NEW HAMSHIRE CONFERENCE
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
DISASTER PROTOCOL
September 2015

Our goal is to educate Churches in local disaster protocols and to help our churches and pastors impacted by disaster as they move through response, rescue and recovery towards a new normal.

Ongoing Education Prep:

• Send out email with suggestions and preparations in general about disasters
• Assist churches to connect and become involved with their local community disaster response protocol and people and to know their town’s protocol
• Direct churches to available online and social media trainings and educational resources including weblinks to existing resources
• Explore trauma remediation and resilience resources and trainings
• Provide yearly Workshops at Prepared to Serve
  (Example: Clergy as Fire Dept. Chaplain, Evacuation Kits, Fire Drills, Hazard mitigation plans, Emotional resilience, Media usage training, Church and personal preparedness: Including directions for “Shelter in Place” resources.)

Advanced Prep:

• Send out email with suggestions and preparations when Disaster is predicted (water, food etc.)
• Educate churches and pastors to notify Conference Office of disasters in their area
• Discuss disaster response protocols with church leadership
• Educate Churches to make connections with their community Emergency Management Director to learn how church can participate
• Contact local disaster management officials to learn about disaster response protocols and any role the church is expected to play
• Discuss disaster response protocols with ecumenical and civil society partners
• Connect with New Hampshire Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NHVOAD)

Responding to Disaster:

Local Churches and Pastors responding to disaster notifies the Conference Office
Conference Minister (CM) and Disaster Response Coordinator (DRC) determine an appropriate response, which may include some or all of the following:

Within 12 hours:

• Send a pastoral email and update to Conference Churches
• Begin contacting churches and specialized ministries (clergy and laity) via phone and email or direct contact to offer support and assess need
• Notify National UCC Disaster Ministries and possibly activate resources and support
Within 36 hours:
- Call pastors in disaster areas (parish and non-parish settings)
- Visit disaster site if possible, to connect with local churches and pastors
- Send email update to churches and post on web
- Keep National UCC Disaster Ministries updated
- Connect with Disaster Partners through NHVOAD
- Send email update to churches and post on web
- Begin conversations on potential funding needs and connect with National UCC on resources

Within First Week:
- Collaborate with rescue and recovery efforts
- Continue meetings to collaborate support and relief efforts
- Keep Conference Churches informed as needed and National UCC
- Assess, Stabilize and support churches and specialized ministries in the disaster zone...ministering in and through them
  a. This will include practical, emotional and spiritual needs
- Work with and through partners

Second Week through 3 months
- Continue support in and through local churches and specialized ministries
- Continue support to pastors, consider lunch gatherings
- Support and Educate churches about delivery of benefits protocol including FEMA application deadlines
- Provide ‘debriefs’ if helpful: Clergy, Laity and Volunteers
- Continue collaboration with Disaster Partners and National UCC, including application for funds through UCC National Disaster Ministries
- Collaborate and coordinate with efforts of immediate responders
- Facilitate assistance from Conference Churches and send Thank You notes
- Continue Communication to Conference Churches
- Begin conversations and education around Long Term Recovery Groups formation
- Gather stories of storm impact and recovery efforts to update Conference churches

3 Months and Beyond
- Support Efforts of Long-Term Recovery Groups and local church pastors
- Continue Collaboration with Disaster Partners
- Continue communication and coordination with Conference Churches
- Facilitate Assistance with National UCC
- Assist in coordinating out of region disaster volunteers
- Begin evaluations to gather lessons learned and best practices
- Develop a plan for long term monitoring of pastors (and their families), churches and recovery efforts

DISASTER PARTNERS:
 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), AMERICAN RED CROSS
 NH Emergency Management and Homeland Security, ECUMENICAL and INTERFAITH PARTNERS,
 UNITED WAY, SALVATION ARMY, NH VOAD