

## **Wildfire Preparedness conference call 7/14**

### **Episcopal Relief & Development's US Disaster Program**

- Participants
  - Sydney Oswald - Diocese of San Diego, Team Member
  - Hannah Wilder - Diocese of San Diego, Committee Chair
  - Keen Hayes - Diocese of San Diego, Team Member
  - Nicole Krug - Diocese of Arizona, DDC
  - Michael Bamberger - Dioceses of Los Angeles, DDC & Partner in Response
  - Cate Wetherald - Diocese of Spokane, Communications Director
  - Scott Clark - Diocese of Spokane, Team Member
  - Dan Gasiorowski - Diocese of Idaho, DDC
  - Dennis Fitzgerald - Diocese of San Joaquin, DDC
  - Bill Brooks - Diocese of El Camino Real, DDC
  - Patty Baker - Diocese of Olympia, DDC
  - Dave Baylor - Diocese of Olympia, Partner in Response
  - Margaret Dunning - Diocese of Northern California, DDC
  - Donna Gleaves - Diocese of Montana, DDC
  - Sheryl Gerety - Diocese of Oregon, Team member
- Purpose
  - It's wildfire season. For a number of reasons (climate change, drought, insect infestation etc), fires have been growing in intensity.
  - Connect DDCs who face similar hazards
  - Share resources & lessons learned
- Margaret's reflections on 2015 CA fires
  - The fires covered a huge swath of land. There were multiple evacuations ordered for this fire
  - Many rural and small congregations - Few had formal disaster plans
  - Church in Calistoga: opened it's doors right away. Not officially a shelter (too small), but church served as a heating, cooling, and feeding place during the day. They also sent people to provide pastoral care in the field where folks had been evacuated
  - Distributed gift cards to help people out with food & gas
  - Lakeport Church - had a thriving thrift store, so helped people out with clothing needs. No priest; the senior warden lead response. The congregation is still providing meals for people who are displaced from the fires. Other congregations have pledged financial support to help this ministry
  - Other congregation - have become a triage center for the red cross, twice a year they hold earthquake drills, the fires have prompted additional planning
  - Diocesan actions -
    - Dio contacted Margaret to let her know that congregations were affected
    - Margaret called Katie to let her know the scale of the disaster
    - An Emergency grant was issued to the Diocese of NorCal to support response ministries
  - Ways churches engaged:
    - Cooling/warming shelter - cell phone charging
    - Gift cards for gas and food
    - Distributed clothing using existing thrift store
    - Took in specifically needed items like diapers
    - Provided pastoral care (including Spanish speakers)
  - We'll have additional conversations about longterm recovery

- [MARC](#)s - Multi Agency Response Centers might be set up. (Thanks for the link, Dave!)
- Document recovery expenses - you might be able to be reimbursed
- Takeaways:
  - Lots of response work is possible without a formal plan.
  - Even when prep work (presentations, attending deanery meetings, sending out information, etc) doesn't feel particularly fruitful, those actions communicate the message that the church should be involved in disaster response. Planting seeds!
  - Small and rural churches have agency and can play a large role in disaster response
- Fire 101 with Michael Bamberger
  - Fire season is year-round in much of the West
  - Three variables that affect how fires spread
    - Weather - Temperature, wind, humidity
    - Fuel
    - Topography
  - We have to deal with mudslides after fires are extinguished
  - Declarations-
    - FMAG Fire Management Assistance Grant program (most common)- Offset costs to fight fires
    - Disaster Declarations - provide public assistance to corporations, utility companies, and government
  - Churches can be helpful by serving as staging areas, letting firefighters use their bathrooms/wifi/air conditioned buildings. For smaller fires, first responders may need water & food
  - Check out these websites for helpful info:
    - National Interagency Coordination Center's Daily Situation Report <http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/sitreprt.pdf>
    - The link to the Geographic Area Coordinating Centers <http://www.nifc.gov/nicc/predictive/statelinks.htm>
    - InciWeb - an overall fire information website <http://inciweb.nwccg.gov/>
    - The morass of a website <http://www.fema.gov/>
    - Because weather matters <http://forecast.weather.gov/MapClick.php?site=lox&smap=1&extField1=34.1720833333333&textField2=-118.05625#.V4U32TNTEdU> (enter the city & state or zip code that you're interested in.)
- Protocol if a disaster strikes
  - Stay Safe
  - DDC contacts Katie Mears (email or Text), Program Director
    - If DDC is unavailable, team member may email Katie
  - DDC sends an email to dio staff to let them know about the disaster
  - We can offer non-monetary support too, so please call!
  - USDP staff, Diocesan Staff, and DDC will work together to help form response
- Other Resources
  - [A Season of Resilience](#)
  - [Cooling shelter for firefighters](#)
  - [Diocese of Louisiana's quick guide](#)
  - [Episcopal Asset Map](#)
  - [Donations](#)