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LCMS WORLD MISSION

Harvest News

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A quarterly mission newsletter to inform and involve LCMS Christians in God's mission



The first local pastor in the Dominican Republic serves communion to ministry teammates from Brazil and Canada.



LCMS WORLD MISSION
The Global Gospel Outreach of
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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Witness
(Martyría)

“But you will receive power
when the Holy Spirit has
come upon you, and you
will be my witnesses in
Jerusalem, and in all
Judea and Samaria, and
to the end of the earth”
(Acts 1:8).



Mercy
(Diakonia)



Life Together
(Koinōnía)

Director's L E T T E R

My Dear Partners in the Gospel

People who dedicate their lives to fighting malaria know that their work must reach all the way to the “*last mile*”...to those people who live beyond the reach of the most basic health and educational services. They know that “*last mile*” people must be equipped with successful intervention strategies to fight malaria if its tyranny of death is to be defeated. But how can such *last mile* communities be reached when there are no normal channels for government and commercial health sector services to be delivered?

An information Q&A in this issue of *Harvest News* provides the answer to this question...an answer that is crystal clear to people like you and me. Through Christian churches! For we know that communities of believers have taken root and are thriving in surprising places throughout the world ... in the *last mile* regions of Africa, along the *last mile* coastal communities of Japan, nestled in corners of Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Spain, Macau, Belgium and The Gambia, and even in *last mile* communities throughout America, in places like Iowa and Nebraska!

As you read these pages, you might also notice that *last mile* people look somewhat familiar. That's because they are very much like you and me...ordinary people who work hard, who love their families and who make every effort to raise healthy children in a safe environment. Yet, many *last mile* people live on the edge of despair, with very little hope in life.

You and I, and our fellow Lutherans around the world, understand the last mile because that's where Jesus met us. In fact, Jesus went well beyond the *last mile*, all the way to the tomb, to abolish the dead-end of death, and to bring the

promise of an abundant life within our reach, and within the reach of every man, woman and child, through faith in Christ! Christians, therefore, are uniquely suited to *last mile* ministries.

That's why it's so important that you and I participate in the Lutheran Malaria Initiative. That's why it's so important that you and I stand with Japanese Christians as they reach out to *last mile* people living in hopelessness. That's why you and I must join with fellow Lutherans around the world to send missionaries who travel to *last mile* communities...because they bring Good News of salvation, of life...and of hope in a Living Christ.

Whether we live in an urban metropolis or a remote farming community, you and I share the heritage of *last mile* ministries. And we share a passion to reach *last mile* communities with the Good News. We share a passion for life, and the confidence that God works through His people, the Church, to bring *last mile* people into reach of eternal life!

In Christ,

Rev. Dr. David C. Birner
Associate Executive Director / International
LCMS World Mission



Japan Relief — Thank You

Thank you for your generous support of post-disaster ministry in Japan. Contributions to LCMS World Relief and Human Care to go towards ministry in the aftermath of the March earthquake and tsunami have totaled more than \$2.1 million. The LCMS is continuing to work with the Japan Lutheran Church and other partners to show mercy to the people of Japan in Christ's name as they rebuild their lives and communities. To read ongoing updates, please visit www.lcms.org/disaster/japan.



With thanks and congratulations to 'Mission Central'

'Old Missionary Gary' connecting people of the LCMS with missionaries, mission projects for more than 16 years!

Gary Thies of Mapleton, Iowa, took a leap of faith in 1994 and quit his job as Mapleton Bank president and became the first LCMS Mission Development Counselor and later established Mission Central through a partnership ministry with LCMS World Mission, Nebraska District and Iowa West District.

Returning missionaries stay at Mission Central, mission festivals are held there and churches from all over the region hold services at the "barn with the stained glass window." The barn includes a 'mission museum' that has been visited by thousands of people from 41 different countries. This past year, 40 busloads and more than 4,000 visitors came to Mission Central. Gary's wife, Maxine, serves as co-director of Mission Central.

Gary is always quick to point to the hundreds of volunteers that God is using through Mission Central—from volunteer video directors to cooks to filing assistants to pilots flying Gary to presentations. Gary



Gary Thies (right) with Mission Central volunteer farmer LeRoy Lammers in Gary's office.

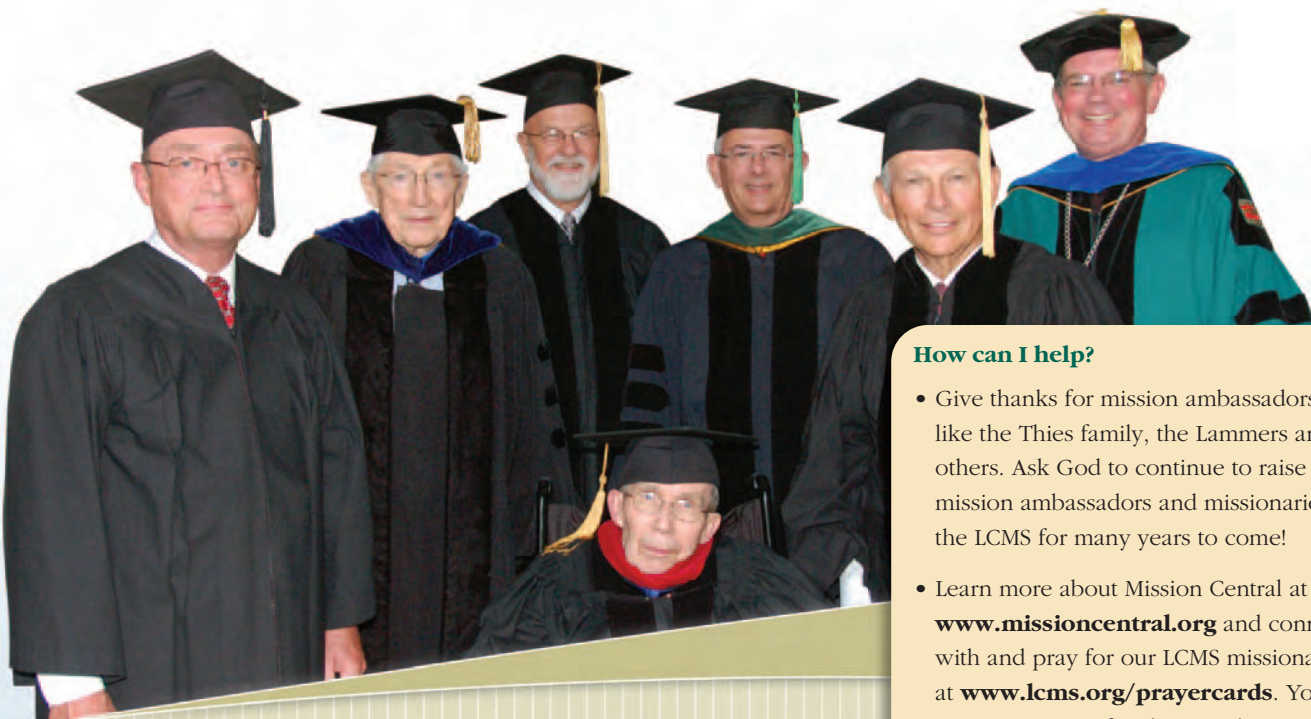
introduces one such couple, "Farmers LeRoy and Luetta Lammers, volunteer meat providers for Mission Central, brought a half of beef from their farm five hours west for Mission Central's freezer for meat for all of our visitors. We have never had to charge for meals. In 2009, our three volunteer meal-preparing teams served nearly 80 meals to groups coming here!"

As a mission development counselor and mission ambassador, Gary also visits LCMS congregations and individuals to inform and excite them about missions and

to encourage them to adopt, financially and through prayer, a specific mission project or missionary. He has given presentations in more than 1,200 churches throughout the U.S. and Canada—often working tirelessly, seven days a week!

"I am *overwhelmed* by what God is doing through Gary in support of the mission efforts of our church body!" shared Dr. David Birner, associate executive director, International, LCMS World Mission. "It is clear that our church would not be sending missionaries around the world if it were not for Gary and the wonderful people who are responding to the opportunity to support our missionaries. It is an awesome testimony to the power and blessing of God on the work of His kingdom!"

On May 20, 2011, Gary was recognized with the Christus Vivit Award during the Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., Commencement as "one of the most effective faith raisers for missions in the LCMS, including prayer and financial support."



How can I help?

- Give thanks for mission ambassadors like the Thies family, the Lammers and others. Ask God to continue to raise up mission ambassadors and missionaries in the LCMS for many years to come!
- Learn more about Mission Central at www.missioncentral.org and connect with and pray for our LCMS missionaries at www.lcms.org/prayercards. Your congregation or family can adopt a missionary family today!

LCMS World Mission joins in celebrating the Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, May 2011 Commencement special award and honorary degree recipients, pictured from left to right, are: Gary Thies, Rev. Dr. Wilbert Rosin, Rev. Carl Selle, Rev. Dr. Paul Heerboth (seated), Dr. John Eckrich, Rev. Hubert Temme and Concordia Seminary President Dale Meyer.



‘Alliance Missionaries’—the expanding multinational mission team

building sustainable communities of believers through a 21st century missionary force

Historically, LCMS career missionaries learn the local language and customs where they serve. They become close friends with partners with whom they work side-by-side in developing sustainable communities of believers. Eventually, those partners build their own missionary force to reach out in their own country and foreign mission fields.

“A distinction of LCMS mission work is that we plant communities of believers in such a way that those communities themselves can sustain the proclamation of the Gospel from generation to generation,” explains Dr. David Birner, associate executive director, International, LCMS World Mission. “Just as the Saxons who founded our Synod started a school before they started a church, the LCMS helps our partners put into place ministries to sustain a believing community such as schools, seminaries, clinics and other human care work.”

Today, partner church bodies are working shoulder to shoulder with LCMS missionaries. In some cases, partner church body missionaries have discovered a natural affinity for work in a particular country. A Nigerian Lutheran missionary, for example, may have a more natural connection with the people of Jamaica than a missionary from the United States, due to their shared African heritage. In the case of ‘Alliance Missionaries,’ the LCMS joins with one or more of our partner church bodies to send a partner church pastor as a career missionary to a foreign mission field. Today, the LCMS is working with five partner church bodies in sending seven partner church missionaries to six countries.

As we join with our brothers and sisters we are discovering that a global missionary force is emerging to meet the needs of the 21st century world. This is why God has placed us here with our specific heritage for the special role of building sustainable communities of Christian believers.

Meet our Alliance Missionaries:

**Rev. Gustavo Lavia
& Rev. Walter Ralli—Spain**

*from Evangelical Lutheran Church
of Argentina (IELA)*



Lavia family



Ralli family

The Lutheran mission in Spain is currently carried out by two Argentinean missionary families, through a partnership established in 2000 between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Spain, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina (IELA) and LCMS World Mission.

Revs. Lavia and Ralli minister among the Spanish people, who are largely unfamiliar with the Lutheran church and unreached by the pure Gospel of salvation through faith alone in Jesus Christ. The pair trains others in various levels of theological education, so that they may be better-equipped to serve as laypeople and/or ordained pastors. This includes the Biblical Institute, which trains laypeople and potentially, future pastors, via Internet in basic Lutheran Christian doctrine and provides a weekly Bible study and order of worship, via email, for Lutherans who live in locations that don't have worship led by one of the missionary pastors every week. The first Spanish pastor of the IELE was installed in October 2010.

Rev. Lavia's family includes wife, Rosana, and daughters, Rocío and Maite. They live in the Madrid area. Rev. Ralli's family includes wife, Paolo, and daughters, Manuela and Camila. They live in the Seville area. (Visit www.lcms.org/Spain.)

Rev. Matthias Tepper—Belgium

*from Germany's Independent
Evangelical Lutheran Church (SELK)*



Rev. Matthias Tepper and family have served at All Lutheran Church of Brussels, Belgium since 2007—sent by the SELK in partnership with LCMS World Mission and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Belgium. Initially, Rev. Tepper focused on reaching out to the English-speaking expatriate community in Brussels. He has two primary objectives: to gather together Lutherans for worship and fellowship and to spread the Gospel among unbelievers so they may come to faith in Jesus Christ. Matthias has experienced the joy of celebrating with Christians from all continents who might speak English as a second or third foreign language, bringing together a diverse group of believers.

Rev. Tepper studied theology at the SELK seminary in Oberursel, Germany and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., and he previously served in Germany. His family includes wife, Michelle, and three young children, Lillian and twins Isaac and Elijah. (Visit www.lcms.org/Belgium.)



Rev. Michael Wu—Macau, China

From Taiwan's China Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC)



An experienced pastor of the China Evangelical Lutheran Church (CELC) in Taiwan, Rev. Michael Wu and his wife, Grace, and two children, Daniel and Esther,

moved to Macau in January 2003 through a joint partnership among the CELC, Concordia School for Special Education in Macau and LCMS World Mission.

Rev. Wu's initial assignment was to serve as a chaplain for the school and as an evangelist attached to the Concordia English Outreach Center in Macau. Since January 2007, he has been focusing on leadership training in East Asia, helping to develop curriculum and to train lay leaders in the church. His work includes teaching evangelists and deacons, as well as working with church leaders and teachers in East Asia who are equipping lay people for ministry. (Visit www.lcms.org/Macau.)

Rev. Samuel Essien—The Gambia

from The Lutheran Church of Nigeria (LCN)



In 2000, the LCMS received an Internet invitation to partner with more than 200 Gambian Christians based at four preaching stations. An initial LCMS team

visited The Gambia and then helped to facilitate a partnership between The Lutheran Church of Nigeria (LCN) and these Gambian Christians to send a Nigerian pastor, Rev. Samuel William Essien, as missionary to The Gambia. Rev. Essien, his wife, Affy, and children, Monte, Fortune, Happiness, Peace and Harriet, have been serving in The Gambia since 2001. In the first year of Rev. Essien's ministry, the first church

building was dedicated, and the first Baptisms of 104 people and confirmations of 84 people were celebrated.

Rev. Essien will soon be transitioning out of this role and will be replaced by Pastor Anthony Sambou, who is a native of The Gambia and graduated from the pastoral program at the LCN seminary in June 2010. The Essien family anticipates returning to Nigeria by September 2011.

Rev. Essien is a graduate of the LCN's Jonathan Ekong Memorial Lutheran Seminary. (Visit www.lcms.org/Gambia.)

Rev. Obot Ite—Jamaica

from The Lutheran Church of Nigeria (LCN)



Rev. Obot Ite and his wife, Abasifreke, have served as missionaries in Jamaica since 2008 through a partnership between the LCN and LCMS World Mission. As Nigerians, the Ites have natural connection points with the people of Jamaica due to their shared African heritage. They serve the congregation of St. Andrews Lutheran Church and reach out to unchurched and uncommitted people around the island in various ways—including following up with contacts generated by Jamaican broadcasts of The Lutheran Hour radio programs. There are also opportunities for building relationships through the time they spend in local schools and Abasifreke's sewing shop.

Rev. Ite is a graduate of the LCN's Jonathan Ekong Memorial Seminary and previously served in Nigeria. (Visit www.lcms.org/Jamaica.)

Rev. Walter Ries, Jr.—Dominican Republic

from Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (IELB)



In 2005, the IELB partnered with the LCMS to send Rev. Walter Ries, Jr., to lead evangelistic outreach efforts and theological education in the Dominican Republic and serve as part of the Lutheran ministry team there.

Rev. Ries is involved in work in several communities in the Dominican Republic, teaching confirmation and theological courses, and serving as pastor in local congregations until national leaders can be trained. He has been training two Dominican vicars, including Dr. Willy Gaspar, a local dentist, who recently completed his studies. Gaspar and his wife, Santa, began their theological studies in 2005 at the Bible Institute in Santo Domingo. On March 13, 2011, Dr. Gaspar was ordained and installed as the first pastor of the emerging Dominican Republic Lutheran Mission.

Today, Rev. Ries and his wife, Ana, reside in Santiago. The Brazilian missionary is a graduate of the IELB's Concordia Seminary in Sao Leopoldo, Brazil. (Visit www.lcms.org/DominicanRepublic.)

How can I get involved?

- Pray for these Alliance Missionaries serving far from home—establishing sustainable communities of believers. Ask that God would gather His people to receive the Gospel and Sacraments faithfully and joyfully!
- Give to support the outreach ministries of Alliance Missionaries in six countries. Visit www.lcms.org and click on "Make a Gift," selecting the countries where these missionaries serve. Or, write a check to LCMS World Mission with "Alliance Missionaries" written on the memo line. You can also call the Donor Care Line at 888-930-4438 to make a secure gift today.

Lutherans lead the fight to end malaria deaths

The LCMS joined an unprecedented effort among African Lutherans in connecting God's love, mercy and healing with those who suffer from malaria in Africa.

Did you know? Half of the world's population is at risk for malaria, and the disease claims one child's life every 45 seconds.

In response to the universal affects of the disease, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and Lutheran World Relief formed the Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI), a unique effort to mobilize millions of U. S. Lutherans in the global effort to help end malaria deaths in Africa by 2015. LMI seeks to raise awareness, advocate for worldwide health initiatives and raise \$45 million to fight malaria.

Kama Bernabo, director of international planning and operations for LCMS World Mission, serves on the LMI program committee. In December 2010, Kama visited Lutheran partners in Tanzania to help coordinate and develop anti-malaria programs.

Learn more about LMI first-hand from Kama in this Q and A.



Q: What excites you about LMI?

Kama: When a Lutheran pastor in Africa tells me people treated in their clinics often come to church and are later baptized, I get excited. When I hear about a youth group in the United States that embraces this cause and gets energized and creative, I get excited. When I hear reports that malaria education through the church is more effective than that of other programs, I get excited. When I see that the number of deaths from malaria have decreased in recent years because of integrated programs like LMI, I get excited. Getting excited is the easy part.

Q: Why the LCMS?

Plenty of organizations donate money and nets, but they don't have a sustained, trusted presence in the communities they hope to benefit. Often, their good intentions don't translate to good outcomes. Our church partners in Africa live and serve in hard-to-reach areas known as "last mile" communities—they have clinics, hospitals, pastors, health care professionals, teachers, community leaders and evangelists. Through our partners, the LCMS can contribute to the global fight against malaria in a unique and important way. At the same time, we can rejoice in knowing God's kingdom will grow as the Good News of the Gospel is shared with the men, women and children who are served by the health ministries of the Lutheran churches in Africa.

Q: How will our Lutheran partners in Africa benefit?

They benefit from our prayer and encouragement, as many of their members have suffered in some way because of malaria. LMI aims to increase our partners' capacity to reach people with education, prevention and treatment, to access resources in their own countries when LMI funding has waned, and to steward those resources more effectively. Examples of increased capacity are: improved health infrastructures, improved grant-writing and project management skills, advanced inventory systems, stronger relationships with government health ministries, improved monitoring and evaluation of programs, etc.

Q: What have you seen and learned by visiting Africa and working with partners in developing the programming?

The media often portrays Africans as helpless victims of disease and poverty. I have worked with committed Lutheran medical professionals and church leaders who are fighting malaria with fierce ingenuity. They don't need to be rescued, but they do need our commitment to be good listeners and strong partners.

Q: Can you tell us of a family you met in Africa that is personally fighting malaria?

Meeting the young mother in this photo (left) was powerful for me. She brought her daughter to a Lutheran clinic in rural Tanzania to be treated for malaria several days before our visit, and the little girl was showing signs of improvement. Without

A Tanzanian woman comforts her child, who was being treated for malaria at a rural Lutheran clinic.





Kama Bernabo learned from Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania nurse Anna Minja during her visit.

treatment, she may have died. I have a little girl, too, and I could relate to the way this mom held and comforted her sweet baby. The nurse told me the woman had not left her child's side since coming to the clinic. Because of this, I will never forget that every malaria statistic has a face, a heart and a story. They don't all end like this one, but they should.

Q: What can we personally do to get involved through our schools and churches?

Learn more about malaria, and get creative! The best ideas for raising awareness and funds for LMI have come from youth groups and members of LCMS churches. I have been inspired by the passionate response to this need, and I wish more people would share their photos and stories. Enthusiasm is contagious!

Q: Why now?

We Americans tend to respond to a cause or crisis and then move on to the next one. For the sake of millions of children and families, we need to stay in this fight until it is won. No one should die of malaria—it's preventable and treatable.

Get Involved!

- Get Connected: Visit www.lutheranmalaria.org to download worship resources, fundraising ideas and much more to start educating your congregation and community about malaria.
- Team up!: Through LMI's partnership with the Nothing But Nets™ campaign, \$10 buys a net for a family in Africa and trains them on its use. Imagine how many families you could reach by teaming up with your friends and family through Lutheran Nothing But Nets. Visit www.lutheranmalaria.org/nets to get started.

LCMS World Mission Prayer Resources

July, August & September Missionary Birthday List

July 4	Mark Krause, Latvia	Aug. 21	DeeDee Wasmund, South Korea
July 13	Peter Pfaff, South Korea	Aug. 22	Julia Mueller, Latvia
July 14	Jane Klammer, Asia	Aug. 24	Mark Eisold, Peru
July 15	Jonathan Braun, Macau; Connie Larson, Asia	Aug. 25	Andrea Herman, Guinea
July 17	Megan Birney, Hong Kong; Michelle Gerlach, Asia; Stephen Oliver, Taiwan	Aug. 26	Patrick Frerking, Asia; Deborah Rockrohr, South Africa
July 18	Juliana Hirsch, Czech Republic	Aug. 27	Maggie Oliver, Taiwan
July 19	Jonathan Muhly, Eurasia	Aug. 28	Jennie Smith, Germany
July 24	Joel Zielke, Asia	Sept. 1	Jamie Endorf, Peru
July 26	Kevin Foley, Taiwan; Bryn Welcenbach, Macau	Sept. 3	Heidi Norton, Guinea
July 31	James Koerschen, Asia	Sept. 5	Michelle Cagnin, Hong Kong
Aug. 1	Joshua Lange, Asia	Sept. 6	George Frahm, Cambodia
Aug. 2	Michelle Sawyer, Hong Kong	Sept. 13	Cherie Auger, Cayman Islands; Fred Reinhardt, Kenya
Aug. 6	Michael Kersten, Hong Kong	Sept. 16	Terry Umphenour, Asia
Aug. 8	Megan Ferrin, Hong Kong	Sept. 18	Sharon Owens, Macau
Aug. 9	Joyce Erber, Nigeria	Sept. 19	Jeffrey Ross, Kenya
Aug. 10	Susan Frerking, Asia	Sept. 22	Lucas Gerlach, Asia
Aug. 11	Fungchatou Lo, Cambodia	Sept. 23	Amy Winkelman, Southeast Asia
Aug. 13	Michael Moreno, Norfolk, Neb.	Sept. 24	Bill Leese, Hong Kong; Mary Kosberg, South Korea
Aug. 15	Ed Auger, Cayman Islands; Rebekah House, Asia	Sept. 25	Trixy Zielke, Asia
Aug. 16	David Mahsman, Germany	Sept. 29	Coral Rose, South Africa
Aug. 18	Julie Lutz, Papua New Guinea; Steve Winkelman, Southeast Asia		
Aug. 20	Sarah Schaff, Southeast Asia		

Military chaplains with birthdays in July:

Chaplain Matthew Boarts, Shaw AFB, S.C.; Chaplain Jon Conroe, San Diego, Calif.; Chaplain Gregory Lucido, Fort Gillem, Ga.; Chaplain Kelly-Ray Merit, New York, N.Y.; Chaplain David Reedy, England; Chaplain Patrick Riley, Spain; Chaplain Ryan Rupe, Milwaukee, Wis.; Chaplain James Watson, Fort Leonardwood, Mo.; Chaplain Edward Wright, Fort Bliss, Texas

Military chaplains with birthdays in August:

Chaplain Jeremy Gorline, Germany; Chaplain Michael Moreno, Norfolk, Neb.; Chaplain Gregory Todd, Camp Lejeune, N.C.; Chaplain Oliver

Washington, Fort Hood, Texas; Chaplain Ralph Wetzel, Fort Wayne, Ind.; Chaplain Glen Wurdeman, Fort Riley, Kan.

Military chaplains with birthdays in September:

Chaplain Steven Bartell, Arlington, Va.; Chaplain Graham Glover, Germany; Chaplain Lynn Hanson, Minneapolis, Minn.; Chaplain James Hoke, Lincoln, Neb.; Chaplain David Jacob, Germany; Chaplain Gregory Jans, Barksdale AFB, La.; Chaplain James Puttler, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.; Chaplain William Sager, Fort Shafter, Hawaii; Chaplain Jonathan Shaw, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.; Chaplain Lynn Stroud, Bryan, Texas

Download a copy in Word or PDF format at www.lcmsworldmission.org/prayforus or call to request a copy at 1-800-433-3954.



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Regional Director for Latin America Rev. Ted Krey and pastors representing partner churches from the region share blessings with Rev. Willy Gaspar at his ordination service on March 13. Gaspar is the first local Lutheran pastor in the Dominican Republic.



LCMS WORLD MISSION

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www.lcms.org



In late April, the LCMS launched its new website, which includes a more user-friendly format and many new features. Users can create a “myLCMS” account, which allows you to view donation records, subscribe to any LCMS e-newsletters and more! Log on today to explore the new information available.

Questions? Send an email to
infocenter@lcms.org
 or call 888-843-5267.

