How to Prepare a Disaster Plan

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Adopted by the Vestry of St. John's Episcopal Church, Walpole, NH
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INTRODUCTION

Inasmuch as this community has had to deal with the Cold River flood of 2005 and is currently dealing with the "Swine Flu" pandemic it has become incumbent upon this church to address future hazards and disasters in a planned and anticipated manner. With this in mind I present the following.

ST. JOHN'S EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

Our church needs to address the scope to which we might be involved. As there are disaster plans for the town of Walpole, the State of New Hampshire, and the nation as a whole (see the appendices) our St. John's Disaster Plan should dovetail into those and not duplicate effort. We should decide whether we will be addressing only members of our congregation or the general public. I suggest that we should limit ourselves to our own membership.

The Vestry members need to discuss its vision of our church's ministry in a disaster knowing the above information. Particular issues might include:

- Who would be our "clientele"?
- Could our church fulfill a need the Selectmen might welcome?
- How do we want to respond?
- How are we able to respond?
- Do we have people available to help?
- Could we offer shelter space to the town of Walpole?
- Could we offer kitchen facilities to the town of Walpole?
- Financial and in-kind donations and how to handle them.
- How should we relate to other Walpole churches in disaster management? Should we contact them early to see what they might have in their plans?
- The provision of a meeting spot to ensure that everyone within our purview is safe.
- Considering asking the American Red Cross to review our plan and to advise us.
- What space can we allot to our ministry of this sort (clerical, storage, feeding, cots and blankets, etc.)?
- Focus on what we can do for people within our congregation.
- Does our plan address property issues?
- Does our plan address facilities issues?

I think our role should be in keeping track of needs of individuals within our congregation in coordination with Walpole's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

We are very much helped by the Rev. Janice Howe's book Nothing Ever Happens Here: A Guide to Disaster Ministry (see Appendix) which suggests the following:

- Keep a list of people needing to be checked on, particularly elderly and infirm. This list should be kept up monthly. Have responsibility be given to a specific group of our congregants. Notify local emergency liaison for the town of Walpole of the list.
- Maintain information on connections (phone #s, cell phone #s, E-Mail addresses, text messages, land mail addresses).
- Have laminated (waterproof) business cards to hand out during a disaster.
- Don't duplicate what is already available in help from others.
- Keep chart of all agencies to call on including key regional and contact people with the average amount of time they stay in a community working on a disaster.
- Have a key contact person for the church. Also have an alternate.
- Clergy and church leaders should be introduced to the Walpole Emergency Management Director (EMD) designated in the Appendix to this document.
- Contact other local churches to see whether they have anything they're doing regarding potential disaster work. See to it that the churches avoid duplication of effort.
- On the basis of what efforts we as a church will offer we should select a committee to do preparation work, make up forms, establish data on our clients, have appropriate filed information, assign to specific individuals roles in the disaster plan, etc.
- Our files should specifically include folders on **People, Tasks, Properties, Facilities**:

    1) Data on all our congregants in the following form, to be done immediately, updated at least yearly and kept on tap should there be a disaster.

        INFORMATIONAL DATA OF THOSE AFFECTED

        _____

        _____

        _____

        Address (Permanent)

        _____

        Address (Temporary)

        _____

        Telephone _____Cell Phone_____

        E-mail Address_____

        Emergency Contact Person_____

Contact Person's Address_____

Contact Telephone Number_____

2) List and data on all agencies.
3) Copy of our denomination's resources, none yet clear. The Rev. Charles LaFonde at Diocesan headquarters.is working on this. (His cell telephone number is 603-344-2711.)
4) Church concern lists as follows on those within our congregation with known problems we should be following:

CHURCH CONCERN LIST
To give to town official if need arises
Name_____
Address_____
Telephone Number_____
Emergency Contact
Person_____
Emergency Contact Person's
Address_____
Emergency Contact Person's Telephone Number_____
Potential needs/limitations
Oxygen_____ Diabetic_____
Wheelchair_____ Mobility Issues_____
Vision or Hearing Issues_____
Other Concerns_____
_____

5) Release of information form as follows:

RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORM
I_____, hereby authorize St. John's Episcopal Church of Walpole, NH to release to agencies or persons designated below any information that is relevant for the purpose of providing assistance for my disaster needs.
I _____, hereby authorize the agencies or persons designated below to release to St. John's Episcopal Church of Walpole, NH any information that is relevant for the purpose of providing assistance for my disaster needs.
Name of Agencies or Persons Designated: Check all that apply
___American Red Cross___Town Officers___Salvation Army
___FEMA___Small Business Association___Home Health Care
List any other agency or person:_____
_____ _____
Signature of Client and Date Signature of Spouse and Date

Pre Disaster Address and telephone #

_____

_____

Current Contact Information

_____

_____

6) Copy of Walpole Emergency Operating Plan (EOP) in written and CD forms (see Appendix to this document).
7) Available Disaster Funds:
   a) Denominational
   b) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
   c) Small Business Association (SBA) The New Hampshire Disaster Recovery Team
   d) Donations
   e) Etc.
8) FEMA information
9) SBA information
10) The New Hampshire Disaster Recovery Team
11) One keeping track of extra costs
12 One from which one can "tell our story" about disaster news and giving information to www.disasternews.net (Heather Myers) as per the Rev. Janice Howe's page 20.
13) Our disaster committee should consist of a) a Communicator Contact Person (for communicating with newspapers, TV, radio, etc., b) Telephone Receptionist, c) Church Greeter at the front door, d) News Listener, e) a Gatherer of Personal Information, who will keep the files up to date, work with the greeter, and keep up with congregants' needs, f) the Pastor, and g) a "Thanker" (see below). These all should be designated by the Vestry and be actively "in office". At least yearly they should be updated and made familiar with their duties.

Note that item 1 should be put into effect immediately and items 4, and 5 above should be made up in "blank" form available to be used should a disaster occur.

If the disaster lasts a long time the committee and the church should separate disaster funds from other funds and be generally flexible (see Janice Howe's page 37).

We should have a key to Town Hall in order to be able to get to the defibrillator there

Remember to thank people in writing.

We should be sensitive to take care of caregivers. Anticipate and prophylactic ally treat burn-out and grief.

A year after the initiation of a disaster commemorate it. See Janice Howe's pages 63-66.

Organizations to keep in mind and be prepared to tap with our having individual files on each include:

- American Red Cross, Keene (work 603-352-3210) with its responsibilities being in: damage assessment; work with local officials and help with mass care (sheltering and feeding); mental health counseling; financial assistance. It also helps with clean-up at Red Cross expense. This organization has contracts/agreements with 300 +/- organizations and can get one to such organizations. It has volunteers ready to assist 24/7 each day of the year. A copy of St. John's Disaster Plan should be sent to Janet Warren, Director of the Keene branch of the American Red Cross, (New Hampshire West Chapter of the American Red Cross, 83 Court Street, Keene, NH, 03431, (603) 352-3210 ext 210). **NOTE** In the event of a disaster the very first organization to contact should be the American Red Cross as it is skilled in coordinating organizations.
- Department of Environmental Service (DES) (office 603-271-3503, Web Site http://www.recovery.gov).
- The Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire . At the time of this writing there is no Diocesan plan although the Rev. Charles Lafonde is working on one.
- Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) for the big issues (office 800-621-3362, Web Site http://www.fema.gov/).
- HazMat Cleanup of hazardous materials. The Office of Hazardous Materials Safety. (Office 800-HMR-4922 M-F 9-5, Web Site hazmat.dot.gov).
- Jan Howe's business cards on the subject (see her book page 19 and obtain a copy from her).
- Local and State Agencies as they come to be brought into the mix.
- Monadnock Commission Organizations Active in Disasters (MCOAD) . Ellen Avery is the point person and can be reached M-F at the Monadnock United Way (603-352-4209).
- National Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (1501 Lee Highway, Suite 206, Arlington, VA 22209-1109 (telephone 703-778-5088, fax 703-778-5091, e-mail info@nvoad.org.) New Hampshire office (reach through Google with designation "New Hampshire national volunteer organizations active in disaster).
- New Hampshire Help-Line (known as "2-1-1 New Hampshire" which one can reach by just dialing the three numbers "211" and selectively with key pad of telephone asking for particular helps). Call 2-1-1 or visit www.2-1-1NewHampshire to access information about a variety of human services in each community.
- New Hampshire Mobil Command Center (NH HSEM) (603-223-3630)
- New York Council of Churches data coming from Jan Howe
- North Walpole Fire Department – Chief Edward Hasselmann (Office 603-756-3621, home 603-447-2077, E-mail Edward.Hasselmann@Hubbardbseeder.com)
- Public Command Center NH HSEM (603-223-3630).
- Salvation Army (Keene office 603-352-0607, national web site http://www.salvationarmyusa/usn/www_usn_2.nsf)

- Television WMUR-TV (800-257-5151)
- Walpole School System – Principal Sam Jacobs (home 111 Commonwealth Ave., Springfield, VT, 05156, home telephone # 802-885-8238, work # 603-756-4728, E-Mail sjacobs@sau60.org)
- Walpole Fire Department - Chief Richard Hurlburt (home 603-756-4297, Firehouse 603-756-3621, cell 603-313-4297) and fireman and representative on the EOP Lawrence Devault (home 603-756-3295, office 785-3659) are experts on the EOP.
- Walpole's Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) should be available in hard cover and CD within our St. John's Disaster Plan files. A duplicate of the CD form may be made from my copy.
- Walpole Police Department - Chief David Hewes (home 603-445-2363, Police Station 603-445-2058).
- Walpole Selectmen: Whitney Aldrich (home 603-756-9055), Sheldon Sawyer (home 603-756-4049), Jaime Teague (home 603-445-5193). All three have as their office number 603-756-3672.

APPENDIX

1) Reverend Howe's Plan as outlined in her text <u>Nothing Ever Happens Here: A Guide to Disaster Ministry: Publishing Works, Inc., Exeter, New Hampshire, 2008.</u>
[Rev. Howe has written this book for a community that has no town Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). With that in mind she suggests a disaster plan (produced by some other agency) that might have the following format:

OPERATIONS

Infrastructure Branch	Human Structure Branch	Emergency Services Branch
Highway Dept.	Mass Care & Shelter & Food	Fire/Rescue
Water/Sewer	Health & Medical Services	Search & Rescue
		Hazardous Materials
		Law Enforcement
		Specific Hazards

Other sections would be Information & Planning, Logistics, and Administration and Finance.

I would suggest that because our town, Walpole, has its own Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) this pattern does not work for us.]

2) Sources of Information for our Emergency Plan
The following sources will be useful for pulled-together information in planning our own disaster plan.

- Walpole's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)
- The Rev. Janet Howe's book <u>Nothing Ever Happens Here: A Guide to Disaster Ministry</u>. [I suggest a) that a copy of this book be acquired for our Disaster Plan library and b) that the Vestry invite Rev. Howe to attend a meeting when the St. John's Disaster Plan is nearing completion. Her input into what we have developed and our recognition of her work, forms, and experience seem to me to be worthy of a couple of hours of her time and the Vestry's time. [She can be reached at Third Congregational Church, P.O. Box 164, River Road, Alstead, New Hampshire 03602-0164, Office 603-835-6358, and E-Mail pnjhowe@comcast.net.]
- The American Red Cross, Janet Warren, Director of the Keene branch, (New Hampshire West Chapter of the American Red Cross, 83 Court Street, Keene, NH, 03431, (603) 352-3210 ext 210)
- Physicians and Nurses within our congregation (to be contacted after Vestry has thought about this Draft Plan.

- Openness to others' ideas including the Police and Fire Department leaders, Walpole's Selectmen and Health Officer

3) Walpole's Emergency Operations Plan

The town of Walpole has an extensive, finalized-this-year and all-encompassing "Emergency Operations Plan" (EOP) which I have reviewed. It would be inappropriate to create a competing plan of our own. I have a copy of the EOP on CD. It is based on the NH Bureau of Emergency Management's "State of New Hampshire Emergency Operations Plan" (2004) in compliance with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). It addresses natural disasters (earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, etc), manmade incidents (civil disturbances, etc.), technological situations (hazardous materials including terrorism, etc), power failure, nuclear power plant incidents, national security emergencies, pandemics, and animal health as it pertains to human welfare. A CD copy should be made for our records.

The Plan covers:

Content of Operations

- Plans For A Given Disaster
- Organization and Assignment Responsibilities
- Administration, Finances, And Logistics
- Notification
- Activation And Deployment
- Local To State, State, And Federal Interface
- Continuity of Operation
- Continuity of Government Recovery and Deactivation

Plan Management

- Development
- Maintenance
- Document Control
- Training and Exercise

Authority and References

- Statutes and Regulations
- References

Emergency Support Functions (ESF)

- Transportation
- Communications
- Public Works and Engineering
- Fire Fighting
- Information and Planning
- Shelter
- Resource Support
- Health and Medical Support
- Search and Rescue
- Hazardous Material, Hazard Analysis and Assessment
- Food and Water

- Energy
- Law Enforcement
- Public Information
- Volunteerism and Donations
- Animal Health

Hazard-Specific Annexes

- Terrorism Annex

Administration

- Forms
- Resource List
- Authority of Emergency Resource Agencies
- List of Acronyms and Abbreviations
- Terms and Definitions

Its Emergency Management Director (EMD) is the Chief of the Walpole Fire Department Richard P. Hurlburt (home 603-756-4297, Firehouse 603-756-3621) and it is he who calls the plan into action in a given "disaster". Its Emergency Operation Center (EOC) is the Walpole Fire Department (603-756-3621). The Deputy Emergency Management Director is Scott Taylor (home # 603-756-9630) The Emergency Management Coordinator is Lawrence DeVault (home 603-756-3295). The EOC is designed to work with fire department auxiliary, American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, volunteer organizations, and other local and state and federal agencies. "Its Incident Command System (ICS) will be used as the principal on-scene incident management system to direct and control response and initiate relief actions and activities." ["Basic Plan – 9"] Very detailed and specific with officers and groups involved in its implementation, suffice it to be said that we are fortunate that we have already in place this on-paper very good plan.

4) State of New Hampshire Emergency Operations Plan
Walpole's EOP is based on this plan and so we need not pursue this unless we would like to have a hard copy of it within our files for reference in an emergency

5) The National Incident Management System
Our plan will dovetail into the State of New Hampshire's Plan which in turn dovetails into the National Incident Management System. So we need not pursue this. I suspect the State has hard copies.

I think that our role should be in keeping track of needs of individuals within our congregation in coordination with the town's EOP.

From the desk of
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