Steps for Developing a Plan for Your Church

1) A communications network is essential. There should be a continually updated list of all the congregational members’ phone numbers (office, home, and mobile). There should be a copy of the list kept at the house of worship and the Disaster Response Coordinator and the religious leader should have copies.

2) Designate one remote phone number where an emergency message can be recorded and make sure all parishioners know that number and understand its function.

3) Identify vulnerable church members. These members may be aged, living alone, living in trailers, have health problems, and/or are living in areas prone to disasters. When a warning of a potential disaster is issued have a designated person call these members to ensure that they are in safe areas.

4) Appoint a Disaster Response Coordinator and a Disaster Response Committee for the congregation to coordinate and oversee preparedness efforts, communications and response to an emergency or disaster.

5) Formulate plans for evacuation in case of emergency or disaster. There should be a plan for evacuating the church during the week and on a Sunday morning when member traffic is high.

6) Inspect the church and any additional buildings. Are exits clearly marked? Do the smoke detectors have fresh batteries? Are the fire-extinguishers up-to-date?

7) Check that your insurance policy meets the minimum requirements of your house of worship by your mortgage holder. Are the art and musical instruments covered? Books? Alters?

8) Practice the communication and evacuation parts of your plan on a regular basis.