



Seven Minutes

July 10, 2019

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In seven minutes, I can cook an egg. I can drive to my daughter's house or take a shower in seven minutes. In seven minutes, I can work with Chris Halverson to sort through the Presbytery mail...even now, when we're in the season of taking orders for Planning Calendars. There are a lot of mundane things that only take me seven minutes.

Next week, I'll take 7 Minute training. It lasts four hours... Yeah, that's what I thought, too.

Rev. Catherine Neal and I will join other faith leaders from around the area at an event sponsored by the Milwaukee Jewish Federation. The "First 7 Minutes" seminar teaches people about "mass casualty incidents" or MCIs, and it trains ordinary people on how to save lives. According to the promotional information, the seminar "capitalizes on basic steps that any person can take to save lives. This training empowers the community and enables people to save lives in an MCI."

Trainers are experienced paramedics and related professionals with experience in such incidents. The training includes study, discussion, and a drill. Catherine and I will learn the seven guidelines that can help anyone face the first seven minutes of a crisis:

- Safety
- Call for help
- Use your additional resources
- Prioritize
- Treat
- Report
- Assist EMS

which guidelines are probably not known by their acronym "SCUPTRA."

I hate that there are things called "mass casualty incidents," and I hate that they potentially affect our congregations. I hate that MCI's are regularly caused by deranged and fear-filled people with automatic weapons. I hate that in the time it takes to boil an egg or take a shower, we have a window to save lives...or not. But, I'm grateful to the Milwaukee Jewish Federation for opening this training to all faith leaders in the area—the first place this particular training is being offered anywhere in the nation.

Catherine Neal is part of the Disaster Preparedness and Response Task Force of the Presbytery, under the leadership of Moderator Marilyn Stone. The task force is drawing on and supplementing their skills and experience in disaster response to help us be better prepared. As they reach out to your congregation, I hope you will take accept their offer to assess your readiness for a disaster. Save November 2 for a Presbytery-wide conference on disaster response.

I pray to God we'll never need to use our First 7 Minute training. I give thanks to God that the training is available to us before we need it.