

Bethel UMC Hazardous Weather Guide

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for decisions the Pastor and leaders of Bethel UMC may need to make concerning the canceling of church activities in those situations where hazardous weather is a possibility. This guidance should in no way be interpreted to replace the wisdom and common sense of our leaders and with the understanding that the best course of action in any situation is a case-by-case decision made based on the specific circumstances of a given event. Also, members and friends of Bethel UMC should always be mindful that a decision by the church leadership to not cancel an event should not be seen as an expectation by the church that attendance at an event is required. It is understood and expected that individuals must make decisions on attendance at an event by them and their family based on their individual safety concerns and situation.

When considering whether the possibility of hazardous weather may call for the cancellation of a church event or activity, the church leaders should consider the following;

- The Pastor should contact the Lay Leader and the Chair of the Church Council the day before a scheduled activity that might be affected by hazardous weather.
- Church leaders should discuss the situation and consider whether it is advisable that the activity should be canceled. Factors to consider include:
 - The type of weather predicted (hurricane, snow, etc.)
 - The probability that the hazardous weather could affect the scheduled activity, including the timing of the hazardous weather vs. the activity
 - The possible magnitude of the hazardous weather (wind severity, amount of frozen precipitation, etc.)
 - The likelihood of power interruptions
 - Advisories from state or local officials concerning avoiding travel
- Based on the available information, church leaders should make a decision to either cancel (or partially cancel or delay) the event, not cancel the event, or delay a decision on canceling the upcoming event.
- If the initial determination is to delay the decision, the leaders should agree on a time as early as possible when a final decision will be made.
- If the decision was delayed, the leaders should communicate by the determined time and make a final decision on cancellation (or delay).
- If the decision is made not to cancel the event, the Council Chair will notify the church web master to post an appropriate message on the church web site indicating that the event is planned as scheduled but that people should make a decision on whether or not to attend based on their safety concerns and weather conditions in their area. No other notification is necessary as the normal assumption will be that events will occur as planned unless notice of cancellation is provided.
- If the decision is made to cancel the event in question, the Lay Leader and Council Chair will initiate notification of members and friends of the church through a phone chain.
- The Council Chair will notify the web master to post an appropriate message on the church web site with the details of the cancellation (which events affected, etc.).
- If Sunday morning services are affected, the Lay Leader will contact the pianist and any others involved in the morning worship service that need to be notified. The Council Chair will notify the Sunday School Superintendent.
- The Council Chair, as necessary, will contact the Chair of the Trustees to discuss what measures might be necessary to secure the church property from possible damage.
- If the decision is made not to cancel an event, but the possibility exists for some manageable hazard (such as minor icing of walks, etc.), the Council Chair will contact the Chair of the Trustees to discuss possible measures to mitigate any hazards (such as salting of walks, etc.).