

WARNING ORDER:

OPERATION BARNABAS

JANUARY 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.

MATT. 13:45-46

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

THE NEW YEAR AND THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

CH (LTC) Steven Hokana, USA (Ret)

Jesus wants us to be passionate people focused exclusively on Him as our priceless treasure! The Lord also wants us to know that He is the perfect example of the man seeking out the pearl ... you!

Within the Body of Christ, great things are happening in January. The life of the church continues. We are at the end of the Christmas season and transitioning to Epiphany, when the Wise Men visit Jesus. The Epiphany season culminates with the glorious Transfiguration of Jesus, where Peter, James and John see Jesus in all His heavenly glory (MATT. 17:1-9).

The church has some wonderful Epiphany traditions. In Germany, where I was stationed, it was not unusual to walk past a house and see a chalk inscription that read: "20 † C † M † B † 24." "CMB" stands for Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar, the traditional names of the Magi. "20" and "24" mark the coming year (2024). Others say "CMB" is an abbreviation of a blessing: *Christus mansionem benedicat*, which is Latin for "May Christ bless this house."

The Church Year is a rich tradition that helps the people of God remember the mission and ministry of Jesus through feasts like Epiphany. But as Christians, we do not live in a bubble, and other forces contend with this season of the Church Year. Of course, there is New Year's Eve. My family made this holiday a family Christian event. We went to church. It was a warm and wonderful service. We sang Christmas hymns. The attendance was a bit smaller, which made it rather intimate. The service was in the evening, which added to the warmth of candles and

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“ The Epiphany season culminates with the glorious Transfiguration of Jesus ... ”



Images: Getty Images



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.

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Christmas hymns. After church, our extended family would gather at our home and have a buffet-style dinner. My wife's family really pulled out all the stops to prepare a huge buffet. Nowadays, my family's New Year's celebration is a bit quieter. We enjoy traditions after church and we still uncork champagne to celebrate the New Year and say goodbye to the past year. New Year's Day is filled with football and relaxation.

Have you ever thought about the names we have for months of the year? Consider January. In ancient Roman myth, Janus is the god of beginnings and transitions. He is usually depicted as having two faces, since he looks to the future and to the past. The Romans named the month of January in his honor.

But the concept of Janus is a problem. With two faces, it's difficult to look forward and back at the same time. Have you ever tried walking and looking behind you and ahead of you at the same time? You lose your bearing. You trip, stumble and fall flat ... how embarrassing!

Janus looks ahead. This could be a time to express hopefulness, think positive thoughts and voice high aspirations for 2024. But that, too, is frighteningly self-indulgent. Our "hopefulness" is really a substitute for wishful thinking or luck. Leaving God out of the picture is dangerous.

The Lord is not bound by time. He is the Eternal God. And we are the children of God, who live in Christ by means of our Baptism. In light of our Baptism, wishing ourselves good luck is a horrible plan! As if God would appreciate that we would "take" Him with us like a lucky pair of socks. Then there is the foolish thought of "taking" God somewhere, even the anxious future. The Lord is already there, fully present and enacting His good pleasure and plans for us.

We don't "take" God anywhere! The great Lord God who created, judges, sustains, upholds and sends forth His Son is not "taken" anywhere. He is the

Author of time, the Ruler of all. The Lord spoke to Job out of the storm, saying:

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know!

Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (JOB 38:4-7)

We need to move beyond the desire to spend too much time in the past. To reflect on life's disappointments, those who wronged us, decisions that were not in keeping with our character and core values. This year, in 2024, let's look ahead. As a matter of fact, I will make a bold prediction that something wonderful and utterly fantastic will happen to you in this New Year! Not because you are so special, handsome or wealthy, but because God cares deeply for you and wants the best for you, His child. Have a happy New Year! This will be one of the best years of your life! However, spend the next year focused.

Not long ago I had an experience that reflected the parable of the pearl of great price. I was in West Lafayette, Ind., attending my wife's graduation ceremony for her master's degree in education. I wanted to get her a special gift to commemorate this special day. I searched everywhere for a gift. I went to AutoZone, Walmart and the "As Seen on TV" store. I think too much like a man. Wiper blades would have been great, or a wrap-around Snuggie with her alma mater emblazoned on the back ... awesome! How about a "Clap On" for the living room or a scrunchy hose for the lawn? All were appealing, but nothing seemed to work for the occasion.

I decided to take advantage of my mother's wisdom and gave her a call. She recommended pearls. So, I took her to the finest pearl shop in West Lafayette. We picked up some really nice pearls, and lots of them.

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Image: Getty Images

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On the morning of her great day at Purdue University, Mary graciously wore pearl earrings, a ring, a bracelet and a necklace. Now, it snowed the night before, so there were about 2–3 inches on the ground. The temperature was falling as well. When we got back in the car after this wonderful event, Mary touched one of her ears and said, “One of the earrings is missing!”

We searched the car. No earring. We searched around the car, but nothing. We drove around the block ... not sure why. Finding a pearl earring in three inches of snow while driving is next to impossible. But you do emotional things when you are worried! After driving around the block, we came back to the parking garage. To the whole family, nothing was more precious than the pearl. We didn't think about anything else but the pearl. Tunnel vision, borne out of passion, fuels your energy to find the missing pearl. You look everywhere thoroughly. All focus is on the pearl.

In God's Word, Jesus uses emotional language that, on the surface, borders on aggressive intentionality, laser focus, passion and financial risk. Jesus calls us to be aggressive in our search for the pearl. But this pearl of Christ is the kingdom of God. Not a part, not a piece, but the whole kingdom of God. It's the heart and soul of everything we want, need and desire. It's the diagnosis and the cure, it's the answer to the puzzle, and the kingdom of God is all about the issue here. It's about keeping the burning desire aflame in your heart. It is focused emotion tied with action.

The sinfulness of fallen humanity is quite clear. The devastating results of sin are evident in broken relationships. We fall short of the mark that God intends. We are in a terrible mess globally, in this country, city, within the walls of our homes; we see the consequences and destruction of sin.

But as a baptized child of God, washed, redeemed, forgiven, a partaker of the forgiveness of sins, and one who kneels at the rail to receive Christ's body and blood, we are changed. We are a rebellious people now forgiv-



Photo: Getty Images

en. All of our actions and activities, though they don't win favor with God, demonstrate our way of saying thank you for what He has done, and bear witness to the God of all comfort. We are called to be aggressive in our “pearl search!” Go to extremes. Sell it all, cash it in, hold it close, and make it a part of who you are. The kingdom of God is here and within you!

Back in West Lafayette, we parked the car and went off in the most likely direction of the lost pearl. By this time, it was getting colder and people had been walking around and could have either picked it up or stomped it further into the snowy ground. To all our relief, the pearl was found! Jon found it in the parking lot. What joy. What a life lesson. We should react this way to the promise of life given in Jesus.

But there is another reason this parable is important as we move into 2024. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it” (MATT. 13:45–46).

Can this parable have two understandings concerning the merchant? This is indeed possible. We know we ought to prize the Gospel highly and aggressively seek it out. But at what great personal risk to the merchant! Yes, our faith in the Good News of salvation is to be cherished and protected. But let's take another look at this parable.

Consider our salvation. Who is it that aggressively seeks us out? Who assumes the great risk of purchasing us? It's none other than Jesus Christ our Lord. Luther makes this clear in the meaning of the Second Article of the Apostles' 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. (SC, Second Article)

As you enter 2024, be aggressive with your search for the pearl — the kingdom of God! Everything you need and desire is already given. Be aggressive as you search for it every day. Look at that pearl and admire it, love it. Show it off and be possessed by its joy — the joy of eternal life. Rest in the certainty and the promise that Jesus died and rose for you. Let the Holy Spirit, who creates faith, comfort and lead you in 2024. Amen.

FALLEN HEROES

Please pray for all those who mourn the death of the fallen heroes below who gave their all for our nation.



**ARMY CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3
STEPHEN R. DWYER**

38, of Clarksville, Tenn., died Nov. 10 in an MH-60 Black Hawk helicopter

crash over the Mediterranean Sea during refueling training. Dwyer was assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. He received his commission in 2009 from the United States Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., and served as a field artillery commissioned officer for six years before reverting to warrant officer and graduating from flight school in 2018. His awards include the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with Combat device, four Army Commendation Medals, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, Iraq Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, two Overseas Service Ribbons, NATO Medal, Ranger Tab, Combat Action Badge, Basic Army Aviator Badge, Parachute Badge and Air Assault Badge.



**ARMY CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 2
SHANE M. BARNES**

34, of Sacramento, Calif. died Nov. 10 in an MH-60 Black Hawk

helicopter crash over the Mediterranean Sea during refueling training. Barnes was assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. He received his commission in 2011, and later resigned this commission in 2020 to become a warrant officer. His awards include the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor device, Air Medal with Combat device, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, Inherent Resolve

Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Korea Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Combat Action Badge, the Senior Army Aviator Badge and Air Assault Badge.



**ARMY STAFF SGT.
TANNER W. GRONE**

26, of Gorham, N.H., died Nov. 10 in a Blackhawk helicopter crash during aerial refueling

training over the Mediterranean Sea. Grone enlisted in the Army in 2017 as a 15T UH-60 Black Hawk repairer and was assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne). His awards include the Air Medal with Combat device, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal with Combat device, two Army Good Conduct Medals, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, Inherent Resolve Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Combat Action Badge and the Basic Aviation Badge.



**ARMY SGT.
ANDREW P. SOUTHARD**

27, of Apache Junction, Ariz., died Nov. 10 in a Blackhawk helicopter crash during aerial refueling

training over the Mediterranean Sea. Southard enlisted in the Army in 2015 as a 15T UH-60 Black Hawk repairer and was assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne). His awards include two Army Commendation Medals, Army Achievement Medal, two Army Good Conduct Medals, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, Global

War on Terrorism Service Medal, Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon and the Basic Aviation Badge.



**ARMY SGT.
GADE M. WOLFE**

24, of Mankato, Minn., died Nov. 10 in an MH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crash over the Mediter-

ranean Sea during refueling training. Wolfe enlisted in the Army in 2018 as a 15T UH-60 Black Hawk repairer and was assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne). His awards include two Army Commendation Medals, Army Achievement Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon and the Basic Aviation Badge.



**AIR FORCE MAJ.
JEFFREY T.
HOERNEMANN**

32, of Andover, Minn., died Nov. 29 in a CV-22B Osprey aircraft mishap

while performing a routine training mission off the shore of Yakushima Island, Japan. Hoernemann was a CV-22 instructor pilot and officer in charge of training, assigned to the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Yokota Air Base, Japan. The incident is currently under investigation.



FALLEN HEROES

Please pray for all those who mourn the death of the fallen heroes below who gave their all for our nation.



AIR FORCE MAJ. ERIC V. SPENDLOVE

36, of St. George, Utah, died Nov. 29 in a CV-22B Osprey aircraft mishap while performing a

routine training mission off the shore of Yakushima Island, Japan. Spendlove was a residency trained flight surgeon and medical operations flight commander assigned to the 1st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Kadena Air Base, Japan. The incident is currently under investigation.



AIR FORCE TECH. SGT. ZACHARY E. LAVOY

33, of Oviedo, Fla., died Nov. 29 in a CV-22B Osprey aircraft mishap while performing a

routine training mission off the shore of Yakushima Island, Japan. Lavoy was a medical operations flight chief assigned to the 1st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Kadena Air Base, Japan. The incident is currently under investigation.



AIR FORCE STAFF SGT. JAKE M. TURNAGE

25, of Kennesaw, Ga., died Nov. 29 in a CV-22B Osprey aircraft mishap while performing a

routine training mission off the shore of Yakushima Island, Japan. Turnage was a flight engineer assigned to the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Yokota Air Base, Japan. The incident is currently under investigation.



AIR FORCE MAJ. LUKE A. UNRATHS

334, of Riverside, Calif., died November 29 in a CV-22B Osprey aircraft mishap while performing a

routine training mission off the shore of Yakushima Island, Japan. Unrath was a CV-22 pilot and flight commander assigned to the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Yokota Air Base, Japan. The incident is currently under investigation.



AIR FORCE STAFF SGT. JACOB M. GALLIHER

24, of Pittsfield, Mass., died Nov. 29 in a CV-22B Osprey aircraft mishap while performing a

routine training mission off the shore of Yakushima Island, Japan. Galliher served as an airborne linguist specializing in Chinese-Mandarin and was assigned to the 43rd Intelligence Squadron, Detachment 1, Operating Location – Alpha, 363rd Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Wing based out of Yokota Air Base, Japan. He enlisted in the Air Force in 2017. His awards include the Air Force Achievement Medal, Air and Space Commendation Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award and Air Force Meritorious Unit Award. The incident is currently under investigation.



AIR FORCE SENIOR AIRMAN BRIAN K. JOHNSON

32, of Reynoldsburg, Ohio, died Nov. 29 in a CV-22B Osprey aircraft

mishap while performing a routine training mission off the shore of Yakushima Island, Japan. Johnson was a flight engineer assigned to the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Yokota Air Base, Japan. The incident is currently under investigation.



AIR FORCE CAPT. TERRELL K. BRAYMAN

32, of Pittsford, N.Y., died Nov. 29 in a CV-22B Osprey aircraft mishap while performing a

routine training mission off the shore of Yakushima Island, Japan. Brayman was a CV-22 pilot and flight commander assigned to the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Yokota Air Base, Japan. The incident is currently under investigation.



RESOURCES

LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces
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

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

Combined Arms (CAX)

Combined Arms (CAX) is a nonprofit organization exclusively focused on transforming the veteran services marketplace (public & private) to improve the lives of veterans and military families:
combinedarms.us

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/

“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

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

National Chaplain Center

patientcare.va.gov/chaplain/index.asp

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs va.gov

National Guard Office of the Chaplain

nationalguard.mil/Leadership/Joint-Staff/Special-Staff/Chaplain/

National Military Family Association militaryfamily.org

U.S. Air Force Chaplain Corps af.mil

U.S. Army Chaplaincy army.mil/chaplaincorps/

Organize a donation drive for homeless veterans

Access the step-by-step guide at 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.

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

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.

CATALINA LUTHERAN CHURCH, TUCSON, ARIZ.



Catalina Lutheran Church in Catalina, Ariz., hosted their annual Veterans Day celebration to honor veterans and bring awareness to their Operation Barnabas chapter. They had a successful Pickle and Jam and bake sale at Claire's Café. They served 28 veterans with a free breakfast or lunch.



ARNOLD, MO.



Alicia Hinton, Ministry to the Armed Forces administrative coordinator, shared the work of Operation Barnabas with the Military Care Team from St. John's Lutheran Church in Arnold, Mo.

TWIN FALLS, IDAHO



The second grade at Immanuel Lutheran School in Twin Falls, Idaho, created a wall of poppies for Veterans Day.

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OPERATION BARNABAS

STAFF

Rev. Craig Muehler, CAPT, CHC, USN (Ret.)
Director, LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces
craig.muehler@lcms.org

Rev. Dr. Steven Hokana, CH, LTC, USA (Ret.)
Assistant Director, LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces
steven.hokana@lcms.org

Alicia Hinton, MSgt, USAF (Ret.)
Assistant to the Director,
LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces
alicia.hinton@lcms.org

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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

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To receive the *Warning Order* newsletter, sign up using the following link:
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 with your stories, and be sure to include your name, city and state.

Warning Order may be reprinted with acknowledgment given to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.



Ministry to the Armed Forces

LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces
Operation Barnabas
1333 S. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122

888-THE LCMS (843-5267)
lcms.org/armedforces
lcms.org/operationbarnabas

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OB SPECIAL OPS: NEWS FROM THE FIELD (CONT'D)

SPIRIT LAKE, IOWA



Immanuel Lutheran Church in Spirit Lake, Iowa, marked Veterans Day in a big way! They had a men's choir singing "Eternal Father, Strong to Save," showed a video after the service honoring veterans, recognized the veterans in attendance and hosted a special

Vets Brunch! The brunch included presenting a booklet featuring all the veterans, the reading of a Veterans Day poem, presenting information on Operation Barnabas, a group photo and a delicious buffet with patriotic table settings.

PRAYER



Photo: Army

"Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."

(1 THESS. 5:11)

Gracious and loving God, the year is new and still fresh. May we embrace this year with joy and humility. Much can happen in 2024: life, death, sickness, poverty. But this is also a year given to us by Christ our Savior. Even if we are haunted

by pestilence and depravity, Christ is in this year. May we always remember that our Lord goes with us wherever we go. This includes 2024. Therefore let us encourage the fellowship of the saints and encourage each other throughout the year. In Your holy and precious name, we pray.

AMEN.