

Disaster Ministries /DRRT (Disaster Resource & Recovery Team) – October 2025

We are excited to be an active committee again after an absence of a couple of years. Our new co-chairs are Jack Lacey and Sue Burgess. Our current members are Bruce Burnham, Pam Burnham and Harry Marsters. Also joining us is Jacquelyn Thornton from the National Emotional and Spiritual Care Team (she lives here in Maine). Rounding out our committee is Rev. John Fiscus, ME Conference ACM.

We have three goals. The first is to help churches be prepared for community/county/state emergencies, natural disasters and acts of violence. Our second goal is to be ready to help in the aftermath of a disaster such as fire, flood, hurricane, violence, etc. Our third goal is to help coordinate the resourcing and collection of CWS (Church World Service) kits that churches prepare each year. This year alone we collected **489 kits** between two pickup sites (Woodfords Congregational Church, UCC, Portland and High Street Congregational Church UCC, Auburn). Are you aware that National UCC offers \$250 grants to make CWS kits. See one of us for more information.

We have also written several articles for the Mid-Week News about preparing for disasters. An important flyer we have created is “Open in case of Emergency”. This flyer and other information will be available on our table at Annual Meeting.

The co-chairs of our Conference are invited to attend once per month a Zoom meeting with our colleagues from other Conferences of the United Church of Christ. These meetings are led by Katie Howe from the National Setting. In these meetings we hear what is going on other states, share resources, and work on projects together. Once per quarter we also connect with those that serve on the Emotional and Spiritual Care Team. Also, once a year, in the Spring we get together face to face for 3 days. In this meeting we work on National resources as well as do tabletop emergency drills. This helps us to improve our skills as Disaster Response Coordinators.

One of the co-chairs also meets quarterly with Maine VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters). This group which is part of a national organization, helps to “that helps to mitigate and alleviate the impact of disasters by providing a forum that promotes cooperation, communication, coordination, and collaboration.”

We are grateful that we have had no major natural disasters here in Maine in the last several years. But we are ready and prepared. Let us help your churches be prepared as well.

POTENTIAL COMING EVENT: We are discussing a work trip out of state to help with repairs from a natural disaster in the Spring of 2026. Reach out if you are interested in participating in a work trip.

Finally, we are always looking for more folks to join our team. We would love to have members from every Association in the Maine Conference. If you are interested, please reach out to us or see us at Annual Meeting October 17th and 18th.

With blessings,

Sue Burgess