNTABILITY

1. The Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Committee is responsible to the Connectional Table through the Board of Global Missions.
2. This committee shall be a policy setting committee and not an operational committee. (operations are the responsibility of the Disaster Response Team that is organized under an Incident Command Structure).

#### B. MEMBERSHIP

1. The membership of the Committee shall consist of:
  - a. The Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator who shall act as Chair, and who is designated by the Connectional Table in consultation with the Bishop and the Conference Nominating Committee.
  - b. The Conference Disaster Volunteers in Mission Coordinator who shall act as Co-Chair.
  - c. The Director of Connectional Ministries
  - d. The Conference Treasurer or designee
2. The other members of the Conference Disaster Committee shall be appointed in accordance with three principles: 1) Geographic 2) Inclusivity 3) Disaster Training and/or Experience
3. To fulfill the Geographic Principle, there shall be one or more members from each district.

#### C Duties and Responsibilities

1. The Conference Disaster Coordinating Committee shall be responsible for overall coordination and control of the United Methodist portion of disaster response.
2. The Conference Disaster Coordinating Committee shall be responsible for the coordination of the Conference Disaster and Preparedness Coordinator, the United Methodist Volunteers in Mission Coordinator, the Early Response Team Coordinator, and the Conference Treasurer's Office.
3. The Conference Disaster Coordinating Committee shall write policies and procedures as needed to facilitate this coordination.
  - i. All written policies shall be approved by the Cabinet or by the Conference Finance and Administration or their designee.
4. The Conference Disaster Coordinating Committee (CDCC) shall coordinate between the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and the Pacific Northwest Annual Conference.
  - i. CDCC shall follow suggestions from UMCOR for improvement of the Conference Disaster operation.

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- ii. The Conference Disaster Coordinating Committee shall request through the Bishop's Office, UMCOR participation within the conference when needed and necessary.
  1. UMCOR must have a specific invitation from the Bishop before they are able to provide disaster assistance.
5. The Conference Disaster Coordinating Committee shall assume such other duties as assigned or as deemed necessary.

### FINANCIAL POLICIES

1. The Conference Disaster Coordinating Committee shall write necessary policies and procedures for financial accounting of Disaster funds and expenses.
  1. Such financial policies are for internal financial management and need not meet General Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)
  2. Such policies shall be written with the assistance of the Conference Treasurer's Office.
2. Disaster Donations
  - a. All money sent to the PNW Conference Treasurer following a disaster shall be held in a Specific Disaster Account.
  - b. All money in the Specific Disaster Account shall be spent specifically for that disaster or at the direction of the Cabinet/CFA
  - c. Disaster funds collected by the PNW Conference for a specific disaster shall not be co-mingled with UMCOR funds or General Disaster funds.
  - d. All requests for expenditures from the Specific Disaster Account shall be submitted first to the Conference Disaster Preparedness and Response Coordinator or Cabinet, who shall forward it to the Conference Treasurer for payment.
    - i. The Conference Disaster Response Coordinator or Dean of the Cabinet shall mail, email, or submit in writing the expense requests to the Conference Treasurer for payment.
    - ii. The expense requests shall include the amount requested, the name and address of the recipient of the check, and what the request seeks to accomplish.
      - 1) Normally all recipients will be either a United Methodist Church, a Long Term Recovery Organization, an inter-faith organization or a case worker.
      - 2) Care should be taken not to send checks directly to clients.
  - e. Money remaining in the Specific Disaster Account following closing of all specific disaster related requests may be moved, with the approval of CFA, to the General Disaster Account for use for other disaster related needs.
3. UMCOR Expenditure Policies
  - a. UMCOR money shall not be spent to repair vacation homes.
  - b. UMCOR money shall not be spent to repair conference owned church property unless approved by the Cabinet.
  - c. UMCOR money shall not be spent to repair business owned property.
    - i. Disaster money may be used to replace or repair personal property owned in conjunction with a business such as farm houses.

## Master Plan for Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery

- d. Disaster money spent to repair rental property shall have a specific owner's agreement for continued occupancy of the renter of the property after completion of the repairs without raising the rent for a given period of time.
  - e. Disaster money shall not be spent in a way that would duplicate federal or state benefits.
- E. After Action Report
- 1. An After Action Report shall be completed and submitted by the Conference Disaster Committee to the Cabinet and to UMCOR following each disaster.