## Religious Freedom



REETINGS, DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST.

The founders of our beloved Synod left Germany and sailed to the United States in the mid-1800s so they could practice their faith without persecution.

Being free — not just to worship but to live according to the teachings of their faith — was important then, and it remains vitally important today.

In recent months, the government has taken steps that we believe infringe upon religious liberty. With the provision in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) requiring the health plans of many religious employers to cover contraceptives, including emergency contraceptives that can act as abortifacients, we are now reaching a tipping point.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) has launched "Religious Liberty: Free to Be Faithful," an education and awareness campaign aimed at inspiring LCMS rostered and lay members to take action to protect the freedom of religion.

The goals of the campaign are to provide clarity regarding the church's role in matters of Christian citizenship and impress upon elected representatives the crucial need to protect First Amendment rights for all religious organizations — not just houses of worship — so they remain free to operate according to their religious beliefs. We must be free to put our faith into action in the public square, not just in our sanctuaries. In response to Christ's bidding, we must be able to witness to the Gospel message as we demonstrate His mercy through our love and compassion for all people.



LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison testifies Feb. 16, 2012, on Capitol Hill in defense of religion and conscience. The "Free to Be Faithful" campaign encourages LCMS members to follow "their reason and all their senses" and safeguard religious liberty this election season.

Concordia Plan Services (CPS), our church's benefits provider, seeks to continue to serve those who serve the church in a manner consistent with our faith. Unfortunately, the aforementioned provision within the PPACA may ultimately impact CPS' ability to meet its mission of providing care and coverage to LCMS employers and employees.

Please join us in learning more about our rights and responsibilities as Christian citizens on the cusp of national, state and local elections.

We encourage every member of the LCMS to use "their reason and all their senses" to safegard our precious religious

liberty and invite you to learn more and explore informational resources at *lcms.org/freetobefaithful*.

God bless you, and God bless America.

REV. DR. MATTHEW C. HARRISON
PRESIDENT, THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—
MISSOURI SYNOD

Mr. James F. Sanft *V* President, Concordia Plan Services