

Lutheran Lay Fellowship of Metropolitan Washington DC



LUNCHEON MEETING Thursday, December 5, 2013 – 12:00 noon

Saint Luke Lutheran Church
9100 Colesville Road at Dale Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Opening Announcements

President Bob “Sarge” Sargeant opened the meeting at 12:15 p.m. Dee and Dave Lambert both celebrate birthdays this month as well as Ken Wilson. There were no wedding anniversaries this month. John Corkill introduced himself as a first time attendee.

Betty Fredericks distributed a flyer for the Christmas concert she’s singing in at Asbury Methodist Village on December 21 at 3:00 p.m. There will be a Fair Trade fair and concert sponsored by St. Luke’s.

Sarge related that last month’s meeting produced a lot of good ideas which are being pulled together in a report that will be a proposal aimed at developing a new generation of Lutheran leadership.

Pr. Berg made a presentation of gratitude to the Luther Bells, who provide the food for us each month. Gifts were a poinsettia plant garden, gift cards, and fruit basket. He also named some future speakers for our luncheons.

Dave Lambert announced that membership renewal notices are available and will be sent out to others. He asked for volunteers to help stuff envelopes.

Opening Devotion



Prayer Book for the Armed Services

Isaiah 11 was the scripture on which Chaplain Wester based the day’s devotions. He described today’s soldier, both heavily trained and heavily laden. Our nation is filled with veterans. The new ELCA prayer book for those in the Service was distributed as well as how to order more. (*see attached form*) He read a prayer from the book to complement the scriptural message of vision of peace.

Introduction of Speaker

Pr. Berg brought his usual humorous stories as part of the day's "digestif" and transition to the day's speaker.

The Rev. Franklin "Eric" Wester, Assistant to the Presiding Bishop for Federal Chaplaincy Ministries for the ELCA, works to support the chaplaincies of the church in federal agencies, institutions, and armed forces, and to provide for the pastoral care of those called to these ministries.

Chaplain Wester completed thirty-two years of military service culminating as a senior military chaplain and Army colonel. He has over thirty years of service as a Lutheran pastor. He is currently the Director of Federal Chaplaincy Ministries for the ELCA, Project Director of Military Chaplaincy Discernment and Professional Development at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary and Senior Instructor of Leader Development Education for Sustained Peace (at the Naval Post-graduate School). In 2011, he served as Interim Pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Alexandria, VA and from 2008 to 2011 was a Senior Military Fellow at the National Defense University. He and his wife, Paula, live in Arlington, VA.

Presentation

Military Chaplaincy: A Ministry of Affirming the Dignity of Humanity in the Intense, Inhumane Context of Combat was the theme for Chaplain Wester's presentation.

Our speaker began by, continuing the introductions humorous vain, by offering a series of "one liners" with a military flavor.

Lutheran Chaplains serve in three areas: the Military, Veterans Affairs, and Prisons. He showed photos of several local residents who are serving as Chaplains. He then showed photos of other Lutheran Chaplains in their work settings. Chaplain Rich Johnston, USN, serves the Navy Brig in Charleston, South Carolina. All three military branches do chaplain training together in Columbia, SC.

He described a 2011 "reunion" at Reformation Lutheran Church of people who were members on December 7, 1941, the date of Pearl Harbor.

The ELCA has adopted a Social Statement on criminal justice: Hearing the Cries, The Church and Criminal Justice. 1 in 34 adults in the US is the care of the criminal justice system. The July/August issue of The Journal of Lutheran Ethics, a free online journal, focuses on the criminal justice system. There are very few ELCA prison chaplains, and hopefully this social statement will encourage more congregational ministries in prisons and jails.

Current Federal Chaplains = 196 DOD, 32 VA, 5 DOJ.

Pr. Wester brought note of the Prayer Books mentioned above, inviting people to use the accompanying form to purchase one, and encouraged their being included in the “gift boxes” that groups put together to send to members of the military.

Most chaplains enter as generalists, but many move on to specialties, such as trauma, ethics, and character development. Approaches are focused on the military’s seven core values. The largest young adult ministry in the church is the military chaplaincy.

The Sunday prayers in congregations for members of the military are deeply appreciated for those who are serving.

Military service stretches individuals to the limits of their human endurance. Reports of the "hidden wounds" of more than a decade of war bring to mind the occasional reports of increased homelessness, suicide risk, and isolation among veterans of military service. And yet, military service can bring out the very best in people.

A Q&A period raised several questions:

Q: How can we ministry to the spiritual distress of those who return to our congregations?

A: Be preemptive – the more you can prepare people before they go, the better they will fare. Pray with them and invite them into discussion of their concerns, perhaps over lunch or breakfast. The Center for Research and Ethics sampled 3,000 deployed soldiers, looking at dimensions of spirituality in resilience. Connection to others, religious practices, and hope were three key variables, or components, that were most influential. Belief in the prayers of loved ones back home was also very important.

Q: How do you support Chaplains in the stresses of their work?

A: Chaplains are non-combatants – on the front, but not armed. His work is to work with chaplains and their families before, during, and after deployment.

Q: Re: prison chaplaincy- what is his role?

A: He only deals with federal chaplains, while there are many more in state and local prisons and jails.

Q: Do you foresee an increase in Lutheran Chaplains in federal prisons as a result of the social statement?

A: How do we attract people to these ministries? The Social Statement can only help. Berkeley Seminary has an active prison ministry during pastoral formation. Chaplains in prisons are paid by the Federal government, and positions are open. However, one must be under age 37 to enter these positions, which is a problem when many are just entering ministry at mid-life.

Q: How does Lutheran theology help undergird the work?

A: A strong commitment to a sacramental ministry, our solid theological grounding are important.

He thanked the four veterans present for their service. He also noted the service of his wife who is a medical social worker who assists the transition and from active military to veteran status for the severely wounded.

He concluded with a short video addressed to encouraging entry into the Chaplaincy ministry.

Closing Devotion

Chaplain Schmidt, returned and recovered from his recent illness, led the devotion, remembering the passing away of our former member Dan Bella, and the mother of member Bonnie Priebe, Irene Spicer. He read from Dan's pastor's message concerning his being ready for release into heaven. There was a feeling of peace at the last. Chaplain also recalled that John Corkill's wife, Betsy, who passed away within the last year. He commended all to God's hands, noting that we were privileged to be part of their life. He commended the living to be more humane in this era of inhumane-ness, and especially at this time of God becoming human.



Evangelical Lutheran Worship Prayer Book for the Armed Services

For Chaplains and Other Military Personnel
Published by Augsburg Fortress

ISBN 978-1-4514-7000-0
First Printing, April 2013

When you pray, you pray with all of God's people; you are not alone. This prayer book has been prepared especially as a guide for an individual person's use, but it also contains prayers, services, hymns, and other resources for use in corporate settings, so that service members may join their voices in the worship of the whole church.

Since at least the First World War, Lutherans in North America have provided prayer resources for people in the armed services. This prayer book continues that tradition, adapting prayers from years past, including resources for worship and prayer from Evangelical Lutheran Worship, and providing newly created materials for changing circumstances. The collection is intended not only for chaplains rostered in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America but especially also for other military personnel in the armed forces of the United States of America. With some contextual adaptation for the service branches of Canada, much of this volume may be useful also for those associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. The prayer book's resources may additionally support ministries such as prison and other institutional chaplaincies.

The arrangement of Prayer Book for the Armed Services reflects its use in ever-widening spheres. First are materials for use by an individual person, including Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Night Prayer, and prayers for various circumstances. Following this are prayers for use in corporate settings, services of Holy Communion and Holy Baptism and related orders, rites for selected life passages, and corporate orders for daily prayer. Selections from the book of Psalms, a topical index of suggested biblical readings, and hymn texts are provided for use in many of these services. The volume concludes with Martin Luther's Small Catechism.

In days of joy and anticipation as well as times of struggle and fear, may this prayer book be a helpful companion in faith and a vivid reminder of Christ's love for you. Whether you develop a pattern for daily use or turn to this volume for occasional use, you may be assured that the prayers of the church go with you. Whatever your circumstances, and when you pray by yourself or in the company of others, may the Holy Spirit strengthen you in faith and deepen your commitment to living in response to God's grace and mercy.

Prayer Book for the Armed Services

Gift Order Form

What: Make a gift of the *Prayer Book for the Armed Services*

Where: *Prayer Book for the Armed Services* will be sent to deployed chaplains in areas of active conflict and to chaplains underway and at sea. Also, copies will be provided to military training bases for new recruits entering military service. You may designate your preferred recipients:

- Deployed chaplains and military members in Afghanistan or another hostile fire zone
- Navy or Marine Corps chaplains and military members at sea
- Basic training or "boot camp" for new recruits
- Hospital ministry
- Other areas of need to support military members (e.g. service academies, deployment sites)

How: Send a check payable to the ELCA Federal Chaplaincy Ministries (Restricted Fund)

Prayer Books
Bureau for Federal Chaplaincies
305 E Street NW (Suite 300)
Washington, DC 20001

Amount: Books retail for \$8.00 each. The Office for Federal Chaplaincy Ministries will arrange for the shipping from Augsburg Fortress to the preferred destination.

Why: Individuals and congregations have generously supported military members and their families during years of war. In addition to prayer shawls, cards, letters of encouragement, and personal comfort items, we would like to provide the new *Prayer Book for the Armed Services* to offer spiritual encouragement for those in military service.

INDIVIDUAL OR CONGREGATIONAL DONOR: _____

DONOR'S ADDRESS: _____ SYNOD: _____

CITY, STATE and ZIP Code: _____

DONATION AMOUNT: _____ Books retail at \$8.00 each. Shipping will be arranged.

Send donations to: Prayer Books, Bureau for Federal Chaplaincies, 305 E Street NW (Suite 300) Washington, DC 20001