Strong Faith, Fervent Love: Providing Physical and Spiritual Care in the Wake of Disaster

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s (LCMS) Disaster Response ministry responds to immediate and long-term needs following natural and man-made disasters. Working through LCMS districts and congregations as well as with international Lutheran churches and other partners, LCMS Disaster Response builds capacity of the church’s partners to respond to needs with Christian care. The ministry reaches out to LCMS congregations and their communities with services that include on-site assessment, emergency relief and development grants, pastoral care for LCMS church workers and members, and other resources.

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“So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”
— GAL. 6:10 ESV —

Resources and Services
- Gospel-centered care for body and soul
- National and international disaster response
- Lutheran Early Response Teams (LERT)
- “Mercy in Action” preparedness training
- Material, financial and people resources
Disaster Response is a ministry of presence, a presence rich with God’s mercy and Word of life. It serves the thousands of individuals and families all over the world who are suffering from loss in the wake of disasters like hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, fires and tornadoes. But it also provides an opportunity for the church to be visibly active in reaching out in mercy to serve the hurting and homeless with physical and spiritual care.

“In times of disaster, the Church responds in mercy and love for neighbors in need,” said the Rev. Ross Johnson, director of LCMS Disaster Response.

Disaster preparedness is a priority of Disaster Response, which offers two major training programs. Mercy in Action is a program designed to help train congregations to respond when tragedy strikes while Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) training equips individual volunteers. To date, LERT has trained more than 13,000 Lutheran volunteers in disaster relief and response.

Recovering from any natural disaster is an ongoing task. Money and people resources go a long way for recovery efforts even years after a tragedy occurs.

“Providing mercy care,” said the Rev. Paul Krueger of Our Savior Lutheran Church, “opens up the door to Gospel proclamation.”

“In most times of tragedy, prayers, financial donations and trained helping hands are most needed,” said Johnson.

Through LCMS Disaster Response, the church is able to provide Gospel-centered care for both body and soul in times of tragedy.

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