

# WITNESS, MERCY, LIFE TOGETHER



April 2012  
No. 5

News and Notes from the Office of the President

## Values and Priorities around WITNESS, MERCY, LIFE TOGETHER

*Bringing Clarity to How Synod Manages Its Resources*

**W**ITNESS, MERCY, and LIFE TOGETHER complement one another and enhance the ability of the Synod's members and partners to achieve the common objectives established in Article III of Synod's constitution. Those objectives are aptly summarized in our Synod's mission statement:

*In grateful response to God's grace and empowered by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacraments, the mission of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is vigorously to make known the love of Christ by word and deed within our churches, communities, and the world.*

In a recent report (at [www.lcms.org/president](http://www.lcms.org/president)), Rev. Greg Williamson, chief mission officer of the LCMS, has articulated several "values" and "priorities" flowing from Synod's Constitution and mission statement. These values and priorities have been used by budget planners at the International Center to shape the next fiscal year's budget. "While values undergirded the preparation," Williamson notes, "priorities guided planners through funding allocations."

In his report, Williamson outlines these values and priorities in order to lend tangible clarity and shape to the Synod's work, both now and in future generations.

### Values

#### (1) Fidelity

"The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod remains Lutheran in teaching

and practice," said Williamson. "The same principles that brought new freedom to the Church of the Reformation continue to bring theological liberty and freedom today."

The Church's confessions have historically served the Church and continue to do so, encouraging unity among the faithful, identifying areas where the LCMS can partner with others, serving as a standard for catechesis and shaping our practice. This confessional clarity identifies the Synod as Lutheran in a unique way and bears witness to the atoning work of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

#### (2) Quality

In Col. 3:17, St. Paul bids us, "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus." Excellence (or quality), then, is simply a response to the Lord's call, one that is integral to the Synod's witness.

"Parishioners deserve the best pastors, teachers, deaconesses — every rostered worker," said Williamson. "These called servants daily nurture men and women in the midst of spiritual battle. Nothing short of excellence will do." In return, the Synod must also demand excellence in her care for those workers. "They, too," he says, "deserve nothing but the best."

#### (3) Credibility

Williamson, in collaboration with the Office of the President, has been purposeful in outlining the LCMS' mission, priorities and plan for resource management. Doing so, he believes, will help increase credibility for the Synod's work and provide a clearer way to care for and about our church's rostered workers and congregations as they work to proclaim the Gospel.

"Credibility fosters confidence among our Synod's members, which, in turn, fosters assurance among our laity," says Williamson. "Credibility ultimately creates an environment of mission boldness."

#### (4) Sustainability

In the face of fiscal realities, the church must put each of its

## The Business of the Church Is the Preaching of the Gospel

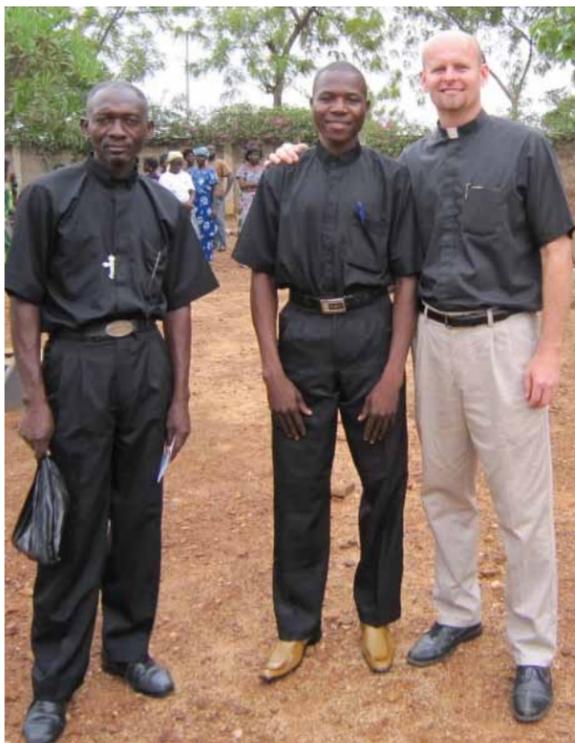
**B**efore our dear Savior took leave from His disciples through His suffering and death, He gave them the promise that He would see them again after His resurrection and tell them very clearly what they were to do. As the Lord had said, so it happened.

For 40 days, the Risen One showed Himself to those that were His, in Jerusalem, then at the Sea of Gennesaret, now in Galilee, now to a few, then to the eleven, and finally to more than 500 brothers at once. At the final appearance at the Mount of Ascension, the Lord drew together everything He had spoken among His people during these 40 days ... : "Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation" [Mark 16:15]. From this we see that our Lord Jesus entrusted to the Church of all lands and all times only one task [*Geschaeft*], and this is the preaching of the Gospel, the joyous message of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. That was the great theme, which the Resurrected One dealt with in the circle of His disciples, and of which He did not tire of speaking. And so our Lord also today is invisibly in our midst and reminds us all together that our proper business is the preaching of the Gospel.

We have therefore for our synodical work a clear and simple rule: Everything that does not serve the course of the Gospel, indeed, very much hinders it, does not belong in the circle of our considerations. On the other hand, whatever advances the course of the Gospel is worth our deliberation and consideration. And the more and the better a matter advances the preaching of the Gospel, the more important and more necessary it shall appear to us. Now, since our Savior demonstrates care for the preaching of the Gospel in such a way that He gives to His Church shepherds and teachers, so will we in these days direct our most diligent attention to our "schools of the prophets" and to our missions.

Excerpted from "The Business of the Church Is the Preaching of the Gospel," 1911 synodical address by LCMS President Friedrich Pfothenhauer, translated by Matthew C. Harrison, in *At Home in the House of My Fathers: Presidential Sermons, Essays, Letters, and Addresses from the Missouri Synod's Great Era of Unity and Growth* (CPH, 2011).

■ Pastor Matthew Harrison, President  
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod



Missionary Rev. Glenn Fluegge with two students from the Lutheran Center for Theological Studies in Togo, West Africa.

LCMS Office of International Mission/Glenn Fluegge

projects and programs to the test of sustainability. Can they last? Will they impact future generations?

"The Synod has the privilege of reaching the lost for Christ," notes Williamson. "Legacy partners have stood the test of time, but they require our ongoing support and engagement."

The LCMS's partner churches — some the direct result of LCMS early mission efforts — are now carrying out their own mission work even as LCMS missionaries work alongside them. Continuing these partnerships, he believes, is vital to the Church's global engagement.

Cultivating long-term mission work also provides a cultural platform that will allow the LCMS to proclaim Christ during this and future generations.

"Sustainable mission paradigms will employ synodical resources most efficiently and effectively. Sustainability provides a mission target not only

for this generation, but for the next," said Williamson.

#### (5) Stability

In the midst of an ever-changing cultural environment, LCMS congregations provide stability. Despite familial, community and national changes, the Church stands firm and resolute.

Yet this cultural change distresses both the fiber of society as well as our congregational fellowship. That is why, Williamson says, "churches must be bastions where men and women of faith may find theological respite, consistency and an enduring *koinonia*" (LIFE TOGETHER). This *koinonia* is God's work by means of His Word, through our study of Scripture and the Confessions, the resulting agreement in our Confessions through corporate worship and through sacramental practice and ministry.

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AP Photo/Carolyn Kasler

# Religious Liberties Fight Far from Over

By Adriane Dorr

His picture appeared on “Meet the Press” and “Saturday Night Live.” His mustache came to life in cartoons. Critics from Los Angeles to New York lambasted what he had to say. Journalists from major newspapers across the country, such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, quoted and dissected his words.

National Public Radio covered the story, and TV stations from FOX to CNN ran clips of the hearing. Within three days, more than 30,000

people had watched his statement on YouTube. What had begun as a 24-hour trip to Washington, D.C., for LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison had turned into an overnight media frenzy.

Harrison appeared before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing on Feb. 16 to discuss the January Health and Human Services mandate regarding contraception and its mandatory coverage by non-profit, religious institutions’ health-care plans.

By the time he got to the Washington, D.C., airport to head home, the news of the committee and its discussion had already spread like wildfire across the Internet and social media.

But while the secular world was busy telling its version of the story, the Church was hard at work as well. Less than a week after Harrison’s trip to the nation’s capitol, the LCMS Council of Presidents drafted and released a statement of support for Harrison, noting that they “stand united with President Matthew Harrison in full support of his testimony before the Congressional Committee.”

Each of the 35 presidents also signed his name and that of his district to the document, which “commends to the Synod President Harrison’s statements in defense

of religious liberty and freedom of conscience.”

The faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, also issued a response. On Feb. 21, they collectively endorsed Harrison’s defense of religious liberty while simultaneously calling on members of the LCMS to “support those who put themselves on the line in defense of this liberty.

“We must ourselves also be willing to stand up and pay the price of our convictions,” they wrote, “whatever that price may be.”

Meanwhile, the media continued to decry the fact that no women testified at the initial House hearing. In response, the Heritage Foundation — an institution dedicated, according to its website, to “public policies based on the principles of free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense” — hosted its own panel discussion in Washington, D.C., focusing on the mandate’s attack on religious freedom.

Comprised of women, the panel included Maggie Karner, director of Life Ministries for the LCMS. “We’re here to advocate for basic religious freedom,” she told those in attendance. “We can’t be expected to check our faith at the door.”

While the government’s next steps remain unclear, the church’s actions are not. “We must be free to put our faith into action in the public square,” said Harrison. “We will pray for and support our government where we can, but our consciences and lives belong to God.”

**Adriane Dorr** ([adriane.dorr@lcms.org](mailto:adriane.dorr@lcms.org)) is managing editor of *The Lutheran Witness*.

## VALUES AND PRIORITIES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

These values, already set in place by faithful forefathers, are qualities Christ works in us as He calls us to follow Him. These values are not new; they simply restate the truth and wisdom of Holy Scripture and are part of the Church’s LIFE TOGETHER.

### Mission priorities

Just as values create an environment for planning, so priorities provide a way to evaluate our activities as we engage the Church through WITNESS, MERCY and LIFE TOGETHER.

#### (1) Plant, sustain and revitalize distinctly Lutheran churches.

“Foremost among mission priorities is planting, sustaining and revitalizing a global network of spiritually healthy, vibrant and orthodox Lutheran congregations and international partners,” says Williamson. The church also serves to encourage them in reaching the lost, nurturing disciples and bearing witness to the Lord and Savior of the Church, Jesus Christ, through Word and Sacrament.

#### (2) Support and expand theological education.

Pastoral education, both foreign and domestic, is central to the ministry of congregations, church partners and our Synod. “Synod intends to enhance institutional instruction, pastoral mentoring and ongoing vocational training as she seeks to shape the next generation of church leaders,” explains Williamson. Sustaining the Synod’s seminaries and those of its

partner churches ensures that pastoral education students are formed to lead congregations that will be faithful to Christ, both at home and throughout the world.

#### (3) Perform human care in close proximity to Word and Sacrament ministry.

Coupled with baptizing, proclaiming the Gospel and catechizing people in the faith, the Church responds to the world in mercy, bringing relief to the starving, sick, hurt and homeless.

Mercy finds its roots “in Word and Sacrament that it may alleviate not only human suffering,” notes Williamson, “but also that it may address the very real spiritual suffering that leaves the world in sin, death and darkness.” Works of mercy must be accompanied by Word and Sacrament, working hand-in-hand, bearing witness to Christ, the Church and her presence in the world.

#### (4) Collaborate with the Synod’s members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness.

Williamson explains that in the Synod, we “will collaborate with members and partners to enhance mission effectiveness.” Having strategic partners in ministry is essential to reaching people, nations and even cultures for Christ. Working and coordinating with our partners uses our missionaries most effectively and efficiently, giving them a structure by which they can identify specific needs and the way the LCMS is uniquely suited to respond to them.



LCMS Communications/Elizabeth M. Truong

#### (5) Nurture pastors, missionaries and professional church workers to promote spiritual, emotional and physical well-being.

Nurturing pastors, missionaries and professional workers to “promote spiritual, emotional and physical well-being” is essential to the Church’s health. As the Synod, it is our responsibility to care for those who care for us, since their spiritual health can directly impact the overall health of their congregations, circuits, districts and the Synod. “This cadre of called servants requires nurture and commitment,” Williamson states, “a commitment to enhance their spiritual lives as they shepherd those in their call.”

#### (6) Enhance elementary and secondary education, and youth ministry.

Finally, the Church has a duty to her baptized children and young people — those growing up in a culture that operates counter to the foundations of Scriptures. Strengthening existing and developing new early childhood, elementary and secondary schools and youth ministries will begin to address the needs of the

church’s youth, who “are the church today, not only the church of tomorrow,” explains Williamson. “They deserve the church’s fullest attention and care.”

### The way forward

“A synod . . . must above all else be formed so that the gifts that are distributed to the various servants of Christ may be best utilized for the benefit of all,” wrote C. F. W. Walther, the first president of the LCMS. “And here again, the number-one priority must be the promotion of a better understanding of God’s Word” (*At Home in the House of My Fathers*, p. 298). Under the Synod’s emphasis of WITNESS, MERCY and LIFE TOGETHER, these values and priorities give order to our church’s work in the world on Christ’s behalf.

They have also given the president’s office, Rev. Williamson and other key staff at the Synod’s International Center in St. Louis the ability to link the church’s available resources with work that is most relevant to the Synod’s mission statement, with a means to look to the future, and ways for us together to reach all nations for Christ.

READ FULL REPORT:



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# Task Force Forms on Districts, Congregations in Mission

By Albert B. Collver III

Say the word *missionary* and most people think of Christians who have dedicated their entire lives in service to those who do not yet know the Gospel, leaving behind family, home and country. But the face of mission work looks quite different in our day.

In fact, over the past 30 years, short-term mission trips sponsored by congregations in the United States have increased dramatically. Thirty years ago, approximately 22,000 people from U.S. congregations — although not necessarily Lutheran — visited Latin America. By the beginning of the 21st century, over one million people had done so. That's an increase of 978,000 people! And those figures don't even begin to calculate trips to other popular short-term mission destinations such as Africa, India or Asia.

This increase in short-term mission trips corresponds to a decrease in career or professional missionaries across all denominations, as more congregational dollars go to support short-term missions. The trend is similar in the LCMS. At its convention in January, the North Dakota District adopted a resolution to work with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya. Other districts are planning similar resolutions, and an increasingly large number of LCMS congregations are individually involved in short-term missions as well.

To better understand the trend toward short-term mission work, including the blessings and challenges that accompany it, LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison established a Task Force on Best Practices for Districts and Congregations in Mission.

Members of the task force include the Rev. Dr. Albert B. Collver (director of Church Relations) as chairman, the Rev. Herbert Mueller (LCMS first vice-president), the Rev. Russell Sommerfeld (Nebraska District president) and the Rev. Daniel McMiller. The task force, which held its first meeting on Feb. 21, will study the issue of short-term missions.

Sommerfeld explained that “the task force will offer best practices and guidelines to bless local LCMS congregations, their ordained and commissioned workers, and districts in coordinating mission engagement on international mission fields with the LCMS and indigenous Lutheran church bodies.”

While short-term mission trips can bring incredible blessings to districts and congregations, they also carry challenges that districts and congregations may not initially realize. The ability to continue and build on work begun by a short-term team is often a challenge for the partner church body. At times, church relations issues develop as an unintended consequence of short-term mission trips. More



Members of a short-term team work alongside locals in Lunahuaná, Peru.

LCMS Office of International Mission

recently, the LCMS's partner churches have sent letters to the LCMS International Center in St. Louis, Mo., asking why the Synod's congregations are working with churches in their country that have no affiliation with the partner churches.

The task force's initial concern is to alert and better acquaint LCMS pastors and congregations with the LCMS's partners. To address this, a section on partner churches ([lcms.org/partnerchurches](http://lcms.org/partnerchurches)) was recently added to the LCMS website in order to provide additional information on the history and practice of the Synod's partners. This page will continue to be updated as the work of the task force advances. The group hopes to report its findings and recommendations by the fall of 2012.

“Short-term mission trips are but one of numerous issues the task force is working on. There are three key issues, from my perspective, which are vital for our LIFE TOGETHER and the advancement of the Gospel around the world,” said President Matthew C. Harrison, “First, congregations are

and will be involved in an increasingly ‘hands on’ fashion in international work. Second, we must provide agreed upon “best practices” for such involvement to avoid things that are potentially detrimental to our partner churches, and to insure the building up of the Lutheran church worldwide. Third, we at the International Center must significantly “up our game” so that it is clear that congregations and districts maximize their witness and reach of their dollars by strong partnerships with the national church.”

Ultimately, the goal is to increase LIFE TOGETHER between districts, congregations and partner churches as best practices for short-term missions are developed. This LIFE TOGETHER will be strengthened through educational pieces, increased awareness of partner churches and better coordination with the LCMS mission strategy.

**The Rev. Dr. Albert B. Collver III** ([albert.collver@lcms.org](mailto:albert.collver@lcms.org)) is director of Church Relations — assistant to the President.



A short-term team leads children in song in Phu Tho Province, Vietnam.

LCMS Office of International Mission/ Joshua Lange

## Join an LCMS Short-Term Mission or Mercy Team

Short-term teams can have three to more than 20 people who serve alongside LCMS missionaries and Lutheran partners to proclaim Christ and bear His mercy in Word and deed for one to two weeks. Teams can be formed by congregations, families, friends, small groups, etc.



**Learn more!**

Snap this code with your smart phone  
To learn more about LCMS Short  
Term Teams or go to  
<http://www.lcms.org/shorttermteams>

## Accomplish More: Matching and Unrestricted Gifts

By Mark D. Hofman

*Distinctly Lutheran ... Theological Education ... Human Care ... Effective missions ... Nurturing church workers ... Enhanced schools and youth ministry...*

*Fidelity ... Quality ... Credibility ... Sustainability ... Stability ...*

The article outlining “Values and Priorities around WITNESS, MERCY, LIFE TOGETHER — Bringing Clarity to How Synod Manages Its Resources” lays out the focus and priorities for the use of financial resources in the coming years. Solid values driving a focused effort are hallmarks of Christian stewardship.

Stewards of God love having their donations doubled by a matching gift. The impact of each dona-

tion is extended as it works with the matching grant to accomplish more. For those responding to a matching grant, each dollar given is the equivalent of giving \$2 to something they believe is important.

From the perspective of the donor providing the matching gift, the donation is an investment designed to encourage others to join in a partnership, funding something they believe is important. The gift, made in advance of any response from others, is more than the equivalent of giving \$2. The giver receives great joy in seeing how God uses their offering to marshal resources from fellow believers.

The LCMS is blessed and thankful

when both kinds of gifts are graciously offered. They work together to share the Gospel with others through bold acts of witness and mercy around the word. In the case of the current special matching incentive grant for unrestricted gifts, all who respond supply one of the most vital kinds of charitable donations imaginable. Unrestricted gifts fill the gaps left after restricted donations have been applied to various programs and projects, wherever the need is greatest. They ensure that the most important work of the LCMS is completed. Unrestricted gifts go farther because they are flexible, cost-effective and can be deployed immediately. Finally, unrestricted gifts are spent only on

projects or programs deemed to be the highest priority by the Synod's elected Board of Directors, and are audited for appropriate use.

For more information about the matching grant for unrestricted gifts, or how an unrestricted gift is wisely used to advance the Gospel through the LCMS, please call 888-930-4438, or send an e-mail to [mission.advancement@lcms.org](mailto:mission.advancement@lcms.org)

**Mark D. Hofman** ([mark.hofman@lcms.org](mailto:mark.hofman@lcms.org)) is the executive director of LCMS Mission Advancement.

# Grimenstein Begins as LCMS Disaster Response Manager

By Jeni Miller



The Rev. Dr. Edward Grimenstein

Several social organizations, even in other churches, do not see the Gospel as a vital or integral part of disaster response. We are different. The LCMS desires to always care for both the spiritual and physical needs of people. We care for the whole person, and when the time comes, we let the Gospel have the last word.

**WMLT:** In the wake of recent disasters like the tornadoes in Kentucky, Indiana and Alabama, how does the LCMS respond to those suffering both physically and spiritually?

**EG:** First, we locate the churches within that area and determine which LCMS members have been affected. Second, we provide grants for immediate physical support, such as food, blankets and supplies. Next, we engage the congregations by going there to help them develop an action plan for responding to disaster. Finally, we get out of the way and let them do it!

**WMLT:** Why is it important as Lutherans to be concerned for those suffering from disasters around the world, and how can LCMS members help support those affected?

**EG:** As Lutherans, we know what it is like to receive mercy from Christ. We see it every Sunday in the Lord's Supper, Baptism, preaching of the Word and singing of the Word. Being immersed in God's mercy, it is a natural effect that the Church will show that same mercy of Christ in this world. LCMS members can always financially support the Synod's disaster response efforts, and they can also contact us to request disaster response training and support so they will be ready to reach out in mercy through both material goods and Word and Sacrament ministry to meet the needs of those suffering from disasters around the world.

**Deaconess Jeni Miller** ([jenikaiser@aol.com](mailto:jenikaiser@aol.com)) is a freelance writer for LCMS Communications.

Tornadoes. Earthquakes. Floods. Hurricanes. Fires. These are the kinds of tragedies through which the Rev. Dr. Edward Grimenstein sees the Synod's arm of mercy being put to good use.

A parish pastor, former United States Army chaplain and now the new manager of Disaster Response, Grimenstein helps train LCMS congregations to take bold action when disaster strikes, acts as a liaison between disaster response and the LCMS International Center and assists districts in supporting pastors and parishioners who are affected by disasters.

"Christ comes in the midst of suffering, and we bring His gifts to people enduring disasters," said Grimenstein (EG) of his new role. "It is simply what the Church is and what the Church does."

**WMLT:** What makes the LCMS unique in how she shows mercy and provides care for those suffering from disasters?

**EG:** The LCMS isn't afraid to share the Gospel when people are hurting.

# Weedon to Serve as Chaplain and Director of Worship

By Jeni Miller

Worship is at the center of the Church's life together. "Having been called, gathered, enlightened, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit," *Lutheran Service Book* notes, "we receive His gifts with thankfulness and praise."

Because the Church's work flows from and centers on the gift of Christ given in Word and Sacrament, the Rev. William Weedon was recently called as the new director of Worship/International Center chaplain. Weedon is currently serving as a parish pastor in Hamel, Ill., but has assisted the Office of the President by providing catechetical instruction at the International Center.

"It was extremely important to the Office of the President that, in the midst of the Synod's restructuring, worship should occupy an important place in the daily lives of those at the International Center," said Weedon. "As the people of God, we also need to have an intentional way of addressing worship in the LCMS, and this new position will help make that possible."

**WMLT:** What will your work entail as Director of Worship for the LCMS?

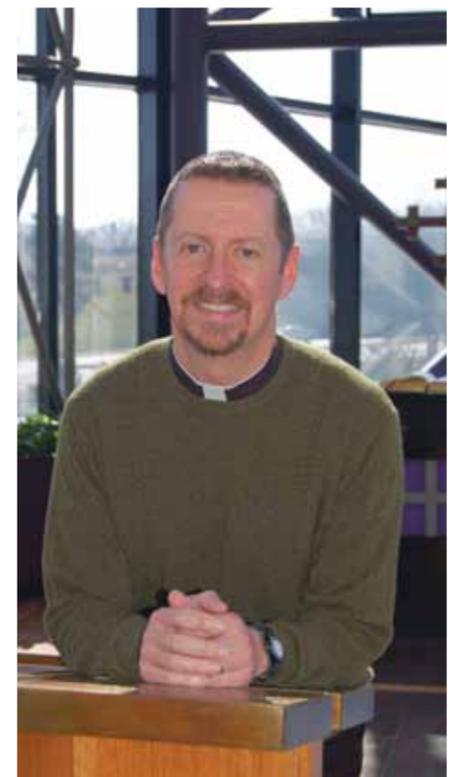
**WW:** Under the Office of National Mission, I'll work together with the Rev. Bart Day to address the worship needs in our Synod. We have been blessed with an extraordinarily rich, intentional and beautiful liturgical heritage that fully accords with our Lutheran Confessions. We recognize that within that heritage we possess a wide range of freedom in how we receive together the Lord's gifts in our parishes, but that we have a responsibility to each other and, above all, to the world to make sure that the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ rings through loud and clear in all we do.

**WMLT:** Regarding your role as International Center Chaplain, why is it important for the staff to have a chaplain in the building, and what worship opportunities will be offered?

**WW:** It is absolutely important to provide regular chapel services and ensure pastoral care for the people at the IC and at LCEF [Lutheran Church Extension Fund] who daily make decisions on behalf of the LCMS. We're not in competition with the pastoral care these folks receive in their own churches, but we seek to supplement it by speaking the Word of God in the midst of our work, allowing that Word to permeate and shape our life together . . . in service to Christ's church.

**WMLT:** How do these new roles benefit LCMS pastors, congregations and members?

**WW:** It benefits all of us through furthering the work that the Commission on Worship has already done, making fuller use of it. My prayer is that through this work, pastors and parishioners will continue to grow in experiencing the very best of Lutheran worship.



The Rev. William Weedon

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## UPCOMING LCMS EVENTS

**LCMS Armed Forces Sunday**  
 May 20, 2012  
[vicki.helling@lcms.org](mailto:vicki.helling@lcms.org)

**Convención Nacional Hispana Luterana**  
 (Hispanic Lutheran Convention)  
 June 19–22, 2012  
 Ann Arbor, Mich.  
<http://4cnhl.wordpress.com/>

**Black Ministry Family Convocation**  
 July 11–15, 2012  
 Greensboro, N.C.  
<http://singtothelordanewsong.weebly.com/>

**National Lutheran Youth Workers Conference**  
 July 12–15, 2012  
 San Antonio, Texas  
<http://www.nlywc.com>

**Prison and Jail Ministry Conference**  
 Sept. 29–30, 2012  
 St. Louis, Mo.  
[sidprisonministry@gmail.com](mailto:sidprisonministry@gmail.com)

**Rural Ministry Conference**  
 Nov. 1–3, 2012  
 Storm Lake, Iowa  
[amy.gerds@lcms.org](mailto:amy.gerds@lcms.org)

**Campus Ministry Conference**  
 Jan. 3–5, 2013  
 St. Louis, Mo.  
[unwrapped2013@lcms.org](mailto:unwrapped2013@lcms.org)

**Life Conference**  
 With special youth track!  
 Jan. 25–26, 2013  
 Washington, D.C.  
[www.lcmslifeconference.org](http://www.lcmslifeconference.org)