

Where Do I Begin?

To get involved, contact your United Methodist Annual Conference **Disaster Response Coordinator** or the **Director of Connectional Ministries**.



For more information, contact:

United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)
Office of Emergency Services USA
100 Maryland Ave. NE Suite 315
Washington, DC 20002
Tel: 202-548-4002

Email: DomesticDisaster@umcor.org

Website: www.USemergencies.org (click on "Training Programs")

www.umcor.org



"Is thy heart right towards thy neighbor?"

—John Wesley

CONNECTING NEIGHBORS

Preparing the Local Church for Disaster Ministries



When disaster strikes, the local church usually provides the first response. The visible presence of the church is an essential and effective ministry that brings God's hope and healing to people in times of crisis.

UMCOR's Connecting Neighbors Leadership Training Program

This is a two-day, local church readiness, train-the-trainer program designed to give volunteer trainers the tools and information necessary to guide the development of local church disaster response ministries. Connecting Neighbors' volunteer trainers are willing to invest time to provide disaster readiness training that is consistent with their Conference Disaster Response plan.

Participants are encouraged to seek conference approval to attend this training, and to return to their conference with the goal of sharing the information they have learned at district workshops, district pastors' meetings, laity meetings, and cluster church meetings, with local churches.

Why a Church Plan?

The local church is a place where people connect—with God, with each other, and with the community. People naturally turn to the church in times of crisis, seeking meaning, peace, and healing. A church that is prepared can help mitigate the emotional and spiritual impact of disaster, and may be a place of hospitality and sanctuary in a time of critical need. A plan can speed the immediate response and help lessen those feelings of confusion, loneliness, and isolation that are so common after disasters.

Susan Meister



Susan Meister

What Will I Learn?

The **Connecting Neighbors Leadership Training Program** will prepare you for your role in guiding others to:

- Develop a disaster plan that fits with the church's mission
- Connect the church to outside resources and to the community's emergency plans
- Identify types of disasters likely to impact the church community and the needs that may arise
- Assess the church's resources to meet those needs
- Identify the church's role in disaster readiness and response
- Create a plan to manage volunteers
- Assign responsibilities
- Develop a system of communication.