Church Hurricane Preparation Guide

**Now**

* In May, Divide the church directory among the Vestry members. Other staff and key volunteers may be included (Assistants, Retired Associates, Deacons, Treasurer, Administrator, etc.) Note and allow for members who are away during hurricane season. The Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge is the top of this phone tree. Give each caller a script to guide emergency calls. An initial call at the start of hurricane season will establish connection and set precedent for future calls.
* Gather physical parish registries, directories, credit card and bank account numbers, insurance policies, other important documents and anything else difficult to replace.
* Secure documents in a sturdy, waterproof container and store copies in a safe, secondary location. Consider a safe deposit box and “cloud storage” options.
* Regularly backup all computers including accounting and church membership and contribution records.
* Photograph, videotape or inventory furniture, fixtures and equipment for insurance.
* Secure recordings in a sturdy, waterproof container and store copies in a safe, secondary location. Consider “cloud storage” options.
* If you do not have a backup location for worship, contact neighboring churches and/or schools to secure one.
* Pre-plan how the congregation will be contacted for the sake of their security and well-being AND how they might be coordinated and mobilized to serve your community.
* Pre-plan how the church might be a gathering location for physical aid: canned goods, water, personal hygiene, supplies for pets as well as coordinating volunteers.

**When A Storm Threatens**

* Contact your backup location to affirm its availability for worship in case your facilities are rendered unusable.
* Update and re-check security and backup for all documents, electronic records and recordings noted above.
* Make sure each Vestry member has their call list.
* Fill any church vehicles with gas.
* Check and secure any gas lines or tanks as may apply.
* Batten down the buildings early: There's no assurance you will have time or volunteers.
* Move inside or tie down easily blown items such as garbage cans, furniture, bird feeders, potted plants, lumber or lawn ornaments. Turn picnic tables upside down.
* Set the refrigerator and freezer to the coldest settings.
* If the church plans to use a generator, be extremely careful to follow all instructions, test it and secure fuel.

**After The Storm Hits**

* Check for obvious damage and dangerous situations such as unstable walls and broken glass.
* Make any necessary temporary repairs (patch holes, cover broken windows, etc.)
* Keep all receipts for all repairs, temporary housing and food costs.
* Wash your hands well and often with soap and purified water. This is especially important for children.
* If you smell gas, open the windows, leave and call for help.
* If you have power, check for electrical damage such as sparks, frayed wires or burning odors.
* Photograph and/or video all damage
* Inventory damaged or missing possessions. Don't throw away items you believe are a loss before your insurance adjuster sees them.
* If your buildings flood, remove water as soon as possible and keep well-ventilated.
* Clean hard-surface floors, countertops, cabinets, the stove and the oven with soap and water and disinfect with a solution of a cup of bleach in five gallons of water.
* Removed or steam clean carpet.
* Dry metal objects such as drapery rods and appliances and lightly oil them to prevent rust.
* Have any electrical appliance exposed to water serviced before using it.
* Often there are numerous medical emergencies after a storm due to people, especially the elderly, exerting themselves in unaccustomed ways and using unfamiliar equipment such as chainsaws. Remind everyone, and urge them to remind their neighbors, to be attentive to their physical limits especially under stress and duress.