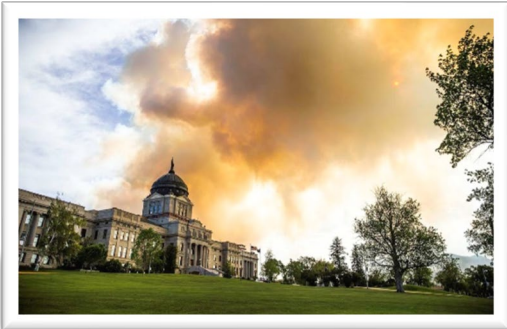




Lutheran Disaster Response
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Montana Synod Assembly Report Region 1 Disaster Preparedness Project

Who actually thought as we met for a virtual Assembly in 2020 that we would be doing so again this year? Yet, here we are. We are blessed with technology and hearts longing to be together again – and so we shall be. Soon. Blessed be the Creator of all life!



In the year of COVID-19 my work has been to walk with you in disaster preparation and response. Montana has been blessed, but we've done a lot of response in Region 1 this year. The flooding of the Umatilla River in eastern Oregon brought hardship to families and businesses in both Oregon and Washington. A little over a year later the work continues with some 579 survivor families being served. Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) is us, and Prs. Travis Larsen of Peace Lutheran in Pendleton, OR and Joel Ley of Christ Lutheran in Walla Walla, WA have been active with the Blue

Mountain Long-Term Recovery Group and Unmet Needs tables. LDR-US has invested \$10,000 to help pay a family case manager and consulted with us throughout the year. The work continues, but we are not alone.

In March 2020 the global pandemic locked our church and business doors, keeping us all home. No one knew what lay ahead. Lutheran Disaster Response was once again in our midst. Some \$125,000 was funneled through you and our five partner synods of Region 1. This money was intended for those impacted by COVID-19, being used for food cards, feeding programs and other assistance as you've seen fit. A new newsletter, the [Hammer and Dance](#), went into publication April of 2020. This Region 1 resource was created in response to needs encountered as we sought to navigate the COVID crisis. It has now matured into a congregational disaster preparedness newsletter. You can view it or subscribe at <https://www.region1beprepared.org/newsletters> My thanks to Colter McCarty for making this available to you, and for [publicizing webinars I offered last fall](#).

A wildfire season like no other took the homes of well over 4,000 families in Oregon and Washington this year. The Oregon Synod Disaster Team and I have worked with LDR-US, FEMA, and the Oregon and Washington State VOADs (**V**oluntary **O**rganizations **A**ctive in **D**isaster) to serve survivors. LDR-US has poured \$30,000 into direct wildfire aid. Montana lost some 380,000 acres to fire, along with 166 structures and millions of board feet of timber in 2020. The cost to tribal, county, state and federal holdings neared \$50 million. Another fire season will soon be upon us. Special thanks to Synod VP Dick Deschamps for working with me on your behalf!

The Region 1 Disaster Preparedness Project is now one year old. It has been a busy year with more "response" than "preparation." The coming year, though, will be full of grace and opportunity. I look forward to working with you in the days and weeks to come.

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