CARR FIRE AND A CALL TO ACTION

St. James Lutheran Church in Redding, CA, played a significant role during the devastating Carr Fire last July and August. Over 1,000 homes were lost, and St. James hosted displaced families and provided children’s activities for families staying in the Red Cross shelters.

Now St. James is responding again, partnering with the Church of the Brethren to train people in caring for displaced children through the Brethren’s Children’s Disaster Service. In this program trained volunteers, when called upon, will respond to Red Cross Shelters, bringing with them various children’s activities designed to allow children to give expression to their feelings. A training is scheduled for March 1-2, 2019. St. James hopes to train at least 40 volunteers from its own congregation, and perhaps some from yours!

Retired Pastor Bob Grosch works as a mental health specialist in Red Cross disaster shelters and notes that, despite the best intentions of the Red Cross, children’s emotional needs often can be easily overlooked. Shelters are not child friendly atmospheres, and parents are often preoccupied with the many tasks needed for the family to recover when they have lost their home to a disaster. Pr. Grosch says, “When a child loses his/her home the trauma is increased as they observe their parents’ trauma and difficulties in reestablishing a home for the family.”

St. James is extending the invitation for this training to congregations throughout the Sierra Pacific Synod. If any Church Together readers wish to consider attending this training they can contact Katie Swartz.
“This is a real gift to the Red Cross and to the children,” says Pr. Grosch. “We will have available to us locally trained volunteers we can call upon to enrich the shelter experience for our little ones.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: While Church Together readers have our glad permission to reprint stories in their congregations’ electronic and print communications, we especially encourage congregations to share this article and its invitation as broadly as possible. Thank you for your partnership.

Do you have a story that you would like to share? Send any Church Together story requests to mic@spselca.org.