



LCMS World Relief and Human Care

# SHARING

## newsletter

2024 HOLIDAY EDITION

## Helping Those Impacted by Hurricane Helene

**W**hen Hurricane Helene came ashore near Perry, Fla., as a Category 4 storm on Sept. 26, it left a trail of destruction across the southeastern United States. Weeks later, the estimated death toll stands at almost 250 people across seven states, with some people still unaccounted for.

Within days of Helene's landfall, the Rev. Dr. Ross Johnson, director of LCMS Disaster Response, traveled to the affected areas. He reported that the impact in Florida consisted primarily of flooding; in Georgia, wind damage; and in North Carolina, both.

In the Tampa Bay, Fla., area, homes were severely impacted by a nearly 20-foot storm surge. Almost 50 families at Grace Lutheran Church, St. Petersburg, experienced some degree of damage, along with 15 families from Our Savior Lutheran Church, St. Petersburg. The LCMS Florida-Georgia District estimates that around 30 church workers have been directly affected.

Johnson is coordinating with the pastors at both Grace and Our Savior to provide grants to assist church members. Meanwhile, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Tampa, is providing housing to Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) volunteers working in the area.

In Georgia, where the response will be focused on chainsaw work, two volunteer camps — one in Valdosta and one in Augusta — will operate over the next 3–4 weeks.

In North Carolina, Helene packed a double whammy of wind and water, necessitating both extensive chainsaw work and flood recovery. In Tryon, N.C., the sanctuary of Trinity Lutheran Church was flooded. Mount Pisgah Lutheran Church in Hendersonville also sustained damage, and Camp Linn Haven (an LCMS Recognized Service Organization) and Mountainside Lutheran Church, which is on Camp Linn Haven's campus, suffered extensive damage.

Eric and Laura Macke of St. Petersburg, Fla., are currently renting an Airbnb property while repairs are being made to their home. Eric is a teacher at Grace, St. Petersburg, and he and Laura



**Clockwise, from top left:** Laura Macke prays with volunteers at her flood-damaged home in St. Petersburg, Fla., on Oct. 1, 2024. Jay Wendland, LCMS Florida-Georgia District disaster response coordinator, talks with Lisa Kauffman outside her home in Gulfport, Fla. The Rev. Chris Futch (right) listens to a man involved in the cleanup in Gulfport, Fla.



agreed that their church family has never meant more to them than it does today.

"I don't know how we would get through this without our church and our faith," Laura said. "These are all just earthly things. We will replace them; we will rebuild; everything will be fine. I know that God will take care of us. I'm not afraid."

Learn more at [lcms.org/hurricane-response](https://lcms.org/hurricane-response).

## Give God Glory ...



... for the Rev. Dr. Carl and Chenhsi Hanson, LCMS missionaries serving in Seoul, South Korea. Carl is pastor of International

Lutheran Church, a vibrant English-speaking ministry that includes both expat and local families living in the greater Seoul area. Chenhsi is a trained Chinese/English translator who is actively involved in the congregation, especially in the Sunday school program. Learn more at [lcms.org/hanson](https://lcms.org/hanson).

... for Ministry in Mission, an LCMS Recognized Service Organization (RSO) based in Chesterland, Ohio. This RSO has done extensive mercy work in Haiti, including

partnering with LCMS Disaster Response following disasters, organizing mission trips for health care providers, and providing meals and tuition assistance for children. Learn more at [ministryinmission.com](https://ministryinmission.com).

... for all those helping people impacted by Hurricanes Helene and Milton. We give thanks to God for the unity within our Synod as we walk together with the LCMS Florida-Georgia and Southeastern districts; as our LERT volunteers muck out homes and churches and remove debris; as multiple RSOs partner together to help provide housing, hot meals and supplies; and as individuals, families and groups pack flood buckets and provide financial support. To God be the glory for the mercy work being done in His name.

One of the priorities of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) is to reach out in mercy and compassion to those in need, motivated by Christ and His Gospel, according to the Lutheran confession of the faith. This is accomplished under the familiar name of LCMS World Relief and Human Care, which the Synod uses to describe the mercy work directed by the policies of the Boards for National and International Mission and implemented through the programs of the Offices of National and International Mission.

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### You Make the Difference through LCMS World Relief and Human Care

You make the ministry described in this newsletter possible! Your prayers and contributions to World Relief and Human Care "Where Needed Most" help deliver our Savior's mercy to people in need. You bolster tightly restricted donations from others to help fully fund important mercy projects, allowing us to report here the impact you are making in Christ's name. The courtesy envelope in this issue allows you to send a future contribution as the Holy Spirit leads, when He leads.



# CARING FOR Military Members in Japan

**A**s the only missionary of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) currently serving in Japan, the Rev. Dr. Daniel Jastram’s work takes him all over the country. Once a month, he and his wife, Joan, travel south to the American naval base in Yokosuka. There, he leads worship for a small group of Lutherans while Joan accompanies on the piano.

During the May 11 service, Katie Terjesen and her five children were among those in attendance. Her husband, Commander Steven Terjesen, serves on a U.S. Navy destroyer and was deployed with his ship that week.

“We feel beyond grateful and blessed that we have this opportunity [to attend an LCMS service] over here. We came over expecting absolutely nothing,” said Katie Terjesen. This is the family’s seventh move with the military, so she’s grateful to be able to provide some continuity in church attendance for her children.

While most of those who attend the Lutheran service will eventually move on to other postings, Edward Robinson III, a retired U.S. diplomat and Navy commander, plans to stay in the area for the long haul. He’s not yet a confirmed member, but he attends worship regularly and loves Jastram’s preaching and teaching.

“He really preaches the Gospel,” Robinson said after the service. “He’s a real theologian. He asks difficult questions. He’s always putting me on the spot and challenging me.”

Jastram has served in Japan since 2016, and his top priority is “to establish faithful Lutheran worship” in the country, which is why he eagerly agreed to care for the Lutherans in Yokosuka when he learned of their desire for

an LCMS chaplain. He also leads an English-language service in Shinjuku, Tokyo, where he serves an eclectic group of American and Japanese Lutherans.

In each location, the groups that gather may be small, but Jastram never stops preaching and teaching. “There’s only one Christian church throughout the entire world: all those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior from sin through His death and

resurrection,” Jastram reminded his listeners in his sermon for the week. “Jesus prays to the Father that we may be one, and that we could have His joy every day of our lives.”

LCMS missionary Rev. Dr. Daniel Jastram serves as pastor for LCMS military members and their families at the naval base in Yokosuka, Japan.



## Thank You for Helping to Change Lives

**I**n the aftermath of the terrible hurricane damage in North Carolina recently, there was a recurring post on Facebook. It showed a group of Amish people building small, temporary homes for victims. God bless them for doing so.

An LCMS Lutheran commented, “We need to learn from this.” I responded, “Perhaps you are unaware of the extensive work done by the LCMS in times of disaster. In New Orleans after Katrina, the LCMS (through Camp Restore — a miraculous partnership of the LCMS, the Southern District, Orphan Grain Train and many others) rebuilt 6,000 homes.”

And the fact is, we’ve been mucking out and assisting with rebuilds ever since. Our Lutheran Early Response Teams are amazing and amazingly trained. I use this as just one example of what your church body — that means your brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ who give of their time, talents and treasure — does to change the lives of tens of thousands of people, indeed millions, over time.

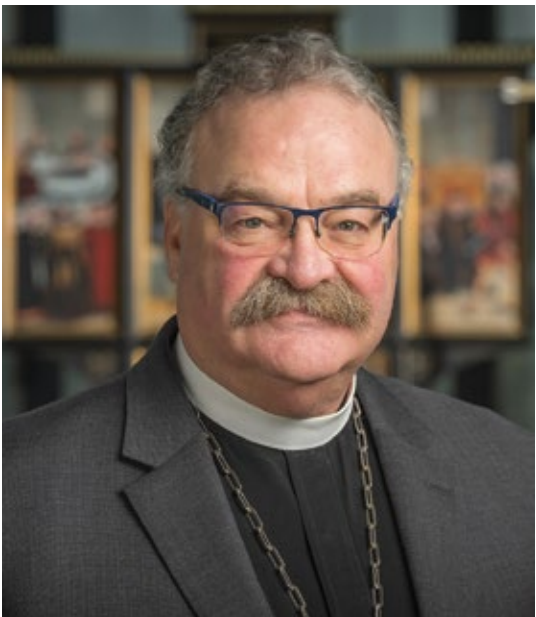
Whether in the U.S. or the most remote corner of Africa or the Philippines, YOU

empower the Missouri Synod to show Christ’s love to all those hurting, always in partnership with our Lutheran brothers and sisters on the ground. We do precisely what St. Paul urges: **“Do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).** You allow us to help make vast improvements in housing for seminarians and deaconess students in seminaries with shoestring budgets. You see that thousands of orphaned children are not only cared for physically but learn Bible stories, attend church and are taught Luther’s catechism.

I’ve had the privilege of seeing all of this personally, as well as much, much more. Thank you. And believe me, people all over the globe thank you and thank Christ for you.

In Christ,  
*Matthew C. Harrison*

Pastor Matthew C. Harrison  
President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



Photos: LCMS Communications/Erik M. Lunsford

