



Foothills Presbytery Disaster Preparedness and Response Plans



**PRESBYTERIAN
DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

OUT OF CHAOS, **HOPE**



Approved by Committee on Shared Ministry 11-17-2020
Approved by Foothills Presbytery Coordinating Council 1-19-2021

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Commonly Used Acronym List

CPC	Coordinating & Planning Commission
CSM	Committee on Shared Ministry
CWS	Church World Service
DPRC	Disaster Preparedness & Response Commission, Foothills Presbytery
EMD	Emergency Management Division (local by county & state)
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
KCC	Key church communicators
LTR	Long-term recovery
LTRG	Long-term recovery group
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
PC(USA)	Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
PDA	Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
SC-PDAT	South Carolina Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Team (5 SC presbyteries)
SCVOAD	South Carolina VOAD (see VOAD)
VDH	Virginia Department of Health
VOAD	Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
WVDH	West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources

Disaster Preparedness and Response Plans - Overview

Plan Contents

The content of the Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan is organized in appendices for ease in locating information and to streamline revisions. The Disaster Preparedness & Response Commission (DPRC) is responsible for coordinating and periodically reviewing all content, and submitting significant revisions to Presbytery for review and approval via the Committee on Shared Ministries (CSM).

Background

This Plan defines roles and responsibilities across the Presbytery for response to disasters. It recognizes our relationships with local and national disaster assistance organizations and develops an organization structure and communication pathways within the Presbytery. These response protocols will facilitate the flow of information to bring appropriate resources to those most in need. This Plan is based on training and materials provided by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), a ministry of the Presbyterian Church (USA); supported primarily by the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering.

This Plan serves as a beginning of an evolutionary and expanding system of connecting members of our Presbytery to resources and needs both inside and outside of our boundaries. It is hoped that future iterations of this Plan can serve as a model for congregations to develop their own specific disaster plans and move outward into their communities and regions.

The Plan recognizes one of the key tenants of disaster response: **all disasters are local**. Therefore, pastors play a key leadership role in disaster situations and often require an extra measure of emotional and spiritual support. Even in widespread events, the effects of a disaster are always localized right down to individuals and their families.

Rational

Foothills Presbytery, as a collection of church families, characterizes itself as a *community of Christ for worship, nurture, and mission*. As such, it is important to be a part of the healing love of Christ by caring for communities adversely affected by crises and catastrophic events – both natural and human-caused. From PDA's perspective presbyteries are gateways for an organized response to disaster. To be effective in this ministry, we recognize the need for careful preparation, communication, and mobilization plans that reach across many churches and can be activated in a timely manner.

Presbyteries and congregations need to have good communication plans in place in the event of a disaster. Often without reporting from the local community, the Presbytery (and Synod) is dependent on news accounts rather than first-hand information, which could lead to an uneven or inadequate response.

Scope

Foothills Presbytery is a mid-level council of the Presbyterian Church (USA). It encompasses churches in the upstate of South Carolina. It includes the counties of Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, and Spartanburg.

Disaster response addressed by this Plan moves in two directions. It reaches inward to churches and communities experiencing disaster events within the boundaries of Foothills Presbytery. It also includes reaching out to areas in need beyond our Presbytery. It encompasses not only a disaster response plan, but also addresses protection and recovery of the Presbytery office facility, a training plan and model disaster plan for congregations, and a list of disaster response resources.

The nature of disasters covered by this Plan is purposely left unspecified. This Plan is not tied to a specific class of disasters. Disasters are events that cause human suffering or create human needs that survivors cannot alleviate without spiritual, monetary, material, and/or physical assistance. However, because Foothills Presbytery is in the upcountry of SC, it may assume a role of providing sheltering for hurricane evacuees from the coastal areas that should be addressed in disaster planning.

Disaster planning covers three distinct phases: preparation, immediate response, and recovery. Our response philosophy includes offering a ministry of presence, assessing need, and coordinating a response. An adequate response meets physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Special attention must be paid to care of pastors who often bear a tremendous leadership role in local disasters. We will address these phases by:

- Identifying experienced individuals and congregational resources within the Presbytery that can respond to a disaster;
- Developing a response organization and communication protocols that can be activated as needed;
- Managing donated material and financial resources, including granted funds;
- Training teams and collecting resources for response; and
- Linking our resources among:
 - Presbytery churches
 - Community-based and ecumenical response organizations including regional and state Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)
 - Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) and other national and international relief agencies.

We remain especially attentive to responding to those of our communities with limited personal options and resources to overcome the chaos often delivered by disasters.

Although this Plan focuses primarily on responding to disasters within the Presbytery, guidelines for responding to national situations are included. Resources and connections provided by PDA for response to national and international disasters are recommended.

Appendix A

Disaster Response Plan

Appendix A

Disaster Response Plan

This Plan defines roles and responsibilities across the Presbytery for response to disasters. The Disaster Preparedness and Response Commission (DPRC) has responsibility for coordinating communication and for training in response to both disasters within the Presbytery and help with disasters nationally and internationally – including long-term recovery. This team may be commissioned by the presbytery to take certain actions in response to a disaster.

Organization

Presbytery Disaster Preparedness and Response Commission (DPRC)

A Disaster Preparedness and Response Commission will be formed at the Presbytery level as a sub-committee of the Committee on Shared Ministries.

The DPRC will normally consist of a Director, Co-Director, Preparedness Training Coordinator, and members from across the Presbytery. Presbytery Leader/Stated Clerk, or another presbytery representative(s) appointed by the Presbytery Leader will be an ex officio member(s).

The responsibilities of the Director can often be shared or delegated. The Co-Director provides back-up availability and general assistance to the Director, and shares in all responsibilities of the Director. As a leadership team, their responsibilities include:

- Convene and chair DPRC meetings;
- Recruit and train DPRC members as needed as approved by the Committee on Shared Ministries (CSM);
- During times of disaster, activate the protocols listed below as appropriate;
- Coordinate information flow to/from the appropriate members of the DPRC and communicate directly with the Presbytery staff;
- Advise the Presbytery leadership about requesting assistance from PDA, including deployment of members of the PDA National Response Team and applying for PDA grants;
- As needed, recommend creation of financial accounts to receive and disburse relief funds and creation of an administrative commission for disaster recovery (see below);
- Coordinate communication with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, South Carolina Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Team (SC-PDAT) and other inter-faith and civil disaster response agencies;
- Collaborate with Presbytery leadership about information for the news media;
- As is appropriate, foster and maintain a relationship with South Carolina Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD);
- As needed, develop recommendations for partnerships, certifications, and memorandums of understanding with other organizations;
- Ensure there is consistent representation from the DPRC to the Committee on Shared Ministries;
- Coordinate periodic reviews and revisions of this Plan.

The DPRC Preparedness and Training Coordinator is generally responsible to:

- Coordinate training of DPRC members across the Presbytery;
- Assist congregations with organizing and training, including presentations about disaster preparedness and response;
- Coordinate assembly and delivery of disaster kits if/when needed;
- Coordinate with PDA and train Presbyterian Women in disaster preparedness training;
- Maintain a current list of disaster response and preparedness resources;
- Liaison with PDA regarding training materials and other resources;
- Review and revise, as needed all Appendices of this Plan.

The general functions of the DPRC are to:

- Coordinate a Presbytery response to any disaster brought to the attention of the DPRC including ministry of presence visits, assessments of need, providing emotional and spiritual care, and coordinating volunteer response;
- If warranted, coordinate a rapid response to local and national disasters;
- Form and activate communication protocols as needed;
- Ensure that pastors affected by disasters receive pastoral care;
- As directed, disseminate assessment and response information to affected and responding churches, PDA, and other organizations including local inter-faith networks and VOAD;
- Develop and maintain comprehensive Disaster Preparedness and Response Plans;
- Work with the DPRC Preparedness & Training Coordinator to conduct training for DPRC members, and congregations;
- Help organize and equip disaster response work teams as needed for response both within and outside the Presbytery;
- Liaison with inter-faith and civic disaster response agencies, and provide representatives as requested.

Presbytery Disaster Assistance Commission

A Presbytery Disaster Assistance Commission (DPRC) can be a very useful body to act on behalf of Foothills Presbytery in directing a significant and/or long-term disaster response. The responsibilities of an administrative commission can include managing a response from PDA, creating and managing accounts to receive donations and grants, disbursing funds to congregations and long-term recovery organizations, forming partnerships with other disaster recovery agencies, managing volunteers, and hiring staff if needed (with approval from CSM and using designated, donated or granted funds). The Commission may act in times of disaster on behalf of and with the full authority of Foothills between meetings of Presbytery. The Commissioning document recommendation will include specific responsibilities and accountability for the commission.

Response and Communication Protocols

The principle methods of communication during disaster situations will be direct phone/cell phone contact among Presbytery leadership, pastors, and DPRC directors. In the context of this Plan Presbytery leadership includes the Presbytery Leader/Stated Clerks, the Associate Stated Clerk, the Associate for Shared Mission and Ministry, and the Presbytery Communications Coordinator. Hopefully, information can be passed throughout the Presbytery via email from the Presbytery Communications Communicator. If cellular capacity is limited, often text messages can get through when cell phone calls fail.

Guidelines for communication and response are provided by PDA. The following protocols are recommended for responding to disasters within Foothills Presbytery and are based on a PDA model. These items are listed in order of importance and sequence of events.

Church Leadership – Presbytery Leadership and Pastors

1. If you are in a safe location, remain sheltered until danger passes.
2. Assess your own damage and attend to loved-ones and yourself first.
3. When it is safe, assess the general situation and physical needs of your neighbors, congregations, and community.
4. Congregations follow the protocols of their church disaster plans.
5. Respond to the immediate needs of survivors in cooperation with local emergency response agencies.
6. Pastors report congregation status and immediate needs to Presbytery leadership.
7. Presbytery leadership initiate contact with pastors where there is expected significant impact and record the results of an assessment.
8. Presbytery leadership communicate the status of the Presbytery and congregations to other leadership and staff within the Presbytery as needed.
9. Undergird all efforts with spiritual support to the survivors in cooperation with other spiritual leaders of the community. (No secular agency is equipped to perform this unique and vital role.)
10. Pastors coordinate efforts of congregations, relying as much as possible on church members to lead work teams – focusing on those in the community with the most need (beyond church members).

Presbytery Disaster Response Commission - Directors and Team Members

1. If you are in a safe location, remain sheltered until danger passes.
2. Assess your own damage and attend to loved-ones and yourself first.
3. Establish a plan for maintaining communications with the Presbytery leadership.
4. Advise Presbytery leadership about contacting PDA and requesting a National Response Team (NRT) deployment and/or requesting financial grant assistance. If NRT are deployed, maintain close liaison with those PDA responders.
5. Assist Presbytery leadership with the assessment of the status of congregations, damaged churches, and affected communities. Record this information and note where there needs to be follow-up contact and where there are likely to be unmet needs.
6. Assemble information to communicate to all churches via the Presbytery Communications Administrator about the current status of areas affected and any expected needs.

7. DPRC Directors communicate needs to DPRC members and assist them with coordinating volunteer responses when it is safe to send in field workers.
8. Establish a regular meeting schedule (in-person or virtual) for the Presbytery DPRC as long as the situation warrants support from the Presbytery and national organizations including PDA and VOAD.
9. Participate in VOAD and FEMA conference calls.
10. Coordinate “ministry of presence” visits to all affected areas and report needs to Presbytery leadership.
11. Assess and respond to spiritual care needs, especially for pastors of affected churches.
12. Monitor the shelter needs of Presbytery counties and surrounding areas.
13. DPRC initiate or join any long-term recovery organizations, and recruit church members to be part of this effort.
14. As FEMA and insurance companies respond, begin a list of “unmet needs” that can serve as an assignment guide for the long-term recovery groups. Coordinate this effort through the local long-term recovery organizations (LTRGs) and VOAD. Enlist the aid of local church members in this survey, paying special attention to the poor, minorities, disabled, elderly, and uninsured.
15. If warranted, advise Presbytery leadership about creating financial accounts to manage recovery donations and grant funds.
16. If needed, DPRC survey churches that may become volunteer host sites for the long-term recovery and communicate this information to PDA.
17. Seek professional advice as needed from a panel of advisors (see Long-Term Recovery section below).

Long-Term Recovery

While immediate disaster response periods can be counted in terms of days and weeks, long-term recovery efforts may stretch into several months and even years. If these efforts continue for extended periods, it is very important to enlist help from long-term recovery groups (LTRGs). In this situation the Presbytery DPRC may recommend creation of an Administrative Commission if it has not already been created (see above). During this extended period, pastors and relief workers will need pastoral care for themselves and their families. Disasters always put great stress on persons and families involved in response and recovery, especially those in leadership positions. Foothills Presbytery will make a special effort to minister to the special needs of these persons during times of crisis.

In most cases long-term recovery is managed by local (county) LTRGs that may be set-up as the recovery process proceeds. These organizations are aided by Emergency Management Divisions (county or state EMD), FEMA, VOAD, and other national agencies that may have partnerships with local jurisdictions. The DPRC will identify all local LTRGs and will foster participation by our congregations that will connect us to those with unmet needs. Support for this effort can come from PDA.

Another valuable resource during a long-term recovery situation is an Advisory Panel. The Presbytery DPRC will foster relationships with specialists who can provide professional advice to guide the Presbytery in decision-making and recovery planning. Generally, this advice will pertain to:

- Protection and safety of survivors and workers;

- Possibilities for advocacy, relationships, and creative responses;
- Propriety issues around norms and issue ownership; and
- Community re-development issues.

Advisors will be available in many areas including medicine, law, finance, banking, insurance, engineering, community organization, psychiatry, agriculture, human rights, religion, ecumenical and inter-faith relationships, governmental agencies, private enterprise, the environment, etc.

Responding to National and International Disasters

Responding to persons in need is a very natural way of showing Christ's love and putting faith and compassion into action. An increasing number of congregations seek to respond to those in need by:

- Organizing and sending volunteer work teams to disaster sites;
- Collecting and donating money; and
- Assembling or donating funds for various disaster recovery kits for survivors (e.g., hygiene, school, flood buckets). Guidelines are contained on PDA and Church World Service websites.

Foothills Presbytery will use the resources of PDA to communicate needs and coordinate management of work teams, monetary donations, and disaster kits. Some DPRC members have extensive disaster response work trip experience and can provide helpful information about forming teams and planning a work trip.

PDA maintains a list of disaster sites across the country in need of volunteer teams. Information about current national and international disaster response needs are contained on the PDA web site and are communicated via e-mail on the PDA Rapid Information Network. Monetary donations for disaster response may be given through One Great Hour of Sharing. Also, during the year when a special appeal is made for significant recovery needs, PDA will assign a designated account number for giving to a specific disaster response. Even if there is no specific appeal issued for a disaster, donations can always be sent to PDA for general disaster response.

Preparing for Pandemic Infectious Diseases

When confronted with a possible infectious disease event, the DPRC will disseminate appropriate information about best hygiene practices and church procedures. The DPRC will be informed by the best practices shared by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC), National Institute of Health (NIH), the Governor's office and PDA. As is the case for all disasters – they are local. Pandemic events, although global in nature, have differing ramifications for local communities. Infectious disease situations change rapidly, so it is important to stay tuned to the local situation and the recommendations from local health authorities when making decisions about modifying church procedures and activities. See Appendix D for the latest PDA guidance.

Appendix B

Administrative Office Disaster Plan

Appendix B

Administrative Office Disaster Plan

This plan is an appendix of a set of disaster preparedness and response plans developed within Foothills Presbytery. The Overview section discusses the background, rationale, and scope of preparedness and response plans being developed in the Presbytery. This appendix outlines disaster preparedness plans to ensure the continuing function of Presbytery administrative functions in the event that the Presbytery facility is damaged or lost. See the resources in Appendix D for the latest PDA guidance about infectious diseases.

- A. Develop Memoranda of Understanding with some area churches/entities for temporary housing of the Presbytery Office as needed.

- B. Develop contingency staffing plans depending on location of the disaster. All current staff should be able to work from home, given internet access, cell phone access, and power.

- C. Create a disaster “Go Box” containing:
 - Current Directory
 - Hard copy of Presbytery Manual
 - Copy of Presbytery Disaster Response Plan
 - Community emergency contacts
 - Current Planning Calendar
 - Official copy of the property deed
 - List of credit card numbers and holders
 - Account numbers and contact information for all bank accounts
 - Copy of insurance policy
 - Copy of PDA Memorandum of Understanding
 - Complete computer record backup (flash drives, cloud, or offsite)
 - Presbytery stationery/stamps
 - Business cards for all Presbytery staff
 - Memoranda of Understanding for temporary housing of Presbytery Office
 - Contingency staffing plan

- Book of Order/Confessions
- Book of Common Worship
- Hymnal
- Bible

D. Secure equipment:

- Laptop computers - at least one capable of reading backup flash drives
- Cell phones
- Copier(s)
- Surge protectors

E. Other considerations:

- Records preservation
- Evacuation plan
- Severe storm shelter
- Plan for sheltering in place
- Ensure PDA has the presbytery's bank information so granted funds may be quickly received

Appendix C
Disaster Preparedness and Response Education
Plan

Appendix C

Disaster Preparedness and Response Education Plan

Objective:

This plan outlines educational processes that will encourage congregations to develop their own emergency or disaster response, whether local, national or international.

Goals - Local Disaster

- Provide list of resources for congregations to use in developing their congregational disaster plans and print resources as needed.
- Provide list of resources for families to use in developing their family disaster plans and print resources as needed.
- Provide sample plans.

Goals - National Disaster

- Provide list of resources for congregations to use in developing their response to a national disaster.
 - How to organize and plan for a work team
 - Prepare “kits” to be available as Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) determines the need.

Goals - International Disaster

- Provide list of resources for congregations to use in developing their response to an international disaster
 - How to connect with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to determine needed resources
 - How to publicize information about needed resources.

Process

- Create list of resources
- Use materials from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Preparedness Commission for presentations to churches about disaster planning
- Be prepared to make presentations to churches
- Post materials for developing plans on the Foothills Presbytery website.

Appendix D

Disaster Preparedness and Response Resources

Appendix D

Disaster Preparedness and Response Resources

Listed below are sources for disaster planning materials developed by PDA and other organizations regarding disaster planning, work team coordination, volunteer management, spiritual care, infectious disease events, and long-term recovery. Many items are annotated with a summary of the content.

FEMA Are You Ready Guide

<https://www.ready.gov> an Extensive guide on preparing for disasters. The entire document is available online, in pdf format and in book form. The *Ready Kids* materials are especially useful for family preparedness and for doing Family Preparedness events with your congregations.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

<http://www.pcusa.org/pda>

The PDA web site has a number of resources for training.

- **Community Arise** <http://www.communityarise.com/> curriculum is appropriate for a wide range of audiences: potential volunteers; faith-based and secular community groups; disaster response groups (long-term recovery, pre-disaster planning, or immediate post disaster); and denominational and community decision-makers.
- **God With Us** <http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/pda/pdfs/god-with-us-curriculum.pdf> worship and Christian Education Resources for Congregational use after a local disaster with emphasis on the needs of children, youth, and families immediately after a disaster.
- **Preparedness For Pandemics** – <https://pda.pcusa.org/pda/resource/disease-guidance-for-congregations/> can help congregations plan a response for worship and ministry continuation should the need arise.

The American Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org/services/prepare/> provides information and a video covering family and community aspects of disaster preparedness.

Appendix E

Congregational Disaster Plan Template

Appendix E

Congregational Disaster Plan Template

This is a guide to help congregations prepare for disaster response in their church or local community. It consists of steps that can be accomplished in sequence or concurrently by a group involved in planning. The guide breaks the many important steps in disaster planning into smaller more manageable blocks. It covers many, but not all, of the topics that should be considered in making your church plan. Adapt this list to meet the unique needs of your congregation.

This checklist comes directly from the work of the Preparedness Team of the PDA National Response Team.

Congregational Disaster Plan Template

Name of Church _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Social Media _____

Goal Date for completion _____

DISASTER PLAN

Date Updated: _____

This plan (or portions thereof) is to be activated in the event of a disaster or warning of potential disaster.

- Section 1: Contacts and Staff Responsibilities
- Section 2: Facilities Evacuation Plan
- Section 3: Alternate Facilities and General Communication
- Section 4: Documentation of Property
- Section 5: Protection of Property
- Section 6: Caring for the Congregation
- Section 7: Immediate Response Protocol

Overview

This document is a template to help churches work through designing a disaster preparedness plan. It is not exhaustive and should be expanded upon, taking into consideration the many variables in found in church facilities, congregations and disasters. Add, delete, and make it your own.

SECTION 1

Contacts and Staff Responsibilities

CONTACTS - Cell phone numbers are essential because disasters don't happen during office hours.

List all church staff, clerk of session, disaster team members, etc.

Church Contacts:

Position:
Name:
Phone: (mobile/text, home)
Email Address:
Home address:

Position:
Name:
Phone: (mobile/text, home)
Email Address:
Home address:

Add others as necessary.

Local Community Contacts:

Emergency: 911
Police:
Sheriff:
Fire Rescue:
Emergency Management:
Insurance Agent:

Presbytery Contacts:

Presbytery Office Address:
Phone:
Email:
Website Address:

Position: Stated Clerk/Presbytery Leader
Name:
Phone: (mobile/text, home)
Email Address:

Position: Stated Clerk
Name:
Phone: (mobile/text, home)

Email Address:

Position: Associate for Shared Mission and Ministry

Name:

Phone: (mobile/text, home)

Email Address:

Position: Administrative

Name:

Phone: (mobile/text, home)

Email Address:

Add others as necessary.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS DUTIES

Assign duties to staff and disaster team members to perform if adequate warning is provided (hurricane, etc.). Also, make a list of who does what if no warning is provided (tornado, etc.) Plan for someone to act as “back up” in case a staff member is out of town.

Provide brief but clear descriptions of their responsibilities so everyone understands ahead of time what is expected of them.

Make sure staff is briefed on alternate plans and post-disaster operating procedure.

Examples:

Administrator – Make back up of all important computer files and see that they are stored off site.

Building Maintenance Staff – Prepare and secure equipment, buildings and grounds for the emergency.

Ushers/Greeters – Follow protocol for evacuating the building (fire, bomb threat, etc.). Should be trained in AED, CPR and First Aid.

List everything that needs to be done in checklist form for each person and include in this plan. Add or remove as needed.

Congregational Preparedness Checklist

- _____ Develop a communication system within the congregation (i.e. phone tree, Shepherds, etc.)

- _____ List of congregational members with special needs noted and updated annually

- _____ Congregational Directory updated at least quarterly. (Including e-mail addresses and cell phone numbers.)

- _____ Insurance Policies reviewed annually and saved in multiple locations.

- _____ Financial and Session records saved electronically and stored in multiple locations monthly.

- _____ Inventory of physical plant made and updated annually. Video record recommended for insurance purposes.

- _____ Determine if the physical plant can be used as an emergency shelter, point of distribution, etc.

- _____ Consult with local American Red Cross and Emergency Management Agency regarding possible shelters in the area.

- _____ Share plan with Emergency Management Agency, first responders and presbytery.

SECTION 2**Facilities Evacuation Plan**

The evacuation plan should be in a presentation format and placed on the walls in strategic locations so staff, members and visitors will know where to go in an emergency. This plan should also designate a safe room where a large group of people could weather a storm if necessary and a location to gather outside of the building that would be clear of emergency vehicles.

1. Make a floor plan of each of your buildings. On it, mark the exit doors to the outside, location of fire alarm pulls, fire extinguishers, first aid kits and AED unit. Post the plan throughout the building, marking “you are here” at the appropriate location. Show how to get to the nearest two exits.
2. Attach your evacuation plan to this document.
3. At a staff meeting at least once a year, talk about what everyone should do in case of an emergency. Discuss both evacuation and maintaining a safe area. Make this part of your Usher/Greeter training. If your facility already has evacuation plans posted, check them yearly for updates.
4. Conduct a congregational fire drill once a year. Include staff, session, deacons, ushers and greeters and as many congregation members as possible, ensuring that there are plans for evacuating vulnerable people.

SECTION 3**Alternate Facilities and General Communication**

A disaster may render portions of your facility uninhabitable. You should have a plan for alternative work/worship space.

- 1. Determine if there is an accessible location, perhaps another church, for an alternate office that can be used in an emergency situation (e.g. offices damaged, no power, etc.). Develop an agreement with that site that you will offer your facilities to them for emergency use if they will reciprocate. Decide what systems, procedures, and records should be available in an emergency, and make plans accordingly.*
- 2. Plan for an off-site worship location should your building become uninhabitable. If safe to do so, meeting for worship in the church parking lot the Sunday following the disaster can be a time of great healing. **If at all possible and safety is not compromised, do not cancel worship services.***
- 3. Determine who will be the Media Spokesperson.*
- 4. Keep the website and social media current.*

Name of Alternate Facility:

Address:

Contact Person(s):

Phone/Text:

Email:

Name of Media Spokesperson/Alternate:

Phone/Text:

Email:

Name of Social Media/Website Communicator:

Phone/Text:

Email:

SECTION 4**Documentation of Property****FACILITIES INVENTORY**

Complete a facilities inventory of your property. Document the inventory with a written description listing the items, including serial number, cost, and the date purchased if possible. Also, take digital pictures or a room-by-room video/DVD (a great project for the youth). Make copies and store this inventory in a couple of safe places off site. Update your inventory annually. Check your insurance policy yearly and update as necessary.

CHURCH RECORDS

Determine what records need to be protected and copied. List those records below.

1. Membership records including Church Directory
2. Financial records
3. Session minutes
4. Historical documents
5. *Other?*

Back-up electronic records on a routine basis (at least monthly) and store off site or to the cloud.

Put irreplaceable hardcopy files in a waterproof/fireproof container and store off the floor, above expected flooding levels (or move off site). These tasks should be included on one of the staff preparedness checklists, as noted in Section 1.

SECTION 5**Protection of Property**

Equipment and supplies such as plastic bags, plastic sheeting, tarps, duct tape, rope and waterproof containers are needed to cover equipment and protect items, etc. These supplies should be purchased ahead of time and stored ready for use. Upon notification of a pending disaster event, each area of all buildings should be secured if time allows. Items that will need special protection should be listed accordingly. Equipment that requires special procedures (tie down, gas and electrical shut-off, etc.) should also have instructions included with the checklist.

PROPERTY CHECKLIST

1. Place plastic bags or sheet plastic over electronic equipment.
 2. Disconnect electricity to all electronic equipment.
 3. Cover large items with tarps.
 4. Position equipment in hallways if feasible or move away from windows.
 5. Check each room after it is secured to ensure all items are properly secured.
 6. Turn off electrical breakers, shut of gas and water mains if deemed necessary.
- Add other tasks.*

SECTION 6**Caring for the Congregation**

Plan ways the church can assist congregation members and members of the community. Implement the following ideas if possible.

1. Remind your congregation to be prepared for disasters. See resource lists.
2. Identify those within your congregation who may need assistance with disaster preparation. Are there any vulnerable members who may need help (i.e. preparing to shelter in place, shopping for supplies, transportation if they have to evacuate)? Are there vulnerable non-members whom the church could assist? Assemble a team who will assist those who need help.
3. Develop a system to check on members and neighbors post-disaster. Remember that phone lines may be down and cell phones may not work. Text messaging often works when other communication does not.
4. If your church is not damaged and it's safe to do so, open your facility to the community and responders (e.g., get water, charge cell phones, etc.).

SECTION 7

Immediate Response Protocol

Adjust the following to fit your particular situation.

IF YOU HAVE PRIOR NOTIFICATION

1. Contact staff and volunteers. Distribute/email the written protocol to be sure everyone has the latest update.
2. Activate your preparedness plan to protect facility and contents.
3. Staff should share personal shelter location arrangements (where will they go if unable to stay at home).

DURING THE EVENT

TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS TO BE SAFE!

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING AN EVENT

1. Initial contacts are made to all staff.
2. Staff / disaster team contact each other to confirm initial response actions.
3. Staff / assigned personnel should begin to assess building as soon as it is safe to do so. Do not turn utilities on unless safe to do so.
4. Activate protocol for checking on congregation members.
5. Contact your presbytery office and ask the presbytery to advise PDA of the disaster.
6. Hold a staff meeting as soon as possible.
7. Worship together.