



The
Episcopal Diocese
of New York

The Essentials of a Disaster Preparedness Plan

There are four essential parts to an evacuation plan: **Parishioners, Church Documents, Church Furnishings, and Property.**

1. **Parishioners:** The choice is to evacuate or to shelter in place. If the decision to evacuate is made, the questions are: evacuate to where; how to get there; how long to stay there; and what to bring. At risk parishioners, such as the elderly, shut-ins, families with small children; and those with special needs will likely need assistance in making the decision to evacuate and planning how to get to their destination.

If the decision is to shelter in place, questions of safety, provisions, warmth, flashlights, water, and bedding need to be thought through. Congregational leaders are encouraged to talk with their parishioners about these choices and to assist in planning and execution as much as possible.

2. **Church Documents:** Regular backups of the parish's computers are essential; remember to take a hard copy to a secure offsite location – the cloud servers may be in their own flood zone. It is strongly recommended that a list of all insurance policy numbers, contractors, together with contacts and phone numbers be created and brought/sent to an offsite location and that the parish leadership each have a copy with them. Similarly, each congregational leader (Clergy, Wardens, Vestry, Treasurer, Heads of Guilds, etc) should have a copy of the Parish Directory; the Treasurer should secure the congregation's financial records, such as checkbooks, backup of financial system, etc. Historic

documents, such as charters, Bibles, Articles of Incorporation, etc., should be sent (by prior arrangement) to Wayne Kempton at the Diocesan Archives or to another parish for safekeeping.

3. **Church Furnishings:** Prepare the church building by removing items likely to be damaged by flooding: BCPs, Hymnals, Bibles, icons, vestments, hangings, Communion Vessels, etc. and arranging with a neighboring parish out of the flood zone to store them temporarily. Photographing all the Communion Vessels and any other furnishings in advance of evacuation is strongly recommended.
4. **Property:** In the event of flooding, someone needs to make the buildings as secure as possible and to turn off the electricity at the main to reduce the chance of fire. Please coordinate/communicate with your local Fire and Police Departments so that they are aware as well.