

**REPORT TO CHURCH COUNCIL of
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF SANTA ROSA, CA
March 9, 2019**

Name of Commission/Committee/Group:

Disaster Response Ministry

Members of the Commission/Committee/Group:

Among the many commissions, committees and other organizational groups at work in our church, the Disaster Response Ministry is unique in that it is neither a commission, a committee, nor a group. As a ministry it is a practice, or a series of coordinated actions for the benefit of those adversely impacted which our church engages in during times of disaster. When there is no disaster affecting our church there are only a few people standing by to be called to action (Norm Hardin, Diane Jackson). When our church is called upon to act as the result of a disaster, the number of people involved in the ministry grows to accommodate the need.

Purpose of the Commission/Committee/Group:

To minister to those in need following a disaster.

How does the purpose help fulfill the mission of FUMC?

The Disaster Response Ministry reaches up to God and reaches out to all people in God's love to assist following a disaster.

What are your ministries for the last year?

In 2018 after all the activities involved in responding to the wild fires an After-Actions Report was completed to record what we had done for future reference. Copies were sent to the Bishop and some members of the cabinet. As we had "winged it" in performing as a refuge, a plan of "Shelter Operations following a Disaster" was written and added to our Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan, which itself was amended to include needed changes. A "Fire Relief Fund Committee" was formed to oversee the funds in the neighborhood of \$72,000 that the church received in support of those who lost their homes and our activities resulting from responding to the fires. Immediately after the fires funds were provided to:

- The Good Shepherd Fund for immediate emergency needs,*
- To purchase and distribute gift cards to fire victims, and*
- To reimburse church costs directly attributable to fire relief.*

A while later:

- Eight persons or families who lost their homes from FUMC and 1 from Christ Church were given \$1,000 each to ease the financial burden that was forced upon them.*
- The pre-school was reimbursed about \$1,400 for monies lost by having to shut down during the shelter period.*
- A camp was held for the children who had lost their homes and we contributed over \$6,000 towards the cost.*

- *One long-time member of our church lost her home in the Butte County fire, and she also was given \$1,000 to ease the financial burden that was forced upon her.*

What are your goals and plans for the next year?

Upon reviewing the problems that faced the fire victims and finding out what obstacles faced them as they tried to get help, I found that one of the biggest, most time consuming and most stressful chores was obtaining all of the records and documents needed to satisfy various agencies. At present, I am putting together a booklet titled "Emergency Records Kit: Strengthening your Preparedness for Disasters and Emergencies." By assembling a kit containing necessary documents and records when you aren't under the stress of strong emotions and time constraints, you can be better prepared if a disaster ever falls your way.

What are we doing now with the flooding response along the Russian River? This week we have had 8 folks like Paul O'Rear volunteer to help at the Local Assistance Shelter in Guerneville. Five of them did work at the center and three others were never assigned as the center closed earlier than expected. Another example of our church people rising to fill the need.

Diane Jackson and I have met with Sonja Ed-Bennett, The Disaster Management Coordinator for the Conference and her VIM chief, to help establish how our church can be a disaster host by housing, providing parking for RVs and perhaps feeding Emergency Response Teams who come to work along the river. It appears that our services won't be needed this time, but our actions in this event serves as practice in the event that we are called upon later to assist VIM groups that may come to help rebuild Santa Rosa.

What goals have you set?

- 1. To provide pastoral care and support to disaster victims, both congregants and community members.*
- 2. To make individual and family disaster planning and training available to the congregation and to our immediate community.*
- 3. To identify and mitigate the risks from likely disasters.*
- 4. To protect church property and ensure the continuation or quick resumption of worship services and ministry tasks.*
- 5. To identify and organize resources, equipment, and facilities of the church, including its membership, that could be of benefit in the time of a disaster and recovery.*
- 6. To plan ways to meet spiritual, emotional, and physical needs during and after a disaster, especially for those persons with special needs.*
- 7. To offer a "ministry of presence" in the event of a disaster.*
- 8. To create a disaster response group that springs into immediate action in the event of a local disaster.*
- 9. To work cooperatively with the appropriate conference units, Sonoma County VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters), and local government agencies in the identification of, advocacy for, and assistance in disaster recovery.*
- 10. To provide direct communication from the church to the conference and hence to the national offices of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and United Methodist Volunteers in*

Mission (UMVIM) to obtain needed resources and assistance or to provide available resources and assistance to areas in need outside of the immediate community.

Respectfully submitted,

Norm Hardin

Disaster Response Coordinator