

Disaster Plan



Providing Ministry
Before, During and
After a Hurricane or
Other Disaster

Celebration Church
Cypress, Texas

Introduction

You might be saying to yourself as you read this, “A hurricane plan? Duh! Just get out of town until it’s over!” But here in the Gulf Coast, we all know there’s more to dealing with hurricanes than just getting out of their way. And a church is not immune to the need of having a plan in place for hurricanes and other disasters.

For a church, decisions need to be made about when to cancel worship, suspend church activities, close and secure the church, communicate with members, perform damage assessment, resume ministries following a disaster, and provide spiritual and pastoral assistance to those most affected by a storm or emergency.

Although this disaster plan is not an exhaustive plan, it does help guide the congregation in how the church will function before, during, and after a hurricane or other disaster. And as a rule of thumb, Celebration always follows a “better safe than sorry” policy.

We pray that we will never need to use these plans, but we will also not be caught unprepared.

And as the church prepares itself, we encourage all families and individuals to have a plan as well.

Before a Hurricane/Disaster

1. All members are encouraged to prepare themselves, their families, and their property for the possibility of a hurricane or emergency, especially during hurricane season.
 - A. Have an emergency supply kit that includes batteries, flashlight, radio, water, food, pet supplies, etc., and have the kit located in a place for quick and easy retrieval during an emergency. Include a copy of the church directory.
 - B. Develop an emergency evacuation plan that every member of your household knows.
 - C. Prepare your home for hurricanes by securing lawn furniture and outdoors plants, keeping insurance policies in a safe place, etc.
 - D. Make sure the church has emergency contact numbers for you.
2. The Board of Stewards is authorized to create a plan to protect and repair the church's property during and after a hurricane or other disaster.
3. Celebration is committed to sustaining a ministry of Word and Sacrament for as long as is safely possible, and to reestablish Word and Sacrament ministry and pastoral care and support in the aftermath of a hurricane or other disaster.
4. Normally, during a tropical storm, the church will remain open for Sunday worship and emergency pastoral care, unless flooding or tornadic activity prevents it.

5. In the case of any approaching hurricane or other impending disaster, the following will be the plan:

If Harris County issues a **Precautionary Evacuation**:

- A. The Pastor shall confer with the Leadership Team about securing the church facilities, communicating with members, and taking inventory of church supplies.
- B. Members are encouraged to consider evacuating.
- C. Church activities will normally continue uninterrupted during a precautionary evacuation, but members are encouraged to check the church website or call the Church Office for more information.

If Harris County or the City of Houston issues a **Recommended or Mandatory Evacuation**:

- A. The Pastor will, after conferring with other church leaders, cancel worship services and other church activities. In the absence of the Pastor, the Ministry Team shall make the decision. **During a recommended or mandatory evacuation, all activities at the church will be suspended until an “all clear” is sounded.**
- B. All member households are highly encouraged to move to shelter.
- C. All member households are encouraged to keep a church directory with their emergency supply kit.
- D. During an emergency evacuation, the church will presume all member households have evacuated.

During a Hurricane/ Disaster

1. The Ministry Center will not be open. You may leave an email voice mail or text message to communicate with the Church Office.
2. Worship will be suspended during any hurricane or disaster that threatens the local area. During a tropical storm, please check the church website or voice mail for further information about church activities.
3. If you should have a pastoral emergency during an evacuation or storm, please call, text message, or email the Church Office. The Church Office will respond as quickly as is safely possible. Please be advised that church leaders may also evacuate, so it may be some time before the Pastor or other church leader can respond in person to a pastoral emergency.

Emergency Shelter

Individuals and families are encouraged to already have a plan of where to evacuate should the need ever arise. However, if you are looking for emergency shelter outside of the metropolitan area, and have nowhere to go, you are encouraged to contact our church partners along your evacuation route. Share who you are, that you are from Celebration Lutheran Church in Cypress, Texas, seeking refuge. Here are potential partners who may provide initial shelter for you and your family, should you need to evacuate:

Heading towards Austin or San Antonio:

Camp Lutherhill

3782 Lutherhill Road
La Grange, TX 78945
(888) 266-4613

Texas Lutheran University

1000 West Court Street
Seguin, TX 78155
(830) 372-8160

Faith Lutheran Church

615 S Eagle
Weimar , TX 78962
(979) 725-6296

Good News Lutheran Church

11020 Old Corpus Christi
San Antonio , TX 78223
(210) 633-0551

Heading towards Dallas:

Angel of Joy Lutheran Church

4003 Daniel McCall Dr
Lufkin , TX 75904
(936) 632-4777

Briarwood Retreat Center

670 Copper Canyon Rd.
Argyle, TX 76226
(800) 441-0016

Church Communications

During a hurricane or other disaster, you are encouraged to email, text message, or leave a voice mail with the Church Office, letting the church know if and where you have evacuated, and giving contact information for you and your household.

As the church leadership is able, updates will be offered through the website, by e-celebrate, and through text messages.

following a Disaster

1. After a hurricane or other disaster, it will take some time for members and church leaders to come back from an evacuation.
2. As the Leadership Team arrives, they will hold an emergency meeting to develop a plan to check on members, assess property damage, and survey local community needs, etc.
3. The pastoral care leaders will immediately assess congregational pastoral needs and begin a process of “triage” for pastoral care.
4. If you should have a pastoral emergency following a storm or disaster, please call, text message, or email the Church Office. pastoral caregivers will respond as quickly as is safely possible. pastoral caregivers will prioritize pastoral responses by urgency and seriousness. You are encouraged to be patient and understanding that there may be several people in pastoral need.
5. The people of Celebration are reminded that in urgent cases, all baptized believers are empowered to act on behalf of Christ to pray for, help, and assist those in need. In an emergency situation, any Jesus-follower may: pray, baptize, give Holy Communion, offer the promise of forgiveness of sins, or share the Gospel with others. Should you baptize or offer Holy Communion in an emergency situation, please contact the Church Office as soon as possible, so that the pastoral act may be recorded.
6. The Pastor and Leadership Team shall determine when and where worship will resume. This information shall be shared through whatever means are available: website, email, text message, phone call, Church Office voice mail, etc.
7. Celebration is committed to being a force of rebuilding and support for our local community, as well as for other churches in our area and in our synod following a hurricane or disaster.

Important Information

CELEBRATION CHURCH EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Ministry Center (281) 758-1279

Church Cell Phone (281) 840-0195

(during an emergency, the church cell phone shall be the primary tool for communicating)

website: www.click2celebrate.com

email: info@click2celebrate.com

HARRIS COUNTY

HOMELAND SECURITY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

www.hcoem.org

KTRK CHANNEL 13 (ABC)

www.abc13.com

WEATHER UNDERGROUND

www.wunderground.com



CELEBRATION CHURCH

A Lutheran Christian Community