

## Love Completes the Mission!



Most military deployments today are to Iraq. A number of troops also continue to go to Afghanistan, and the U.S. continues to maintain a military presence in allied countries like Korea, Germany and Japan. Our chaplains continue to serve with devotion, offering tireless pastoral care, worship opportunities, Bible studies, moral guidance and hospital visitation to hundreds and even thousands of deployed Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine, Reserve and National Guard soldiers. It takes love and support to carry on this effort.

Hundreds of homes are missing a parent, and families here repeatedly face serious issues that must be settled without the support of one partner. More than a dozen parishes are struggling while their chaplain-pastor is away for an extended period of mobilized reserve duty. It takes great love and determination to support our military families, as well as the churches and families of deployed reserve chaplains.

As God wills, this year could bring a turning point in the conflict in Iraq. We pray that many of our troops may begin to return home. Through it all, as Christians who have God's love in our hearts for all people, it is that love shared with others that will help complete the mission there and in other areas of the world.

Our theme for this year's Armed Forces Sunday materials is **"Love Completes the Mission."** God's love in Christ completes His mission to the entire

creation, both to people and things. In Christ we have come to know that love and we are part of a New Creation. We now live to share the love showered on us by God's grace. Through us that love is available to all people of the world as God's love in Christ provides a bridge of peace. Yes, "Love completes the mission."

We pray for our chaplains and all whom they serve, both here and overseas. Their mission requires great love, which God provides abundantly in Christ. Your support of our chaplains will make a difference in the world!

- The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has 73 active duty chaplains in the Army, Navy, and Air Force; eight serving in a war zone. We have 103 reserve and National Guard chaplains; between 10 and 15 are mobilized at any given time. LCMS chaplains serve in 27 Veterans Administration centers, and we have 25 Civil Air Patrol chaplains helping with rescue missions and teaching morals classes to young cadets.
- Our Ministry to the Armed Forces Office recruits chaplains, provides LCMS endorsement for their ministry, plans annual training and offers Ministry by Mail support to chaplains and military personnel throughout the world. Your love can help complete the mission by sending us names of those in your congregation who are entering the military: E/mail us at [lcmschaps@lcms.org](mailto:lcmschaps@lcms.org). See other helpful material at: [www.lcmsworldmission.org/armedforces](http://www.lcmsworldmission.org/armedforces).

You can support our mission directly by returning a gift in the special Ministry to the Armed Forces Sunday envelope.

## Prayer of the Church for Armed Forces Sunday

L: We confess that the human family cannot always live together in harmony. Even as we try to work for peace, whether in our personal life or the affairs of the nation, we find ourselves at war.

**P: Only Your forgiveness and love can bring peace to our personal lives, to our country, and to the world. Lord, let Your love work in our hearts.**

L: We pray for the members of our Armed Forces who serve on land, sea and air; for those who safeguard our shores and those called to bear arms around the world.

**P: Heavenly Father, keep those serving in the Armed Forces from harm, and give strength and courage to do their duty, especially those who work to bring order to Iraq and Afghanistan; protect them and let Christ's love shine through them.**

L: We pray for the Veterans Administration chaplains who share your love and healing with injured and disabled veterans throughout our country.

**P: Lord, give our VA chaplains perseverance as they labor to bring healing to those who bear scars of war and suffer sorrowful memories and terrifying dreams. Give the VA chaplains patience and a rich measure of love.**

L: We lift up to you the chaplains who serve in prisons and jails working with a community that is out of sight and isolated from the mainstream of life.

**P: We bring before you those who minister in prisons, as they serve inmates separated from family and loved ones and unable to share in productive civilian and community work. We pray our chaplains faithfully share the Word of God, so that those in confinement find freedom in the Gospel of Christ.**

L: We pray for pastors who serve double duty, both as reserve and guard chaplains, especially those mobilized to active duty and deployed away from home.

**P: Surround our reserve and guard chaplains with love; bless families and parishes during times of separation; let them find sustaining strength in Word and Sacrament, and give joy to their homecomings.**

L: We also pray for the work of Civil Air Patrol chaplains.

**P: Bless our chaplains who offer moral training to young boys and girls; let the example of Christ be central to their instruction and the character development of the coming generation.**

L: Finally, let us pray for the Ministry by Mail program, providing six thousand military families with Portals of Prayer and religious and devotional material.

**P: May all the material that supports Lutheran personnel strengthen them in their faith and bring joy to their assigned tasks. May they witness boldly to Christ even as they share His love.**

**ALL: May Your love, O God, sustain our chaplains and the men and women of the Armed Forces whom they serve, as we seek to complete Your mission to share the love of Christ with the world; through Jesus Christ, Your Son our Lord, who lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.**