



July 1, 2018

## Resource: How churches can help in extreme heat situations

When summer is here, it is important to remember the dangers of extreme heat. Heat can be deadly and community action really can save lives.

Extreme heat kills more people every year than hurricanes, lightning, tornadoes, earthquakes, and floods *combined*. People who are young, or elderly, or ill are particularly vulnerable because their bodies are less able to maintain a consistent temperature.

Heat impacts do not land evenly, and community cooling centers can be as important for reducing summer isolation as they are for cooling off. Human connection, heat plans, and check-in calls save lives.

Here are some ACTIONS you and your church can take:

- Prepare for heat waves by planning a cooling center or a cooling party. Think about how to get the word out, and how to get people there so they're not isolated.
- Create a plan for hot-day check-in calls.
- Think about outdoor workers and people without consistent shelter. Can your church bring them dispensers full of cold water to refill bottles?
- Check out the [CDC's guidebook](#) \* on heat. Pages 16-17 *Being Prepared Before the Heat* and page 18 *Resources for Developing Extreme Heat Programs* are terrific resources.
- Use air conditioners to stay safe and healthy but use only what you need. Try fans, community cooling, use your curtains, and change your cooking habits. Teach friends to do the same.

\* <https://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/pubs/extreme-heat-guidebook.pdf>

## Independence Day—Are We Really “Free”?

The Fourth of July is a day we celebrate each year with much fanfare. We celebrate that day in 1776 when the signing of the Declaration of Independence told the world that we were separate now from Great Britain and we were building a country with a Declaration that stated unequivocally “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness”

In 1776 we, as a nation, celebrated that victory, a victory won on the back of thousands of men who gave their lives for our freedom. Yes, it is true, each year we hold the backyard picnic, and watch the fireworks in honor of that victory and our freedom, but I question if we really have the right to celebrate anymore.

What would those brave men, years ago, think of us today? A nation, free from Britain yes, but still bound. Bound by the terror and violence in our streets, the hatred in our hearts, the division in our lands? What would they think of the fact that we allowed people, coming to this land for a better life, to be separated from their children? What would they think of the school shootings and the gun violence in our streets? What would they think about the fact that we are still fighting over what they fought so hard for: “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights”? Why is it, over 200 years later we are still struggling to see the person beside us who may have a different skin color, a different political opinion, a spouse of the same gender, the list goes on....as our equal?

When our forefathers built this country, they did so with a strong believe in GOD! It is on the currency, in our pledge, in our Declaration, it was a vital piece of our country's foundation. Today we see prayer banned in schools, sporting events on Sunday morning, the breakdown of religion being a part of family life.

Perhaps this year, as we celebrate July 4<sup>th</sup>, we should do so in prayer. A prayer for this nation, for ourselves. Perhaps this year we should remember those men who gave their lives, and pledge to do better. Perhaps we should promise ourselves and pray to God to help us be more understanding to the person who is different than our self. Perhaps we should fight and yell as loud as the Atheists that prayer IS needed in school, God IS needed in our lives because what we are doing now, isn't working!

As my pastor often says, “May it be so”!

- Susan Creswell, PSEC Executive Assistant