

Caring

News and Notes on the Church's Work of Mercy



Winter 2010
Help share Christ's mercy. See envelope inside.



Reaching out in the Dominican

Also inside: Mercy in Madagascar • Anchor for Joy • Sunday School Teacher Extraordinaire

Caring

News and Notes on the Church's Work of Mercy



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Winter 2010

At press time, LCMS World Relief and Human Care is responding to needs in Haiti following the devastating earthquake. To make a donation or get updates, visit www.lcms.org/worldrelief.

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LCMS World Relief and Human Care reaches out in mercy and compassion to those in need, motivated by Christ and His Gospel, according to the Lutheran confession of the faith.

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On the cover: Many children are among the worshippers in the young Palma Arriba mission congregation that is considered the first Lutheran church in the Dominican Republic. The youngsters' desire to learn about Jesus means new hope in this Caribbean country where LCMS World Relief and Human Care and ministry partners work to plant congregations and improve the care of Dominicans with developmental disabilities. Cover photo by Barb Below.



Mercy forever.

Diligently joined in unity of teaching, faith, sacraments, prayers, and works of love. SA II.IV.9a

Flood Supplies Help 1,000 Families in Overlooked Villages



People considered “untouchables” are among the 1,000 families in southern India who received rice, cooking pots, blankets, and other emergency provisions after October monsoons triggered floods described as some of the region’s worst in 100 years. The assistance was made possible by a \$34,170 grant from LCMS World Relief and Human Care to the India Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELC).

“People were very happy to receive the emergency relief kits,” said Ravi Jesupatham, India country coordinator with LCMS WR-HC, who oversaw the relief distribution in Andhra Pradesh that continued through early December. “No other agency has given so much so far. Children were happy and surprised to receive ‘gifts’ from a ‘stranger,’ maybe for the first time in their lives.”

LCMS WR-HC and the IELC focused relief efforts on 23 villages and slums largely neglected by other agencies.

One village was Repalle in the Dalit colony, the home of people who are considered “untouchable” because of their tribal community and poor living conditions. The floods meant even more challenges, destroying many already meager dwellings. Instead of going to school, “untouchable” children help their parents by working, rag picking (scavenging through trash for ‘recyclable’ items), and even begging.

Jesupatham and IELC leaders spent several weeks traveling to the various villages, including riding bullock carts to reach remote areas where roads had washed away. The Indians were “surprised to know some God-loving people were there to care about them,” Jesupatham said. “They all happily carried away the [emergency relief] kits on their shoulders and the love and compassion of Jesus in their hearts.”



Ravi Jesupatham, India country coordinator with LCMS World Relief and Human Care, gives biscuit packets to children in the Dalit colony of Repalle, the home of people considered “untouchable.” The village was among those that received emergency relief supplies made possible by an LCMS WR-HC grant after October floods destroyed thousands of homes.

Top, right: Indians carry bags of emergency relief supplies distributed by LCMS WR-HC that helped 1,000 families after flooding that was described as some of the region’s worst in 100 years.

Board for Human Care Ministries: Rev. Bernhard M. Seter (Chair), John W. Edson (Vice Chair), Dr. Peggy Beyer (Secretary), Paul Crumb, Rev. David A. Fischer, Dr. Jean Garton, Dr. Robert G. Miles, Rev. Gregory Smith

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Hope and Ministry



Through the new Amigos de Jesus Bible clubs, Dominican families with developmentally disabled children meet for fellowship and support.

When LCMS World Relief and Human Care's Barb Below attended a confirmation service in Palmar Arriba last summer, eyes focused on the 12 new members at the young mission congregation that is considered the first Lutheran church in the Dominican Republic.

But faces that also caught Below's attention were those of the children who played outside the church before the service and later came inside, both with their families and on their own. The desire of young Dominicans to learn about the Lord "gives lots of hope for the future of the church," said Below, who visited the Dominican Republic in August with ministry partners who support the Dominican Republic Lutheran Mission. "After almost five years of work, God is really opening doors wide."

Since 2005, the LCMS Dominican Republic mission team has worked hard in this Caribbean nation about 1,000 miles southeast of Florida. In recent months, missionaries Rev. Ted and Rebecca Krey, Rev. Walter and Ana Ries, and Danelle Putnam have rejoiced in exciting steps to plant the country's first Lutheran congregations and start a much needed ministry to improve the care of Dominicans with developmental disabilities.

In December, Dominican officials agreed to the team's long-proposed pilot project to move people with developmental disabilities out of government institutions and into a group home connected to Lutheran congregations. The first group home will operate alongside the

Mercy Medical Teams: Volunteers Help "Little Miracle" in Madagascar



Despite Dr. Carl Jurgens' 28 years in the medical profession, it was during a Mercy Medical Team (MMT) trip to Madagascar last October when he came "about as close to a miracle as I've seen in a long time."

A pregnant woman walked into the Andranomadio Lutheran Hospital in Antsirabe in the midst of a troubled labor. Jurgens, an ob-gyn from Belvidere, Ill., began an emergency Cesarean section. As the surgery was ending, the power went off. Although Jurgens wore a headlamp he had packed at the last minute and was able to finish the procedure, the infant was not breathing.

"Carl handed me this baby with no signs of life," said Janet Sandersen (at left), a neonatal nurse from Longmont, Colo., who quickly began performing CPR. After six long minutes, the baby took its first breaths. "He was our little miracle," Sandersen said.

Jurgens and Sandersen were among the 11 Lutheran volunteers who cared for 910 patients during the second MMT trip to Madagascar. These trips are organized by LCMS World Relief and Human Care in partnership with international Lutheran church bodies.

While some volunteers helped at the Lutheran Hospital, others saw patients at four rural clinics treating many cases of tuberculosis, worms, and parasites. "During

Grow with Young Dominicans

mission church in Palmar Arriba. This means new hope in a poor country with few programs for people with developmental disabilities and a lack of understanding about proper care. Putnam calls the pilot project an opportunity to connect “the least of these” with the church, helping them become part of the body of Christ and providing care in a home-like setting.

Another step toward improving the plight of the developmentally disabled is the new *Amigos de Jesus* Bible clubs. Groups meet in the homes of volunteers who embrace people with developmental disabilities and their families, gathering for fellowship and Bible stories.

These are exciting times for the Lord’s work in the Dominican. Six mission sites and one preaching station are based in various communities. In Palmar Arriba, young people are especially active, taking part in confirmation classes, helping with Sunday school, and much more. Pastors Krey and Ries also build relationships as they teach the Small Catechism through a popular baseball league. Young Dominicans “are eager to hear the Gospel and frequently bring their friends to church with them,” Krey said. “We are excited how the Lord works through His Word. Luther says, where you find God’s Word, there it gives birth to His children.”

VBS Students Can Learn and Lend a Hand

Children in this year’s Concordia Publishing House vacation Bible school programs can learn about ministry in the Dominican Republic and lend a helping hand. VBS students will be invited to collect offerings to help build and equip Lutheran churches in the Dominican and provide training and support for Dominican children with developmental disabilities and their families. VBS children also will be encouraged to donate supplies such as washcloths and bibs for government-run institutions and the proposed Lutheran group homes for people with developmental disabilities.

The Dominican Republic Lutheran mission is supported by a partnership of LCMS World Relief and Human Care, LCMS World Mission, Bethesda Lutheran Communities, The Lu-

theran Church of Brazil, the LCMS South Wisconsin District, and St. Michael Lutheran Church, Fort Myers, Fla. St. Michael members first raised awareness of needs in the Dominican and started the ministry. To follow the Dominican mission team’s work, visit <http://faithndominican.wordpress.com> or contact Barb Below, 800-248-1930, ext. 1383, or barb.below@lcms.org. To make a gift that strengthens ministry in the Dominican through LCMS WR-HC:

Send a check to LCMS World Relief and Human Care, P.O. Box, 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861. (Note “Dominican Republic Mission” in the memo line.)

Make a secure credit card donation by calling toll-free 888-930-4438.

these clinics each patient received de-worming pills; had their blood pressure, heart rate, and weight monitored; explained their complaints; and received the appropriate medications from our pharmacy,” said Jacob Fiene, LCMS WR-HC manager of Medical and Material Resources. These services were provided free of charge.

The team took the equivalent of \$90,000 in prescription and over-the-counter medications to Madagascar. Most medications are donated, while others are purchased at discounted prices. “Generally speaking, we will spend \$4,000 in total on medications while the overall value will be anywhere from \$50,000 to \$90,000,” said Fiene. The drugs and medical equipment the teams bring to each clinic are vital. Many drugs are hard to obtain or are expensive in the countries where MMTs serve, and many Lutheran clinics continue to “make do” with equipment considered antiquated by U.S. standards.

“What [Mercy Medical Teams] can accomplish with what little they have is amazing,” said Sandersen.

To learn how you can help ship much-needed medical goods to locations such as the Lutheran Hospital in Madagascar, see the *Caring back cover ad*.

2010 Mercy Medical Team Schedule

- February 12-23: Kenya
- February 13-21: Haiti
- March 11-21: Haiti
- April 9-21: Madagascar
- May 13-24: Kenya
- June 3-16: Kenya (Home-based care initiative and clinics)
- July 29 - Aug. 9: India (diabetes education camps)
- Sept 30 - Oct 11: Madagascar

Teams are in special need of pharmacists, pastors, and physicians. For more information, contact Jacob Fiene at 800-248-1930, ext. 1278, or jacob.fiene@lcms.org; or visit www.lcms.org/mercyteams.

From Ruin to Renewal in Greensburg, Kan.

More than two years after a massive tornado destroyed Peace Lutheran Church in Greensburg, Kan., a full house celebrated the rebuilding of the church at a dedication service Nov. 8. As the worshippers rejoiced, they also remembered the deadly 2007 tornado that claimed 10 lives, destroyed the town's 37 businesses, eight churches, and 1,100 of the town's 1,500 residences.

After the storm, LCMS World Relief and Human Care's Rev. Glenn Merritt and Rev. Carlos Hernandez visited the devastated community many times, providing pastoral care and assurance that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod would accompany them as "one people" through their devastating loss. Over the months, LCMS WR-HC awarded a total of \$430,000 in disaster grants for recovery in Greensburg.

Although the tornado destroyed the church building, it did not destroy the church. After meeting in a tent and a home, Peace Lutheran members worshipped in a modular unit made possible by LCMS WR-HC in partnership with Orphan Grain Train and Laborers For Christ. Member Bill Proctor recalls being overwhelmed by volunteers who traveled from around the country to help with recovery efforts.

Today, Peace Lutheran has a new building with walls that can sustain 250 mph winds. Proctor says the location is ideal, situated across the street from a popular tourist site (the world's largest hand-dug well) and near a tornado memorial. The new church also brings an opportunity for growth. Plans are in the works for the congregation to begin an evangelism program and needs-based community outreach. "What a joyous occasion to watch the new life of a church rise out of what some thought were the ruins of a church," said Merritt. "God has given the members of Peace a great opportunity to move forward into a bright new future."



Members of Peace Lutheran Church, Greensburg, Kan., gather in the sanctuary of their new church that was dedicated in November, more than two years after the church and most of the town was destroyed by a deadly tornado. LCMS WR-HC awarded a total of \$430,000 in disaster grants to assist the congregation and community with recovery.



Deaconess Strengthens Mercy in Luther's Homeland

Because Germany is where Martin Luther posted the 95 Theses that triggered the Reformation, many Americans assume that most Germans are Lutheran. "But only a small percentage of people can be found in any sort of divine service on Sunday," said Deaconess Rachel Mumme (at left), who is based in Berlin with LCMS World Relief and Human Care.

Today, many people in Luther's homeland consider themselves non-religious. Mumme's work includes strengthening diakonal (service) partnerships with the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church, the LCMS

partner church known by its German acronym, SELK. One such partnership is with a mission congregation in the Berlin suburb of Marzahn that operates a weekly food pantry. "There are lots of needs in this area, which has extremely high unemployment," Mumme said. "Many people have exposure to the church through the food pantry, either as a volunteer or as a recipient." The deaconess also raises awareness of an important ministry in Leipzig that assists refugees seeking asylum. Some of these expatriates are Muslims who converted to Christianity before fleeing countries such as

Joy in View of Eternity

I'd been thinking about humor. It may seem a strange topic in our line of work. So many folks are hurting in so many ways, locally, nationally, and globally. If you've read these pages before, you know that "mercy" and "faith in Christ" are realities that animate the work of LCMS World Relief and Human Care. But I want to let you in on a secret. With Christ and His mercy as our anchor, we who work here are filled with joy. We laugh. We laugh together. We laugh with each other. We laugh at each other! Our staff loves to "tweak" each other. We find humor in ourselves, in our Synod, in our work. In fact, as I think about all the folks I know around the world in this kind of work (relief, development, mercy), the ones who are really good at it have a great sense of humor. (I'm thinking of my friend John Nunes, president of Lutheran World Relief, right now.) And it's not frivolity. Not at all. It's joy – joy in the face of death itself.

Eric W. Gritsch wrote a wonderful little book, *The Wit of Martin Luther* (Augsburg Fortress 2006). Luther's sense of humor is very well documented, even legendary. Gritsch makes a couple of points that particularly strike me. Luther, the author notes, had been driven into himself, his own activity, his piety, his thoughts and feelings, searching for comfort in the face of God. But all he (or we) could find within is sin. Help came from the outside, from Christ. In our lives with God and with others, too, we see the "need for outside intervention to shore up sanity." Such was Luther's view. Gritsch, on page 9, says: "Humor tells us that life has meaning only in communion with others and that egotistic self-reliance is ridiculous. Real living begins with freedom from the tyranny of the self, and just as a patriotic comedian can make fun of his own country, one can love oneself while joking about it."

So Luther said: And this is the reason why our theology is certain: it snatches us away from ourselves and places us outside ourselves, so that we do not depend on our own strength, conscience, experience, person, or works but depend on that which is outside ourselves, that is, on the promise and truth of God, which cannot deceive. (Luther, op. cit. p. 15).

Being pulled "outside oneself" is a great advantage. We need not take ourselves quite so seriously.

The Lord has given us serious challenges. So many of the people our ministry helps have tremendous struggles. We don't know what this new year holds. We don't know what the proposed re-structuring of the Synod will mean for this work. But we do know that the answers and the comfort don't reside inside us. Christ has it covered. It's time – it's always time, no? – to rest just a bit, catch our breath, then roll up our sleeves again, and go to work with mercy. And because the work is His, the results His, the means His, and because eternity is covered . . . we can have a good belly laugh at ourselves along the way.



Pastor Harrison
Executive Director, LCMS World Relief and Human Care



What Luther Says

We can mark our lack of faith by our joy; for our joy must necessarily be as great as our faith.

Selection from *What Luther Says: A Practical In-Home Anthology for the Active Christian*. *What Luther Says: A Practical In-Home Anthology for the Active Christian* © 1959, 1987 Concordia Publishing House. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be printed, reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of Concordia Publishing House. For ordering information, please contact CPH at (800) 325-3040 or www.cph.org.

Iran and Iraq. The refugees endure harsh challenges, Mumme says, as they await court decisions on whether they can remain in Germany. Rev. Hugo Gevers, an SELK missionary, calls the migration of Muslims to Germany "an open door to the Gospel that God has given us."

Mumme moved to Germany in 2006 with her husband, Jonathan. "The body of Christ is intrinsically interested in all the work that all its members are doing, be they American feet or German hands," the deaconess said. To learn more about Mumme's work in Germany, contact her at rachel.mumme@lcms.org.





Miss Margaret's 70 Years of Sharing Jesus with Children

In 1940, the pastor at Martini Lutheran Church asked 18-year-old Margaret Krantz to take over a Sunday school class for a teacher who was expecting a baby. Seventy years later, “Miss Margaret” is still introducing Jesus to youngsters at the Baltimore, Md., church.

“I know my Savior, and I want children to know Him, too,” is the simple explanation Miss Margaret gives when asked why she continues to prepare and share Sunday morning lessons.

Now 88, Miss Margaret (at left) often walks the seven blocks from her home to the church where she was baptized and confirmed. Along with teaching Sunday school, this energetic octogenarian also serves as the church secretary – a post she took after her 45½-year career as a secretary at Montgomery-Wards. “People who have moved away and call the church can’t believe they’re talking to Miss Margaret,” said Rev. Elliott M. Robertson, Martini Lutheran’s current pastor. “I’m always hearing, ‘She’s the one who taught me the Lord’s Prayer and helped me know the 10 Commandments.’”

An urban church located just south of downtown Baltimore, Martini Lutheran faces the same challenges that confront many inner-city ministries. At one time more than 40 youngsters filled Miss Margaret’s class. On a recent fall Sunday, she taught three students – including one little girl who proudly told Miss Margaret, “Jesus died for me and took away my sins.”

“As long as I can get that [message] over to

Helping the Elderly with Home Repairs

LCMS members worked three Saturdays this fall helping the elderly with much-needed home repairs as volunteers with Lutheran Housing Support (LHS) in the north St. Louis, Mo., community of College Hill.

The work days were a continuing step in the Campaign for College Hill, an effort by neighbors and St. Paul Lutheran Church members to revitalize their community with the help of local LCMS congregations and LHS. LHS is a ministry of LCMS World Relief and Human Care that helps congregations restore affordable housing and safe streets in blighted communities.

College Hill’s Elizabeth Henderson had waited years to get safe doors. Jim and Diane Schmidt’s house needed roof and plumbing repairs. At Jesse Wilson’s home, volunteers

gutted the living room and put in a new ceiling and walls. They were among the more than 30 homeowners who submitted applications to LHS for home improvements. Throughout each work day, volunteers and homeowners got to know one another. “We live in different neighborhoods, but we’re not that much different. We’re all children of God,” said volunteer Valerie Hellend. Volunteer Brock Schwartz lent a hand saying, “It’s what God has called us to do. Our whole goal is to spread God’s Word through our actions and helping others.”

Volunteers are needed for work weekends that will resume in the spring. To learn more, contact Don Strohmeyer, Campaign for College Hill lead organizer, at 314-570-8824 or dstrohmeyer@att.net.

those children, I'm happy," said Miss Margaret with a pleased chuckle.

Obviously, this faithful servant believes that reaching retirement age doesn't mean retiring from the Lord's work. "I've gotten so much contentment, so much love from the people I've taught in Sunday school," Miss Margaret said. "The Lord has given me good health and kept me well all this time. I want to keep going and doing as long as I can, until the Lord calls me home."

To learn more about Martini Lutheran, visit www.martini.lutheran.org.

Connecting Seniors with Christian Service

Miss Margaret's devotion to teaching Sunday school at age 88 is one example of the goal of "Connecting Seniors with Christian Service," a new initiative from LCMS World Relief and Human Care that seeks to encourage older adults to continue sharing their time and talents with the church. "How wonderful that Miss Margaret shares her God-given talents serving young children, students, and their families. What a witness to others of her faith and love for Christ," said LCMS WR-HC's Deaconess Dorothy Krans. With Rev. Carlos Hernandez, Krans presents workshops that help congregations identify and expand opportunities for seniors to faithfully and joyfully serve the Lord and explore intergenerational ministry that brings together different age groups. To learn more, contact Krans at 800-248-1930, ext. 1636, or dorothy.krans@lcms.org or Hernandez at 314-956-2005, or carlos.hernandez@lcms.org.



Jim and Diane Schmidt watch from their porch as volunteers repair the couple's roof as part of a neighborhood work day organized by Lutheran Housing Support in north St. Louis, Mo.

One-on-One with a Human Care Leader: LWML President Janice Wendorf

As the president of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML), Janice Wendorf says one of her main responsibilities is to set the organization's vision. She prayed that God would direct her to the message of unity that He wanted her to promote among the organization's varied members – from high school students to 90-year-olds, from the newly married to widows, and women of all ethnicities.

She focused on things that unite: being in God's Word, being of His Word, and walking with the Lord daily. "I see human care intertwined with all three parts of the vision," said Wendorf, whose husband, Kenton, is senior pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Grafton, Wis. "We see His heart for the world . . . and learn through His Word to look for the needs that He sets before us."

The LWML, which is the official women's auxiliary of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and LCMS World Relief and Human Care are longtime partners. At the 33rd Biennial LWML Convention, for example, members voted to fund a record \$1.8 million in grants. That total included three grants to LCMS WR-HC for: body and soul work with disabled children in the Dominican Republic; devotional materials for U.S. prison inmates; and to help the needy in India, including underprivileged children at the Missouri Evangelical Lutheran India Mission School.

For more than 65 years, LWML members have shared Christ's mercy throughout the world. Recently, an LWML society assembled health kits for a police department to distribute during crisis situations. Another group made prayer shawls for cancer patients while other LWML members collected food for a hunger program. "I sometimes have to run to keep up with our mission societies," Wendorf said. To learn more about the LWML, visit www.lwml.org.



LWML President Janice Wendorf, right, ties a quilt at the 2008 Oregon District LWML Convention. The LWML's longtime quilting ministry is just one way members share Christ's mercy and His Word with people around the world.

Minnesota Lutheran Extends Lifetime of Sharing Christ's Love

Throughout his life, Herman E. Schmidt seized opportunities to share his faith. And his last day on earth proved no exception for the 97-year-old Minnesota Lutheran.

Hospitalized after suffering a heart attack, Schmidt (pictured below) recovered enough that his breathing tube could be removed. When the doctor asked about his end-of-life care, Schmidt answered – and also asked the physician a question. “Do you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?” the patient queried the doctor. “If you don’t, you’re missing out on something really good! I go to Redeemer Lutheran in Rochester, and I know Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, and I’m not afraid to die!”



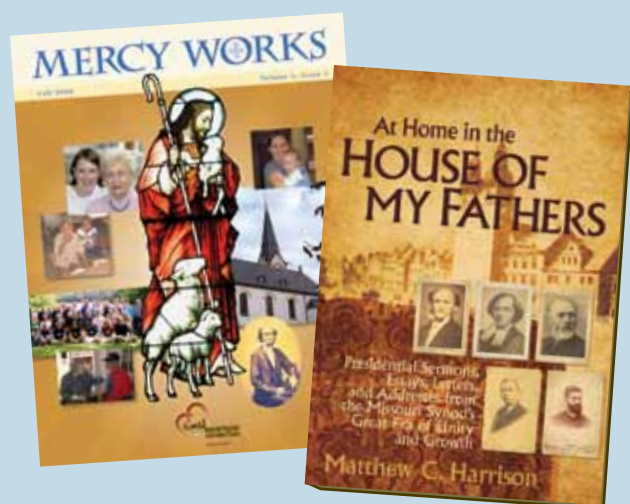
Three years later, Schmidt’s son – Herman A. Schmidt – calls his late father’s testimony one of countless examples of his father’s strong love for the Lord and passion for witnessing to others. “From the time I was a youngster, I remember Dad always involved in the church and interested in sharing his faith,” Schmidt said of his father, who was a businessman and member of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Palatine, Ill., before retiring in Minnesota.

The elder Schmidt died in 2006. But his love for the Lord continues to touch lives through a gift he and his late wife, Helen, made through their will and trust to LCMS World Relief and Human Care. “Dad donated throughout his life to ministries that share the love of Jesus, so we were not at all surprised about his gift to World Relief and Human Care,” said Herman A. Schmidt, a member of Hephatha Lutheran Church in Anaheim, Calif.

Schmidt says his father would no doubt approve of this story. “He would be happy not for himself, but because sharing his story is yet another way of witnessing the impact of Jesus’ love in his life and to the world,” Schmidt said. “Dad firmly believed, and wanted others to believe as well in the grace of our risen Savior as stated in Eph. 2:8: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God . . .”

To learn about planned giving opportunities, contact Hans Springer, LCMS WR-HC associate director for fund development, at hans.springer@lcms.org or 800-248-1930, ext. 1693.

Resources



Visit LCMS WR-HC Blog Gallery

LCMS World Relief and Human Care has entered the blogosphere! Depending on your ministry interests, you can follow regular postings by:

- LCMS WR-HC Disaster Response
- LCMS Life Ministries
- Lutheran Housing Support
- Mercy Medical Teams
- the Dominican Republic Lutheran Mission

You’re also invited to follow the personal blog of LCMS WR-HC Executive Director Rev. Matthew Harrison, which highlights the mercy of Christ in action throughout the world, and the Spanish-language blog devoted to mercy work in Latin America and the Caribbean. Links to these blogs are available on the LCMS WR-HC blog gallery at www.lcms.org/?15666.

Illinois Couple Celebrates 50th Anniversary by Helping “Veterans”

In August, Rev. Adam Dietrich and his wife, Marlene, of Mokena, Ill., celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. “We didn’t want gifts. We just wanted to be with our friends . . .,” said Rev. Dietrich who, with his wife, asked that guests make donations in their honor to LCMS World Relief and Human Care’s “Veterans of the Cross.”

Veterans of the Cross carries special significance for this pastor and pastor’s wife (at right). The program provides short-term financial assistance to retired pastors, teachers, and their spouses during times of need. “When these older pastors worked, their salaries were much lower, and now they don’t have much to retire on. We need to take care of our servants when they need help,” said Rev. Dietrich.

Lutheran High School South in Chicago recognized the couple for their more than 30 years of volunteerism. Marlene is an alumnus, and Adam worked as the school’s theology chairman. He also served at Trinity First Lutheran Church, Bridgeport. The couple has a heart for “older folks,” regularly checking on elderly friends.

The donations honoring the Dietrichs’ anniversary are just one example of the variety of gifts that can be made to LCMS WR-HC in honor of a special person or special occasion or as a memorial to a friend or loved one. “I’ve had many different events or occasions that LCMS World Relief and Human Care is designated to receive financial gifts – as a result of family reunions, weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, graduations, confirmations, births, Father’s and Mother’s Day, or in honor of family, friends, pastors, teachers, or neighbors just in thankfulness for them,” said LCMS WR-HC’s Kathy Wakeman, who processes gift receipts to donors and sends acknowledgement letters to honorees. “People love to honor someone with a gift to help someone else.”

Rev. Dietrich retired in 1997 but continues to serve as interim pastor at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Hodgkins, a position he has held for 33 years. The couple has six grown children, including four who are in church work, and three grandsons. Throughout their 50 years of marriage, the Dietrichs say their greatest lesson and joy have been that “the Lord takes care, no matter what, during the good times and the rough times.”

To learn more about making a tribute gift or a memorial, contact Kathy Wakeman at 800-248-1930, ext. 1648 or kathy.wakeman@lcms.org.



Meet the Early LCMS Presidents

Unless you read German, you and fellow LCMS members could find few – if any – opportunities to read the words of early Lutheran church fathers. But LCMS WR-HC Executive Director Rev. Matthew Harrison fills that historical void with *At Home in the House of My Fathers: Presidential Sermons, Essays, Letters, and Addresses from the Missouri Synod’s Great Era of Unity and Growth* (Lutheran Legacy Press, 826 pages, \$19.95). This comprehensive new tome includes many first-ever English translations of writings by the first five LCMS presidents, spanning a period that includes the Civil War, the Great Depression, a presidential assassination, and unprecedented technological advances. It also includes essays on mercy and caring for the needy. The book can be ordered at <http://logia.org/houseofmyfathers>.

Mercy Works Now Online

Mercy Works, the quarterly journal of LCMS World Relief and Human Care that lifts up the place of mercy in the life of the church, is now only available online. Watch for the first online-only issue this winter. Contributors include deaconesses, students enrolled in the Synod’s deaconess training programs, and Lutheran theologians, professors and pastors. To sign up for a free subscription, create an LCMS e-News account at www.lcms.org/enews.

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