



March 9, 2006

Dear Partner in Ministry,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! We are grateful for the excellent disaster response ministry being carried out over these last several months in response to Hurricane Katrina across the state of Mississippi. It has indeed taken us all in service to each other to bring help and hope to those who have been so severely impacted.

Due to the increased disaster response requirements in Mississippi it is deemed important that we have the capacity to meet the demands of this task. Lutheran Episcopal Services of Mississippi (LESM), the LDR affiliate for Mississippi, is a new organization growing in its capacity and mission and has been asked to 'gear up' at an incredible pace to assist in the response. We are concerned that the pace is impacting the effectiveness of the response and the mission of LESM as an organization.

In support of this concern, and wanting to allow the further development of LESM as a vital ministry of both the Episcopal and Lutheran church bodies, it has been determined that our direct disaster response ministry will be reassigned to another LDR affiliate, Lutheran Social Services of the South, thus ensuring a positive impact for LESM as an organization and the immediate disaster response required. This transition will take place on April 1, 2006. LESM remains an affiliate of LDR and our long-term goal is to build the competency and capacity of LESM to be able to manage an effective disaster response in the future.

Our Katrina Aid Today project, a national consortium of organizations serving Katrina evacuees and funded by the federal government, will remain a program and the responsibility of LESM – supported both by Lutheran Disaster Response and Episcopal Relief and Development.

On behalf of the two judicatories and LDR, we look forward to continuing our disaster response work in Mississippi and the emerging ministry of LESM! Please contact us if you have any questions or require additional information.

In Service,

The Rev. Ronald B. Warren
Bishop
ELCA Southeastern Synod

The Rt. Rev. Duncan Gray, III
IX Bishop of Mississippi
Episcopal Diocese of MS

Ms. Heather L. Feltman, DM
Executive Director
Lutheran Disaster Response