

Annandale United Methodist Church Disaster Response Plan

I. INTRODUCTION

The following two paragraphs are copied directly from the Virginia Conference Disaster Response Plan booklet. They summarize the basic need for a comprehensive plan on the state, district and local level.

“VIRGINIA CONFERENCE DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN INTRODUCTION”

Disaster Response and Recovery is a vital part of our church Mission. We are called to love one another. One of the ways we can show the love and the hands, feet and face of Jesus is through the efforts we make in the community and around the world.

It is our hope with the revisions in the Response and Recovery Plan we are going to improve our ability to respond in a more efficient manner. It is the responsibility of every conference and district team member to identify and recruit able and reliable individuals and groups who want to contribute to the conference response in disaster situations. It is also our responsibility to promote the plan and the Virginia Conference efforts. Take every opportunity to educate your church family and other church families in your area about disaster response and recovery.”

There is an existing Virginia Conference Disaster Response Plan (VA Plan) as well as an existing District Disaster Response Plan (Dist. Plan). The Virginia Conference has endorsed both plans based on viewpoints from a state as well as a district level.

The Annandale United Methodist Church (AUMC) Disaster Response Plan is based on elements of these existing plans. It is intended to meet the needs of the Annandale United Methodist Church (AUMC) staff, programs and congregation in the event of any type of disaster.

Much of the responsibility to implement this Disaster Response Plan at AUMC rests with the Local Disaster Response Coordinator. In order for the Coordinator to effectively integrate this plan with other Church activities, the Coordinator would be a member of the Church Council.

II. POSSIBLE THREATS

The threats considered most likely to affect the AUMC buildings and community are:

- # 1. Fire
- # 2. Inclement weather (Blizzard, freezing rain, etc.)
- # 3. Power Outages
- # 4. Tornado
- # 5. Office Computer Failure

In addition, the following threats were also considered:

- # 1. Chemical Spill or Hazardous Waste (trucking industry)
- # 2. Terrorist Activity
- # 3. Hurricane or Storm Damage
- # 4. Nuclear Threats
- # 5. Flooding/Heavy Rains

III. ACTIVITIES CONSIDERED

This plan takes into account that there are many daily/weekly/monthly activities in addition to Sunday worship services that are centered at the church building or on the church grounds. Some of these activities are:

- Child Development Center
- Mother's Day Out
- ESL Classes
- AA and NA Classes
- Monthly Committee Meetings
- Korean Church Activities
- Boy Scouts
- Choir Practices and Rehearsals
- Wednesday Night Together
- Special events in Wright Hall, Sanctuary, Hughes Hall and other rooms
- Funerals
- Weddings
- Computer Use Group Classes
- Local Church Disaster Coordinator Responsibilities

The following list shows the tasks that are established from both the VA PLAN & Dist. Plan for the local coordinator.

IV. ACTIONS TO BE COMPLETED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (Prior To A Disaster)

1. Verify with the Trustees that the insurance for church, parsonage and other buildings cover flooding if they are in a flood plain. Basic insurance only covers water damage from the sky.
2. Insure that stored church archives are properly protected from water damage and fire.
3. Establish an effective calling tree that reaches each church family. The calling tree will be used to send and receive emergency information. So that the calling tree can function to the extent possible in the absence of power and telephone service, the calling tree should be established on a neighborhood basis. Detail on the AUMC calling tree operation is given in Section VIII.
4. Identify church members who will need assistance in the event of an evacuation and have persons assigned to assist them in evacuation.
5. For situations in which no evacuation is expected, the AUMC Disaster Coordinator will enlist the members of the congregation to help prepare for the disaster, which can include structural preparation and stockpiling of needed supplies.
6. In the event that the AUMC building can not house a Sunday worship service, and alternative site should be identified and arrangements made to use it. The AUMC Disaster Coordinator will accomplish this task in consultation with the Pastor and will assistance from appropriate Council of Staff persons.
7. **SET THE PROPER EXAMPLE.** If there is an evacuation, the Church Disaster Coordinator should leave and urge all the congregation and community to do the same.

V. Actions Immediately Following a Disaster:

1. The AUMC Disaster Coordinator will assist the pastor in accessing the following:
 - A. Damage to the church building.
 - B. Damage to parsonages or other buildings.
 - C. General condition of neighborhood and church families.
2. The calling tree will be used to check on church families and identify which ones are in shelters or staying with other people and what assistance is needed.
3. Information will be relayed to the congregation and community about federal, state and conference relief options, locations of shelters, food, supplies, filing centers for financial assistance, counseling and other vital information. This information will be supplied to the AUMC Disaster Coordinator by the Conference or District Disaster Response Team Communications Coordinator.
4. If the church is damaged, verify that the alternate worship site is available and in suitable condition for worship on the Sundays following a disaster. If it is unavailable, assist the Pastor in locating a suitable worship location.
5. The AUMC Disaster Coordinator will coordinate the collection and distribution of relief supplies using facilities of AUMC, providing the facilities are not damaged.

VI. Evacuations During a Worship Service or other Major Gathering in the Sanctuary

1. During any type of Church service, the ushers will play a critical part in response to any type of emergency. Certain preparations by those who are regularly Usher Captain are necessary. These are:

1. Chief Usher will have passed a certified CPR training course.
2. Have an available cell phone to call for the proper level and type of assistance.
3. Emergency numbers should be posted throughout the Church.
4. Know the fire alarm locations, evacuation procedures and exit routes.
5. Be informed of the location of and the routes to nearby facilities.

Procedures for Evacuations – For Usher Captain

1. Notify the Pastor of the nature of the emergency.
2. Be aware of any medical professionals (doctors or nurses) that are in the church at the present time
3. Assign other ushers to coordinate the total evacuation of all church rooms and offices on each floor, as necessary.
4. Assist the elderly and handicapped with physical support, wheelchairs, and walkers.

VII. Preparatory Steps for AUMC Offices

Due to the vital work performed by the church office staff, the following actions are recommended for all AUMC offices.

1. Every office computer should have a back up system in place and updated on a daily basis. Copies of backup discs should be stored safely both on and off site.
2. Each office staff person should be cross trained in the event of one or more office personnel not being able to get to the office.

3. There should be a back up power generator with an automatic transfer switch installed or readily available in the event of an electricity failure. It should have the capacity to provide power for all computer and telephone systems necessary for the office to conduct normal or ordinary activities.
4. The paper files/church archives/church photographs should have a storage location that is fire-proof as well as water proof.

VIII. AUMC Calling Tree Operation

The need for a calling tree to distribute and receive information is critical in the event of an emergency. In order to send and receive information quickly and accurately, the following calling tree should be put into action.

The Pastor, Associate Pastor, Disaster Response Coordinator, and Disaster Committee members should discuss the nature of the emergency and decide to what extent the calling tree should be invoked.

Assuming an area wide emergency, the following example should be followed:

1. After the Pastor, Associate Pastor, Disaster Coordinator and Committee members have evaluated and subsequently determined the need to put this plan into action, the Pastor will contact staff, including the Property Manager and the Disaster Coordinator will call the leader of the Church Council, United Methodist Men (UMM), United Methodist Women (UMW), and the congregational lay leader.
2. The Disaster Coordinator will already have put into place a temporary office location in the event the church office is not available.
3. The Church Council leader will call all members of the Church Council. Each Chairperson will then call all of the members on each committee and ministry area.
4. UMM leader will then call all of the members of the UMM
5. The UMW leader will then call the leaders of each of the Circle groups, and all UMW women that are not a part of any circles. Each Circle group leader will then call each member of their circle.
6. The congregational lay leader will call the Caring Ministries leader and together will call each of the home bound members from the updated list.
7. The Pastor or Associate Pastor will call each member of the office staff and Church staff. The Church staff will then call all other staff members, as assigned.

After each round of calls, the individual leaders should:

1. Respond with any report to the Disaster Coordinator with news, reports or evaluations that will merit a disaster response.
2. Formulate a list of immediate, urgent and emergency needs.
3. Organize, assist and/or have personnel ready to assist to the response of the calling tree's results.
4. Coordinate with Fairfax County emergency response personnel (firemen, ambulances, area hospitals) as needed.

IX. DISASTER RESPONSE QUARTERLY MEETING

For this Disaster Response Plan and its described actions to be effective, a continuous effort on the part of all involved is necessary. Therefore, there will be quarterly Disaster Response Meeting incorporating the following recommendations:

1. It is recommended that the Pastor, Associate Pastor, Council Leader, office staff, lay leaders, UMM and UMW leaders, Disaster Response Committee members and Trustee Chair, as well as all other interested members of the congregation be present.
2. At this meeting, updates of the Va. Plan, the Dist. Plan and the AUMC Disaster Plan as well as recommendations of the Disaster Response Committee are given.
3. A list of shut-in or home bound members of the congregation should be updated monthly. A copy of this list should be distributed to each primary member of the calling tree at this meeting.
4. Each Pastor, leader, chairperson or plan participant will offer updates concerning each of the following at each quarterly meeting:
 1. Insurance updates
 2. Archive updates
 3. Shut in/ Home bound member updates
 4. Office updates
 5. Generator status updates
 6. Neighboring Facility updates
 7. Calling tree updates
 8. File of Life updates
 9. Any other related business

X. INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY PREPAREDNESS

1. A File of Life Kit should be distributed to each member. It is critical that each member have this file completed and attached to their refrigerator for easy access by emergency personnel.
2. Each family should have a "Family Preparedness Checklist" and have rehearsed this with their family. A list of the recommended items on this checklist is listed below.
 1. Post emergency telephone numbers near telephones.
 2. Teach children how and when to call 911, police and fire department.
 3. Pick one out of state and one local friend or relative for family members to call if separated during a disaster (it is often easier to call out of state than within the affected disaster area) Teach children the out of state telephone numbers.
 4. Discuss what to do about power outages and/or personal injuries.
 5. Pick two emergency meeting places:
 - A. A place near your home in case of a fire.
 - B. A place outside your neighborhood in case you can not return home after a disaster.
 6. Draw a floor plan of your home and mark/discuss two escape routes and emergency meeting places.
 7. Show family members how to turn off water, gas and electricity at the main disconnect switch/valve when necessary.
 8. Practice these actions at least once a year. Have a different family member act as coordinator/monitor at each practice. The monitor should record the time from

alarm to the arrival of the last person at the assembly point. Practice should be done in daylight and dark

9. Take a basic first aid and CPR class. Include all age appropriate household persons.
10. Keep family records in a water and fire-proof container.
3. Each family should have an "Emergency Disaster Kit" located within easy reach in their home. A list of the recommended items in this kit is located below.

Emergency Disaster Kit:

Assemble supplies you might need in an evacuation. Store them in an easy to carry container such as a backpack or duffel bag. Store the supply bag in a place that makes it easily accessible and quickly attainable.

1. A supply of water. (One gallon per person per day) Store water in sealed unbreakable containers. Identify the storage date and replace every 6 months.
2. A supply of non perishable packaged or canned food and a non electric can opener.
3. A change of clothing rain gear and sturdy shoes.
4. Blankets or sleeping bags.
5. A first aid kit.
6. Prescription medications for each person.
7. An extra pair of glasses for each person.
8. A battery-powered radio, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries.
9. Credit cards and cash.
10. An extra set of car and house keys.
11. A list of family physicians.
12. A list of important family information; the style and serial number of medical devices such as pacemakers, contact information for close relatives, health information.
13. Special items for infants, elderly, or disabled family members.