

# FRIEDRICH WILHELM RICHMANN

## *Lutheran Chaplain in the U.S. Civil War*

BORN: **NOVEMBER 9, 1820** Hartum, Westphalia, Germany

DIED: **NOVEMBER 7, 1885** Brooklyn, N.Y.

**F**RIEDRICH RICHMANN WAS THE FIRST Missouri Synod pastor to serve as a chaplain for soldiers in time of war. While his military service was shortened by sickness, he is remembered as a faithful shepherd caring for those in need.

Born in Germany, Richmann immigrated to America at the age of 18. He settled in Ohio and, seeing the need for pastors among German immigrants, he trained for the ministry. He graduated from Capitol University in Columbus, Ohio, in 1843 and was called to serve congregations near Lancaster, Ohio.

Richmann heard of plans to form a Lutheran synod in the West, and, in April 1847, he participated in the Missouri Synod's organizing convention in Chicago. At the time, the parish he served was the largest in the new Synod, with 900 members.

From 1856 to 1858, Richmann was pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., before being called to Schaumburg, Ill.

The onset of the Civil War changed everything. In March 1862, the governor of Ohio commissioned Richmann as chaplain in the 58th Regiment of Ohio Volunteers, U.S. Army. Richmann's congregation granted him a leave of absence to head off to war.

Richmann joined his regiment near Corinth, Miss., where General McClelland's division was fighting in the weeks after the Battle of Shiloh. Richmann wrote reports of his activities. He oversaw the evacuation of wounded from the battle lines to field hospitals, providing pastoral care to the wounded and dying. He held daily worship services for the soldiers, leading them in singing hymns

accompanied by a small brass choir, sounding "beautifully through these dark forests" (Ernstmeyer, *They Shall*, 17). He presided at funerals.

Richmann ministered to the increasing number of soldiers who were growing sick from illness. Many were dying, and Richmann had the difficult task of writing letters to their families. Then Richmann himself became so ill that he was forced to resign his post and return to Schaumburg. But he continued to serve.

In 1869, Richmann was called to St. John Lutheran Church, Elgin, Ill. From 1879 to 1883, he was pastor of several congregations in the Pittsburgh area. In 1883, he was called to serve as chaplain of the Lutheran Hospital and the Wartburg Altenheim, or nursing home, in Brooklyn, N.Y. His chaplaincy work continued until the end of his days.

Throughout his ministerial career, Richmann dedicated himself to proclaiming the Gospel and caring for those in need. He did this in a variety of ways in unique settings, from the pulpit, on the battlefield and in hospital and nursing home, offering the consoling Word of God and the message of Christ's salvation to all.

**For more information about the 175th anniversary of the LCMS, visit [lcms.org/175](http://lcms.org/175).**



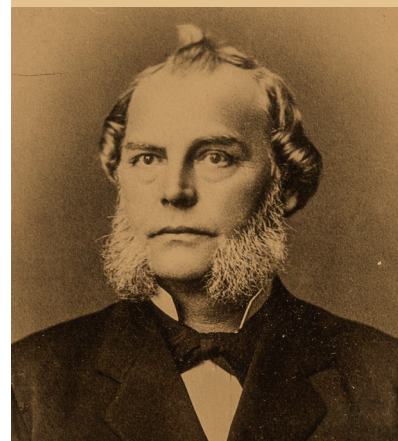
### DISCOVER MORE

John W. Brinsfield et al., eds., *Faith in the Fight: Civil War Chaplains* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2003).

Warren B. Armstrong, *For Courageous Fighting and Confident Dying: Union Chaplains in the Civil War* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998).

David Wollenburg, "Reports of Chaplain F. W. Richmann in *Der Lutheraner*," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 85, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 33–37.

Milton S. Ernstmeyer, ed., *They Shall Not March Alone: Glimpses into the Life and History of the Chaplaincy of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1990), 17.



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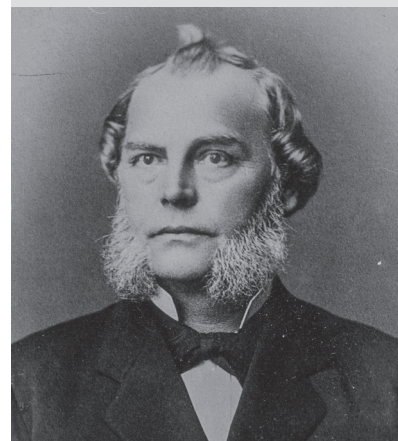
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