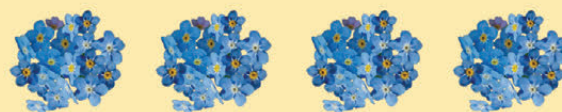




Forget-Us-Nots



ON THE FRONT LINES



Today, your gifts to LMVFM matter more than ever as we deal with two disasters:

- ◆ The Global COVID-19 Pandemic; and
- ◆ The ongoing epidemic of US military suicides costing some 20-plus lives every day.

Giving to LMVFM has been affected by the sharp economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic, offsetting much of the gain generated by the year-end 2019 Christmas Ornament Adoption Appeal. This unprecedented crisis has resulted in an economic downturn has affected us all.

In order to keep this ministry Christ-centered, LMVFM never accepts government aid. In other words, your gifts to LMVFM assure that no military veteran, contractor or family member will ever be turned aside from the free clinical and pastoral counselling and related care that they will not get anywhere else.

Please know that your regular, generous gifts to LMVFM are saving lives from spiritual and physical death, 24/7/365.



Why your help matters

LMVFM provides veterans, contractors and their family members with free counseling services and assessments, help with VA claims, assistance locating and connecting with other types of resource support.

- ◆ LMVFM does not solicit or accept any government funding or resources.
- ◆ All LMVFM programs and services are free to our clients.
- ◆ LMVFM has never turned a veteran, contractor or family member away for any reason.



- ◆ Oct. 14 — 13th anniversary "Dine to Donate" at Granite City Brewery, Fort Wayne IN
- ◆ Oct. 24 — 2nd Annual "Battle Rattle Run" 5K, St John's Lutheran, Lake Township
- ◆ Nov. 1-Jan. 31 — Annual Christmas Ornament Adoption Appeal
- ◆ Every month — Designate your Thrivent Choice Dollars to LMVFM
- ◆ Daily — Designate LMVFM as your organization with Kroger's Rewards Program and Amazon Smile and they'll make a donation to LMVFM for all your eligible purchases.
- ◆ Employer Match — Ask whether your employer will match contributions to LMVFM.



Donating Your Choice Dollars is Easy



There are two ways to Donating your Thrivent Choice Dollars to Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries.

1. Call 1-800-847-4836 and when prompted say "Thrivent Choice" which will connect you to a friendly Customer Care Agent and tell them that you would like to donate your Thrivent Choice Dollars to: Lutheran Military Veterans & Families Ministries.
2. You can also donate your Choice Dollars by logging into your account at Thrivent.com/Thriventchoice and direct your Choice Dollars to Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries.

Your Donations of these items help us to keep our programs and services free to those we serve. Gift Cards of any amount, unused postage, large and small business envelopes.



amazon smile
You shop. Amazon gives.

AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases when you select:

Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries as the organization you want to support. Smile Amazon will remember your selection, and then make a donation from all of your eligible purchases made at smile.amazon.com.

Note: Purchases made at the regular Amazon.com site do not qualify. You must use SmileAmazon to have a donation made to: Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries.



I H S

Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries, Inc.
3480 Stellhom Rd., Fort Wayne, Indiana 46815 260.755.2239 www.lmvfm.org
"Serving with Christ's Love Those Who Serve"



Spring

2020

Whatever the battle: Assess. Respond. Repeat.

When a crisis first hits, people will immediately and reflexively react in one of three ways: fight, flee, or freeze. However, after their initial reaction, how a person responds becomes a conscious personal choice and it is that conscious choice which defines them. The same holds true for LMVFM.

We had a lot to think about in the days leading up to COVID shelter in place order for all but essential services. With the information we had, we assessed the danger, and responded by purchasing and using enhanced sanitising agents at the office.

Thinking that we would be considered a non-essential service one of our first concerns was how we were going to transition from counselling the veterans we see at the office to having sessions by phone. We do a significant amount of counselling by phone with clients who for geographic reasons can't come to the office. But in reality, in person face-to-face counselling is far more effective. The other concern was how we were going to keep the ministry moving forward working out of our homes.

Less than an hour before the shelter-in-place order came into effect, we found out that LMVFM's direct care mission, classified us as an essential service which has allowed us to continue seeing and assisting our clients. We are grateful for the many unexpected challenges we have faced during the pandemic. By meeting them head on we have discovered new opportunities to serve and increase our ministry outreach to our veterans, contractors and their family members.

We discovered that many of our veterans were at a severe disadvantage when trying to buy groceries once the panic buying ensued that left shelves empty at grocery stores. Our ability to source much needed staple items for our veterans was greatly appreciated.



God continues to provide for LMVFM's every need!



Most recently, He sent us Deb Myers (center), who combines law office management experience with deep respect for veterans in her service as LMVFM's new office manager.



While at home LMVFM volunteers continue to serve.

Blessings to you all, as we continue to find opportunities to serve.

Team LMVFM

From the Executive Director: With Prayers and Thanks

Dear Friends,

During this time of uncertainty, I want to share one of my favourite Scripture verses with you:

When I am afraid,
I will trust in you,
In God, whose word I praise,
in God, I put my trust;
I shall not be afraid.

What can mere man do to me?
Psalm 56:3-4

As our ministry continues serving our veterans, contractors and their family members, please know that our prayers are with you, too.

Blessings as, together, we continue

"Serving, With Christ's Love,
Those who Serve."

Leslie

Chaplain Leslie Haines
Executive Director
Lutheran Military Veterans
and Families Ministries

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COVID-19: Finding the silver lining



If there is a silver lining to COVID-19, and the almost overnight government mandates to shelter-in-place, practise social distancing and overall restrictions on activities, it's that Americans now have something in common with those who have served in the military.

No matter how much you love your family members, sheltering-in-place has provided Americans with the personal knowledge of what it's like to be around the same person/s almost 24/7. Now just imagine what it's like for soldiers who have no say in who they are going to share a confined space, or in combat zones where they live with the uncertainty of when or if they will be under attack.

We've all experienced the frustration of being fed misinformation, fake news about something that could potentially kill us. It led to fear based knee jerk reactions at every level of our country. Imagine then the frustration soldiers have when missions are not clear, when rumours are all they have to go on. Whatever fears they may have, they are pushed back and they carry on with their mission.

Many Americans now share something else with those who have served in the military which is what it is like to miss birthday of a loved one, have a loved one taken to the hospital and not be allowed to see them, or to lose a loved one, and not be able to attend their funeral.

After more than a month of living with shelter-in-place and no control of when it will end, Americans now have a taste of what everyone who has served in the military knows which is how it feels when you are forced to "Hurry up and wait".

Military and Veteran Suicides

On the 1st of April, one week into the "Shelter-in-Place" order that swept the country the Defense Suicide Prevention Office posted the 2019 Suicide Report. Once again, the report confirmed that suicides in the military were at an all time high. Sadly, by the end of 2019 suicides among Americas veterans had also seen an increase.

Military suicides since 2015

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
266	280	285	324	340

One of the most significant challenges brought on by the order to shelter in place is reaching veterans who are at risk for suicide while they are in forced isolation. To combat the suicide risks for our veterans who are not coming to the office, regardless of their state, we have been making contact with them by phone and also making ourselves available to make home visits. For pastors and congregation members, we recommend calling your veterans and doing porch visits to see how they are doing.



On Principle: Why LMVFM Accepts No Government Funding

As soon as Congress approved funding aid for businesses and non-profit organizations affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic, we at LMVFM started getting inquiries about whether we'd applied for assistance. While we appreciate the inquiries, the answer is 'No.' From its inception in 2008, LMVFM has neither solicited nor accepted any form of government funding. We're committed to keeping Christ at the center of this ministry. Government funding comes with restrictions on the free exercise of religion. So, rather than compromising LMVFM's Christ-centered mission, we remain confident that God will continue to provide for our needs, especially through the generosity of faith-motivated donors like you.

LMVFM-Serving with Christ's Love, Those Who Serve



Clockwise from top right: Addie Myers keeps an eye on the "Paws and Effects" therapy team. Veteran Jake likes his new facemask. It's all hands on deck for newsletter mailing day, including Board members Chaplain Braasch (l.) and Jody Ford. Thumbs up from Chaplain Haines to volunteer JoAnne Fox, for making and donating facemasks that keep our vets and families safe during Pandemic 2020.



MAIL CALL



Thanks to LMVFM's encouragement, I'm starting to focus more on the needs of veterans in our congregation and community. What with the Pandemic, restrictions on social gatherings and inability to be in direct contact with veterans and their families, what should I be looking for and how should I respond? — Pastor IHB

Dear Pastor,

What a thoughtful, timely question! As a result of their military training and experience, we've seen that many of our veterans bring an "assess and respond" mindset to life in general and emergencies in particular. But, after awhile, vigilance can wear thin and the effects of Post-traumatic Stress (PTS) begin to show.

Watch for signs of depression, heightened anxiety, and uncontrolled anger — three of PTS's main symptoms — in the veterans you serve as Pastor. These can be warning signs that your veteran is thinking of doing harm to self and/or those around him or her. Pay extra attention to their loved ones as well. Keep the VA Suicide Prevention Hotline Number close at hand, 1-800-273-8255. In an emergency, do not hesitate to call 911 and keep the veteran or loved one on the line until help arrives. Don't hesitate to call us at LMVFM if you want to talk further with us about how you'll "assess and respond" to ministry with the veterans in your midst. Thanks again for asking —