

# SPEAKERS

CONCORDIA SEMINARY, ST. LOUIS

2018 NATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE CONFERENCE



## REV. DR. RICHARD ARMSTRONG

The Rev. Dr. Richard Armstrong is the Executive Director of Lutheran Counseling Services (LCS) in Orlando, Fla. He is a Fellow in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in the State of Florida and a Florida Approved Clinical Supervisor.

Armstrong served for over 25 years in the parish ministry of the LCMS in three different congregations. He is co-author and trainer of “God’s Care in Times of Crisis” and “God’s Care For Congregations in Times of Crisis,” manuals for selecting and training crisis teams in Christian schools and churches to prepare for, respond to and provide aftercare in crisis situations. Armstrong and his teams have been part of Lutheran disaster response to tragedies in Denver, New York, D.C. and Newtown, as well as the Florida and Gulf Coast hurricanes. He has received the “Distinguished Service Award,” Lutheran Schools Association of New York and the “Distinguished Alumni Award 2006,” Concordia University Texas, Austin, Texas. In addition to serving as the Executive Director at LCS conducting individual, marriage and family system therapy sessions, Armstrong is also involved in facilitating organizational consultations and leadership coaching. Armstrong is happily married to his wife Kristi, and they have two daughters, two sons-in-law and six grandchildren.



## CHELSEA BECK

Chelsea Beck is the Volunteer Coordinator for the Corpus Christi/Port Aransas site for the LCMS Hurricane Harvey long-term recovery team. She is grateful for the opportunity to serve so many on behalf of her church and loves working with volunteers from all over the country. She is

a (sometimes too proud) eighth generation Texan from Houston and has called the Coastal Bend home for the last seven years. Beck is a mom to three rambunctious boys, a leader in her local MOPS group, an artist and an art teacher.



## REV. DUSTIN BECK

The Rev. Dustin Beck has served the saints at Trinity Lutheran Church in Corpus Christi, Texas for 7 years. He is a graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, class of 2011. Beck’s ministry has focused on caring for an aging congregation while welcoming and integrating younger families into the same

community. But then Harvey hit South Texas — and ministry and life haven’t been the same since! Beck and his wife Chelsea have three sons, all under 7 years old, and his hobbies include running, camping and Cowboy Action Shooting.



## STEPHEN BORN

Stephen Born is The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s disaster response coordinator for the Central Illinois District, which encompasses 51 counties. He is a Lutheran Early Response Team (LERT) trainer and a LERT chainsaw trainer.

Born, a licensed student airplane pilot, received his mortuary science degree in 2001, graduating with Pi Sigma Eta honors. He completed his postgraduate training in craniofacial reconstruction in 2017. Born was awarded the highest designation in funeral service by the Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice in 2016. He has certifications as a cemetery manager, crematory operator and grief counselor.

Since his “train the trainer” program from the Missouri Synod in 2014, Born has trained over 800 LERT members and over 130 LERT chainsaw members. He believes if you’re not training, you’re not growing. The Central Illinois District LERT teams have been deployed to many tornadoes and floods across the state of Illinois.

The Central Illinois District LERT teams are utilized by over 17 Emergency Management Agency (EMA) county coordinators across the state. Due to his disaster relief leadership, Born received the Illinois Governor’s Volunteer Service Award in 2017 and was recognized by the director of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency.



### REV. JACOB DEAL

The Rev. Jacob Deal was born and raised in the Luna Pier, Mich. area. He and his wife have been in the LCMS their entire life. Since a very young age Jacob desired to be a missionary with the Lord's Gospel. He pursued the office of the Holy Ministry with much encouragement from his parents and in-laws. He received his Bachelor's degree in Communication from the University of Toledo in 2012. He graduated with a Master of Divinity from Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Ind. in May of 2016. The Lord has provided him and Anna with two wonderful boys, Isaiah and Titus. Deal is the sole pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sharon, Pa.



### REV. JOHN ELLIOTT

The Rev. John Elliott has held many roles in his life. He has been a nuclear-qualified Submariner in the United States Navy, a computer and telecommunications project manager, a CFO, a COO, a contractor, and the business manager for the LCMS Florida-Georgia District. Elliott recently completed the SMP program at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and was ordained in June 2018. He now serves as a pastor at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Oviedo, Fla. During Hurricane Irma and its aftermath, Elliott was the District Disaster Response Coordinator for the LCMS Florida-Georgia District.



### DEB HAMMEN

Deb Hammen has been a parish nurse for 4.5 years at St. John's Lutheran Church, Glendale, Wis. and has been an RN for 43 years. She received her B.S.N. from University of Wisconsin Oshkosh and parish nurse training from Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, Wis. The CUW School of Nursing uses her as a preceptor for nursing students in the Community Wellness course focusing on teaching functions of the parish nurse. She is a member of the South Wisconsin District LCMS Crisis Intervention and Stress Management Team (CISM), a mental health RN on the Wisconsin Emergency Assistance Volunteer Registry, and a member of the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress. Most recent deployments have been to a Red Cross shelter for mentally challenged victims of a large apartment building fire and deployments to Port Arthur, Texas, both as a parish nurse and construction crew member. Hammen has extensive experience in psychiatric and home care nursing and was a clinic manager for the Medical College of Wisconsin.



### REV. DR. MATTHEW HARRISON

The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, the 13<sup>th</sup> man to serve as president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) since its founding in 1847, is the church's chief ecclesiastical officer, supervising the doctrine taught and practiced by its nearly 9,000 ordained ministers; representing the LCMS with its partner church bodies throughout the world; and overseeing all officers, executives and agencies of the LCMS. He was first elected to the office of LCMS president in 2010 and was re-elected in 2013 and 2016.

Harrison joined the staff at the LCMS International Center in St. Louis in 2001 as the executive director of the church's former World Relief and Human Care ministry. During that time, he oversaw the church's multimillion-dollar responses to epic disasters, including Hurricane Katrina, the Asia tsunami and the Haiti earthquake; managed relationships with some 120 LCMS Recognized Service Organizations and other inter-Lutheran social ministry organizations; worked in consultation with LCMS partner/sister churches to build capacity during mercy outreach efforts; and managed the church's global pro-life efforts.

Previously, Harrison served as a pastor at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Westgate, Iowa (1991–1995) and Zion Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne, Ind. (1995–2001). During his pastorate at Zion in Fort Wayne, his parish embarked on the St. Peter/Zion Project for Neighborhood Renewal, a now nationally recognized neighborhood revitalization effort. Owing to the success of this effort, Harrison later founded Lutheran Housing Support Corporation, a faith-based housing organization headquartered at the LCMS International Center that helps revitalize communities and renew neighborhoods across the country.

Harrison graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Religious Studies from Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, in 1984. Following his graduation, he and his wife, Kathy, spent a year as missionaries in a remote Canadian Cree Indian village with the Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots. Harrison went on to earn a Master of Divinity in 1989 and a Master of Sacred Theology in 1991, both from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. He has pursued additional graduate study at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. In 2011, he received two honorary doctorates: a Doctor of Laws from Concordia University, Ann Arbor, Mich., and a Doctor of Divinity from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne.

Before being elected president, Harrison served on a number of boards for church and community organizations. He is a prolific writer whose books include *A Little Book on Joy*, a devotional-style book about finding delight in living a Christ-centered life in today's society, and *Christ Have Mercy: How to Put Your Faith in Action*, a book urging Christians to consider the innumerable opportunities they have to show mercy to fellow Christians and to anyone God places in their path. He compiled and translated *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, a collection of works by several of the church's founders, and edited *The Lonely Way: Selected Essays and Letters* by Hermann Sasse, a

prominent confessional Lutheran theologian in the German ecumenical movement of the early 20th century. Most recently, Harrison revised and edited a new edition of C.F.W. Walther's *The Church and the Office of the Ministry*, a seminal writing by the first president of the LCMS, and translated *Letters to Lutheran Pastors, Volumes 1, 2 and 3*, an edition of Sasse's correspondence with Lutheran pastors around the world.

Harrison and his wife live in Ballwin, Mo., and are members of Village Lutheran Church in Ladue, Mo., where Harrison also serves as assistant pastor. They have two sons. Harrison is an avid banjo player and instrumentalist who makes guitars, banjos and mandolins.



### REV. DR. STEVEN HOKANA

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Steven Hokana serves as assistant director of Ministry to the Armed Forces for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). He brings more than 26 years of experience as an active-duty U.S. Army chaplain to the position.

Hokana graduated with a bachelor's degree in History from Concordia College New York, Bronxville, N.Y., in 1982. He earned his Master of Divinity degree from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1987 and his Doctorate of Ministry degree from the Oblate School of Theology, San Antonio, Texas, in 2006. His dissertation illustrates the redemptive love of God to heal those with anxiety disorder through confession and prayer. He is a board-certified chaplain and an active member of the Association of Professional Chaplains. In addition, he is a member of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) and a Diplomate, American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress, in collaboration with the National Center of Crisis Management.

Hokana's military service took him to Southwest Asia, Cuba, Bosnia, Germany, Denmark, Alaska and on multiple stateside assignments. His military and combat operations include Desert Shield; Desert Storm for the liberation of Kuwait; and Stabilization Force 6, a multinational peacekeeping force deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina after the Bosnian war. His involvement in military operations includes Inherent Resolve, Freedom's Sentinel, Enduring Freedom and Resolute Support. During his career, he has provided pastoral care in diverse units, including Combat Service Support, Airborne Infantry, Light Infantry and Armor.

Hokana has served as chief of United States Disciplinary Barracks and manager of Chaplain/Chaplain Assistant Training, U.S. Army Medical Command, and he twice served as ministry chief in Army hospitals. His career culminated in his service as chaplain of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), where he supervised 44 chaplains and chaplain assistants who provided religious-support operations to thousands of soldiers, Department of Defense civilians and contractors in Iraq, Afghanistan and multiple other nations in Southwest Asia.

Among his awards and decorations are the Army Meritorious Service Medal (awarded nine times), the Army Commendation Medal (awarded six times), the Army Achievement Medal

(awarded three times), the Humanitarian Service Medal (awarded twice) and the Parachutists and Air Assault badges. Hokana also is the recipient of the Order of Medical Military Merit and the Bronze St. Martin of Tours award for more than 20 years of service as a chaplain in the LCMS.

Hokana and his wife of 35 years, Mary, have three children and two grandchildren.



### RUSTY HUSEMAN

Rusty Huseman's practice includes representing the LCMS Florida-Georgia District. He travels extensively throughout the district helping our churches and schools work through the legal quagmires that often arise. He also serves as President of the Lutheran Legal League, or L3 as

it is commonly known. L3 is an organization of attorneys throughout the United States who not only practice law but are actively engaged in their LCMS churches. This organization exists to help the 2 million members of the LCMS with their legal questions. Huseman is married to the love of his life Kris, and this year they celebrated their 40th anniversary. He has 2 children and 6 grandchildren. He is a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Jacksonville, Fla.



### REV. DR. ROSS JOHNSON

As director of LCMS Disaster Response, the disaster response and human care ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Rev. Dr. Ross Edward Johnson oversees the church's comprehensive disaster response program, including planning, training and implementing immediate

and long-term responses to help people in the aftermath of disastrous events wherever they occur. He works to facilitate relationships with federal, state and community disaster response agencies; consults with LCMS districts, congregations and international church partners to prepare for and respond to natural and man-made disasters around the world; and makes available pastoral care in the field while responding to disasters.

Prior to joining the staff of the LCMS International Center in St. Louis in 2013, Johnson served as a pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fairhope, Ala. Johnson served as a church planter and theological educator in Guatemala and Venezuela, working as a member of the former LCMS World Mission overseas missionary staff. Also, Johnson joined the U.S. Army Reserves in 2002 and now is a Major serving as a division chaplain. In 2012 he deployed with the Army and served in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. In addition to holding a Master of Divinity and Doctorate from Concordia Theological Seminary, Johnson earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Vanguard University, Costa Mesa, Calif. He and his wife, Mireya, have two sons, Felix and Miguel.



## REV. TED KREY

The Rev. Ted and Rebecca Krey have served in the Dominican Republic since 2009. Krey serves as the regional director for the Latin America and the Caribbean region of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), which encompasses 22 countries in South and Central America and the Caribbean.

He is privileged to oversee 40 missionaries planting churches in 10 countries. Hand in hand with church planting, he works to establish the formation of pastors and deaconesses in Latin America. In 12 countries, Krey also works with partner churches to strengthen them in their church planting efforts and in various other ministry areas.

2018 marks the 10th year of LCMS ministry work being done in the Dominican Republic. As a result of what the Lord has been doing through His Gospel work over these 11 years, five missions have been established. Two Lutheran schools have been started, along with Good Shepherd Lutheran Homes, which seeks to serve people with intellectual and physical disabilities throughout the country. A seminary has been built, which seeks to serve men and women throughout Latin America.

Krey is a 2001 graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. Rebecca has a Master's degree in Biochemistry and formerly worked in a genetics research lab, studying cardiovascular disease and diabetes. She previously served for two years as a long-term missionary in Slovakia. Previously, Krey served in Venezuela for eight years. Rebecca joined him after they were married in June 2008. They have five beautiful children: Esther, Matthias, Natalia Anna, Evangeline and Azariah.



## JOEL & KATHY MATHEWS

Retiring in 2015 from careers in law enforcement and the corporate world, Joel and Kathy Mathews have been blessed to be able to travel and assist the LCMS in providing disaster response training and management. They have been active in disaster response since Hurricane

Charlie in 2004 and have assisted following hurricanes Katrina, Matthew and Irma, and other responses. Joel is a graduate of Concordia, St. Paul and served as a DCE and teacher, an electrician and law enforcement. Both are LERT trainers and Joel is a certified chainsaw instructor. They are owners of Mercy in Action Disaster Resources.



## REV. MICHAEL MEYER

The Rev. Michael Meyer is the manager of LCMS Disaster Response, the disaster response and human care ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. In this role, Meyer assists with the church's response to natural and man-made disasters occurring domestically

and internationally. He works with LCMS districts and congregations, LCMS Recognized Service Organizations and external relief organizations to implement the church's immediate and long-term response to help people in the aftermath of disastrous events. Among Meyer's responsibilities is oversight of the LCMS District Disaster Response Program, in which he works with volunteer District Disaster Response Coordinators (DDRCs) to ensure ongoing disaster-readiness training and preparation among LCMS districts, congregations, international staff and partner churches worldwide. Previously, Meyer served as pastor at Emmaus Lutheran Church, Denver, Colo., which was his first call after graduating from seminary. A 2008 graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., Meyer also holds a Bachelor's degree in Music from Southern Methodist University, Dallas. Meyer and his wife, Heather, have three children: Nathan, Kaitlyn and Emily.



## REV. STEVEN MISCH

For all but one year of twenty-seven in congregational ministry, the Rev. Steven Misch has served as pastor in the Texas District. Growing up in Northern Minnesota, Misch did his undergraduate work at Concordia University, St. Paul. After completing graduate work at Concordia

Seminary, St. Louis, he began his ministry on the Navajo Indian Reservation in New Mexico with Navajo Evangelical Lutheran Mission (NELM). In 1983, Misch was called to serve at Grace, Del Rio, Texas. After five years he accepted a call to St. Mark, Lake Jackson, Texas, where he served for eight years. In 1996 Misch moved to Houston to serve as an associate pastor at St. Mark, Houston. In 2001 he accepted a call to serve at Good Shepherd in Borger, Texas. He is now serving as one of four Mission and Ministry Facilitators in the Texas District. Included in the various responsibilities with the district is Disaster Relief Coordination. Misch considers it an honor to be a resource and an encourager for the pastors and the congregations of Area A and the district as they move ahead in the mission. Misch is married to Lynn (37 years), and they have two boys, both of whom are serving as pastors in the LCMS.



## REV. TIMOTHY NIEKERK

As Senior Pastor of Salem Lutheran Church in Tomball, Texas, the Rev. Tim Niekerk leads a congregation focused on making Jesus real in the lives of others. Niekerk's dynamic personal style energizes his ministry team of over one hundred to consistently bring a fresh and innovative

approach to equipping the saints for works of service so the body of Christ may be built up.

As Hurricane Harvey hit the Texas Gulf Coast in August of 2017, Niekerk wasted no time organizing Salem's response to the epic devastation. Within days, Heart for Texas was formed as a non-profit coalition of Lutheran congregations including Trinity, Spring; Concordia, San Antonio; Resurrection, Spring and Gloria Dei, Clear Lake. Volunteers from the area and hundreds from over half of the United States mobilized to muck out, clean up and dry out thousands of homes in preparation for rebuilding. Salem adapted several thousand square feet of student ministry space to house and feed the weekly caravans and assumed management of 70,000 square feet of donated warehouse space to organize and deploy the truckloads of donated material arriving almost daily.

The work is hardly over. As houses take shape again, the need for beds and tables and other provisions is immense. Earlier this year, Niekerk asked his congregation for the third time in five years to love others as recklessly as God loves us in Jesus and dedicate Salem's entire Easter Sunday offering to refurbish homes. Salem members contributed an unprecedented \$270,000 to provide a "house in a box" to over one hundred families. Along with a \$100,000 matching grant from LCMS Disaster response and a pledge from the largest furniture store in Houston to provide merchandise at a zero-profit margin, well over a half-million dollars in quality merchandise will be distributed to make houses homes again.

Niekerk is known at Salem for his highly competitive spirit. When he plays, he plays hard and plays to win. You would think such a passion would give him the ability to see real talent and pick the winners in the world of sports. Sadly, Niekerk remains a loyal and diehard Detroit Lions fan. His wife Kristin is a professional counselor, Wisconsin native and a Packers fan. They reside in Tomball and have two children: Josiah, who is a senior in high school, and Gabrielle, who is an eighth-grader.



## DEACONESS KATHY O'DAY

Deaconess Kathy O'Day has been serving as Director of Disaster Response at Lutheran Church Charities since February 2017. She is also an LCMS District Disaster Response Coordinator in the Northern Illinois District. O'Day completed a B.A. in Lutheran Theology and Certificate of

Lay Ministry from Concordia, Mequon in 2008 and Deaconess Certification from Concordia, Chicago in 2017.

In 2015, O'Day was called to serve as LCMS Lay Minister - Local Missions Coordinator at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Ft. Collins/Greeley, Colo. Her many years of disaster experience have been as a Disaster Case Manager Supervisor, assisting affected areas in all aspects of long-term disaster recovery as well as short-term deployments for immediate needs assistance. She also attained federal certification as a Disaster Case Manager Supervisor. She has been active in local VOADs and NVOAD and served as co-chair of the 2014 NVOAD Conference. In 2014, O'Day received the Distinguished Hoosier Award, from then-Indiana Governor Pence, for exemplary work with disaster survivors throughout the state. She wrote the Disaster Case Manager Supervisor Training Manual for Catholic Charities-Archdiocese of Indianapolis and has provided instruction throughout the state of Indiana. She also wrote the Emergency Operating Procedure Manual for United Way of Weld County, Colorado.



## JOHN PYRON

John Pyron is a 13-year veteran in disaster response, recovery and resilience. Pyron unknowingly began his disaster career as a chainsaw team leader in Mobile, Ala. following Hurricane Ivan in 2004. He returned to Mobile to lead 2 volunteer construction rebuilding teams and moved

to Mobile to accept a Construction Coordinator position with the lead agency of the Mobile County Long-Term Recovery Committee shortly thereafter. Since 2004, Pyron has gone from serving as a disaster response volunteer to coordinating response and recovery volunteers on the Gulf Coast; to working as a disaster case manager to supervising disaster case managers and leading a multi-million dollar FEMA-funded Disaster Case Management Program grant in the Midwest; to now working to develop interfaith partnerships, congregational capacity and community resilience in 88 counties in Ohio. Pyron has worked in response and recovery operations in 12 states and has lived in 4, currently in Dayton, Ohio with his partner, Katie, of nearly 9 years and their two sons, Henry and William.



## JEREMY SCHAMBER

Jeremy Schamber is the principal at Martin Luther School in Joplin, Mo. He was born in the Cole Camp, Mo. area and raised in the country outside of Hannibal, Mo., where his dad served as pastor. He earned a Bachelor's of Science in Elementary Education/Special Education from Concordia University

Nebraska, Seward, Neb. and a Master in Elementary Education Administration from William Woods University – Fulton, Mo. He has served the congregations of St. John in Seward, Neb. and Immanuel Lutheran Church where he currently resides. Schamber is married to Kelli, a prekindergarten teacher at Martin Luther School. They have three children: Olivia (10), Ezra (7) and Ariella (1). He and his family were very active in the recovery efforts after a devastating tornado hit Joplin and continue to be faithful servants of the community. The Schamber family are avid St. Louis Cardinals and Kansas City Chiefs fans.



## REV. DANIEL SCHEPMANN

The Rev. Dan Schepmann has served in pastoral ministry for 22 years in various roles and three different congregations. He graduated from Concordia, Austin with a BA in Elementary Education and continued on to receive his Master of Divinity from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He is

currently serving at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Houston, Texas as Sr. Pastor. He is married to Karisa (Biar) Schepmann, just celebrating 25 years of marriage. They have three children: Thomas (19), Caroline (13) and Anna (10).

Schepmann has served on various committees and boards within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod throughout his pastoral career, dealing particularly with pastoral leadership, congregational revitalization and growth, conflict resolution, district leadership and certified as a Birkman consultant. He has great joy and blessing in serving in his various roles of husband, father, pastor and friend. In his spare time, he loves to hunt, fish and play golf.

This past year, he was blessed to lead disaster relief and recovery in the Clear Lake community of Houston and Galveston County through the people and ministries of Gloria Dei. As relief and recovery were completed, Gloria Dei shifted into a “rebuilding” phase with the blessing of various partnerships with LCMS Disaster Response, the Texas District, Fuller Center for Rebuilding, Orphan Grain Train and High Socks for Hope. These partnerships have given Gloria Dei the opportunity to provide complete, turn-key home rebuilds, leveraging the physical relief and recovery to share the message of Jesus Christ with those in need. By God's grace and in His mercy, he is blessed to serve and lead a congregation focused on “helping more people live life with Jesus every day as we ‘Love People,’ ‘Serve Others,’ and ‘Connect in Community.’”



## REV. CHRIS SINGER

The Rev. Chris Singer is in his fifth year as Senior Pastor at Trinity Klein Lutheran Church in Spring, Texas. Previously he served 18 years at St. John's Lutheran Church in Orange, Calif.

He served in the front-line relief work during Hurricane Katrina. He has led six mission trips to Kenya, Africa and serves currently on the Board of Kenyan Schools of Hope. He is certified in Crisis Intervention and served as a sworn chaplain for the Tustin Police Department, Calif. He is also a licensed trainer for Prepare-Enrich Marriage Assessments.

Singer is married to his wife Jeanette. Together they have five children: Caleb, Hanah, Rachel, Benjamin and Jacob.

His experience with Hurricane Harvey was personal, as his home took 51” of water during the storm. After eight months he and his family have finally moved back into their home. They opened Trinity as an emergency shelter and a center for relief in the community. Volunteers organized around rescue, relief and recovery. Singer worked with his colleague and friend the Rev. Tim Niekerk, and the two congregations came together to host thousands of volunteers and workers for clean out and rebuild. Al Roker, NBC's weatherman, chose their work as one of his three charities to highlight in 2017.



## REV. CHARLES ST-ONGE

The Rev. Charles St-Onge is a 2003 graduate of Concordia, Fort Wayne and a former engineer and project manager. He holds a Master's in Engineering as well as a Master's in Science and Religion. He currently serves as a mission pastor in Montreal, Quebec

and as the LCMS area mission facilitator for Puerto Rico, Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. He is married to Deborah, and they have two daughters aged 13 and 11.



## WILLIAM TORRES

William Torres holds a degree in Computer Science from Antillean Adventist University in Puerto Rico. After graduating in 2006, he worked as a system analyst and CAMS manager at his alma mater. Since December of 2017, he has been serving as an evangelist and Disaster Response Aid Coordinator

in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico. He is married to Cindy and has two young sons aged 6 and 2.



## JULIE TUCKER

Julie was born and raised in the Chicagoland area and moved to San Antonio, Texas in 2001. She is married to Bill and they have four children; three of their children are in college and their oldest son is living with the Lord.

Tucker loves photography, the mountains, outdoor activities, reading and spending time with her family. She is blessed to be a part of an amazing church family at Concordia Lutheran Church and is the Director of Retreats and Missions.

Tucker has a heart for those who do not know Jesus and loves to talk about Him to family, friends and strangers. She is currently working for the Texas District of the LCMS as the Director of Disaster Response. Her life verse is, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thess. 5:16-18). Her current action verse is, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).



## REV. WILLIAM WEEDON

The Rev. William Chancellor Weedon has served as the Director of Worship for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and Chaplain of the Synod's International Center in St. Louis since 2012. He hosts a daily radio show/podcast on KFUD called "Thy Strong Word" that works through

a chapter of the Bible each day. He is author of the books *Celebrating the Saints* (CPH, 2016), *Thank, Praise, Serve and Obey* (CPH, 2017) and a new children's book *See My Savior's Hands* (CPH, fall of 2018). He and his wife, Cindi, stay busy trying to keep up with their eight beautiful grandchildren.



## REV. ROBERT ZAGORE

The Rev. Robert Zagore serves as executive director of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's Office of National Mission, where he oversees the implementation of the policies that direct the domestic ministries serving the congregations, schools and districts of the Synod. He began serving in this position in May 2018.

To this role, Zagore brings 27 years of experience as a parish pastor in both urban and rural congregations. He spent 17 of those years as senior administrative pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church and School in Traverse City, Mich. Prior to that, he was pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church (1997–2001) in Niles, Mich., and Hope Lutheran Church (1991–97) in Stanton, Mich. He also has served as a pastoral delegate at three LCMS conventions, as a circuit counselor in the LCMS Michigan District, and as a vicarage and seminary field work supervisor.

Zagore received his Master of Divinity degree from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind. (1990), and he later completed additional coursework toward a Master of Sacred Theology degree. He also holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind. (1983). Before becoming a pastor, Zagore worked as an accounting consultant for Cleveland Business Consulting Services. Zagore and his wife, Gwen, have four adult children: Christopher (married to Leah), Katie, Elise and Faith.