

CONNECTING NEIGHBORS

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM



NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Shortly after a series of tornadoes spiraled through Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee in late February 2012, United Methodist conference disaster response personnel reported to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) that they had already begun to assess damages in areas hard hit by the severe weather. This was good news for the Rev. Tom Hazelwood, US Disaster Response executive for UMCOR, because it meant that UMCOR's work to prepare local churches for disaster is paying off.

"The United Methodist Church's first response to disaster rests with the people in the local church," said Hazelwood. "It always begins and always ends with neighbors helping neighbors."



PHOTO: MARUJI BISHIR



PHOTO: SUSAN MEISTER

When a disaster strikes, the local church 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.

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A church prepared for disaster ministry has taken steps to safeguard the people and property of the church and is prepared to respond to the suffering of their neighbors in a time of crisis. UMCOR's **Connecting Neighbors Leadership Training** is a one-day, local-church disaster-readiness program designed to equip **volunteer trainers** with the information and tools they need to help guide the church as it prepares to respond to disaster in the community. Those persons willing and able to prepare their church community for this ministry are encouraged to participate in this program.

Attendees learn how to identify types of disasters likely to impact the community, assess the immediate needs of their neighbors and the church's resources to meet those needs, connect the church to outside resources and to the community's emergency plans, develop a system of communication, and much more.

After participating in a recent Connecting Neighbors workshop, Anne Harvell of Minnesota said, **"I get it now! UMCOR is about Response-Ability."**

Harvell's play on the word "responsibility" captures the essence of UMCOR's US Disaster Response program. UMCOR gives United Methodists the ability to respond to emergencies and help untold numbers of people get assistance when they have nowhere else to turn.

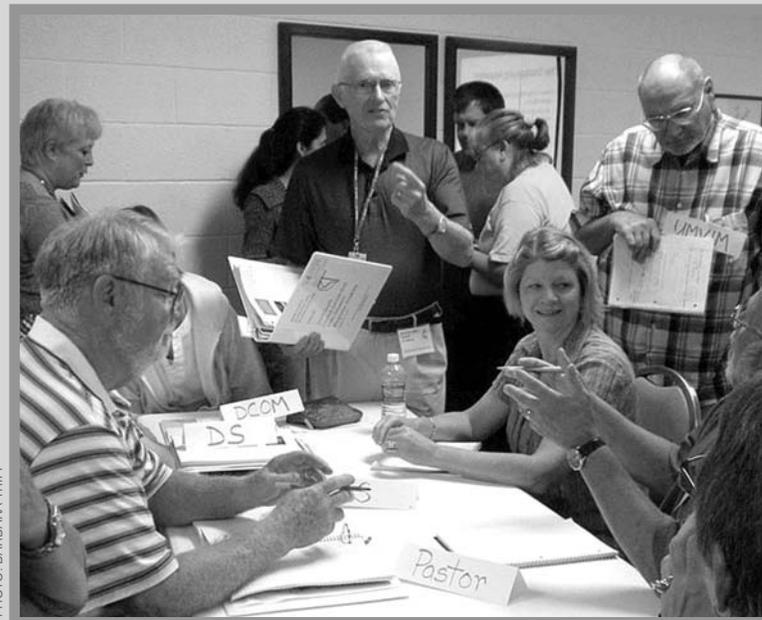


PHOTO: BARBARA TRIPP



PHOTO: MIKE DUBOSE



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PHOTO: BARBARA TRIPP



Be able to respond so you can say:
I am trained. I am ready. Lean on me.

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Support this ministry with
your gifts to US Disaster Response,
UMCOR Advance #901670.

www.umcor.org