

Planning for Disasters

If your church burned down on Friday, where would you meet on Sunday? If a tornado came through your community, how would you care for your members and neighbors?

While we all hate to contemplate being faced with a disaster unfortunately they do occur. Two major disasters have occurred recently in our presbytery. The Flint water crisis continues to affect thousands, including members of our churches. The flooding in Isabella, Midland, and Bay counties also impacted many people including church members. While we are blessed that we have not experienced a tornado, a toxic spill, or a church shooting, we are better able to deal with such events if we are prepared.

The Presbytery Coordinating Team appointed a vision task force in January to explore ways to help the presbytery and its churches to become more missional. Part of that mission emphasis is to develop a disaster preparedness policy and plan for the presbytery and to provide information for individual churches to help in creating their plans. With the help of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the documents have been completed and were approved by the Coordinating Team at its July meeting.

The plans are available by clicking on [these links](#) or on the Presbytery of Lake Huron web page under the "Misc" tab and then "Documents and Forms." The Presbytery Disaster Plan outlines how the presbytery will communicate and coordinate activities in case of an emergency. The Emergency Preparedness for Churches is a document that was originally created by St. Joseph's Mercy Faith Community Nursing in cooperation with Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard and graciously shared with us.

You are encouraged to become familiar with both documents to aid your own preparation. The presbytery plan is still a work in progress as we continue to identify people that are qualified and interested to fill the various volunteer positions.

The church document is a guide to help individual churches create their own disaster preparedness plans. You are encouraged to begin discussions within your church about how the church will respond to a crisis in your community if and when one may occur.