

## **“Disaster Preparedness Manual for Churches’ now available**

Is your church prepared to withstand a natural disaster and to help your congregation and community in the aftermath? Do you want to be prepared but don’t know where to start?

Being ready just got easier, thanks to the new “[Disaster Preparedness Manual for Churches](#)” published by [United Church of Christ Disaster Ministries](#) and the [Insurance Board](#), a property and liability insurance program for the UCC and other churches.

Drawing on the expertise and work already underway across the [UCC Conference Disaster Coordinators](#) network, and in the Indiana-Kentucky Conference in particular, this 24-page manual is ready for use by houses of worship of any denomination or faith. It offers a step-by-step guide on how to prepare your building and congregation for a disaster and to serve your wider community when one occurs.

“Yes, the internet is overflowing with disaster preparedness materials. But finding concise, usable directions tailored to houses of worship has been a challenge, until now,” said UCC Disaster Ministries program associate Amanda Sheldon. “The ‘Disaster Preparedness Manual for Churches’ responds directly to that challenge by assembling just what congregations need to know, and do, in one PDF document.”

This document is not meant to be overwhelming,” said Gerald Sink, Director of Loss Control, Insurance Board. “It is meant to be a guide that helps you begin to plan for emergencies that may befall your congregation. The key is to start somewhere, plan for one type of disaster and then begin planning for the next type.”

**[Click here to download the manual.](#)**

“Natural disasters happen every day. No one is exempt, even if you live in a region historically considered ‘low risk’ for weather-related disaster,” said UCC Disaster Ministries executive Zach Wolgemuth. “Climate change is making sure of that.”

“The plethora of disasters that we’ve already experienced across the United States in 2019 is yet another wake-up-call for all congregations to have a preparedness plan in place.”

The “Disaster Preparedness Manual for Churches” includes what to do on “Blue Sky Days” when there’s no adverse weather forecast, and how to prepare for specific types of events – floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, wildfires, winter storms, lightning strikes and earthquakes.

Wolgemuth commented, “As congregations invest in preparedness and mitigation efforts along with long-term recovery support after disasters, they can offer leadership to our nation.

“Disasters both large and small are devastating and disorienting to the people affected. When they occur, they often call us to the better angels of our nature – neighbor helping neighbor, stranger helping stranger. But how can we help if we don’t know what to do, and aren’t prepared?”

The “Disaster Preparedness Manual for Churches” was unveiled during a June 22 workshop presented at the denomination’s biennial national governance (General Synod) meeting in Milwaukee.