

Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod -ELCA Disaster Response Plan

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SYNOD RAPID RESPONSE TEAM (RRT)

Initial: Team Leader: *Pastor Tom Minor*
Communication: *Peggy Contos Hahn*
Liaison: *Pastor Don Carlson; Pastor Herb Palmer*
Needs: *Pastor Kathy Haueisen*
Donations: *Pastor Fred de Oliveira*
Volunteers: *Pastor Brad Fuerst*
Logistics: *Pastor David Tart*

Primary: Local Rapid Response Team(s)

SYNOD RESPONSE:

1. The ELCA recognizes the opportunity for the local ELCA congregations and leaders to be valuable first responders in extending acts of compassion and spiritual care in the early phase of disaster relief ministry. Thus, the first response of local disaster relief will be coordinated primarily by the Synod where the disaster is located. (Note: Lutheran Disaster Response is not a first responder, but works with short-term and long-term recovery from disaster. See chart of Sequence of Delivery of Lutheran Services.)
2. The Synod Bishop will:
 - Appoint the Synod Rapid Response Team (RRT) and commission them to be prepared and trained to respond to a local disaster. Depending on the nature, location, and magnitude of the disaster, the bishop may also need to designate a local Rapid Response Team leader to manage the disaster response on-site.
 - Provide pastoral care to the rostered leaders of the Synod in the impacted area. (A list of trained pastoral caregivers who are willing to serve in time of disaster will be maintained by the Synod office. These pastoral caregivers may be commissioned by the bishop and sent into the impacted area as needed.)
 - Work with local churches impacted by the disaster to assess damage, analyze viability for future ministry, secure appropriate pastoral leadership, strategize financial options for repair to church structures, and make plans for future mission.
3. The Synod Rapid Response Team (RRT) in conjunction with the Synod bishop will:
 - Manage the Synod's disaster response
 - Communicate updated reports on the disaster, needs, and ways to respond. (Primary communication will be through the Synod Web site. If the web site becomes inaccessible, the ELCA Web site www.elca.org will provide information about a temporary site.)
 - Serve as a liaison with other disaster response partners.
 - Be at maximum preparedness at all times.
4. All rostered leaders in the impacted area are to contact the synod office to provide an update on status—even if the rostered leader is out of harm's way.

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<p>RAPID RESPONSE TEAM <i>[National Incident Framework]</i></p>	
<p>RRT TEAM LEADER <i>[Incident Commander]</i> Maintain an active RRT team at all times Notify team when they need to be on alert and activate team as needed Coordinate the RRT efforts</p>	
<p>COMMUNICATION <i>[Public Information Officer]</i> Gather and maintain accurate information about the disaster Communicate updated assessments of the situation, specific needs, and ways to respond</p>	
<p>LIAISON <i>[Liaison Officer]</i> Represent the RRT at community meetings concerning disaster response Collaborate and coordinate with partners in disaster response Communicate the latest developments in disaster response with the RRT</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Depending on the specific nature and magnitude of the disaster, the following may or may not be utilized.</i></p>	
<p>NEEDS <i>[Planning Section]</i> Develop a system to track needs of congregations Seek ways to respond to the needs of congregations Work with disaster response partners (including 211) to meet needs of those in the impacted area</p>	
<p>DONATIONS <i>[Administration & Finance Section]</i> Provide a system to direct those who want to donate goods and re-direct donations Maintain updated list of warehouses in the local impacted area for donated goods & gift cards Provide a system to receive and track financial contributions Provide a system to thank donors of money, goods, and services</p>	
<p>VOLUNTEERS <i>[Operations Section]</i> Keep an updated list of those coordinating volunteers in the impacted area Develop a system to receive and direct offers for volunteers and services</p>	
<p>LOGISTICS <i>[Logistics Section]</i> Prepare RRT command post site for the disaster response and maintain it during its use Maintain adequate telephone lines and internet access Assure resources (human, financial, and material) are available for operations</p>	

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Disaster Response Plan**

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE <i>Not in Sequential Order</i>	BISHOP	PASTOR
a) Call the church to prayer.	Yes	Yes
b) Activate the Rapid Response Team.	Yes Synod RRT	Yes Congregation(s) RRT
c) Support the local and state civil authority in promoting preparedness plans & executing their search and rescue efforts.	Yes	Yes
d) Assist with area preparedness plans to assure safety.	Yes	Yes 1) Assist members and others with special needs. 2) Report personal plans for evacuation to the Synod Office.
e) Assess and communicate loss and damage.	Yes Receive & provide updates.	Yes Receive & provide updates to the Synod.
f) Visit the impacted site, providing a public Lutheran presence.	ASAP	Yes
g) Recognize and empower local Lutherans as first responders in relief efforts.	Yes Trust and support the local ELCA leadership in their immediate response efforts.	Yes Use the gifts & compassion of the congregation to respond in specific ways & expand current ministries.
h) Secure and release funds for immediate relief ministries of local congregations.	Yes	Yes
i) Provide direct pastoral support to rostered leaders (includes responding to financial, physical & mental needs particularly if congregation is dispersed.)	ASAP and continual (May need to issue a financial appeal to supplement salaries.)	Yes (with colleagues)
j) Send and receive Lutheran pastoral caregivers.	Commission and send pastoral caregivers to partner with local clergy, especially solo pastorates. (May need to request assistance from Conference of Bishops.)	Be ready to receive support of commissioned pastoral caregivers.
k) Work with the local congregations to identify needs of the church and the local community	Yes (Key issue: Funding to restore damaged or destroyed churches and property.)	Yes