

ARDF Disaster Response Task Force **Response Protocol for Natural Disasters**

Disasters over the past years have both taught lessons and posed challenges as the Anglican Relief and Development Fund attempts to mount a provincial, diocesan, and parish disaster response ministry.

Our commitment to a comprehensive training program that will one day result in trained and prepared disaster response teams in each diocese and parish within the ACNA remains our overall vision and goal. However, in the meantime, and even once we begin to see that goal being achieved, there will be disasters for which we cannot provide the level of response foreseen by the model with which we train.

The greatest challenges to effective and efficient disaster response in our Province are the relative “youth” of disaster-response ministry, the rate at which we, as a nation, are experiencing natural disasters and the overall median age of our parishes.

The North American Lutheran Church’s Disaster Response Program took over twelve years to develop into the well-organized, efficient ministry that it is today. This is the result of the excellent leadership of Mary Bates, National Director/Coordinator for NALC’s program. While the ACNA has pockets of disaster response ministry, we are just beginning.

Additionally, Weather.com reported in April, 2022, that 1 out of every 3 Americans has experienced a natural disaster in some way. This same month, Weather.com reported that natural disasters are estimated to increase 40% globally by 2030. In the short term, invariably we will be *affected* more than being *effective* in disaster response.

After partnering with the NALC for several years, Mary Bates commented, on several occasions, that our problem is we don’t have the hands and feet to do disaster response. The ARDF is blessed with donations and financial resources, but we lack the manpower to execute. Mary stated that the opposite is true of the NALC. Her observation underscores the importance of partnering with other organizations in order to minister effectively.

Our prayer is to equip every diocese with the resources needed to begin a disaster response ministry, beginning with congregants, their families, our parishes and dioceses, growing over time to provide local, regional and national outreach. We give thanks to God for the North American Lutheran Church, whose program and resources have been generously shared and the foundation for our disaster response pilot.

There are four possible responses when disaster strikes:

- 1) **No Response** - there may occur disasters where, because of the unique circumstances and/or geography, in addition to the absence of an ACNA parish, the Provincial Disaster Response Coordinator concludes that we are incapable of efficient and effective response. In this case, ARDF may choose to partner with another organization in order to serve those in need.
- 2) **Emergency Relief** - ACNA parishes having received prior training or immediate post-disaster orientation/training (see note below) will serve as distribution sites for emergency relief supplies gathered locally or from diocesan warehousing. In addition, congregants and other volunteers may organize and begin assisting with the home clean-up or “muck-out” process and spiritual care of victims.
- 3) **Long Term Recovery** - ACNA parishes having received prior training or immediate post-disaster orientation/training (see note below) may both mount a local parish effort at long term recovery and coordinate teams of ACNA volunteers from across the country, according to two broad models:

- a) **Formation of local Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG)** – the “Hurricane Sandy Model” consists of a local parish, in cooperation with other volunteer agencies, managing survivor cases and affected families with whom they serve from start to finish.
- b) **Partnering with an established volunteer agency** - Parishes may provide volunteer housing and orientation but would depend on partnerships established by the ARDF Disaster Response Task Force/Provincial Disaster Response Coordinator/Diocesan Disaster Response Coordinator for coordination of volunteers and long term recovery projects. In this scenario the nearby Parish Disaster Response Coordinator would serve as liaison between local volunteer teams and the assisting partner.
- 4) **No local parish but a provincial church response** - there have been times when we don't have local ACNA parishes near a disaster, such as the tornadoes that swept through Western Kentucky in March, 2022. Or, there may not be a parish in the affected diocese equipped to respond in ways needed to recover. In these cases, donations may be sent to ARDF and ARDF, along with the Provincial Disaster Response Coordinator, may choose to support another partner, or, coordinate relief with another ACNA diocese who may have the resources to help. This was the case with Hurricane Ida long-term recovery, when the Diocese of the Western Gulf Coast, as the affected diocese, did not have a long-term recovery group. The Anglican Diocese of South Carolina did, and work teams were hosted for recovery on Grand Isle, LA. ARDF coordinated the communications and logistics.

Notes:

Regarding immediate post-disaster orientation/training:

It is recommended that the ARDF Disaster Response Task Force contract with a Disaster Coordinator to respond immediately to a major disaster area where there are ACNA parishes for:

- Assessment
- Communication
- Establishment of ongoing channels for communication
- Organization
- Training

Part of the assessment process is the determination of which Long Term model will best work in the area based on the leadership and parish involvement.

Regarding immediate post-disaster communication, reach out in the following order:

1. The Diocese Disaster Response Coordinator in the area of the disaster
2. The Rector of the an affected parish
3. Parish members and their families
4. Community

*Modified for use by the Anglican Relief & Development Fund, April, 2022. ARDF Disaster Response Task Force Response Protocol based on the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) Disaster Response Program. We give thanks to God for Mary Bates, Provincial Director & Disaster Response Coordinator, for her partnership and generous sharing of resources, experience and wisdom.