

Congregations – Prepare to Care in a Disaster

Every year from April to June we see the largest number of tornadoes in Kansas. In order to prepare to care for congregational and community members, designate one board to think through some strategic issues:

- Make sure vital papers and data are backed up in a secure location away from the church.
- Identify and mark storm shelters in church.
- Consider a tornado drill one Sunday morning. This is a good way to see if there are problems getting people to safety and if you have enough space. If you don't know the safest location, ask the local emergency manager or fire department.
- Buy a weather radio, keep it on and have someone listening for it when the building is occupied.
- Maintain a Phone Tree and an alternate way to check on members. Know who won't have local family checking on them, and make sure they are contacted. Know who has health issues and who might be more vulnerable in your congregation.
- Discuss where you would worship if your building is not usable.
- Discuss who you would call upon to help if your Pastor is a storm victim and needs to focus on his own family's needs.
- Discuss ways your building might be used after a disaster. Invite Red Cross and/or emergency manager to give you some ideas.
- Know who and how to cut off utilities.

Time spent preparing when all is calm is quite valuable when a disaster strikes. Being prepared will help your church workers and members to be able to respond more quickly to the needs of your community.