



Outreach Ideas
English District
Evangelism Team
Newsletter

August 2023

Outreach to Our Military

Several years ago, an article which appeared in the *Lutheran Witness* reminded us how, “The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod has a proud heritage of providing Christian witness and nurture to the soldiers and sailors who serve their country in war and peace. It’s a tradition almost as old as the Synod, dating to the first chaplain, Rev. Friedrich Wilhelm Richmann, who ministered with the 58th Regiment of the Ohio Volunteers during the Civil War.” (*The Lutheran Witness*, Vol. 126, No. 7)

Reaching out to the men and women of our Armed Forces is an important part of our witness and outreach. Many of the men and women serving now in our nation’s Armed Forces are from our congregations across the District. We also have many who have retired and are now living in our communities.

Here’s an interesting insight that brings into focus what all this means. In the *Witnessing to New Veterans* module of *Every One His Witness*, the observation is shared that between 30 and 40 percent of our members are serving, or have served, in the military. When it comes to how many members in a congregation have had family members serve in the military that number rises to 80 to 90 percent. When asked how many members have had close friends serve in the military, that number rises to

almost 100 percent. With these numbers in mind the conclusion made is that “There is great opportunity for someone who is not a veteran to minister and care for a veteran.”

We are blessed to have congregations located in close proximity to a number of Armed Forces bases around the nation. Our English District is also blessed with a number of chaplains.



With this in mind, Rev. Rod Buck, the Dean of Military Chaplains (DMC) for Lutheran Church–Canada, notes in *The Canadian Lutheran*, “If your pastor happens to be a Reserve Military Chaplain, encourage him in that task. Talk to him about it to determine how you might be able to support him. If you have a military chaplain and their family posted to a nearby Base and who is attending your parish, make them feel welcome and help them to be involved. Take time to care for their family who, in

the event of a deployment, will be undergoing all kinds of stress.” (Interview with Rev. Rod Buck, *The Canadian Lutheran*, August 30, 2021)

Here’s a great opportunity for outreach and to witness to those who have served and those who are serving in our nation in the Armed Forces.

From The Field

From our Pastors and Congregations

Toolbox

Ideas, Suggestions and Handy Bits

A common theme that comes up from our Pastors who have served in the military, and those who serve congregations with outreach to the military, is this: “Be friendly.”

What should we do when a military family comes through our door at church? As Dr. Michael Morehouse, of Catalina Lutheran Church in Tucson, Arizona notes, “Talk with them!” He gives hearty encouragement. His advice, if your congregation is thinking of something that they might do for the soldiers on base, is “Do it.”

Pastor Bob Bruggeman, and the members of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Mesquite, Nevada, make it a point to share a warm welcome to military families coming through their door both before and after the service. Think of how easy it is for all of us to get talking to our circle of friends after church but overlook these new faces in our midst. Here’s a great opportunity to bring them into the conversation and make them feel at home.

In addition, he reminds us that not every soldier is able to return home to be with family at the holidays. Consider talking with the base Chaplain and discover if there is anyone who would appreciate an invitation to Thanksgiving Dinner.



[Warning Order: Operation Barnabas.](#)

Alicia Hinton, Administrative Coordinator Office of International Mission (OIM) Ministry to the Armed Forces (MAF), remembered those invitations to worship that came “word-of-mouth from someone I knew who was attending that church.” She also noted, “If you show military members that their relationship with the church will continue even after they move, I believe that would be huge for connecting with military members.”



LCMS Ministry To The Armed Forces has a terrific collection of On-Hand Resources which you can order for your congregation and share with your military families. Contact [Alicia Hinton](#)

- In addition to providing care to our Reserve Chaplains and their families, LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces’ *Operation Barnabas* also trains and assists local congregations in the care, support and outreach to all military connected people in their congregations and their communities. This is especially useful for our congregations situated next to our bases. Congregations can also find information on how to create an Operation Barnabas chapter.



- Consider having a landing page specifically created for the soldiers arriving at the base near your church. As well as introducing the men and women of the Armed Forces to your congregation, a page like this can provide useful links. These may include links to the chamber of commerce, area schools, medical facilities, and even tourist information for nearby sites and activities. This page can also describe the different resources and activities that young families ask about, such as a detailed description of your Catechism and Confirmation Instruction, your Sunday School program and Youth Group, and your Adult Instruction program. For Grace Lutheran Church, outside Fort Knox, Kentucky, this was one of the most frequently visited pages on their site. In a number of cases, soldiers stationed overseas were also able to listen online to the same sermons their families heard at home.

- Include visiting military families from your nearby base on your congregation’s Photo Board. Even if they are only going to be with you for a short time, it gives folks an opportunity to learn their names and greet them on Sunday mornings.
- Looking for worship resources for Armed Forces Sunday, Veterans' Day, and more? Check out the [LCMS MAF website](#) for [downloadable resources](#) including Bulletin Inserts, Sermon Resources, Responsive Prayers and more.



- Share a video in church from the [LCMS MAF collection on YouTube](#) such as “[Armed Forces Chaplains talk about their unique ministry](#)” with Rev. Michael Frese, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, IN.

- You can enroll the active servicemen and women of your congregation in our LCMS Ministry-by-Mail program. They will receive an initial packet when their name is submitted, and they will regularly receive copies of *Portals of Prayer* along with *So Help Me God*, a quarterly newsletter from the LCMS.



- Do you have a member who is departing for service in the Armed Forces? Download this rite to bid them Farewell and Godspeed in the service.

- Those Who Serve* and *Those Who Support* are two prayer guides that are available from Lutheran Hour Ministries. You can order paper copies from LCMS MAF. *Those Who Serve* and *Those Who Support* are also available from LHM as free downloadable PDFs.



LHM also has a number of good tracts to include in your brochure display. These include *The Conflict at Home: Soldiers Confronting PTSD*.

- “Adopt-a-Chap” is an opportunity for congregations to directly connect with or “adopt” our Synod’s Armed Forces chaplains, active and reserve. It is a program that links congregations with chaplains to promote mutual support and growth.
- Care Package Instructions — A simple care package helps our chaplains reach out to our men and women in uniform. Using everyday items, chaplains can build relationships to spiritually support our servicemen and women. Here’s a list of “many things that are sent that are appreciated and some things that are difficult to give away.”
- Is your congregation looking for an opportunity to recognize, and give thanks, for your veterans’ service? Here is a downloadable LCMS Veteran Certificate which you can print for presentation.

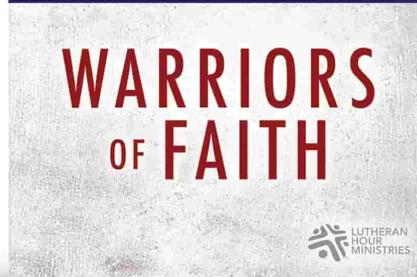
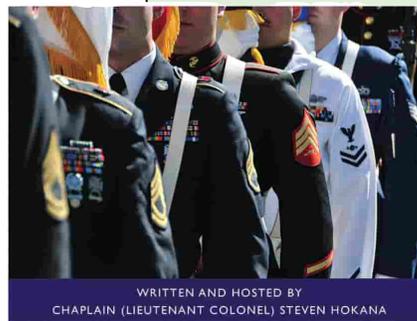
- The Military BibleStick is a small, matte-black, weather-resistant digital audio player designed expressly for the safety of deployed troops. They are produced by Faith Comes By Hearing. Each Stick comes pre-loaded with the New Testament and the Psalms. You can order them here for the active members of the Armed Forces in your congregation.



WARRIORS OF FAITH

Service members of the United States Armed Forces are met with challenges on and off the battlefield. Warriors of Faith – Military Men, a Men's NetWork Bible study written especially for these servicemen and women, explores the issues of anger, grief, guilt, forgiveness and love, as they impact the lives of those who have served, or are now serving, their country.

Written by Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Steven Hokana, this multi-part study is an effective ministry resource geared toward those returning home from a tour of duty and who are struggling with the rawness of war. During five video sessions Hokana speaks in the language of his fellow warriors, sharing the insights and perspectives he's won from a 28-year career in the U.S. Army. His message is to the point, upbeat and heartfelt. He reminds each warrior of faith that as a child of God, he or she is called into a vocation and that no matter what life throws at them, there is everlasting hope in Jesus.



You can download these videos and use this presentation in your congregation. Advertising posters and print resources are also available. Here’s a free resource and tremendous opportunity for outreach. You can advertise it in the community and on base.

Our Synod and District Programs

Materials and Workshops Available For You
(Do you have a workshop scheduled? Let us know.)

Articles, Books and Research

Current Research and Writings



Witnessing to New Veterans

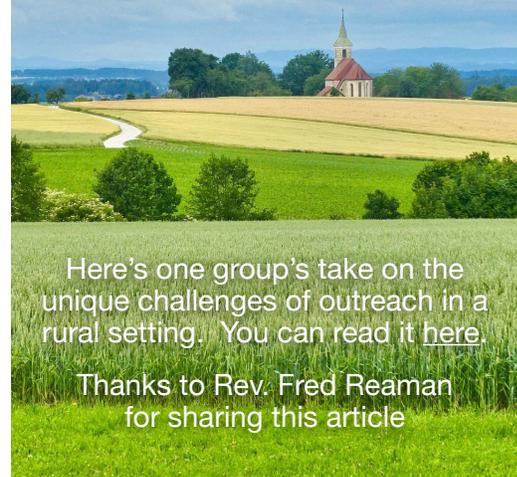


Nearly 200,000 service members transition from the military back into civilian life each year, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. This transition is an opportunity to welcome these men and women into Christian fellowship. Using the LASSIE approach to witnessing, you'll learn how to speak God's Truth to your friend, neighbor or family member as he or she transitions from the military back into our communities.

Click here to watch a [Preview](#) of this module

Every One His Witness video modules and other resources are available at no cost to anyone who is interested. To get a free access code, please email support@everyonehiswitness.org If you already have a subscription, you may continue using the program with your current credentials at no additional charge.

From Planting Corn to Planting Churches Cultivating the "Back 40"



Here's one group's take on the unique challenges of outreach in a rural setting. You can read it [here](#).

Thanks to Rev. Fred Reaman for sharing this article



What LCMS Members Believe About Evangelism

Many of you may have received a copy of the results of the [Lutheran Religious Life Survey: What LCMS Members Believe About Evangelism](#). It states, "It is produced independently of the LCMS or any LCMS institution" and "Views expressed in this study are solely those of the author." If you participated in the study you will want to see the results. If you have received and read the report you're invited to share your thoughts.

Hats off to Rev. Derek Mathers and Rev. Fred Reaman for passing it along.

Coming Topics

- Inviting Traveling Teams
- Podcasting, Easy and Cheap
- Lawn Displays and Signs
- News Releases instead of Ads
- ... and much more

Next Month

Importance of a Web Page

Please Contact

[Pastor David Tannahill](#) of our Evangelism Team with your ideas and input.

Share details of what has worked for you for upcoming editions.

I look forward to hearing from you.