

2011 Disaster Annual Report

Domestic Disaster Response

April 2011

Red River Valley Flooding

The Red River, running between Minnesota and North Dakota to the Canadian border, flooded for the third time in the past three years. This year, the waters crested about three feet from the record set in 2009. Thankfully many areas like Moorhead, Minn., and Fargo, N.D., were saved from flooding by dikes, levees and sandbagging. The major damage was because of ground flooding in rural areas, where waters had spread as much as four miles beyond the river's bank – flooding homes, destroying fields and washing out roads. We were involved in helping local congregations supply food to the relief workers and affected families.

Alabama Tornadoes

Central Alabama was struck by two rounds of tornados, the first and more powerful caused 128 deaths, hundreds injured and thousands of structures damaged or destroyed, including Christ Lutheran Church in Cullman, Ala. The second round caused major damage and two deaths in the Birmingham area. Still hope remained even in the midst of these disasters, as the historic stained-glass window of "Christ the Good Shepherd" at Christ Lutheran remained undamaged. We responded through our local affiliated agency, Lutheran Ministries of Alabama, to help people find the resources they needed, assistance in rebuilding and cleanup efforts.

May 2011

Joplin Tornado

In late May an EF-5 tornado tore through Joplin, Mo., destroying about one-fifth of the town and causing 160 deaths, making it the deadliest tornado since 1950. The building of Peace Lutheran Church, an ELCA congregation, was completely destroyed, but the congregation remained, worshipping in the parking lot the Sunday after the tornado. Working through our local affiliate, Lutheran Family and Children's Services of Missouri, we helped walk with the people of Joplin as they rebuilt their lives, homes and livelihoods.

Missouri River Flood

Heavy snow melts and rainfall caused some areas of South Dakota to receive their annual rainfall in one month. Five counties received a federal declaration of emergency, including the Pierre, Fort Pierre and Dakota Dunes area. Through the work of our partners, The ELCA helped to set up a Volunteer Service Center in Pierre to coordinate volunteers and help in the evacuation. After the waters receded they continued to be present helping with case management and rebuilding for affected individuals and families.

June 2011

Minot Flood

Massive flooding of the Souris River led to nearly 4,000 homes being destroyed or damaged in Minot, N.D., and the surrounding area. Some homes and buildings sat in water for over a month as a result of the flooding. Four ELCA churches were damaged, but three unaffected churches in Minot each shared space with the damaged congregations – and the ability to worship as the body of Christ continued. We currently have a local office in Minot and are working with ecumenical partners to rebuild homes of affected individuals and families.

August 2011

Hurricane Irene & Tropical Storm Lee

Slow-moving Hurricane Irene trudged up the east coast, affecting communities from North Carolina to Maine, causing historic flooding and leaving millions without power. The high winds also covered the roads with downed trees and debris, making travel difficult and at times dangerous. The next month, Tropical Storm Lee pounded the southern United States and brought more heavy rains to the Northeast. After both storms, volunteers and staff were there to help assess the situation and coordinate our response.

September 2011

Bastrop County Complex Fire

Three separate fires merged together over Labor Day weekend outside of the city of Bastrop, Texas, to form one wildfire that took over six weeks to extinguish. Two people were killed and nearly 1,700 homes were damaged making it the most destructive fire in Texas history. The ELCA worked with its companion organizations to provide for those whose homes were damaged or destroyed.

Ten-Year Anniversary of 9/11 Attacks

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, were historic and transformed how we respond to human-caused disasters. From the initial moments of trauma, to the years of continuing ministry of presence, the ELCA has worked closely with those directly impacted to provide the proper care. Through these experiences, we have learned the importance of caring for the caregivers in times of disaster and trauma, to help them so that they can be present for those in need. Ten years later, the ELCA continues to provide support as the city, and the nation, continues to rebuild.

November 2011

Alaska Winter Storm

A major storm with Category 2 hurricane-strength winds struck the western coast of Alaska. Five ELCA Lutheran churches were affected. We supported these congregations and the ELCA Alaska Synod as they engaged in the work of recovery.

ELCA International Disaster Responses

February 2011

India Floods

Heavy rains in late 2010 caused dams to break, resulting in flash flooding in southern India. Over 250 people were killed and nearly 2.5 million others were affected. ELCA gifts helped to provide food, shelter, basic necessities and small monetary support.

Committed: \$50,000

March 2011

Libyan Uprising and Refugee Crisis

In March, the people of Libya rose up against the dictator Moammar al Gaddafi resulting in war between pro-Gaddafi and anti-Gaddafi forces that led many in Libya to flee across the borders to neighbors like Tunisia and Egypt. The ELCA worked with local partners and member organizations to meet the needs of incoming refugees in Tunisia and Egypt by providing food, shelter and security.

Committed: \$85,000

Ivory Coast Refugees

More than 100,000 Ivorians fled from their country in the midst of conflict that broke out after contested elections in December 2010. Mostly women and children, they ended up in Liberia where the ELCA and its companions provided clean water, farming equipment, trauma care and other basic necessities.

Committed: \$80,250

Japan Earthquake and Tsunami

In March 2011, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake struck off the east coast of Japan and triggered a tsunami which struck the country with waves over 100 feet high. Over 19,000 people were killed and hundreds of thousands were left homeless. We responded immediately with food and water, and as the full effects of the disaster became known, provided care and counseling for affected individuals and helped communities reconnect to rebuild livelihoods.

Committed: \$1,540,000

Egyptian Crisis

Anti-government protests that began in late January 2011 grew to include hundreds of thousands. Though mainly peaceful, Egyptian anti-government protests led to some unsafe environments especially for refugees. We responded to support our work at St. Andrew's Refugee Services as it worked to protect refugees from violence and to repair its physical space that was damaged during rioting.

Committed: \$5,500

Tanzania Fire

In Southern Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, the ELCA, with the help of the Western Iowa Synod, helped to build a new dormitory and dining hall at the Igumbilo Lutheran Girls secondary school for vulnerable children after the old facilities were damaged in a fire.

Committed: \$15,000

May 2011

Colombia Flooding

The worst flooding in 60 years left 28 of the 32 departments of Colombia at least partially flooded. The flooding left 311 people dead and affected nearly 2.3 million people. Working through our partners we helped to bring food, shelter and basic supplies, while also providing counseling for traumatized victims. The ELCA also helped to prevent future disasters by building community capacity for future response and agricultural rehabilitation to promote food security.

Committed: \$120,000

June 2011

Sudan Violence

In January 2011, the people of southern Sudan passed a referendum to secede from the Sudan and form their own country of South Sudan. As secession approached in July, violence broke out in the country. The ELCA had worked with The Lutheran World Federation prior to the vote to pre-position water purification tablets, mosquito nets, blankets, mats, cooking implements and hygiene kits in case of violence.

Committed: \$50,000

July 2011

Horn of Africa Drought

During the summer of 2011, Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya and other countries in the Horn of Africa experienced their worst drought in 60 years, forcing millions to leave their homes in search of safety and food, often ending up in refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia. We pre-positioned funds in the region which were used to get first cups of water and porridge to arriving refugees in Kenya. We have been working with our partners to provide food, water, safety and medicine to meet the needs of the local Ethiopian and Kenyan populations as they dealt with the effects of drought. To prevent future disasters, the ELCA also helped communities in the Turkana region of Kenya to institute disaster risk reduction plans.

Committed: \$838,811

October 2011

Central America Flooding

Ten days of continuous, heavy rain in mid-October caused widespread flooding and mudslides in Central America and southern Mexico. Over 100 people were killed by the flooding and over 700,000 others were affected. We responded through our membership in The Lutheran World Federation and with local church bodies in El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras, with emergency food and water assistance, hygiene and medical kits, shelter and assistance for farmers, as many lost their crops and the seeds they normally collect for the next year's planting.

Committed: \$185,000

November 2011

Southeast Asia Flooding

Between June and December of 2011 tropical storms and typhoons affected Southeast Asia with uncommon regularity, creating increased rains and widespread flooding. Two of the hardest hit

countries were Thailand and Cambodia. The ELCA responded through Church World Service and our local companion in Thailand to provide survival food, water purification tablets, hygiene kits, as well as livelihood restoration for 500 fishermen.

Committed: \$150,000

Continued Responses

Haiti Earthquake - 2010

The people of Haiti continue to recover from the earthquake that struck their island in January 2010, leading to almost 250,000 deaths, 300,000 injuries and over a million people left homeless. Since the initial effort, the ELCA has made a commitment to accompany our local companion, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Haiti, and work through The Lutheran World Federation as they respond to the needs of the Haitian people. This has included work around educating about and treating cholera, building a sustainable village for affected families in Gressier, and rebuilding livelihoods through farming, dairy, micro-finance and vocational training opportunities.

Committed: \$3,206,796

South Asian Tsunami - 2004

In December 2004, an earthquake struck off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, which triggered a series of tsunamis with waves up to 98 feet high. Over 230,000 people in 14 countries were killed. The ELCA has continued to work with companions and partners on projects to address issues of disaster risk management, community rehabilitation and livelihood projects.

Committed: \$478,858

Chile Earthquake and Tsunami - 2010

An 8.8-magnitude earthquake and tsunami hit Chile in February 2010 leading to 525 deaths and 1.5 million people displaced. The ELCA has continued to respond and in 2011 gave provision for case management services for victims.

Committed: \$20,000