

Pastoral Resilience Support

PDA recognizes, along with much of the disaster-response community, that there are phases of response to and recovery from a disaster, and that different actions are needed at different points in the process of restoration to well-being. In much the same way, PDA is aware of clergy who are seeking to sustain ministry in an affected community as they themselves are working out their own journey as survivors. What PDA has learned is that clergy experience different needs at different points.

To sustain their own resilience, clergy may need to focus on relaxation, self-reflection, and respite; or the greater need may be for reflection, analysis, and planning. There may be some clergy who experience difficulty integrating the disaster experience into their life and ministry. At this point in the recovery a more structured program that includes reflection, analysis and planning can be helpful.

Recognizing the need to be flexible, PDA offers the following for Pastoral Resilience Support.

Relaxation, Self-Reflection, and Respite

After a disaster; relaxation, self-reflection, and respite can be very helpful for faith leaders to find the space for renewing their strength to manage the demands of ministry in a disaster context. This time is not intended to be simply a vacation but is intended to support faith leaders as they find renewal and foster their resilience.

PDA can offer grants of \$1,000 per clergy person per disaster, or a total of \$5,000 per Middle Governing Body per disaster for this purpose. The procedure for this grant is that clergy communicate their need for respite to the middle governing body, and if the middle governing body confirms this request, the appropriate leadership forwards it to the Associate for Disaster Response (jim.kirk@pcusa.org or 502-438-5161).

The Middle Governing Body is encouraged to fund pulpit supply if needed during a pastor's respite time. Within a year of receiving the grant the grantee will be asked to provide a summary of how the funds were used. PDA asks that names of clergy not be included in the summary.

Reflection, Analysis and Planning

PDA has found that the majority of clergy will return to normal functioning through care from their established support network. There are some clergy who will find additional support helpful.

PDA will offer financial support for clergy to participate in events that offer time for reflection, analysis and planning. Ordinarily, these events take place at a center that specializes in working with clergy.

The middle governing body is asked to make a written request for each clergy person interested in this opportunity. Each request should include the specific program of interest. All requests need to be pre-approved by the Associate for Disaster Response (jim.kirk@pcusa.org). PDA will cover the cost of the event, transportation, meals and related expenses up to \$5,000 per pastor per disaster.

This grant requires an expense reimbursement form be submitted to the PDA program associate.

The clergy person and/or middle governing body are welcome to seek consultation with PDA staff or team members in the development of these plans.