

"Disaster Preparedness Sunday" Liturgy Offerings

Written and compiled by the MACUCC Disaster Resource and Response Team, 7/19/17

In times of actual emergencies, critical thinking can be adversely affected and preparing a worship service can be a real challenge. Feel free to adapt this liturgy to use in your congregation if you're impacted by a critical incident.

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: When all seems lost, or frail or shaken...

All: Our Creator holds our fears and calms the deepest storms...

One: We cling to our faith in the One who calmed the sea...

All: and holds us in steadfast care...

PRAYER OF INVOCATION/THANKSGIVING (For times of trouble)

Gracious and Holy God, we find ourselves in the middle of chaos. We are overwhelmed by what has happened in recent days. Some of us have even begun to doubt your existence. We question why you would allow this to happen. But we know that you are our God and have been present to us in times past. For that we are deeply grateful. Bless us in this hour of worship that we might deepen our faith in you.

PASTORAL PRAYER SEEDS

A prayer of preparation based on Exodus 12:39:

They baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had brought out of Egypt; it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.

Let us now enter into the spirit of prayer:

God of haste, Lord of hurry,

you who pushes us toward a new destiny,

we could not wait, we had to go;

in our time of need, we look to you for sustenance and safe passage.

We give you thanks and praise for all you have done for us,

for our deliverance and for what little we could take away with us.

We ask for perseverance and strength; help us be steadfast in this unsettled time.

Gather us back to you, Lord; draw us near.

Help us regain our footing. Lead us to your bounty even as we walk in the wilderness.

We escaped Pharaoh by your mighty arm and by your grace,
may we withstand the storm unharmed.

We pray all this through you son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

A collect for deliverance:

God of the covenant,

you who established justice and mercy for all generations,

save us from this turmoil; rescue us from our trouble. Deliver us from all calamities.

We remember your promise, that as long as the earth endures, that the seasons and the harvests, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.

We give you our love and endless praise, and bless your holy name. Amen.

For after a disaster/A prayer for deliverance based on Psalm 69:1-3:

Save me, O God,
for the waters have come up to my neck.
I sink in deep mire,
where there is no foothold;
I have come into deep waters,
and the flood sweeps over me.
I am weary with my crying;
my throat is parched.
My eyes grow dim
with waiting for my God.
Let us all enter into the spirit of prayer:
God of deliverance,
you who uphold us in times of persecution
and strengthen us to meet the trials of faithful witness,
in our time of need, our prayer is to you.
May our thanks and praise for you be heard above the winds that afflict us.
As you delivered us from death
through our baptism in Christ
and the victory of his resurrection,
still the whirlwind and let the waters recede
that we may regain our footing and rebuild our lives.
Do not let the flood sweep us away,
or the deep swallow us up.
Rescue us from sinking;
deliver us from destruction and lift us up from the deep waters.
In our weariness, Lord, we open our hearts and lives to you,
who laid the foundation of the earth.
Bring strength to those who go forward into the storm –
the first responders, rescuers, and all those who stand in harm's way on our behalf –
and bring healing to those who fell in the struggle.
Lord, in your steadfast love and abundant mercy, turn to us.
Draw us near, redeem us, set us free.
We ask all this through your Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray, saying...

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

Guide Me, O Great Redeemer – New Century Hymnal (NCH) 18

O God, Our Help in Ages Past – NCH 25

How Firm a Foundation – NCH 407

God of Grace and God of Glory – NCH 436

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God – NCH 439

Jesus, Still Lead On – NCH 446

Unto the Hills We Lift Our Longing Eyes – NCH 466

What A Covenant – NCH 471

Precious Lord, Take My Hand – NCH 472

Out of the Depths I Call – NCH 483

Be Still, My Soul – NCH 488

Nada Te Turbe – NCH 772

The New Century Hymnal
(Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1995)

If It Had Not Been for the Lord – The Faith We Sing (TFWS) 2053
Just A Closer Walk With Thee – TFWS 2158
Wounded World That Cries For Healing – TFWS 2177
Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying – TFWS 2193
Stay With Me – TFWS 2198

The Faith We Sing
(Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000)

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God – United Methodist Hymnal (UMH) 110
O God, Our Help in Ages Past – UMH 117
Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah – UMH 127
Give to the Winds Thy Fears – UMH 129
God Will Take Care of You – UMH 130
Leaning on the Everlasting Arms – UMH 133
Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies – UMH 173
Send Your Word – UMH 195
It's Me, It's Me, O Lord – UMH 352
Precious Lord, Take My Hand – UMH 474
Lonely the Boat – UMH 476
By Gracious Powers – UMH 517
Nobody Knows the Trouble I See – UMH 520
How Firm a Foundation – UMH 529
Be Still, My Soul – UMH 534
God of Grace and God of Glory – UMH 577

The United Methodist Hymnal
(Nashville: United Methodist
Publishing House, 2000)

SCRIPTURE SUGGESTIONS/SERMON SEEDS

Genesis 6:13-22 or 6:13-7:5

Noah receives notice of the impending flood. He also receives instructions about how to prepare to survive the disaster.

Genesis 19:12-26

Lot receives notice that he should evacuate. He doesn't prepare to leave so he is forcibly removed from the area. Lot's wife looks back (lingers too long?) and is lost.

Exodus 12:1-13

Moses and Aaron get word that some terrible affliction is coming to strike down firstborn children and animals. They're given specific instructions about how to avoid this plague.

Exodus 11:1-3, 12:33-36

Moses gets notice that there will be another plague coming. He's told to have the Israelites prepare by collecting items of value from their neighbors. They get word that they need to leave immediately and they do so, taking the unleavened bread.

Exodus 12:39

The Israelites eat unleavened bread because it's all they've got. They took no other provisions.

Psalm 46:1-3

Trust in God in all situations.

Psalm 69:1-3

The psalmist cries out to God for deliverance from a storm, perhaps a storm of life. He feels about to drown and he can't find firm footing, yet he knows God can save him.

Psalm 91:1-4

God is your refuge and your fortress no matter what terrible circumstances you face. You are protected.

Psalm 10:1, 12-18

The psalmist feels alone in the struggle, yet still prays. God sees your circumstances. The psalmist believes that God can help.

Isaiah 54:10

Even if the hills and mountains go away, God's love for you never will. You have God's steadfast love and God's promise of peace.

MINI MESSAGE/CHILDREN'S MESSAGE (Based on Noah's Ark)

God is very good to us, making sure we have a place to live, clothes to wear, food to eat and water to drink. God also gave us minds to think with and God has given us the ability to plan ahead.

September is "Disaster Preparedness Month" so I thought we'd talk about a time in the Bible where someone had to plan ahead. Does anyone know the story of Noah and the ark? (Let children tell parts of story, filling in the blanks.) What did Noah pack? If you knew that there was really bad weather coming and you had to pack to go somewhere safe for a few days, what would you bring? What else? (Encourage them toward items for a go-kit--link in resources, below.) That sounds like a "Go-Kit"; a bag or suitcase that you have prepared in case of emergency. (If you want to minimize anxiety, you can explain that some areas of the country have severe weather like earthquakes or tornadoes. We don't have a lot of that here, but it's always a good idea to be prepared.) Adults, can you think of anything else that we ought to put in our go-kits? (Lead them toward cell phone chargers, eyeglasses, medicine, pet food, single dollar bills, etc...) Is there anyone here who might assemble a go-kit this week? Could you tell us about it next week? Okay, let's pray together. Please repeat after me: Holy God, thank you for giving us the ability to plan ahead. Thank you for loving us so much. Thank you for being with us always, wherever we are. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

CALL TO OFFERING

Isaiah, speaking for God, reminds us: "For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you." In times of trauma, disaster, disruption in our world, you become the presence and compassion of God. Your prayers, your words, your actions and your gifts make it possible for people to find a steady place to stand until the quaking calms. Our offering today will be used to ____ (mention can be made about where the offering will go and be used). For the work of God at home and around the world our offering will be received...

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God of moving mountains, God of steadfast love, God of blowing wind, God of peace, we bring our gifts, our prayers our whole selves to you. Receive our gifts from hopeful, trusting and grateful souls. Use these gifts to bring your calming compassion to our world.

BENEDICTION:

People of God, go forth encouraged by God's steadfast presence in your lives.

Go forth bolstered by the knowledge that your preparation and God's provision help mitigate the effects of changed circumstances.

Go forth assured of God's promises to tenderly care for you, wherever you may go and whatever lies ahead.

Go in peace.

RESOURCES FOR BULLETINS

MACUCC Disaster Resource Team: <http://www.macucc.org/disasterresource>

The Mass Conference Disaster Resource Team pages are a rich repository of resources for individuals/families, churches, and pastors. This collection of information includes articles and links about emergency preparedness, surviving disasters, and disaster aftermath.

Emergency Kit link:

https://macucc.brtapp.com/files/files/documentsmissionjustice/checklist_for_fbopdf3-7-142.pdf

Federal Emergency Management Agency: [Fema.gov](http://fema.gov)

FEMA App on the Apple App Store: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/fema/id474807486?mt=8>

FEMA App on Google Play for Android:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.fema.mobile.android&hl=en>

FEMA App landing page on FEMA.gov: fema.gov/mobile-app

Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency: <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/>

Massachusetts Alerts is a communication tool used by MEMA to disseminate critical information to smartphones. Massachusetts Alerts is powered by a free downloadable application app that is available for Android and iPhone devices based on your location. The Massachusetts Alerts app can be downloaded from Apple's iTunes App Store for iOS devices (such as iPhone & iPad) and the Google Play online store for Android devices

Red Cross Emergency Alerts and Notifications: RedCross.org

This all-inclusive app lets you monitor more than 35 different severe weather and emergency alerts, to help keep you and your loved ones safe. Available in the Apple iTunes App Store and on Google Play.

Learn about all the Red Cross Emergency Apps available at: <http://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/mobile-apps>