



April 28, 2016

Dear Church Leader,

We need your help. Frankly, the state of WV needs your help.

We are looking for two particular kinds of volunteers to train and to be prepared to respond to the needs of our neighbors in times of disaster.

The Presbytery of WV is a part of West Virginia VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster). This group is tasked with making sure that the people who are affected by flooding, fire, or other disasters, natural or human made, have what they need to survive and recover. WV VOAD works to make sure that all the member organizations are able to use their gifts and skills effectively in the chaos of disaster.

The Presbyterians have long been known as the ones who know how to organize and plan long term disaster recovery. We are also known to be skilled at pastoral care and being a comforting presence in times of trouble. We even have our own long term action team through WVMW (West Virginia Ministry of Advocacy and Work Camps). But now we have been invited to serve in a new way!

We have been asked to assemble teams of volunteers who will be mobilized in the first 24 to 48 hours of a disaster to do pastoral care and damage assessments so that the work of rebuilding and restoring communities can happen faster.

We are looking for two different kinds of people to work as partners in teams. The first kind are people with the natural ability to be a calm and trustworthy presence. People who might have been teachers, social workers, pastors, counselors, nurses, or others who have the natural ability to listen well, to comfort, and to be in gentle conversation with strangers. The second kind of people we are seeking are those who can make quick and accurate decisions, who have some experience with building or building repair. They may have worked as an engineer, contractor, building inspector, assessor, designer, or architect. They need to be comfortable with mud, mess, and mayhem.

Our plan is to gather these uniquely skilled volunteers and to train and equip them to do assessments so that the other organizations in WVVOAD can begin their work as quickly as possible.

Please look at your congregation and let us know who you have in your church family that might be perfect for this important work. We would like to have at least one volunteer from each congregation. If you have more than that, we will be glad to train them!

Thank you!

Barbara Chalfant
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