

**Shenandoah Presbytery**  
**Disaster Preparedness Response Team**  
**Report and Recommendations to Council**

2/5/07

**Background**

The Team was given three tasks by Council:

1. Prepare a Presbytery Disaster Response Plan directed at local, national, and international disasters.
2. Develop an Emergency Response Plan for the administrative office of the Presbytery.
3. Plan educational processes that encourage congregations to develop their own emergency or disaster response, whether local, national, or international.

The Team conducted a retreat on August 26, 2006 and met three subsequent times in October and November 2006, and February 2007. Three task groups met independently. Task Group 1 consulted with Tom Hay, Philip Sieck, and John Robinson, Associate for National Response for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Team participants included:

**Retreat Planning Team**

Christopher Crotwell  
Charlotte Hott  
Braxton Garriss  
Doug Sensabaugh, staff

**Disaster Preparedness Response Team (Task Group #)**

Ed Brown (3)  
Donna Coffman (3)  
Christopher Crotwell (1)  
George Evans (1)  
Braxton Garriss (2)  
Cliff Gilchrest (1)  
Charlotte Hott (1)  
Keith Hutchinson (3)  
Patrick Pettit (2)  
Howard Simmons (1)  
Carolyn Thalman (3)  
Dave Thalman (1)

The team developed recommendations for a disaster response organization and a beginning document for review and approval that cover the assigned tasks. The Team decided to develop one document that describes our overarching approach to disaster response and contains appendices that address specific parts of each task. It is hoped that this document structure will facilitate the continuing development and evolution of all three of the initial tasks. Overall, the Team tried to keep procedures simple and use existing structures within the Presbytery for organization and communication. For example, disaster response is centered around mission community teams and uses Key Church Communicators for disseminating information.

## **Recommendations**

A. Adopt the set of Disaster Preparedness and Response Plans as presented by the Team as beginning guidance for disaster response in the Presbytery.

B. Establish a Presbytery Disaster Response Team (DRT) as a sub-committee of Council with the roles and responsibilities as described in Appendix A of the Disaster Preparedness and Response Plans. Those functions include:

- Assist Mission Communities (MCs) with creating DRTs
- 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
- Disseminate assessment and response information to affected churches and responding churches, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), and other organizations including local inter-faith networks and Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD)
- Provide information for the news media
- Develop and maintain comprehensive Disaster Preparedness and Response Plans with provision for the formation of an Administrative Commission
- Plan training for DRT members and field volunteers
- Plan training for the COM and a pastoral care plan for clergy serving in areas affected by a disaster
- Liaison with inter-faith and civic disaster response agencies, and provide representatives as requested
- Develop and maintain master phone lists of MC DRT members and field volunteers
- Recommend creation of financial accounts to receive and disburse relief funds
- Develop and maintain a Memorandum of Understanding with PDA
- Review and revise this plan as needed
- Provide an annual report to Presbytery.

Presbytery DRT members will include:

- Director
- Co-director
- Mission Community (MC) representatives (minimum one from each MC)
- Disaster Response Plan Coordinator (Task 1)
- Presbytery Facility Disaster Coordinator (Task 2)
- Disaster Preparedness Education Coordinator (Task 3)
- General Presbyter
- Presbytery Communications Coordinator.

C. Nominate and approve non-staff members of the DRT as listed above. These members will normally serve a three-year term that can be renewed. They will be organized into three classes designated by year so that one third of the members can be refreshed each year.

The DRT Director and Co-director will be charged with the following responsibilities:

- Convene and chair quarterly meetings of the DRT
- Coordinate with the Presbytery Nominating Committee for the recruiting of members of the DRT
- Maintain routine contact with and support for MC DRTs
- Coordinate training of DRT members across the Presbytery
- During times of disaster, activate the DRT and coordinate information flow to/from the appropriate MC DRTs; communicate directly with the General Presbyter, Communications Coordinator, other members of the DRT, and members of MC DRTs
- Coordinate a Presbytery response to any disaster brought to the attention of the DRT including ministry of presence visits, assessments of need, delivering spiritual care, and coordinating volunteer response
- Coordinate communication with other inter-faith and civil disaster response agencies; develop recommendations for partnerships, certifications, and memorandums of understanding with other organizations; recommend response requests to PDA
- Report training accomplished, disaster response actions, and lessons learned to the Presbytery Council.