



# 2018 California wildfires

ONE YEAR LATER



**Lutheran Disaster Response**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

ONE YEAR LATER

# Thank you

In 2018, multiple fires raged in California, devastating communities and almost wiping out the city of Paradise. Now, one year after the Camp Fire — the most deadly and destructive fire in California history — thousands of people remain displaced, many with no plan to return.

Thanks to your generosity, Lutheran Disaster Response has been able to help communities impacted by these fires with crucial support — from emergency relief supplies to emotional and spiritual care. With your help, Lutheran Disaster Response can continue to support survivors on the long road to recovery.

## Powerful partnerships

Lutheran Disaster Response works in partnership with congregations, synods, social service organizations and other partners in the United States and around the world. With their deep knowledge of local needs and how to address them, these partners help us work in ways that are relevant and effective for each community. Through these partnerships, we accompany survivors from the time a disaster strikes until communities are rebuilt. This work is made possible by the Lutheran Disaster Response network. We are particularly grateful to:

- Sierra Pacific Synod
- Southwest California Synod
- Lutheran Social Services of Northern California
- Lutheran Social Services of Southern California



Photo: iStock/FrozenShutter

ONE YEAR LATER



## The response

Lutheran Disaster Response has provided wildfire survivors with immediate needs such as food, bedding, clothing, housing security deposits, daily life necessities and temporary supplies. And thanks to you, we can stay long after the headlines change, supporting people all the way through their recovery.

Long-term support for communities impacted by the California wildfires includes connecting survivors with disaster case managers who can help them formulate an individual recovery plan, and then with existing resources. We also provide emotional and spiritual care, access to safe, secure and functional housing, and financial assistance for other needs.

**'We have been blessed by so many people on our journey of healing'**



Katy Shrum and her daughter, both teachers at Paradise Elementary School, were on their way to school when they saw smoke. “We ignored it,” Katy said. Seeing smoke in the area wasn’t an uncommon occurrence. When they arrived at school, however, they learned the extent of the fire and began evacuating the children.

“We had 19 kids who couldn’t be picked up,” Katy said. Teachers and others started loading children into their personal vehicles and transporting them to Chico, the nearest town.

Once Katy and her daughter had arrived in Chico, they tried to rendezvous with Katy’s husband. “It took him five hours to make the drive that should have been 15 minutes,” Katy said. Pastor Ben Colahan of Faith Lutheran Church in Chico, where the Shrum family worship, drove them the rest of the way to meet Katy’s husband.

When the fire was extinguished and Katy and her husband could finally check on their property, they learned that their home and their daughter’s home, just down the road — where she’d lived for only ten days — had been completely destroyed. “We only got out with the clothes we were wearing, nothing else,” Katy said. “We lost two cars, a motor home, both our houses and our school! Hard to believe we spent 22 years in this house.”

Three days after the fire, Katy and her family sought refuge at her sister’s house in Fremont. “We were homeless for about three weeks,” she said. Soon afterward, a childhood friend of Katy’s gave the family her motor home, so they would have a place to live and the opportunity to get back to work. Then, when Pastor Ben closed on his new home, he worked with the Shrum family to help them take over his apartment lease. “He’d saved us again,” Katy said.

Now that the family is settled, Katy and her husband are both retired and spend their days caring for their young grandson while Katy’s daughter works. “He’s moved 11 times in his short life,” Katy said. “I want to provide a stable place for him.” She also volunteers on Fridays to help fire-impacted children and families.

“I pray every day for those still suffering,” Katy said. “We have been blessed by so many people on our journey of healing. ... My family received gift cards from complete strangers. All of this love and support gave us the strength to carry on and to see the kindness that was all around us. This love is what is needed in our world every day, and we are so grateful to everyone who loved us.”

ONE YEAR LATER

# Looking ahead

Lutheran Disaster Response has committed about **\$1 million** to the long-term recovery of 2018 wildfire survivors.

Photo: iStock/AartiKalyani

## Ways to support this ongoing response and others like it:

### ONLINE

[ELCA.org/disaster](https://elca.org/disaster)

### BY MAIL

Make a check out to Lutheran Disaster Response and send to:

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
ELCA Gift Processing Center  
P.O. Box 1809  
Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

### BY PHONE

Call 800-638-3522 to make a donation with a credit card. Operators are ready to assist you Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Central Time.



**Lutheran Disaster Response**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.