



Your Mission Advocates

MARTHA DAHLKE

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My name is Martha Dahlke, mission advocate serving congregations, groups and individuals in North Dakota, South Dakota, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Utah, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. I also serve as the director of campaigns and special initiatives for LCMS Mis-

sion Advancement. Both roles afford me the opportunity to serve people who have a heart for growing Christ's kingdom through their joyful giving. I am here to listen and encourage you in your faithful support of Christ's mission and ministry through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). My father (Rev. Dr. Leslie J. Mitkos, Jr.), father-in-law (Rev. James Dahlke) and brother-in-law (Rev. Nathan Woolery) serve the church as pastors in the LCMS. My husband, the third generation in his family to serve in the mission field, was a missionary in Côte d'Ivoire.

We are all called to serve Christ's church through our vocation. For some of us, that means traveling to far-off lands to share the lifesaving Gospel of Christ's life, death and resurrection for our sins. For others, that means lifting up these missionaries in prayer and partnering with them in support of this work. Personally, God has called me to serve His people by guiding their philanthropic gifts, first at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and now with our Synod for the past 18 years. God has blessed me richly with dear friends that want to support Christ's mission, not out of obligation, but in grateful response to God's ultimate gift of His Son.

God has blessed me with a wonderful, huge extended family. In our free time, my husband and I love traveling and seeking out historical sites across the country. I enjoy baking and cooking. You can also find me cheering on my nieces and nephews at their many sporting events and music and drama productions.

My favorite hymn is "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing." It is a daily reminder that God has blessed me much more richly than I could ever deserve by making the ultimate sacrifice of His Son's precious blood as a ransom for my sin.

JOE DEVERIAN

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Grace, peace and mercy to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! My name is Joe Deverian Jr., and I am a mission advocate serving the church in California, Nevada, Arizona and New Mexico. As a mission advocate, I am here to connect people with their ministry passions and celebrate their efforts to help build the kingdom of God.

I am so thankful that God has assigned me this vocation because not only can I rejoice with people about their positive impact on the world, but I can also personally thank them for being the hands and feet of Christ towards me. I grew up in a prosperity gospel church and did not know about the grace of God. My soul was burdened with works-righteousness, and I always worried if I were saved.

But thanks be to God, I went to an LCMS high school where I learned about God's grace through Jesus Christ for the first time. After that, I was disciplined at Concordia University Irvine by a pre-seminarian roommate. When I graduated, I decided to work for the government and became a congressional staffer in Washington, D.C. While there, I was catechized and then baptized! Even though I was baptized with the water and the Word, I felt like I was baptized with fire — I wanted to help spread the Gospel!

I am so thankful for the work of the LCMS, which blesses me and countless others with the Gospel!

DAVID A. FIALA

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Your sins are forgiven on account of Jesus Christ. There is no better message you could hope to hear or endeavor to share. When you partner with the LCMS, you advance this Gospel and grow Christ's kingdom. Together, as the church, we are the very Body of Christ. We are busy

spreading His Gospel through every means possible.

My name is David Fiala, and I am a mission advocate of the LCMS. I serve people who contribute to the mission of the church and reside predominantly in Wisconsin and

Minnesota. My father was a plumber, but I'm just a piece of pipe — I connect things. Would you take joy in having a direct and personal connection to the mission of the church? I'd like to hear about it.

I'm a graduate of Concordia University, Nebraska and Concordia University Chicago. By education, I'm a high school religion teacher and DCE. By experience, I'm an overseas missionary and missionary recruiter. By the grace of God, I am forgiven.

How can I serve and encourage you?

MICHAEL (MIKE) FISCHER

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My name is Michael (Mike) Fischer, and I am privileged to serve LCMS Mission Advancement as the senior gift planning advocate. I serve faithful supporters of the LCMS' mission in implementing a gift plan, the Christian Estate Plan, that benefits the kingdom as well as loved ones. In

addition to facilitating gift plans, I serve a small group of mission supporters living in the western United States.

I have served as a professional church worker for over 45 years in our Lutheran high schools and with various national LCMS ministries. Additionally, I have been blessed to be a part of a family dedicated to church work for over a century. Through these family members and my faithful teachers and professors, God has instilled in me a zeal to be used by the Holy Spirit as He grows the kingdom and robs Satan of those currently in his grasp. As the writer of Hebrews so aptly states, *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith"* (HEB. 12:1-2).

Encouraged by those faithful who have gone before me, fixing my eyes on Jesus and realizing that God has so richly blessed me to be a blessing to others and the kingdom, I joyfully "run the race" to which God has called me.

MARK HOFMAN

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My name is Mark Hofman, mission advocate for congregations, groups and individuals in Colorado, Connecticut, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Hampshire, eastern New York, Rhode Island, southeastern Utah and Vermont. I also serve as the executive

director of LCMS Mission Advancement. Both roles are wonderful opportunities to walk alongside those whom God calls to share His Gospel through the joyful act of voluntary giving. My ethical code for serving as a resource to other Christian disciples begins by confessing, "I am not the Holy Spirit," and ends with "God decides; don't argue with Him about it."

My father and grandfather (who were both LCMS missionary pastors), several other LCMS pastors, friends, family and teachers consistently pointed me to Jesus Christ alone. God has mightily blessed me with a loving wife, Rachel, and a full-of-surprises 13-year-old son, Matthew. Before this work, I served in similar roles at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis for nearly two decades. I am a rostered graduate of Concordia University, Nebraska.

Writing to the church in Philippi, St. Paul gives us this assurance: *"Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him [Christ Jesus] who strengthens me"* (PHIL. 4:11-13).

FRANK KREMER

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My name is Frank Kremer, mission advocate serving Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma and southwestern Missouri. I help connect God's people to Synod ministries that call on their hearts and impact many throughout the world.

I am passionate about serving my church and walking alongside those who have been so generous with their prayers and support of spreading the Gospel of Jesus throughout the world.

I came to the Lutheran faith in 2007 when I met my wife Tammy and started a family, which has grown to include three beautiful children. God always has a plan; he brought me to be a resource for you at the Synod after spending over twenty years working in various roles in manufacturing, distribution and financial services.

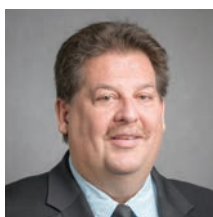
Being able to work for the church and achieve its mission is extremely rewarding and has helped me in my personal growth in the faith.

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 PETER 4:10).

JOHN LEWIS

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My name is John Lewis, mission advocate serving Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Florida. I also serve as the director of LCMS Mission Advancement Transformative Giving. My role as a mission advocate is to gain a deeper understanding of your passion for the mission and ministry of our

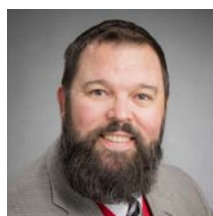
Synod. I am here to serve you and be a resource when it comes to the areas of our Synod's mission work that are most important to you. I am a lifelong LCMS Lutheran who has been encouraged in my faith by family, friends and colleagues throughout my life. God has richly blessed me with my wife of 34 years, Lori, two adult children, Sonya Hogan (son-in-law DeOndre) and Jay Lewis (daughter-in-law Kaleigh), and three wonderful grandchildren, Penelope and Bellamy Hogan and Carter Lewis. In my free time I enjoy traveling with my wife, spending time with my grandkids, watching sports and playing golf.

Connected to Him through our Baptism, God continues to bless each one of us in many ways. I am reminded of this each day in my confirmation verse: *"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing"* (JOHN 15:5).

ZACHARIAH SCHNARE

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My name is Zachariah Schnare, mission advocate serving faithful supporters of the LCMS in Illinois, Iowa and northwest Missouri. In this life, I am continually reminded that *"God will supply every need ... according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus"* (PHIL. 4:19). This He does out of His

divine goodness and mercy through faithful supporters of the LCMS. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 9:7, *"God loves a cheerful giver,"* and later in verse 11, *"[generosity] through us will produce thanksgiving to God."* I am blessed with the opportunity to connect cheerful and faithful contributors with partnership opportunities for joyful giving.

Born into a Lutheran family, service to the church was long instilled in me. Both of my parents were lifelong LCMS workers — my father is a retired pastor and my mother a retired grade school educator. God has abundantly blessed me with a wonderful wife, Dawn, who is an amazing mother to our nine children. My wife and I are both rostered graduates of Concordia University, Nebraska. Prior to serving in this role, I was able to serve the church as an educator at a Lutheran high school for over a decade.

Peter reminds us that all things in this life have been given

from our God in heaven. *"His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence"*

(2 PETER 1:3).

REV. STEVE SCHULZ

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Joy and peace to you in the name of our risen Savior, Jesus! My name is Rev. Steve Schulz, and I serve as the pastoral advisor and assistant to the director at Mission Central* in Mapleton, Iowa. I was born and raised in North Dakota, and the Lord gave me the great privilege of serving for

32 years as a parish pastor in Iowa and North Dakota. Now, I have the joy of helping raise mission awareness among members of the LCMS about international mission work. Mission Central plays a vital role in encouraging people to pray for and support our Synod's missionaries, who serve in mission fields around the world. My wife, Sue, and I have been blessed with four children and two grandchildren. We enjoy hiking, camping and playing board games when the family gets together. The Holy Scriptures reassure us that *"God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son!"* (1 John 5:11). What a beautiful message of hope and peace we have to share with a broken world that so desperately needs to hear it. I am humbled that our Lord Jesus has called me to be a part of this important work of sharing the Gospel.

SHANE SMITHSON

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My name is Shane Smithson, your mission advocate serving Missouri and the southeastern United States, including Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina. I diligently align passions and interests with LCMS ministries and projects. I promise to listen, abide by

the golden rule and help you find the most joy in giving. I am a lifelong LCMS Lutheran with German roots in southeastern Missouri. Born into a Christian household, I grew up knowing that faith and family is paramount.

God has sprouted a growing family through my wife, Chelsea, and our son, Hudson. I am a Concordia University Wisconsin graduate who replanted in St. Louis. I have worked with a variety of nonprofits here in St. Louis and enjoy giving back through volunteering. In my free time, you'll find me out on the golf course or in my flower bed enjoying God's creation.

God richly and continuously blesses us with all that we need, and I believe He has called me to walk alongside my brothers

and sisters in Christ to celebrate those endowments. Would you be willing to share your story with me? You are a valuable member of the Body of Christ!

"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust'" (Ps. 91:1-2).

GARY THIES

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My name is Gary Thies. I was born on a farm in the hills of western Iowa. In 1994, after many years in the banking, real estate and insurance business, I began full-time service as the first-ever deployed mission development counselor for the LCMS, with the task of "raising the level of mission awareness" throughout the entire United States.

Over the years, I have traveled to 75 countries to see the Lord's missionaries at work. Mission Central* began in the basement of my home. My wife, Maxine, and I have seen some real miracles happen out here in the middle of an Iowa cornfield. As the on-site director of Mission Central, I have personally visited with thousands of people who have come to visit this place over the years, and what a joy it has been! The Lord has sent 103 volunteers to help with this labor of love. Our facility features an amazing Barn Museum with missionary artifacts from all over the world. In 2017, a Creation Theater was completed that highlights the sixth day of creation. People can hear directly from LCMS missionaries about their work in our fellowship hall. Mission Central has grown to become a major facilitator of gifts and offerings which enable our LCMS missionaries to tell others about Jesus, who said, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). This is what Mission Central is all about.

KRISTA YOUNG

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My name is a shortened version of Kristen ("Christian" in the Pidgin language spoken in Papua New Guinea, where I was born and raised) and means follower of Christ. As a missionary kid and child of Lutheran school teachers, Richard and Loretta Adler, who dedicated their lives

to the work of the church, I saw what it meant to be a follower of Christ in all circumstances.

Before joining LCMS Mission Advancement, I have been blessed to share my gifts as a director of Christian education and as a missionary in East Africa. I am in awe of the many ways our church is sharing the love of Jesus around the world.

One of my favorite Bible verses is Psalm 139, especially verse 14: *"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well."* Each of us have individually unique stories of God's provision and faithfulness in our lives that can encourage and uplift each other.

I enjoy gardening, especially tropical plants. If you have a garden, I would love to help with the weeds — or enjoy a cup of tea or strong Ethiopian coffee — while we chat. I'm excited about the many ways your partnership impacts God's people around the world. My family recently moved to the mountains of North Carolina, so we hope to become avid hikers. Seeing the beautiful views of creation from the top makes the climb always worth it. When I am in your area, I hope we can connect and meet face-to-face.

* Mission Central is a partnership of the LCMS, LCMS Mission Advancement, Iowa District West and the Nebraska District. It operates under the tax-exempt status given to the LCMS by the IRS and is a budgeted, integral part of the LCMS Mission Advancement unit.