



Metropolitan New York Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

The Metropolitan New York Synod (MNYS) is one of 65 synods in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). We are a geographically diverse synod stretching across thirteen counties of New York from the tip of Long Island to the Catskill Mountains. Members of the Metropolitan New York Synod's nearly 200 congregations are worshipping God, helping friends and neighbors, celebrating diversity, feeding the hungry, working for justice, and advocating for peace. In all we do, we strive to reflect God's boundless love for all people. The MNYS has 69,125 baptized members in its 195 congregations. Many more are connected to the MNYS through our many social ministry partners.

Mission Statement

Marked with the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed, gathered and sent for the sake of the world.

Vision Statement

Claimed by God's grace for the sake of the world, we are a new creation through God's living Word by the power of the Holy Spirit;

Gathered by God's grace for the sake of the world, we will live among God's faithful people, hear God's Word and share Christ's supper;

Sent by God's grace for the sake of the world, we will proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, serve all people following the example of our Lord Jesus and strive for justice and peace in the world.

Superstorm Sandy

On October 29, 2012, through a historic confluence of weather conditions, Superstorm Sandy slammed into New York and New Jersey bringing high winds and a record storm surge that flooded beaches and coastal communities. All along the coast neighborhoods considered safe from ocean flooding suddenly found water rushing through the streets and into basements and first floors. In some areas homes were washed off their foundations by the force of water. High winds and waves knocked out power in some areas for several days.

In the immediate aftermath of the storm, rescue and recovery efforts were hindered by the inability to get fuel to areas. Where access was possible, lack of power meant the fuel could not be pumped into vehicles and containers. Not long after Sandy, the area experienced a nor'easter that brought more water and added to the damage.

In the Metro New York Synod, five congregations were flooded by the storm surge. Other churches found damaged roofs and downed trees. Damages to church properties came to nearly one million dollars.

Local groups have been instrumental and invaluable in the first phase of clean-up. Donations of time and hard work, food and funds have been shared all along storm-ravaged areas. Groups from outside the area, eager to help, have been coordinating mission trips to assist in the rebuilding phase. As the work of recovery continues, our synod has worked with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to organize volunteer host sites for visiting groups of ten to fifty workers at various sites in the MNYS territory.

The following pages provide a brief outline of what mission groups can offer to the New York disaster recovery effort and what they can expect from a trip to the Metro New York Synod. The last page is a checklist for preparing your trip.

We welcome you to New York and thank you for your assistance!

MISSION GROUPS

Mission groups are made up of men and women representing various congregations who volunteer to come to the Metro New York Synod to offer their time, talent and skill to help in the clearing, restoring, and rebuilding efforts. Host sites can house up to fifty volunteer group members at a time, depending on the site. Ordinarily groups will arrive on Sunday afternoon and leave on the following Saturday morning. Groups may be scheduled to share facilities in order to bring the number closer to capacity. Normally, group members must be 18 years of age or older. For every group of five members under the age of 19, there must be at least one adult supervisor of at least 25 years of age. (Some host sites or work site managers might have more stringent requirements.)

It is important to understand that mission groups are not employees, agents or representatives of the Metro New York Synod and the synod is not responsible for the activities or conduct of the mission groups or their members. In this endeavor, the synod is functioning only in the capacity of a host for the residency needs and not as a sponsor, supervisor, or director of any group's activities with any particular project or work site.

WHAT WILL A MISSION GROUP DO?

There are several governmental and charitable organizations involved in recovery and restoration projects in the Metro New York Synod area. There is a great need for volunteer workers. Our synod is communicating with Long-Term Recovery Groups and other organizations such as FEMA, New York Cares, World Cares Center, Long Island Volunteer Center and others to identify particular needs in the community and works sites for groups.

It is anticipated that groups will be matched by these organizations with specific projects according to the skill level of the group members, the tools and equipment the group can bring with them, and the needs of the particular project site supported by the participating organization. The group would then work on the identified project(s).

Groups may supply their own tools and equipment at their own risk and responsibility. In general, the supervising organization will be responsible to provide tools and training to the mission groups. Groups may bring construction materials relative to the project they are assigned to accomplish, but it is generally anticipated that these will be provided by the organizing agency or property owner at the site.

The following list represents the types of work or projects that may be done:

- Working in relief agencies such as soup kitchens, relief supply receiving, packaging, and reshipping;
- Working with other agencies or groups already involved with projects;
- Debris removal;

- Demolition of interior or exterior of buildings;
- Roofing (temporary or permanent);
- Painting;
- Building repairs, such as porches, steps, ramps, carports, walls, floors, etc.;
- New building construction.

NOTE: It is important that no group or member of any group attempt to engage in any activity for which a skilled license is required by state or local governments, e.g., plumbing or electrical work, including HVAC, without first having obtained and produced such a license. Groups and group members should perform only such work as they are assigned by the work site supervisor.

WHERE WILL YOU STAY

Sleeping areas are provided in church facilities. In some cases, showers are located in the same building as sleeping quarters. Many sites, however, do not have showers but have arranged with a nearby YMCA or health club to use their showers. All housing sites have kitchen facilities including refrigerators, stoves, and space to keep non-perishable items. Most sites will provide some essential items in the pantry. Generally, mission groups are responsible for most meals and for any special dietary needs.

Mission groups will usually pay from \$15 to \$30 per person, per night, depending on what amenities the host site provides. This fee is payable on the day of arrival at the host site. Some host facilities might also ask for a deposit of up to \$50. Host sites will contact mission groups to provide specific details of their facilities.

The host site may host one or more meals during a group's stay. Information on these invitations will be shared prior to a group's visit. Groups may also elect to dine at the variety of restaurants available in the vicinity of the host site or work site. A directory of local restaurants will be provided by the host site upon arrival.

Mission groups generally work from Monday through Friday, 9:00am to 3:00pm, including a lunch break (exclusive of travel time). This schedule may be flexible according to the needs of the site and the wishes of the volunteers. Taking an afternoon off for sightseeing or other recreation is encouraged. Each host site will have recommendations for activities in its area as well as for New York City.

Volunteer host sites will usually offer:

- Sleeping and toilet facilities for men and women;
- Shower facilities for men and women on site or within ten minutes of the host site;
- Kitchen and dining facilities;
- Close proximity to a local laundromat;

- Many local restaurants and entertainment venues within walking/easy driving distance;
- Parking for cars and vans.

They may also offer:

- Internet access;
- Television;
- Bedding;
- Some or all meals.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE COMING TO METRO NEW YORK SYNOD

- In general, group members must be 18 years of age or older with at least one adult over the age of 25 for every five group members under the age of 19. (*Some organizations may take volunteers under the age of 18.*)
- Groups must supply their own transportation to and from Metro New York Synod and the project site(s).
- All mission group members must agree to participate fully in the projects that are planned as well as in the mission group's activities and responsibilities.
- The possession or use of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs is prohibited on host site properties without express permission from the host site. Any mission group participant failing to comply with these policies will be sent home immediately at either the sponsoring group's or participant's family expense.
- Groups and their members engage in activities at their own risk so it is important to carefully assess the capabilities of each group member. Training and safety procedures are the responsibility of the mission group.
- Temperatures in metro New York range from 100 degrees during the summer to 0 degrees in winter months. Groups should bring appropriate clothing, bedding, etc. for the season.
- Groups may supply their tools, equipment, and construction materials at their own risk and responsibility, but we do not require it.
- Groups are responsible for their own first aid.
- It is expected that the host site will be left in clean and neat condition when a group leaves.
- Each group will receive a contact from a host site team member before its visit. Questions may be directed to the Disaster Response Coordinator of the synod.

THINGS TO DO BEFORE COMING TO METRO NEW YORK SYNOD

- Recruit and organize your group.
- Identify and appoint a group leader, a contact person, a kitchen/meal person, and an adult supervisor(s).
- Determine the dates your group should come.
- Call the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance call center, (866) 732-6121, to schedule your group. These dates will be dependent upon the availability of an appropriate Host Site. ([PDA Volunteer group opportunities website](#))
- Honestly assess the capabilities of each member of the group and of the group as a whole.
- Complete the following forms (provided by host site)
 - Individual Skill Sheet (required of all volunteers)
 - Medical Information and Authorization Form (required of all volunteers)
 - Participant Liability Release (required of all volunteers)
 - Parental Release and Consent (for volunteers under 18 year of age)
 - Group Roster and Skills Sheet
 - Sponsoring Organization Waiver of Liability
- Provide a Certificate of Insurance from the group's sponsoring organization naming the host site, its officers, agents and employees as additional insured.
- One month prior to the arrival date send completed forms and any deposit monies to the host site.
- Assemble a well-stocked, commercial grade, first aid kit. Consider tetanus shots for team members.

PERSONAL PACKING LIST

- | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Good quality work shoes, preferably with steel toes. | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal medications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good quality work gloves. | <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping bag or linens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dust masks. | <input type="checkbox"/> Pillows |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety goggles. | <input type="checkbox"/> Towel and washcloth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy pants. | <input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Long sleeve shirts (layers advisable) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitizer or towelettes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insect repellent. | <input type="checkbox"/> Shower shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sun screen. | <input type="checkbox"/> Cash, travelers checks, debit or credit cards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hat | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal toiletry items | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid kit | |