

# WARNING ORDER:

## OPERATION BARNABAS

OCTOBER 2024

### OPERATION BARNABAS

Operation Barnabas is the LCMS' network of care to our nation's military members, families and veterans. We reach out to all branches of the military with a special emphasis on our Reserve members and their families.

#### COL. 1:21–22

*And you, who once were alienated  
and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,  
He has now reconciled in His body of  
flesh by His death, in order to present  
you holy and blameless and above  
reproach before Him.*



Photo: Air Force 2nd Lt. Benjamin Williams

## “A REMINDER OF THE OBVIOUS!”

CH (LTC) Steven Hokana, USA (Ret)

Here is a reminder of the obvious.

Who is doing all the activity? Who is doing the reconciling? Who presents you as holy and blameless before God? Not just on the Day of Judgment, but right now, or when you go through challenging times, or when life is not going your way. It is the Lord Jesus.

There was a moment in my life where this was driven home to me, a moment where I was saved not by my actions and activity, but by someone who knew the plan and knew what to do.

I was on a military aircraft flying to Jordan. This big beast is called a C-17 Globemaster III. It is specifically designed to carry a massive amount of stuff at great speeds. Despite its size, it can land on what are called “unimproved runways,” such as an asphalt road, a gravel road, or a level piece of dirt anywhere in the world. The interior of the aircraft is cavernous — it looks like a bowling alley it is so huge.

The plane I was on was traveling from a secret base. (Except this “secret base” was featured by name and location in a *Transformers* movie — Ali As Aleem Airbase, Kuwait.) The passengers on this flight were just a couple of Army “Joes” (me and my Religious Support Specialist). The cargo, however, was four monster diesel generators that were crowded into the hold of the C-17.

There are no preflight announcements. No discourse about emergency exits, oxygen mask issues, wearing a life vest. There was no free drink and bag

“ *He has now reconciled  
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above reproach before Him.* ”

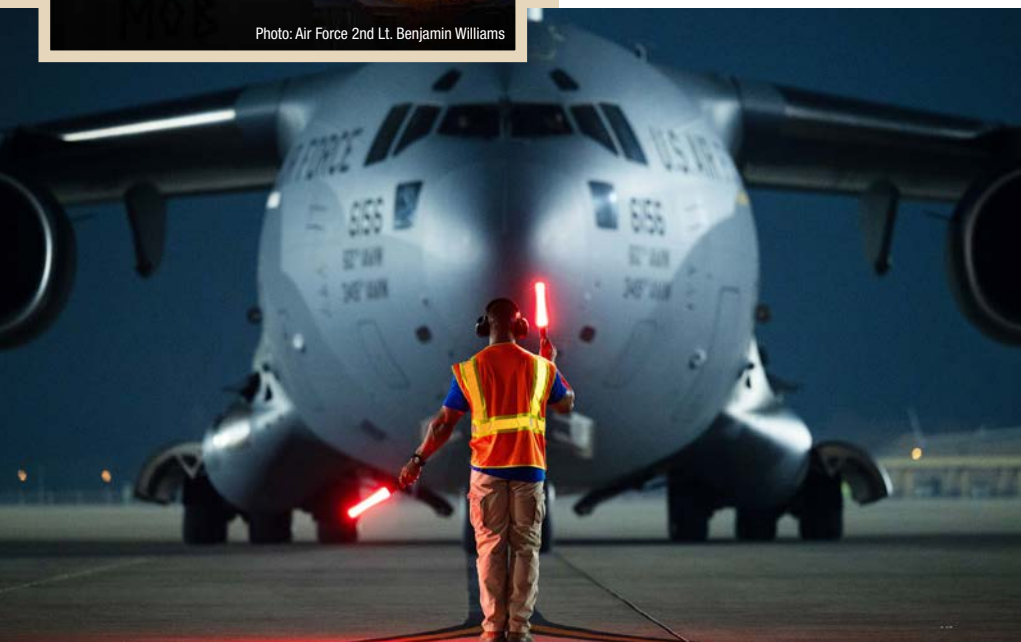


Photo: Air Force



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# REPORTS

## J-1 Personnel

Roll Call: Gather names and record attendance of members. A time to get to know each other.

## J-2 Intelligence

Gather and share information. Provide a report on local units and their deployment schedule; also provide contact information for local military contacts upon request. Identify and assess what is going on in the community concerning veterans and their families.

## J-3 Operations and Training

Develop a plan. Draft a listing of possible chapter activities, including veterans celebrations, presentations (as desired and available); develop a strategy to expand outreach into the community. Identify and assign tasks to specific people that include standards and timeframes.

## J-4 Logistics

Identify and provide materials for meetings, such as coffee, refreshments, etc., to support the plan.

## J-6 Communication

Develop communication strategies to support the plan. Place internal announcements (newsletter/bulletins) as well as provide articles for the local paper.

(continued from p. 1)

of pretzels unless you brought your own. You strap yourself in. You sit on cargo-strap-webbed benches and relax. We took off like a rocket and all seemed to be going well. But after cruising along for a while, various alarms started going off. This was not my first rodeo when it came to aircraft issues while in flight. The last time this happened, however, I was wearing a parachute. So I had options. This time, no parachute. No options.

We started to drop altitude quickly. Since there were no windows, we really didn't know how high we were or how far the aircraft had dropped. Concern mounted when out of nowhere oxygen masks dropped down on us. First, the din of obnoxious alarms, and now oxygen masks. Soon the crew chief, a young, bean-pole thin man with a mustache, came out of the cockpit area. He told us three things. This high-speed aircraft was having problems, we will be landing sooner than expected, and the oxygen masks don't work anyway. Then he left.

My Religious Support Specialist and I sat next to each other staring at the large generators and processing what the crew chief just told us, not quite sure what to say or think. We were helpless. We were aliens in a strange land, or rather, in a strange airplane. Though we were treated well by the Air Force, we were in their world. So, we did what any soldier would do ... we both fell asleep. We later woke up and headed on to our mission in Jordan.

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him. (COL. 1:21-22)

Paul's words here apply to the church in Colossae as well as our church today. We were once aliens in a foreign land, but now, in Christ, we hear the wonderful sweetness of the Gospel message: we are reconciled to Him. Paul describes the central theme of the cross and the "how" of reconciliation: "He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death." Paul goes on to

describe the incredible and beautiful result of this reconciliation on the cross, "in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him."

The audience in Colossae knew about Scripture and understood the term "alien" (EX. 23:12). From the Old Testament we learn that aliens do not belong. Whether or not aliens feel like permanent residents as far as anyone is concerned, in reality they are just passing through.

But the Israelites, though they were aliens in a foreign land, were also a shining light, because Israel was in a covenantal relationship with God. As a set apart, holy people, aliens were treated with kindness and dignity. From Holy Scripture we learn that aliens were considered defenseless and vulnerable. Thus, the Israelites were frequently reminded by God about His special concern for the weak: don't hassle them, don't abuse them, and give them equal treatment before the law. Here is the kicker: in Leviticus 19 we are reminded that Israel was an alien in Egypt. Paul wants to make this clear in our relationship prior to the cross. I cannot help but think that if you and I were "hostile" aliens, as Paul alludes in this text, it would not go well for us.

Paul takes the word "alienated" a bit further. It also means "transferred to another owner." This transfer of ownership, from God to Satan and self, affected us in both *mind* and *behavior*. It means to separate and estrange. It is a word based in relationship and more concisely means, "estranged themselves from God." We hear this as we read Isaiah 1:4:

*Ah, sinful nation,  
a people laden with iniquity,  
offspring of evildoers,  
children who deal corruptly!  
They have forsaken the LORD,  
they have despised the  
Holy One of Israel,  
they are utterly estranged.*

We are so estranged and separated from God. It is a horrible separation.

(continued on p. 3)



Image: Lightstock



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But we deserve estrangement. We deserve separation from God. We deserve alienation. But God does not leave us to our own shallow devices or alone in our hopelessness.

Luther summed it up like this in his explanation to the Second Article of the Creed:

*I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true. (SC, Apostles' Creed, II)*

And this is most certainly good news for you! Christ has made you His own, and you will live with Him in His king-

dom forever. This is the great transfer we will get to enjoy for eternity, and we rejoice even now.

By the Holy Spirit his words of love, hope and consolation extend to us. Paul says, "And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death" (COL. 1:21).

Yea that's us! Broken, hostile, combative, sinful as a nation, spawn of original sin, corrupt. All the while Christ died for you! That is why we need to hear of the salvation Christ won for us on the cross. The very image of the visible God, the head of the church, the only one wherein the fullness of God dwells, is the one who laid down His life for you, me and the whole world. In Colossians 1:22 we read, "He has now reconciled in His body of flesh by His death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him."

So, I brought up the story of "actions in the air" to serve as a reminder: Christ has done all the reconciling for us. Salvation is His gift, won for us not by our own doing, but by His death on the cross. We see how Jesus is the Lord

of our life in the hymn, "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me" in our *Lutheran Service Book*:

*Jesus, Savior, pilot me  
Over life's tempestuous sea;  
Unknown waves before me roll,  
Hiding rocks and treach'rous shoal.  
Chart and compass come from Thee.  
Jesus, Savior, pilot me. (LSB 715)*

While I was in that Globemaster III, there was nothing in the world I could do to right that aircraft. I had no skills to offer. No strength to make that massive aircraft straighten out. We felt we were in danger, that there was a legitimate threat to my life and that of my Religious Support Specialist, who was my responsibility. We placed ourselves there, but could do nothing to help ourselves. We were powerless. It was up to the pilot and crew. This is all a reminder of the obvious! It points to Colossians. We are sinners in need of a Savior. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot cooperate with Jesus; He alone saves us. The Law indicts and persecutes us. We look only forward to hell, death and the grave. But He is the one. The Savior promised by God Himself, His only Son, rescues us and extends to us salvation. Amen.



# OB SPECIAL OPS: NEWS FROM THE FIELD

*This section highlights recent Operation Barnabas activities across the U.S. We hope these examples will be replicated in other congregations and chapters, that these activities might serve as a catalyst for other means of sharing God's mercy to military-connected people in our communities. Please share your activities, including pictures, so that others might gain from your experience.*

## LWML NEW JERSEY DISTRICT

The Rev. Bill Schmidt, Coast Guard Auxiliary Chaplain, shared the mission of Operation Barnabas at the LWML New Jersey District convention.



## NEW LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES BIBLE STUDY



*Called to Serve: Utilizing Our Gifts as Veterans* is a five-session small group Bible study for veterans. Based on research by Barna Group and Lutheran Hour Ministries, *Called to Serve* will help veterans recognize they were created by God as a gift with gifts! For more information, please visit [lhm.org/veterans](http://lhm.org/veterans).

## FALLEN HEROES



### AIR FORCE STAFF SGT. TRISTEN WRIGHT

28, of Palm Bay, Fla., died Aug. 15 in a non-combat related incident at an undisclosed location. Wright was assigned to the 27th Special Operations Logistics Readiness Squadron (SOLRS) and was deployed in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. Wright enlisted on Aug. 23, 2016, and had been assigned to the 27th SOLRS as a material management specialist since 2019. He was previously assigned to the 18th Logistics Readiness Squadron at Kadena Air Force Base, Japan, from 2017 to 2019. Wright had previously deployed in

support of Operations Resolute Support and Inherent Resolve. His decorations include a U.S. Air and Space Force Commendation Medal, a U.S. Air Force Achievement Medal with two oak leaf clusters and "C" devices, an Air Force Good Conduct Medal with one oak leaf cluster, a Global War on Terrorism Medal and a National Defense Service Medal. The incident is under investigation.



## DAYS TO REMEMBER OCTOBER



— **OCTOBER 13** —  
Navy Birthday

— **OCTOBER 26** —  
National Day of the Deployed

# RESOURCES

## LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces

[lcms.org/ministry-to-the-armed-forces](http://lcms.org/ministry-to-the-armed-forces)

### Military Chaplaincy (LCMS):

The link below provides an excellent introductory view of the exciting life and opportunities of the military chaplaincy.

- If Not Us, Then Who?: [vimeo.com/208556248](https://vimeo.com/208556248)

### Operation Barnabas logo wear by Lands' End

Clothing and other items with the Operation Barnabas logo can be purchased from Lands' End:

[business.landsend.com/store/lcms-maf-ob](http://business.landsend.com/store/lcms-maf-ob)

### Nailed! Moral Injury

Moral Injury after combat poisons the soul, but a conscience normed by the cross of Christ brings God's exclusive healing remedy. Dr. Schreiber is available for church/circuit presentations. His book is available at [outskirtspress.com/Nailed](http://outskirtspress.com/Nailed)

### VA Medical Foster Home Program for Veterans

The VA now supports over 1,000 veterans in 700 foster homes in 42 states. This resource provides certified care for veterans needing supervision 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: [blogs.va.gov/VAntage/69916/veterans-gain-freedom-fuller-lives-under-foster-home-program/](https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/69916/veterans-gain-freedom-fuller-lives-under-foster-home-program/)

### "Veteran-Friendly Community" program

The VA is seeking to enhance services to veterans through their "Veteran-Friendly Community" program. Please see this link for more information:

[va.gov/ve/engagement/index.asp](http://va.gov/ve/engagement/index.asp)

Also available is the Veteran Community Partnerships Toolkit. This resource aids in the development of community partnerships with the VA.

### Veteran Help

If you are a veteran or you know a veteran who may be in crisis, free confidential support is available 24/7. Call the Veterans Crisis Line at 988 and press 1, send a text message to 838255 or chat online: [veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat](http://veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat)

### National Chaplain Center

[patientcare.va.gov/chaplain/index.asp](http://patientcare.va.gov/chaplain/index.asp)

### U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs [va.gov](http://va.gov)

### National Guard Office of the Chaplain

[nationalguard.mil/Leadership/Joint-Staff/Special-Staff/Chaplain/](http://nationalguard.mil/Leadership/Joint-Staff/Special-Staff/Chaplain/)

### National Military Family Association [militaryfamily.org](http://militaryfamily.org)

### U.S. Air Force Chaplain Corps [af.mil](http://af.mil)

### U.S. Army Chaplaincy [army.mil/chaplaincorps/](http://army.mil/chaplaincorps/)

### Organize a donation drive for homeless veterans

Access the step-by-step guide at [va.gov/HOMELESS/docs/FaithBasedDonationDrive-508.pdf](http://va.gov/HOMELESS/docs/FaithBasedDonationDrive-508.pdf).

# OUTREACH TO THE MILITARY COMMUNITY



Photo: LCMS/Erik M. Lunsford

Operation Barnabas congregations can honor and support their military-connected members in various ways. Some of the projects that have been successful, and may help fill a need in your community, are listed below.

**CREATING A WALL OF HONOR.** Collect pictures and/or names of the veterans in your congregation and design a board to showcase their service. You may also dedicate this board using a template provided by Ministry to the Armed Forces (MAF).

**MAILING CARE PACKAGES.** Mail care packages to deployed LCMS chaplains and the service members at their location. For a list of recommended items or mailing addresses, contact Alicia Hinton at [alicia.hinton@lcms.org](mailto:alicia.hinton@lcms.org).

**HOLDING A VA FORUM.** Call your local Veteran's Administration representative and ask them to come and speak about important topics such as benefits and special programs.

**SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING.** Hold a service of thanksgiving for the veterans in your community. Some examples include a hosting a July 4th BBQ or Veterans Day Dinner, or acknowledging their service on MAF Sunday.

**DINNER FOR STUDENT VETERANS.** Reach out to students who are veterans at your local college. Offer to cook a "home-cooked meal" for them.

**MANNING A BOOTH.** Secure a booth at your local fair/event and discuss how Operation Barnabas can support the military community. For flyers/giveaways, contact MAF.



Contributed photos



# OPERATION BARNABAS

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## PARTNER WITH OPERATION BARNABAS

Your generous gift to partner with Operation Barnabas makes a tremendous difference and helps to care for our nation's military members, families and veterans. Click here to give.

**GIVE NOW**

## HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

To receive the *Warning Order* newsletter, sign up using the following link:  
[mailchi.mp/lcms/resources](http://mailchi.mp/lcms/resources).

## SHARE YOUR STORIES

We want to hear from you! If you've got ideas for future issues, comments, feedback on articles you've read in *Warning Order* or news from your part of the world, please let us know. Write to [alicia.hinton@lcms.org](mailto:alicia.hinton@lcms.org) with your stories, and be sure to include your name, city and state.

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## Ministry to the Armed Forces

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# PRAYER

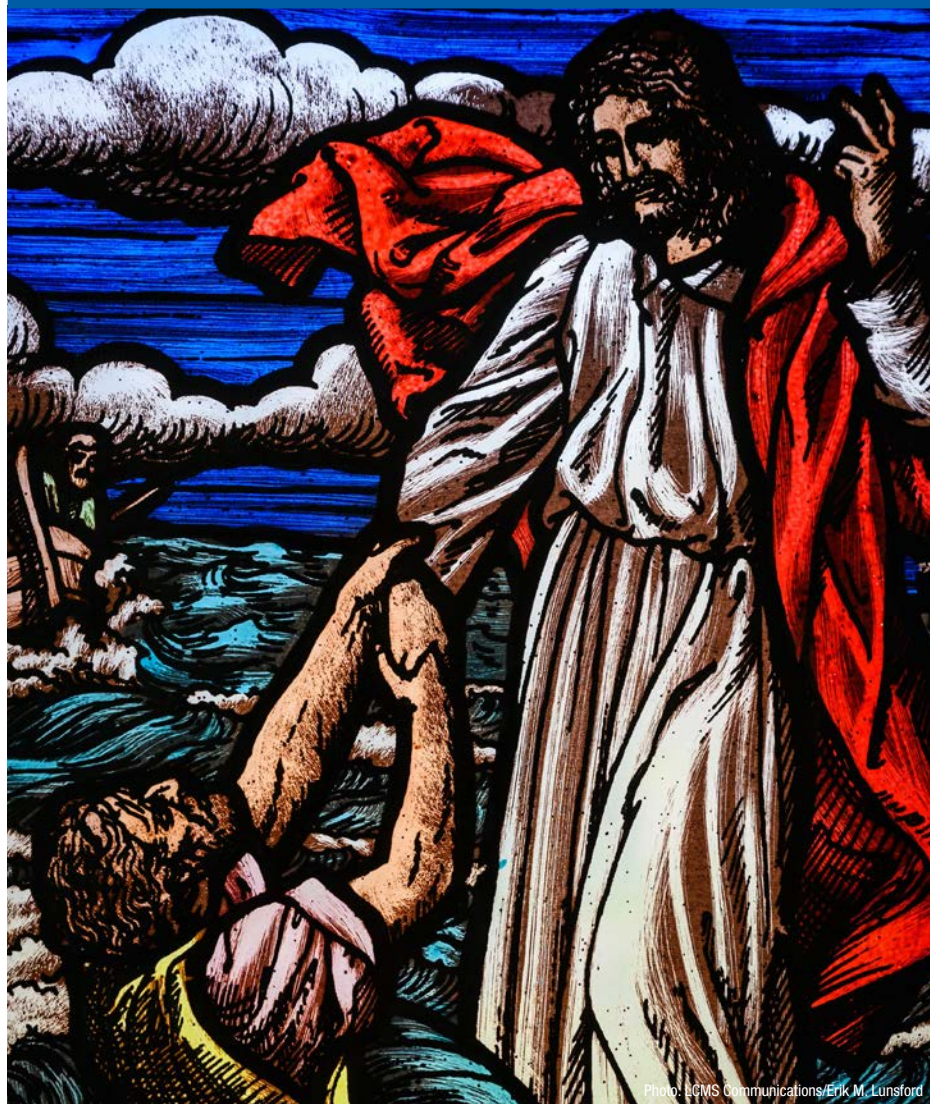


Photo: LCMS Communications/Erin M. Lunsford

**A**lmighty and ever-living God, we thank You for this day and the countless blessings that are found in it. We thank You for the church, the place where Word and Sacrament are rightly administered, and where the treasures of the kingdom of heaven are stored. No place on earth compares to the church, where we hear God's Law and Gospel, have our sins forgiven, and are assured again and again that we, Your children, rest in Your loving arms by Your Son's death and resurrection from the grave.

In this time of prayer, we contemplate the various chapters in our lives. We read in

the book of Ecclesiastes, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven" (ECCLES. 3:1).

Many of us have journeyed through birth and death, war and peace, planting and harvest. As we move through abundance and poverty, good health and failing vigor, we know that You are beside us, and the promises You give Your children in Baptism are never withdrawn. So be with us, gracious God, Lord Jesus, our faithful friend. Bless us. Forgive us and sustain us always as we journey through life. We ask this in Your holy and precious name.

**AMEN.**