



Operation Barnabas

A network of care

MINISTRY TO THE ARMED FORCES

What is Operation Barnabas?

Operation Barnabas is a network of care to our nation's military members and their families. We reach out to all components, with a special emphasis on our Reserve members and their families. You may ask: "Why is it called Operation Barnabas?" Barnabas was Paul's companion, who helped him in his missionary journey. Barnabas means "son of encouragement." We hope to encourage our military and their families!



- *Members of Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) congregations* are equipped and encouraged to reach out to chaplains, military personnel, and veterans in their congregations and communities; especially those far from the support of military bases.
- *Operation Barnabas district counselors* in areas across the LCMS are trained and ready to serve Reserve chaplains and their families—pre-deployment, deployment, and post-deployment.

LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces, a ministry within LCMS World Mission, initiated Operation Barnabas in 2007 as a response to the ever-increasing needs of returning service men and women. The program's goal is to equip and encourage LCMS congregations and their members, as well as local Operation Barnabas district counselors for compassionate care and Gospel-sharing outreach.

Why a special emphasis on the military? There are many groups who need help, especially in this economy.

We certainly agree that all are deserving of care! For the past six years, our nation has been calling on our military members and their families with repeated separations and deployments. Many of our service members have deployed four times or more. (*Deployments generally run from four to 12 months, depending on the branch of service.*) This places an incredible strain on our military. They stand ready to serve our country, and we believe we owe our military families our support.

Why a special emphasis on the Reserve community?

Our active duty members usually work on a base or post, with a large support staff to care for their needs, such as financial counseling, babysitting, health care, etc. Our reserve community and their families are often located large distances from those support structures.

Our hope is that our LCMS congregations can reach out to these families, especially when their loved ones are deployed, and help care for many of their needs.

Do you have to be Lutheran to receive help?

Certainly not! The goal of Operation Barnabas is to help LCMS Lutheran congregations reach out to ALL military families in their communities, regardless of religious affiliation.

For more information, contact Mike Moreno • 1-800-433-3954 • Michael.Moreno@lcms.org



LCMS WORLD MISSION
barnabas.lcmsworldmission.org

The Global Gospel Outreach of  THE LUTHERAN CHURCH
Missouri Synod

Do you offer support for deploying chaplains?

Yes! In fact, this is how Operation Barnabas got started! Shortly after 2003, LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces began receiving reports from deploying chaplains. The deployment cycle overwhelmed all reservists, and also our own chaplains. We now offer to help create a care plan in concert with other resources available to the LCMS congregation, such as the Operation Barnabas district counselor and the LCMS district president.

When we learn of an impending deployment, we offer to visit the pastor, his family, and the congregation. Many members are unaware of the pressures faced during a deployment or of the resources available to them. We help create a “deployment plan” to insure the congregation continues to function, as well as a plan to help care for the pastor’s family during the deployment and after.

After the deployment, we believe that the pastor needs to return to his congregation with a “soft landing.” We recommend that a congregation restart the pastor’s salary and benefits after he “demobilizes,” but that he not return to work for up to 30 days.

I’m not sure we can afford to pay pastor and still pay another pastor to help out for 30 days. What about our financial concerns?

The LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces understands those concerns. For this reason, in partnership with LCMS World Relief and Human Care, we offer a grant to the congregation to allow the pastor to have that time away from full-time ministry, while still being paid. At the moment, the grant is in the amount of \$2,000.

What type of services and care can congregations offer?

Imagine all of the challenges that a single parent faces. One example is childcare. The military has a program to subsidize child care of deployed members. What an excellent opportunity for ministry that opens for us! The LCMS has over 1,400 early childhood centers that care for more than 131,000 children! Your local congregation could offer to help care for military children, and make an impact upon the entire family.

Neighbors can send care packages filled with hygiene items and snacks, but the church has the greatest care package ever given, the Gospel of Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior. We can reach out to our military community in the name of Jesus Christ with love, concern, forgiveness, and the certain hope of salvation. This care package from God is able to withstand all the strains of military life.

Human care needs also provide opportunities to serve. Does your congregation have members who could help with car care if a military spouse has car trouble? Could your youth group offer to help with yard care and raking leaves? The possibilities are limitless!

How can my congregation participate in Operation Barnabas?

You can begin immediately! However, you may benefit from attending an Operation Barnabas workshop. This workshop details how to start a military outreach from the “ground up.” Topics include connecting to your local military, pre-deployment through post-deployment care, military children, and more! To get started, simply contact Operation Barnabas manager, Chaplain Mike Moreno at Michael.Moreno@lcms.org and/or visit the Web site <http://barnabas.lcmsworldmission.org>.

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