

# Emergency Preparedness Plan and Procedures

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## Lewinsville Presbyterian Church

Approved by Lewinsville Church Session on June 10, 2014

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## 1. Introduction

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### 1.1 Background and Purpose

On June 10, 2014, the Lewinsville Presbyterian Church Session approved these emergency preparedness procedures for the Church staff and congregation to follow in the event of disasters adversely affecting the safety and welfare of church members, staff or the residents of our surrounding community or impacting on church facilities and operations. The motion to approve these procedures is included as Annex C to these procedures.

Dramatic climatic events during 2012 – power outages and wind damage - generated such questions as:

- What can Lewinsville do to make available our facilities and/or to mobilize and coordinate members' help to assist the congregants and residents of our community who might be adversely affected by a major disaster – natural or man-made?  
and ....
- What advance arrangements should Lewinsville make for continuing church operations and conducting worship services in the event that the physical structures of the church are damaged to the extent they are determined to be unusable for short or extended periods of time?

The purpose of these procedures is to provide written guidance for church spiritual leaders, staff, elders, deacons and other congregational members in general for:

- Checking on the welfare and safety of our own congregants through a revitalized cluster system that includes volunteer emergency coordinators in each cluster willing and able to communicate with cluster members in the event of widespread loss of power and other utilities;
- Using our facilities temporarily to aid disaster victims – e.g., by configuring our buildings as temporary shelter or as an HQ for connecting victims with local emergency responders who can provide them with help;
- Continuing church operations and worship services in alternative locations should all or part of Lewinsville's church buildings and facilities be damaged to the extent that they are unserviceable until repaired or restored.

These Emergency Preparedness Procedures include measures to:

- Activate and expand the Lewinsville cluster system to include emergency coordinators and alternates for each cluster who could assess and respond to emergency support needs

of members including procedures for notification of cluster members using communications that are not dependent on public utilities. (Session has requested the Parish Life and Care or Management Ministry Groups to work with the current Clusters Coordinator to recruit and orient emergency coordinators to serve as emergency contact points and take on the emergency disaster assessment and emergency response tasks outlined in these procedures.)

- Arrange for dissemination of these procedures online and in print to raise congregational awareness about Lewinsville's emergency preparedness policies and procedures through the Monthly Bulletin, Annual Reports and other media.
- Include a copy of these procedures as part of new member and new elder/deacon orientation as well as part of the printed guidance for Duty Elders and Deacons and cluster leaders.
- Identify and delegate Session members, who along with Senior Pastors and Church Administrators will develop mutual emergency support agreements with Lewinsville Retirement Residences (LRR) and/or Chesterbrook Residences, Inc. and nearby faith communities – e.g., Presbyterian or other neighboring churches or synagogues or other places of worship. (An illustrative Emergency Reciprocal Support Agreement 'template' is contained in Annex B of these procedures.)

## 1.2 Coverage and Organization of these Procedures

These "Lewinsville Emergency Preparedness Procedures" describe steps to be followed to orient staff and session members and relevant congregation committee heads, elders and deacons on what actions to take under different emergency scenarios. Emergency scenarios for which these procedures are intended to provide guidance include:

- Widespread and extended outages or disruption of electric power and/or communications services that leave church and community members vulnerable, particularly the elderly and families with young children and particularly in periods of extreme heat or cold in their places of residence.
- Extensive damage to the residences of church or community members caused by natural or man-made disasters.
- Extensive damage to Lewinsville or neighboring cooperating church (institution) structures that make those facilities unusable for the conduct of church operations or worship services.

Such emergency scenarios may be caused by extreme weather, by cyber or other attacks that disrupt communications services and power supplies. In addition, damage to church facilities may result from vandalism, arson or the breakdown of heating and power systems.

Recent weather related events in our local area – and, of course, extensive damage caused by extreme weather in other parts of the country - underscore the importance of having recorded in one place, procedures to follow when emergencies arise, especially at times of extreme heat or cold when members' welfare and safety, particularly the elderly, may be threatened. Lewinsville can put into place now the preventive and preparedness measures outlined here to respond promptly and systematically to emergency situations. Specifically by:

- Communicating with church members and local residents to determine their safety and needs – especially when electric power and communications services are disrupted and personal contact may be required.
- Mobilizing church member volunteers to help other members and community residents – particularly elderly members with no means of transportation – with food, shelter and other assistance, following any major disaster that disrupts critical utilities.
- Utilizing church facilities temporarily to shelter individuals or families dislocated by disasters – including arrangements under which families might be sheltered for extended periods of time – and addressing any potential local government code requirements and insurance liabilities that accompany such support.
- Notifying local utilities, authorities and emergency responders of disaster victims among our congregants and community with needs beyond those Lewinsville and its members are equipped to provide, e.g., long-term shelter or medical treatment for injuries.
- Arranging the continuation of church operations and worship services in the event the church building is damaged and unusable.

In addition to these procedures, Session will maintain a list of Lewinsville volunteer Cluster Emergency Coordinators and Alternates to serve as points of contact when needed. The Emergency Coordinator list should be reviewed and updated as needed every two years.

These procedures do not cover the following situations for which other measures must be taken.

1. Providing first aid or administering life support to members or others while on church property. The church has on premises (in the Saint Andrews Hall kitchen) a heart defibrillator and duty elders/deacons have emergency responder contact information and procedures to follow in such instances.
2. Responding to criminal activity during which the lives of those on church property or church facilities may be threatened. Under such circumstances local law enforcement authorities should be notified immediately.

## **2. Scenario 1: Emergencies Affecting Members in their Residences**

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This section describes procedures to follow in the event of widespread and prolonged disruption of power and communications and/or physical damage to the homes of member and community residents.

**2.1 Step 1: Disaster damage assessment measures.** The first task of cluster Emergency Coordinators when a wide-spread disaster strikes our area - perhaps even before that disaster ends - is to conduct an assessment of the status and the safety of members of our immediate church family and also of our surrounding community. The following assessment steps should be followed:

1. ***Establish contact with all church members.*** Cluster Emergency Coordinators should work either out of their homes or the church depending on the circumstances immediately to determine the safety and well-being of church members. (Note: These procedures call for the identification of both Cluster Emergency Coordinators and Alternates given the likelihood that some volunteer emergency coordinators may not be available or able to perform their functions at the time of an emergency. See Annex A for cluster Emergency Coordinators' duties.)

In the event power and communications services are disrupted, emergency coordinators and/or their alternates should make personal visits to residences of members in their clusters to verify they are safe and to determine if they are in need of any short-term or medium term assistance from other church members or from local emergency relief services, particularly in cases of power outages during periods of extreme heat or cold.

This exercise will likely generate information as well about residents in the surrounding community in need of assistance. Lewinsville emergency coordinators are encouraged to respond individually to the needs of their neighbors as well as to consider whether and how the church could provide temporary relief or shelter until local government emergency support services can be contacted and arranged to help.

2. ***Inform relatives and local authorities of members' critical needs.*** Cluster emergency coordinators should establish contact, either directly in the absence of communications services – or via phone or internet - with church pastors and/or members selected to coordinate church-wide efforts to provide assistance to members in need. Of course, cluster Emergency Coordinators should not at any time jeopardize their own safety in carrying out these duties.

**2.2 Step 2: Emergency response measures.** Lewinsville has the facilities and resources to assist on a short-term basis members of our congregation and of our community in need of special assistance resulting from emergency disaster situations. In addition to cluster emergency coordinators, who will serve largely as a means of communication and coordination, the following procedures can be followed by the pastors, staff and members of other church groups such as the Parish Life and Care Ministry Group, to provide support for those affected by disasters or other emergency situations:

1. ***Coordinate support among Lewinsville members.*** In the event cluster emergency coordinators' assessments identify members in need of immediate assistance, coordinators can help affected members contact relatives, neighbors or other church members who can provide food or shelter and whatever else may be needed to assure their safety and security, e.g., lodging if places of residence are not habitable, food, means of communicating with family members if they are cut off from these services.
2. ***Coordinate the use of church facilities.*** In the event that church facilities are suitable – e.g., there is electric power, heat and running water, - etc., cluster emergency coordinators could communicate to church administration staff and Parish Life and Care members the needs of cluster members for shelter or other assistance.

**2.3 Issues to resolve – mobilizing volunteers and facilities usage.** The following are issues to be resolved before these procedures can be fully implemented:

- *General communications and coordination: Who should be responsible for serving as a point of contact or clearing house for sharing information collected on members' emergency status and needs? Or of the needs of residents in our community? Of coordinating with first responders and service utilities?*
- *Volunteer support: What volunteer support from members would be needed to oversee the welfare and security of those using our church facilities as a refuge? How would church emergency volunteers be identified, equipped and organized? What arrangements for calls for donated food, bedding, and clothing?*
- *Facilities usage: If necessary and appropriate, how should the church facilities be used as a temporary 'refuge' from heat or cold? Which parts of the church – sanctuary, Heritage Hall, Fellowship Hall and Kitchen, the Manse – can be configured to provide emergency shelter, feeding, and other? What capacity do these facilities have in terms of numbers of individuals who could be assisted?*

### **3. Scenario 2: Emergencies Affecting Church Facilities**

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This section outlines procedures to follow in the event that extensive damage to church buildings makes these facilities unusable for continuing church administrative or program functions and/or regular worship services.

**3.1 Preventive and preparatory measures.** Proper preventive maintenance will go a long way in reducing the risk of water or fire damage to church facilities. Advance arrangements for the use of alternative facilities will enable the conduct of church operations should extensive damage of facilities occur. Specific measures are:

1. ***Establish and implement a regular schedule for inspection of electrical, heating and alarm systems.*** The church administrator will present an annual preventive maintenance and inspection report to the chair of the Management Ministry Group including recommendations for any corrective measures identified in those inspections and during routine maintenance. The Management Ministry Group will act promptly to address any safety and hazard deficiencies that are identified.
2. ***Establish an emergency cooperation agreement (See Annex B) with LRR and or neighboring faith communities (e.g., churches of other denominations or synagogues) for the reciprocal provision of support in the event of damage that precludes usage of facilities for conducting administrative, program, or worship services.*** Session will task the Management Ministry Group to develop and put in place a cooperative agreement for reciprocal facilities use in the event of extensive damage that makes facilities of either institution unusable. Session will review and approve any reciprocal emergency support agreement prior to its entry into effect. Session will also instruct appropriate Lewinsville volunteer emergency coordinators and/or contact persons to obtain names of cooperating institutions' representatives; the church administrator will maintain this contact information on file with the cooperative agreement in Church office files. (Suggested draft wording for an emergency support agreement is contained in Annex B of these procedures. The annex details the nature of arrangements for participating institutions to come to each other's aid in the event that any of our facilities become unusable for the conduct of administrative, program or worship services.
3. ***Determine the cost and effectiveness of purchasing an independent electric power generation unit for running essential equipment of the church.*** Electric power generation units are expensive, which in tight budget times require careful consideration of allocating funds for their purchase and installation. Still, the Lewinsville Management Ministry Group should instruct the church administrator to prepare specifications for

procurement of an emergency back-up electric power generator that powers basic church lights and office equipment.

**3.2 Step 1: Disaster damage assessment.** In the event of extensive damage to church facilities:

1. The church administrator will immediately notify insurance and service contractors to obtain information needed to commence repairs and restoration. Guidance should be prepared for church administrator, pastors and MMG members in working with local authorities to determine which parts of the church are not usable or safe for church operations.
2. The church administrator will engage the Management Ministry Group and pastors in assessing the status of facilities and estimating costs of restoration.
3. The church administrative and program staff and MMG members will consult on what Lewinsville facilities – including the manse if it is still standing – could be used temporarily to make up for some of the space that must be temporarily abandoned for normal use.
4. The Management Ministry Group will propose to Session for approval any emergency arrangements for utilizing alternative facilities and for adopting alternative schedules for the conduct of church operations and worship services.

**3.3 Step 2: Emergency response measures.** In the event part or all of church facilities cannot be occupied or used for the conduct of normal church operations and worship services:

1. The Session should meet promptly to determine what existing emergency support agreements will become necessary to activate and, if it becomes necessary, instruct the MMG and church administrator to contact agreement counterpart churches (institutions) to arrange for needed assistance.
2. Should a situation arise in which other churches or institutions with which Lewinsville has emergency cooperation agreements require our church support, the Session should also meet with and consult with Pastors and Staff to determine what steps we need to take to provide that support.
3. The Church Administrative and relevant staff, along with any delegated emergency volunteers, will contact involved members of the church to inform them of alternative arrangements, schedules and locations for conducting church operations and worship services. (Note: In the event there is no access to the internet or voice communications, then church members should be contacted via their cluster emergency coordinators to share information regarding temporary alternative arrangements for church operations

and worship services. See Annex A for guidance on mobilizing cluster communications and support.)

4. The church Cluster emergency coordinators and/or alternates should contact church pastors or administrator via phone – or in person in the event communications services are not functioning and it is safe to move about – to obtain guidance to share with their respective cluster members on alternative arrangements for church operations and worship services. Each cluster emergency coordinator should mobilize its geographic Cluster members as they deem appropriate to maintain open communications in the event regular communications services are disrupted.

### **3.4 Alternative facilities**

To explore partnering together under a emergency reciprocal support agreement, MMG representatives have made initial explorations with board members of LRR and with the administrator of Immanuel Presbyterian Church. Each has expressed a willingness to meet and explore further possible mutual emergency support cooperative agreements. The Lewinsville Session has instructed that the MMG also explore these arrangements with Chesterbrook Residences, Inc. and with other faith communities in our area. (See Annex C).

MMG has also consulted the Church Administrator to determine the extent we could offer the use of Lewinsville facilities to other churches should they have a need for help in conducting their church operations and/or worship services. Annex B.2 contains a preliminary list of what services and support Lewinsville could provide to other congregations with short-term immediate emergency needs. Session approval will be requested for any emergency reciprocal support agreement involving Lewinsville Presbyterian Church.

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## **4. Community and Local Emergency Services**

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It is the policy of Lewinsville Presbyterian Church to provide needed support to members of its congregation and surrounding community until community and local government emergency support services can be provided or until individual family extended family members or neighbors can provide assistance. This section lists names and contact information of community and local emergency support and other services to be contacted depending on the nature and extent of the emergency and on the needs and safety of affected individuals.

This section should be reviewed annually by the MMG and updated as needed.

### **4.1 Fire Department**

Phone Number: 911

### **4.2 Medical and First Aid**

Phone Number: 911

### **4.3 Property Insurance contacts (Lewinsville Presbyterian Church only)**

Phone Number: TBD

### **4.4 Repair and restoration services**

Phone Number: TBD

### **4.5 Other**

Phone Number: TBD

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## **Annex A: Lewinsville Cluster Emergency Coordinators**

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### **A.1 The Lewinsville Cluster System**

Lewinsville's "Cluster" system groups members of the church by geographic proximity. The number of the cluster to which a church member belongs is included in parens ( ) below the member's telephone number in the church directory. The overall cluster system coordinator updates this list annually to include any new cluster leaders or to make other changes such as modifying geographic boundaries to encompass any new church members. The size and level of activity among clusters vary; some have been active social networks, others have coordinated meals delivery to members in need; some exist largely name only.

These emergency preparedness procedures involve using the cluster system for getting messages between the church its members by using cluster leaders as points of contact and dissemination. Cluster emergency coordinators will add a new dimension and purpose to the cluster system by collecting and channeling messages to/from cluster members and the church as regards their status and needs during any emergency or disaster situation. To the current list cluster contact persons, Session is instructing the cluster coordinator and Parish Life and Care to add volunteer cluster emergency coordinators who can be available and who have the capacity to respond to cluster members' needs for information or help during disaster situations.

### **A.2 Cluster Emergency Coordinator Support Duties**

In addition to being points of contact for any social or service activities among church members in their geographic areas, Cluster leaders and their alternates will be principal emergency points of contact for communications among their cluster group. Specifically, in the event of emergencies, cluster leaders/alternates may be called on to carry out communications and response functions that include but are not limited to the following:

1. Contacting each Lewinsville member in their cluster to assess their safety and needs status in the event of a disaster emergency situation. (Note: In the event there are widespread outages of power and communications, cluster leaders and their alternates may need to conduct assessments of their cluster members' welfare by visits directly to their places of residence.<sup>1</sup>) At time of assessments, the emergency situations of neighboring residents may also become apparent; cluster leaders should record these needs as well for attention by community and local emergency response services or by other Lewinsville member volunteers.

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<sup>1</sup> Many households use cordless phones which will not function with the loss of electric power even though phone service is not disrupted. As an emergency measure, cluster leaders in particular and households in general should have available a regular phone that can be plugged into a phone jack and used in such circumstances ... particularly given that cell phone and wireless services may also be disrupted.

2. Communicating their assessments of the safety status and emergency needs of church members to Lewinsville church emergency coordinators and to the church office. Assessments should be communicated to the church office even if there is no need for assistance so that Lewinsville staff and emergency volunteers are aware that all church members have been canvassed. (Note: In the event that power and communications are disrupted and to the extent that they can safely do so, cluster leaders should visit the church to submit their member emergency status assessments.)
3. Survey cluster members to determine who might have the capacity to provide emergency volunteer support and what kind of support (e.g. all-wheel drive vehicles, vans, space for sheltering) that Lewinsville might coordinate and mobilize to help its members and members of our immediate community.
4. Establish contact with Lewinsville (via phone and internet monitoring) to obtain information and guidance to share with their cluster members about any changes in church administrative or worship services that must be rescheduled or relocated because of emergency conditions. (Note: In the event of power outages and/or total communications black-outs, cluster leaders/alternates should make an effort to visit Lewinsville directly to ascertain circumstances of church operations and worship services and - as conditions allow them to do so safely and without major inconvenience - attempt to visit cluster households to share this information.)

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## **Annex B: Draft Emergency Reciprocal Support Agreement**

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### **B.1 Draft Reciprocal Support Agreement**

The following draft narrative may be modified and used by Session to prepare and negotiate a working agreement – a memorandum of understanding - with other churches or institutions (e.g., LRR or CRI) for temporary reciprocal and collaborative support in the event that there is an emergency situation in which the facilities of one institution become unusable to conduct either administration, program or worship services.

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Lewinsville Presbyterian Church

and

(Name of Partner Church or Institution)

Freely enter into this Agreement of Reciprocal Emergency Support (Agreement) to make available to each other their facilities for the conduct of program, administrative or worship services in the event that the facilities of either of our institutions become unusable due to damage from natural or other causes.

Specifically, both parties agree:

1. To activate the terms of this Agreement, either party should notify the other of its need for administrative, program, and or worship service facilities support, indicating the nature of that support, its scheduling and for what estimated time period and per the lists of reciprocal services and support appended to the Agreement.
2. Each party will make its facilities and support – as described in the Annex to this Agreement - available to the other party upon prior notification and in coordination with their respective commitments and schedules. Such facilities sharing can involve joint usage such as co-worship services or differentiated usage schedules for church services, meetings, events, administrative functions, day care, feeding, etc.
3. Either party may assess reasonable usage costs and fees for the use of its facilities. These fees might involve already established fees for outside use of meeting rooms and at-cost charges for communications or printing services and utilities. Any of these fees may be waived by mutual agreement of the parties to this Agreement.

4. Each party to this Agreement warrants that it has adequate liability and accident insurance that would cover it and the members and staff of the other party while on its premises.
5. This Agreement is developed in good faith by both parties and takes effect at the time it is approved by the governing bodies of both institutions.
6. Either party may unilaterally terminate this Agreement by written notification to the other party.

## B.2 Lewinsville Emergency Support Capacity

Based on agreement in consultation with the church administrator, pastors and Session, the following is a list of reciprocal emergency support that Lewinsville could agree to provide cooperating churches in the event they suffer facilities damage that disrupts their normal operations and worship services.

1. Use of Sanctuary – The Lewinsville Sanctuary is configured with 60 rows of pews, half on the lectern side and half on the pulpit side with the capacity of 10 per row or about 600 worshipers. Current services are held on Sundays at the 8:30 and 11:00 am hours. Several alternative arrangements for use of the Sanctuary could be made so as to accommodate the worshipers of another congregation. These arrangements include:
  - a. Consolidate Lewinsville’s worship services into one Sunday morning service, say at 9:30am, to schedule another congregation for Sunday morning worship, say at 11:00am.
  - b. Make the sanctuary available at alternative times during the day on Saturday or on Sunday afternoons.
  - c. Schedule the Chapel or Heritage Hall for small services of not more than 50 seated worshipers.

Of course, logistical coordination with other church members – e.g., as regards to parking – is necessary to assure that the needs of all worshipers are addressed.

2. Use of the Heritage Hall – Heritage Hall has three floors of divided space for meeting rooms, class rooms and offices in addition to a chapel and library. Some of these spaces have multiple use capacity not only for meetings and gatherings but also for conversion to temporary office space to support the needs of a cooperating church or institution. In circumstances where spaces are to be converted to temporary offices, cooperating churches would provide their furniture and equipment requirements and to share a portion of utilities costs. During weekdays, Lewinsville has sufficient parking capacity to accommodate the additional staff of cooperating churches or participants in meetings and events.
3. Use of Fellowship Hall and Kitchen – Lewinsville has a gathering space and a fully equipped institutional kitchen that could be utilized to support, say, a day-care service or a feeding center and where meals could be prepared for feeding on site or off site to individuals or groups in need.
4. Use of the Manse – Current programs conducted out of the manse could be suspended temporarily to provide emergency shelter for disaster victims or administrative space for the staff of other cooperating churches or institutions. The manse has running water and electricity for heating and cooling. It has kitchen and full bathroom space as well as four spaces that could be used for sleeping or for offices.

**Annex C: Session Approval of These Emergency Procedures**

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MOTION: That Session approves the Lewinsville Emergency Preparedness Procedures along with the following instructions to Lewinsville Ministry Groups for implementing preventive and preparedness measures described in these procedures. Specifically,

1. Session instructs the Parish Life and Care Ministry Group to work with the current Lewinsville cluster coordinator to expand the church cluster system to include volunteer emergency coordinators and alternates as points of contact for assessments, information sharing and other assistance in the event of widespread emergencies affecting the safety and wellbeing of our church members and of members of our community. As necessary, Parish Life and Care should undertake a redefinition of Cluster geographic areas to reflect current Lewinsville membership demographics.
2. Session instructs the Management Ministry Group to appoint one or more of its members to meet with the LRR and CRI boards and with representatives of neighboring Presbyterian and other faith communities to explore, and where appropriate draw up draft agreements for, reciprocal support in the event that extensive damage to any of our respective facilities is such that church operations or worship services must be conducted in an alternative location. Any reciprocal arrangements are to be reviewed and approved by Session before taking affect.
3. Session appoints the chairs of the Management Ministry Group and the Parish Life and Care Ministry Group to work with the church administrator to disseminate these emergency preparedness procedures and to coordinate in their implementation at Lewinsville.

Motion approved unanimously in regular session on June 10, 2014.

END+++++