

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON, D.C. SYNOD ASSEMBLY
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Gaithersburg, Maryland
June 18, 2016

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Secretary's Number:

Title: Gratitude and Support for Military Service Members and Veterans

**Submitted by: Rev. Mark W. Olsen, Rev. Jeff Wilson, Rev. Tom Omholt, Rev. Tom Knoll,
 Rev. Kate Davidson**

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WHEREAS, 1.2 million Americans are currently serving in the various branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, and about 21.2 million American women and men are veterans of military service, and,

WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands of military personnel have been injured over the years and returned home with wounded bodies, minds, and hearts, and,

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is highly committed to ministry among those in military uniform and those who have faithfully, and often sacrificially, served this nation, as exemplified by the service of the Rev. Karis Graham, the Rev. Charles Hodges, the Rev. Jeffrey Jacobson, the Rev. John Kallerson, the Rev. Alexis King, and the Rev. Terri King, military chaplains rostered in this synod; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod in Assembly memorialize the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in New Orleans to encourage our Churchwide ministries, synods, and congregations to offer their gratitude and support for all military personnel, veterans, and their families and friends with tangible expressions of care and encouragement in one or more of the following ways:

- a. Express gratitude often and remain especially attentive to those serving in our Armed Forces, as well as veterans, including military and federal chaplains;
- b. Congregations provide to their members who serve in the military copies of the *Prayer Book for the Armed Services*, (Augsburg Fortress Publishing), a companion to *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* designed for those serving in uniform, veterans, and their families, to military personnel and their families, and collaborate with their synod and the ELCA Bureau of Federal Chaplains to donate additional copies of the prayer book to military chaplains for them to distribute to those in their care;

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- c. Regularly lift up in prayer those who are serving and those who have served, and pray especially with and for members of the military who have been wounded or killed in the line of duty, as well as for their families;
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- d. Regularly remember in Intercessory Prayer all of our Federal Chaplains, to include military chaplains, Veterans Administration hospital chaplains, and Federal Bureau of Prison chaplains, who bring the means of grace in the name of Christ Jesus on our behalf wherever they are called to serve;
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- e. Lift up the vocation of those who serve in our Armed Forces, and encourage gifted women and men in our congregations to be open to the call of the Holy Spirit and the church for them to serve as ordained military and federal chaplains of our ELCA;
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- f. The Presiding Bishop invite synods and congregations one Sunday each year (on the Sunday closest to Veterans Day) to especially remember in prayer those in military uniform, the veterans who have served, the wounded and their families in their recovery and in their coping, and the families of those who have lost their lives in military service who now live with pain and loss;
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- g. Remembering that injuries of the mind, spirit, and relationships do not show as clearly as physical injuries, offer rituals of healing and reconciliation for active duty members and members of the Reserve and National Guard upon their return from deployment or special duty, and periodically thereafter;
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- h. Conduct and/or participate in events in our congregations, conferences, and/or our synod that equip individuals and congregations to offer needed care and support for returning veterans. Such activities include the ELCA “Centurion Connection” and “Care for Returning Veterans” programs, support to wounded warriors, Partners in Care (a state National Guard initiative), and other efforts to receive those returning home with open hearts and arms;
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- i. Realizing that not all honorably discharged veterans transition well, and some find themselves incarcerated, congregations which already have a prison ministry are encouraged to make a special effort to seek out incarcerated veterans to thank them for their service and to help them access their veterans’ benefits so that they might have a more successful transition upon their release.