

**RE:** UMCOR/AR UMC  
Disaster Response Academy  
**DATES:** January 29-February 1, 2020  
**LOCATION:** Trinity United Methodist Church  
1101 N Mississippi St  
Little Rock, AR 72207



Dear United Methodist laity, pastors, early response team members, district disaster response coordinators, key responders, response coordination team members, disaster response committee members, district administrators, conference staff, extended cabinet, cabinet, and Bishop Mueller:

This Disaster Response Academy at Trinity UMC focuses on preparing to help - because disasters don't schedule appointments. The goal is to enhance disaster response ministries in the Arkansas Conference. Participants will dive deep into the areas that frame all disaster ministries while affirming or enhancing how our conference prepares for, responds to and recovers from disasters.

So...

What if disaster response is a way to transform the world for Jesus Christ? Central to the goal of this academy is our desire to grow and enhance the ministry of disaster response for the transformation of Arkansas and beyond. Come prepared to learn, to better understand how disaster response ministry works, and to make our work even better!

Your presence at Trinity UMC the last week in January is critical! Please register early. Details may be found in the three documents accompanying this message.

### **CABINET DISASTER MINISTRY ORIENTATION**

The academy will provide an orientation for the bishop, cabinet, extended cabinet, district administrators and conference staff. They will spend time with Cathy Earl, Director, Disaster Response and U.S. Partner Relations with UMCOR. Cathy will address questions such as: How do the Bishop and Cabinet respond in event of emergency? What is the role of the conference disaster response coordinator and the disaster response committee? What can UMCOR do to help? This session is designed to address these questions and more in order to support the attendees in their roles in disaster response and recovery.

**Attendees can prepare for the session by reviewing the current conference disaster response plan.**

### **LOCAL CHURCH TRACK**

This series introduces disaster readiness and response as a mission of your church. Churches will be encouraged to explore their capacity for various disaster response ministries and to consider ways to engage community partners. Attendees will be better able to prepare for and respond to their neighbors in helpful, cooperative, and caring ways when disaster strikes. They will be able to help individuals and families of the church to be disaster ready. They will cover the "how tos" of protecting church property and the people within the property.

### **ERT TRACK**

Advanced training for Early Response Team members. What is involved in being an ERTeam Leader? What are all the functions and what do they do when they deploy? What needs to be in place before an invitation is issued and how can the invitation be expedited? How is a disaster site and/or a work site evaluated? What all are we looking for when doing an evaluation? This series focuses on three 200 series classes and will include Disaster/Site Evaluation, On Site Management, and ERTeam Leader. In addition, those ERTs attending will have opportunity to train in Chainsaw Safety.

**ERT Basic is a prerequisite for this track and will be offered pre academy on January 11<sup>th</sup> for those who haven't had "Basic".**

## LTR TRACK

When and how does Relief transition to Long Term Recovery? What has to be in place for recovery to happen in a community? How do we determine who we assist in relief verses recovery? Where do the resources come from? The recovery of many individuals and families is often dependent upon a well-functioning group effort. Participants will have opportunity to explore ways they might participate in the group's development on behalf of the church. The functions of Disaster Case Management, Construction Management, Volunteer Management and the relationship of the three will be explored. Learn also to effectively coordinate and support volunteers who are willing to come to your community after a disaster to repair and rebuild.

**Foundations for Disaster Ministry is a pre-requisite for this track will be presented on Wednesday.**

## LEADERSHIP TRACK

This track is specifically designed for those who are counted on to prepare for and to coordinate the response to disaster as well as those who support the effort within the conference. Roles, responsibilities, and preparedness strategies will be explored. The goal of academy is to strengthen our conference disaster response capabilities. What is the role of this leadership team in that? Members of the DR Committee are responsible for the response plan and for providing support and oversight to those who implement the plan. This track will prepare the committee for this important task. The sessions will review the recovery functions and look at designing a recovery project. Participants will explore similarities and differences between relief and recovery, identify ways to provide leadership in developing recovery coalitions, and ways to resource recovery of individuals and families.

**Foundations for Disaster Ministry is a pre-requisite for this track.**

**Attendees can prepare for the session by reviewing the current conference disaster response plan.**

## ALL ATTENDEES

Everyone will have opportunity to participate in these sessions:

Why engage in disaster ministry? What are the phases of disaster? Who are the players? What are the functions and opportunities for volunteers? Where do the resources come from? What are our mission and values? **Foundations for Disaster Ministry** will address these questions and more. This session is the foundational training that grounds all of our efforts in disaster ministry.

At the center of any Disaster Response Ministry is the **Ministry of Caring**. The Ministry of Caring is a versatile ministry that can be helpful in all phases of disaster. It is a ministry of presence with an emphasis on listening as a vehicle for healing. Attendees will be introduced to the emotional, spiritual, and physical stressors associated with disaster, ways to respect diversity, and National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster standards and best practices. Strategies for self-care will also be explored.

What assets do we have within the conference that will help when disaster strikes? Where are they located. Can we reach out to our partners or to our counterparts in other conferences to share assets?

**Asset Mapping** is an important tool in disaster response.

When disaster strikes, how do we expedite knowing what is needed – in the community, for individuals and families? **Volunteer Navigators** is a tool that helps do just that – helps us know what is needed where by whom.

Want to meet and hear from UMCOR, your conference disaster response leaders, government and other response partners? The **Plenary Panel** will offer opportunity to do just that in a question/answer and discussion session.

What is the plan when disaster strikes? What do we do as laity, pastors, and leadership? How is the response organized? How do we do what we do? What do we not do? Let's review the plan together in the **Train to the Plan** session and then work a scenario to practice a response.