



Committee on Relief

Western North Carolina Conference

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

NAVIGATING A DISASTER

Grasping the Nature of a Crisis

When a disaster happens it first affects the local community. Once an incident occurs, the local pastor has a responsibility to assess damages. Take safety precautions and be very mindful of long-term consequences made by quick decisions. Once initial assessments are made, the pastor must reach out to his or her district superintendent. After initial assessment, the district superintendent connects with the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator (CDRC).

Shaping the Disaster Response

All volunteers operate within the framework of civil authorities leading the rescue effort. Disaster zones must be stabilized before relief efforts begin. Our first response is to provide a caring Christian presence. Being present is more important than fixing roofs and clearing debris.

Coordinating a Response

In cooperation with various disaster response agencies, the CDRC determines the scale of the disaster and crafts a plan for coordination. Due to the size of the disaster, the plan may be localized. However, if the disaster is larger, the plan may include the use of Early Response Teams, the use of specialized equipment, and relief supply distribution.

Early Response Teams

Early Response Teams are comprised of individuals who are trained and badged by The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). ERTs have specialized training in postdisaster adjustment, tarping damaged roofs, mold mitigation, debris removal, and disaster response staging. The ERT program is designed to allow local volunteers to manage disaster response. In large scale disasters, however, the CDRC may invite ERTs from other areas to help with the response efforts.

Conference Leadership

The CDRC, in cooperation with the Conference Committee on Relief, also works to provide church-based shelters, volunteer management programs, assist with displaced persons, coordinate relief supply distribution, manage donations and make grants, work with local support that may also include medical assistance, food distribution, and warehousing.