

Disaster preparedness and Parish Directory

Facilitator: Hilary Greene (day job: Red Cross)

Parish directories are essential part of disaster preparedness. That's why these two topics are grouped together for this discussion.

Examples of Parish Directories in use:

- St. Mary's, Barnstable: Has pictorial directory – updated every 5 years. Church directory is app on smartphone. "ChurchLife" Can search by name, and updates by church administrator automatically update the app. **Whenever you have a directory, it is important to keep it updated!**
- Ed Outwin, retired Dean from Western New York: There was often a lot of lake-effect snow and the church directory was the best resource they had for communicating with their parishioners.

Disaster Plans in operation:

- St. Mary's Barnstable: After the prolonged power outage during the 2013 blizzard, they developed a form for each parishioner to fill out. (need to put on the web again)

Question: Is the list shared with first responders? First responders in some towns have their own lists. This is something to check out.

Do they use information in the form to connect with the parishioners electronically? What about snail mail? Do they coordinate lists?

Going forward:

- St. Mary's, Barnstable: "Open Circles" Every parishioner's home gets a colored dot on the map. The dots are grouped into "circles".

Other resources:

- Emergency Kit: from mass.gov.
- Episcopal church has standard disaster plans. Great to identify populations. It's a matter of connecting people and letting people know who is vulnerable.

- There is a diocesan disaster preparedness team. What parishes need a plan? What parishes have a plan?
- Red Cross Resources : Americorps will come to your parish and discuss preparedness.

Other ideas:

- What about partner congregations? Copies of keys to important buildings could be kept at other parishes
- All shelters will be open whenever a storm is expected. Your parishes should know where the nearest shelter is. Here on the Cape it is a regional response.

How do you get a parish interested that hasn't had a reason? Good question. Barnstable is among the oldest (demographically) towns in the country.

Other experiences and ideas:

- St. Mary's, Barnstable: "Open Circles" Every parishioner's home gets a colored dot on the map. The dots are grouped into "circles". Found out people were within walking distance of each other.
- Nancy Guimond (St. Peter's on the Canal): Has experience from Washington, DC with anthrax and H1N9.
- Also from Nancy: Fireside chats to process 9/11. 12 people at a time invited to the rectory.
- St. Mary's did this also: St. Mary's Suppers for 7. "Hey. We're your neighborhood response team."
- Pilgrim Nuclear Power plant: There is a plan. KI pills available from town halls through Civil Defense.
- Diocese of Rochester and Western NY: Parishes connected in Deanery clusters. Deans there have real authority to call meetings on behalf of the bishop.
- Good idea: Bishops asking Deans to check up on their parishes. Our Dean calls parishes to check up on them during/after severe weather events.
- Geographical clusters require association that is not parish-related. St. John's and St. Mary's are close to each other. Can associate for disaster relief. However, you are fighting the Cape Cod attitude: "Falmouth and Barnstable too far away."

Summer vs Winter:

- Summer hurricanes are different than Winter Storms.
- Does your directory keep track of who is here when, i.e. snowbirds?
Add that question to the form. One good question that is on the form: contact info for someone who doesn't live with you who can be called. (Will only call in case of emergency).

This activity should be part of your parish's pastoral care team. Pastoral care team should know who the vulnerable population is.

People who are only telephone accessible can be a vulnerable population.
(Youth can be sent out to teach)

Ham radio used to be big deal. Amateur radio operators could be a great resource.

We need to be connected. Smart phone apps. Emergency apps exist on the smart phone.