



## **Chaplain Craig G. Muehler** **Director, LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces**

Chaplain Craig Muehler, a retired U.S. Navy captain, serves as the director of the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces. He began serving in that position in August 2014 after retiring as deputy chaplain of the U.S. Marine Corps, where he served from 2011-14.

As director of LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces, he is the chief liaison to the more than 160 LCMS chaplains serving in all branches of the military active and reserve, and the Civil Air Patrol. His responsibilities include recruitment of chaplain candidates, endorsement for military duty, denominational training and education for ministry within the armed forces, maintaining updated records on all pastoral acts performed by Lutheran chaplains, and ministry support for the families of LCMS chaplains within the military, active and reserve, and the community in which they live.

A native of Springfield, Ill., Muehler grew up in South Dakota and Missouri. He received his bachelor's degree from Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill., in 1984 and his Master of Divinity from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1988. He earned his Master of Theology in Pastoral Counseling from Trinity International University in Deerfield, Ill., in 2001.

In 1986, he was commissioned as an ensign in the U.S. Navy theological student program and attended the Naval Chaplaincy School and Center. After his ordination in 1988, he became part of the Navy Chaplain Corps, serving as a chaplain in the reserve while also leading St. John's Lutheran Church in McClusky, N.D., as its pastor.

Muehler was called to active duty in 1991 and reported for his first assignment as staff chaplain for Destroyer Squadron 31, where he completed two deployments in the Western Pacific. From 1993-97, he served as staff chaplain for the Service School Command, Naval Training Center and Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Ill. Muehler was then assigned to Kunia, Hawaii, where he served as chaplain for sailors, marines, soldiers, airmen and National Security Agency civilians from 1997-2000.

Muehler was selected for post-graduate school in 2000 and attended Trinity International University. Upon earning his master's degree, he served as senior chaplain aboard the warship

USS Inchon in Ingleside, Texas, and supported the Naval Air Station in Corpus Christi, Texas, through 2002. Muehler reported to the U.S. Marine Corps in 2003, serving the 2nd Force Service Support Group at Camp Lejeune, N.C., and deployed overseas in support of “Operation Iraqi Freedom.” In 2004, he deployed with Combined Joint Task Force–Haiti in support of “Operation Secure Tomorrow.” From 2005-07, then-Commander Muehler served as deputy wing chaplain for the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) in Miramar, Calif., deploying in support of “Operation Iraqi Freedom” as the 3rd MAW chaplain from 2006-07. Muehler next reported as deputy chaplain at the Naval Medical Center in San Diego, Calif., from 2007-09, where he supervised the Clinical Pastoral Education program and ensured spiritual coverage for the newly formed “Wounded Warrior” unit. From 2009-11, Muehler, now a Navy captain, served as the division chaplain for the 3rd Marine Division in Okinawa, Japan. In July 2011, he reported to the Office of the Chaplain of the Marine Corps, where he served as deputy chaplain of the Marine Corps until his retirement in 2014.

Muehler’s decorations include the Legion of Merit (two), the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal (two), the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (two), the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (two), the Joint Meritorious Unit Award and the Air Force Outstanding Unit Commendation.

Muehler and his wife, Kristen, have four children; Seth, Jesse, Faith and Hope.