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Friday, January 22, 2016

## Security Planning and The Verger - Part II



This says it all.

By Ken Holloway, News Manager, VGEC

Last March we published a Vergers Voice edition designed to [highlight issues around church \(service\) security and emergency planning](#). Today's post is designed to put some order to that discussion, expand the conversation to a broader scope and provide valuable sources of information for your use, as may suit your parish family.

Vergers are not usually the emergency planning experts in our churches, or are they? Whether or not we are leading emergency planning teams, we should certainly be pushing to assure that we have current workable plans in place. We are talking everything from fire, flood and tornado warning to menacing intruder, heart attack and an expectant mother about to give birth. We know that these widely divergent events (and many other emergency events) do occur every year in our churches. Some happen during worship services and others occur at any hour of the day or night at any point on your church property.

In preparing for this article, I texted [Carol Barnwell](#), Director of Communications for the [Diocese of Texas](#) to see what references she would suggest on this topic. She texted back that she was at an Episcopal Relief and Development meeting in Florida, then in session, and would call me at the break. Later when we spoke I asked her my question. She said that the meeting she was participating in centered on issues around planning for disaster preparedness. You have to know that I felt God's hand on my shoulder at that instant. She said she would email to me a really good set of references.

Carol had to return to the session, so I called Episcopal Relief and Development and found [Sara Lowery](#) - Program Associate, US Disaster Preparedness and Response. Sara described the session held this week in Florida, "Episcopal Relief and Development's Disaster Preparedness and Response Gathering is a three-day conference designed to meet the needs of diocesan staff. It seeks to equip church leaders to encourage their congregations to prepare for hazards, to support clergy as they minister to people impacted by those disasters, and to build programs that help vulnerable people make a full and sustained recovery." She said that the event was conducted at the [Canterbury Retreat and Conference Center](#) near Orlando, FL. The context for the conference is covered [here](#).

Subsequently, Carol emailed, in a short message, enough references to support several more stories on this subject.

First she pointed me to a 33-page document called "[Parish Emergency Planning](#)", which is resident on the Diocese of Texas web site. It poses all of the important questions for any church involved in developing a plan and provides a fill-in-the-blank blueprint for a realistic customized

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plan. Download and read the document. It should start your planning process immediately. If you already have a plan, compare it to this document and other documents referenced below.

I also found the Diocese of Texas' [web page on emergency preparedness](#) to be a great reference.

Episcopal Relief and Development's resources for [Disaster Preparedness and Planning](#) are numerous. This link provides 71 references, including a list of [Diocesan Disaster Coordinators](#).

Sara Lowery followed up on our conversation with the following email after I sent her a copy of our March 20, 2015 article:

Hi Ken,

*That's great! If you're interested, we also have a wonderful [Resource Library](#) with various resources on everything from successful disaster responses run by people in the US to information on how to prepare for disasters in your community. Here are some of the ones that may be most relevant to you all based on the article you sent:*

- [Individual and Family Preparedness](#)
- [Safeguarding Important Documents](#)
- [Tips on Preparing Your Parish to Respond Effectively to a Disaster](#)

*We also have 3 levels of congregational preparedness guides which may be filled out by the congregations (the bronze level is the most basic, while the comprehensive is the most thorough) in order for them to think about and plan for disasters:*

- [Bronze](#)
- [Silver](#)
- [Comprehensive](#), and the [Facilitator's Guide to the Comprehensive Plan](#) lays out the steps to creating a congregational disaster committee and filling out the plan.

*Let me know if I can be of further help.*

Best,

Sara

Here you have a comprehensive set of links to anything you would ever want to know about disaster preparedness planning for your parish family. Let me know if your parish has been confronted with a disaster and how planning and preparation helped the community.

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*Abstract: Up-to-date comprehensive disaster and emergency planning for our parish families and our dioceses should be in place everywhere in the Episcopal Church. This is a very important activity which vergers can help initiate, develop and complete. We cover the concept and present links to the Episcopal Church's corporate emergency planning knowledge base.*

Posted by [Ken Holloway](#) at 7:44 AM



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