



THE
LUTHERAN CHURCH
Missouri Synod

Missouri Synod gives \$1 million grant for Japan disaster relief

For Immediate Release

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ST. LOUIS, MO—June 22, 2011—[The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod](http://www.lcms.org) (LCMS) has given an additional \$1 million to assist with long-term recovery in Japan following the deadly March 11 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear power accident.

LCMS [President Dr. Matthew C. Harrison](#), who traveled with other LCMS ministry leaders to Japan June 10-19, described the devastation as “incomprehensible.”

“It’s difficult to find the words to describe the enormity of the devastation from the disaster,” said Harrison, a disaster response veteran who traveled to Asia soon after the 2004 tsunami and arrived in New Orleans four days after Hurricane Katrina.

Along with devastation, the LCMS team also witnessed hope through the ongoing work of Japanese Lutherans who continue to share Christ's mercy with those who are suffering after the disaster that left some 24,000 dead or missing and tens of thousands homeless.

The LCMS contingent worked with the Japan Lutheran Emergency Relief organization, whose partners include the Japan Lutheran Church and the West Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church, and other church and community leaders, to understand key needs that Japanese Lutheran partners will focus on during the long recovery. That recovery effort includes assistance with grief counseling, tuition for students, support for the elderly and shut-ins, basic needs of underserved Japanese populations and strengthening communities affected by the disaster. Japanese Lutheran partners will concentrate those efforts in the hard-hit areas of Maehama, Kesenuma, Ishinomaki and Higohinatsushima.

While the Lutheran community is a small part of the very small Christian minority in Japan, Harrison said, “Our Lutheran partners have established a presence and are partnering with specific communities where there is no Christian presence,” Harrison said. “Because of the great generosity of the people of the Missouri Synod, we are able to vastly increase that presence in the name of Christ.”

This new grant to the Japan Lutheran Church, the LCMS partner church in Japan, follows the initial \$200,000 in emergency funds previously provided to that church and the West Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church. Those two Japanese Lutheran church bodies are among the partners working collectively as the Japan Lutheran Emergency Relief organization, which continues to provide food and water at an emergency distribution center in Sendai.

Those traveling with Harrison included Rev. Glenn F. Merritt, director of disaster response with LCMS World Relief and Human Care (WRHC), Darin Storkson, Asia director for WRHC; Dr. David C. Birner, associate executive director with LCMS World Mission (WM); Rev. John Mehl, regional director for Asia for WM; Dr. Naomichi Masaki, associate professor of systematic theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.; and Al Dowbnia, communications director, WRHC.

To date, LCMS supporters have given more than \$2 million for LCMS relief efforts in Japan that will continue for years to come.

To contribute to the Synod's disaster response in Japan: mail checks (noting "Japan Disaster Relief" in the memo line) to LCMS World Relief and Human Care, P.O. Box 66861, St. Louis, MO 63166-6861; call toll-free 888-930-4438; or give online to the [Disaster Relief Fund for Japan](#).

About The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), is a mission-oriented, Bible-based, confessional Christian denomination headquartered in St. Louis, Mo. Founded in 1847, the LCMS has more than 2.3 million baptized members in some 6,200 congregations and more than 9,000 pastors. Two seminaries and 10 colleges and universities operate under the auspices of the LCMS, and its congregations operate the largest Protestant parochial school system in America. The church broadcasts the saving message of Jesus Christ over KFUD Radio, and it has relationships and active mission work in 89 countries around the world. In the last five years, the LCMS has awarded more than \$35 million through more than 900 domestic and international grants for emergency response and disaster relief. Today, the LCMS is in full doctrinal fellowship with 33 other confessional Lutheran church bodies worldwide and is a founding partner of [Lutheran Services in America](#), a social ministry organization serving one in every 50 Americans. For more information, visit www.lcms.org.