

March 18, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

We know the COVID-19 pandemic is hard on you, your family and congregation. It is disrupting all our lives and prompting individuals, groups and businesses to make adjustments to slow the spread of the virus and limit its impact on daily life. For as long as this situation persists, we will be praying for you and taking every precaution against the virus on behalf of you and our staff.

LCMS Mission Advancement remains steadfast in its desire to care for those who contribute financially to the national and international mission and ministry of the LCMS. During these turbulent times, our team is revising its regular operations to continue to serve you to the very best of our ability. I want to share some of these adjustments with you:

- **Work-related travel by Mission Advancement employees, including deployed personnel, has been suspended.** We normally travel in order to personally meet with people like you to inform and assist with choices about voluntary charitable giving. Right now we are intentionally shifting toward personal conversations more often using telephone, e-mail, teleconferencing (Zoom, Facetime, Skype, etc.) and text messaging.
- **Several employees normally based within the LCMS International Center have been designated to work remotely (from home) with appropriate technology and training.** Should you phone the International Center to reach them, this may delay their response, but only slightly.
- **Recording and receipting of donations is likely to take longer than normal.** Our standard of excellence is to send out a receipt within 48 to 72 hours of receiving a donation. Every member of our small team responsible for recording donations and generating gift receipts is a parent of school-age children. Public, parochial and private schools in the St. Louis-area are closing until early April, forcing parents to seek ways to provide child care. We ask for your patience as we will do our best with available personnel to deliver receipts with as little delay as possible.
- **Monitoring of our printing and mailing vendors is being heightened.** The letters and e-mails we send, asking you to prayerfully consider donating (as the LORD allows, 2 Corinthians 8:5), will continue out of necessity in order to support the vital mission and ministry of the LCMS, which continues here and around the globe. Our appeal letters are printed and mailed by offsite vendors. We have the capacity to quickly shift printing to vendors unaffected by the COVID-19 virus.

Today I am asking for your help to ensure that our Synod's work to give witness to our Savior Jesus continues with as little disruption as possible.

- Most importantly, **continue to pray** for an end to this pandemic, for the provision of effective care to those infected or afraid and especially for those providing such care.

- Please call LCMS Mission Advancement if you have questions or desire information. Our toll-free donor services line is **888-893-4438**. You can also find specific employee contact information, including cell phone numbers and email addresses, at <https://www.lcms.org/about/directories/mission-advancement-staff>. We exist to serve YOU and your needs in a manner worthy of our Savior.
- Consider any of a variety of electronic methods to continue your important charitable support. To view these options, please go to [lcms.org/givenow](https://www.lcms.org/givenow).

I also ask for additional prayers that this pandemic will not be used by The Enemy to disrupt or diminish the mission of the Christian Church on earth, or to spread fear and anxiety among those whose certain future and hope is found in Jesus. There will be temptation to retreat from the unity of our fellowship and the challenges of continuing to worship together as we strive to respect those whom God has put in authority over us, even as we return a portion of God's riches back to Him in order to fund and sustain the ongoing local, regional, national and international mission and ministry that makes an impact on people's lives forever.

And so, dear faithful disciple of Jesus, during these difficult times, please know of our confidence in our business-continuity plans, and rest assured that we are well prepared to take care of you.

In service to our Lord Jesus, and to you,

Mark D. Hofman, CFRE, MBA  
Executive Director, LCMS Mission Advancement