



## Not If, But When: The Importance of Preparedness Training

*Even as we enter September--National Disaster Preparedness Month-- we are monitoring Hurricane Dorian and preparing to respond to needs that arise in its wake. The storm has already caused significant damage in the Bahamas, and remains a dangerous storm as it approaches the U.S. Please continue to pray for those who have already been affected, and those who wait in the storm's path. We will continue to share updates on responses as they are available. In the meantime, here is a story about how local churches and regions are taking part in disaster preparedness training through Week of Compassion-- and why preparedness is such a vital part of ministry in the local community.*



A train rumbled by outside with perfect timing. The group was just completing a risk assessment inventory as part of a disaster preparedness training in Eugene, Oregon. "I guess we should consider the possibility of a train accident, since the tracks are 20 yards away," said one participant. "Our whole town is at risk of flooding," noted another.

Meanwhile, conversations throughout the day centered around "The Big One"--the major earthquake that scientists say is overdue in the Pacific Northwest.

*Caroline Hamilton Arnold, Week of Compassion; and Josh Baird, Disciples Volunteering, offer Preparedness training in the Oregon and SW Idaho Region*

The question around disasters is not *if* something will happen but *what* and *when*. Disasters, large and small, will happen in every Region.

September is National Preparedness Month, and it is a good opportunity for congregations to begin thinking about how they minimize loss and also respond and serve their neighbors in an emergency. In the work of disaster response, Week of Compassion sees firsthand what a difference it makes to a church--and to the whole community--when these steps have been taken ahead of time.

When disasters happen, congregations can offer vital care and resources for members and their communities.

As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Multiple studies confirm that preparedness and mitigation efforts result in significant return on investment. In addition to the practical benefits of preparation, communities of faith have another motivation: **advance planning helps us help others**. In the critical moments, days, and months following a crisis event, established plans save precious time and resources and make responses more efficient and effective.

To assist Disciples congregations in this preparation, Week of Compassion and Disciples Volunteering have developed a model Regional Disaster Preparedness and Response Training. This training--offered live or remotely--helps congregations

understand the basic patterns of disaster recovery, consider the risks in their contexts, and begin developing congregational disaster plans.

Since the Oregon training, First Christian Church, Eugene has continued to have congregational conversations about disaster preparedness and resilience. This coming Saturday, September 7, the Alabama-Northwest Florida Region is hosting the training, which will kick-off a regional initiative for congregational preparedness. Following the training, a Regional representative will work with congregations one-on-one to help develop disaster preparedness and response plans.

In addition to preparedness training, we encourage you to explore these other [resources](#) to engage this important part of ministry. To host a training in your Region or congregation, contact: Caroline Hamilton-Arnold, Associate Director for Domestic Disaster Response, Week of Compassion-- [caroline@weekofcompassion.org](mailto:caroline@weekofcompassion.org).

### ***Mission***

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