



## MISSION AND MINISTRY: CONGREGATIONS IN ACTION TO SERVE DISASTER-AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

### Lessons from the Field

A survivor of the catastrophic 2007 flood of the Blanchard River in Northwest Ohio was working with members of her church's mission team to put together flood buckets to assist families who were affected by flooding in Southeast Ohio. As a devotion, the group began discussing a verse from Matthew 25:40: The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

This particular verse has a timeless message that has moved many people over thousands of years. But for the woman whose home had been destroyed in a flood, having experienced the trauma of a disaster firsthand, the verse became a source of personal stress.

The woman sharply questioned the group: "Who are you to call flood survivors 'the least?' It could have been one of our homes that was destroyed by the flood and would we want to be considered 'the least?'" The group certainly didn't intend for their devotion to cause offense. And, in the end, the group prayed together in a spirit of love and friendship.

But the moment illustrates an important message: Many times, we enter into communities that have been affected by disasters with our own ideas of success and forget that listening to a survivor tell his or her story can be as impactful as repairing a damaged roof. Ultimately, we hope to do more than repair a damaged home: we hope to walk alongside and support people as they work to recover and rebuild their lives.

### Learning to Walk Again

Disasters can happen at any time, in any place, and to any one of us. And yet, walking alongside disaster survivors is not always intuitive. It takes training. It takes learning from the experience of other volunteers and from the honest feedback of disaster survivors themselves. As the statewide coordinating agency for Lutheran disaster services and the Ohio Disaster Network, LSS has coordinated disaster response and recovery operations for nearly 20 years and is committed to helping volunteers learn how to respond safely and with sensitivity.

### How Can YOU Help?

Connect with a training opportunity and learn as much as you can. Join us in for a meal, fellowship, and lively discussions on how you and your church can effectively serve communities after a disaster.

### Disaster Workshop

Thursday,  
October 5, 2017  
6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Ascension & Holy  
Trinity Episcopal  
Church  
334 Burns Ave.  
Wyoming, Ohio 45215

Potluck Dinner

Register at  
<http://bit.ly/2h4yXC6>

Please register by  
October 2, 2017

This workshop is free  
and open to anyone  
interested in disaster  
mission and ministry.

Contact John Pyron  
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