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Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries, Inc.

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“Serving with Christ’s Love Those Who Serve”



LMVFM Christmas: Past, Present, Future

We’re well into the Advent and Christmas spirit here at Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries, where the holy, hope-filled season blends Christmases Past, Present and Future.

Our memories start with amazement and wonder, with one Holy Family hunkered down in the best cover available — a barn — and ushered the Christ Child, God in the flesh, into the world to save us from sin, death and the evil one. The Christmas story winds its way through history to this very season, joining the generations who fight to preserve freedom while loved ones pray for good news and safe return from duty.

In this issue, glimpses of hope are coming together from the past, present and future of LMVFM.

“2019 At A Glance” comes together on Page 2 and 3, as LMVFM fulfills its mission one counselee, one congregation, one compassionate friend at a time. It’s been a full, busy year: A growing caseload in counseling, increasing demand for congregational resources and training, and the quiet epidemic of military-related suicide. Your year-round generosity of daily prayer, congregational action and regular financial giving all keep us going when the mission seems overwhelming and unending.

“Hope and Joy meet again in the Annual Ornament Adoption Appeal on Pages 1 and 4. If you haven’t already adopted an ornament, or if you need that special gift for someone on your list, adopt those ornaments today. Please use the reply card that came with this newsletter, e-mail us at: lmvfm.org@gmail.com or call 260.755.2239 to adopt your ornament by 31 January 2020. More details on Page 4.



From Past to Present to Future, the Christmas message reminds us that **HOPE** in the Future gives **POWER** in the Present. As LMVFM brings you the news of what veterans need to address their military service-related Post-Traumatic Stress, we also remember that, LMVFM was founded and still operates on hope and confidence in the triune God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — for all our needs.

Working through individuals, congregations and non-governmental organizations, LMVFM keeps the lights on, doors open, congregations equipped and free Christ-centered counselling available, all to heal hearts and raise hopes of our veterans and those who love them, 24/7/365.

Thanks be to God and to you, it’s what we do.

In Christ, *Leslie*

Chaplain Leslie Haines

LMVFM: Helping veterans let go of their past, engage in the present, and have hope for the future.

2019: Joys, Challenges and Missions Accomplished

Providing Free, Christ-centered counseling for military service-related Post-Traumatic Stress remains top priority at LMVFM: *Helping veterans let go of their past, engage in the present, and have hope for the future.*

LMVFM's counsellors have seen an increase in individuals, couples and families here in our Fort Wayne offices, as well as long-distance by phone to clients throughout the country. When possible, we connect long-distance counselees to a local LMVFM-trained pastoral counsellor. Throughout the year our counselling caseload and support requests fluctuates greatly. Regardless of whether they need just one or two sessions to get them over a rough patch, or long-term individual counselling is needed no vet, military contractor or family member is ever turned away or charged. We give thanks to our generous donors, whose support allows LMVFM to keep our doors open, lights on, so we can recognize and respond quickly, effectively, professionally and above all, faithfully, to **every** veteran, military contractor and family member who turns to us in need.



LMVFM: Focus on Education

During 2019, LMVFM worked with **22** new congregations and church groups across the USA providing seminars and specific training programs for outreach to veterans, military contractors and families in their midst.

Additionally, this year we attended **8** national and regional church conferences across denominational lines which gave us the opportunity to introduced LMVFM's Christ-entered approach to more than 500 congregations. The contacts we make at these events increase awareness about the unique challenges of ministering to veterans and their family members, interest. This increased awareness not only produces invitations to provide new congregational training opportunities, but also puts us in contact with new



To schedule a "Binding the Wounds of War" seminar for a congregation, clergy or other group, call: **(260)755-2239.**

2019 was an "All Paws on Deck" year!

Paw & Effects dog team members, Stanley-Tucker, Patrick-Dooly and even our semi-retired Lilly-Bell had quite a busy year during 2019 as they continued to show their unique gifts and talents with our clients this year. Dooly, ever the road-warrior has accompanied the staff team on every congregational visit and speaking engagements during 2019.



Stanley, is by nature an introvert and prefers quieter settings with fewer people to love and care for. Dooly however, is nothing less than an extrovert and genuinely thrives on meeting and getting to interact people at the typically crowded events we attend throughout the country. As they demonstrate at

the office both dogs have an innate sense of recognizing people who are in need of extra attention. Dooly however regularly demonstrates his ability to recognize and seek out those who would benefit for a little unconditional love at crowded events, which would otherwise distract most dogs.

Stanley is currently on the injured reserve roster having just gone through surgery for a torn ACL. We are blessed to count among our ministry partners, the highly skilled surgical specialist, Dr Steven Harry who performed Stanley's surgery.

LMVFM celebrates 12th year: Serving *with Christ's Love*

Surrounded by family, friends, and ministry partners LMVFM celebrated the beginning of our 12th year of military ministry serving our veterans, contractors and their family members.



Granted it was a bit wet and nippy, LMVFM's *first* annual 5k Battle Rattle Run at St. John Lutheran—Lake Township (IN) held on the last Saturday of October proved to be great Friend-Raiser and Fundraiser.



LMVFM Road Warriors

This has been quite a busy year for the LMVFM team. I am still taken aback as I think about the fact that during 2019, we spent 39 weekends on the road providing training and programs to congregations and groups across the country. This year we'd welcome the opportunity to come and share our ministry with your congregation or group. If you'd like to hear more about how to better serve our veterans and their family members please contact us at: 260.755.2239.

MAIL CALL



Dear LMVFM,
My husband is back from deployment and happy to be reunited with the kids and me — or, at least, was happy until the subject of holidays with our extended families came up. Being home safe and sound should be enough for a happy holiday together, shouldn't it? How should I approach this with my husband, the kids and the rest of the family? Morgan

Morgan, thanks for asking. It's a common question at this time of year. "Why doesn't my son/daughter / grandchild (or in your case, spouse) want to join the rest of the family during holiday events? Civilian logic figures that once out of harm's way, veterans can just relax and enjoy a festive meal and celebration with family. There is no one reason why many returning veterans resist participating in what was once, for them, an enjoyable activity. However, there are some common reasons that veterans give for their resistance to joining in. Here, in their own words, are reasons that veterans give for not wanting to go to family events.

- "The constant chatter-about nothing."
- "Being treated like I'm fragile or about to explode."
- "Noise." "Too many people." "Being hit with too many questions."
- "Having to listen people who have never served talk like they know what it's like to serve."
- "Civilians who spout off their political opinions about war— why we are there, what we should/shouldn't be doing..."

Most of the complaints veterans have about going to anything out side of their home, revolve around the inability to control their environment and interactions with civilians. When you are at home, you have a greater sense of safety and control, as opposed to being at a gathering at another persons home. The best thing you can do is talk with your veteran about why they are feeling the way they are and then discuss some options. If your veteran is willing to go, but has reservations then look for ways to reduce the stress. For example: One of the most effective strategies to employ when you see your veteran stuck in a conversation with that know-it-all uncle, is to call your veteran on their mobile. That allows your veteran to take the call and politely walk away. The most important thing is communication between you both. Finally, if your veteran still doesn't want to go to a family event don't force the issue, but plan to revisit it after the stress of the holidays dies down.

Leave no ornament behind!

2018 LMVFM Christmas Ornament Adoption Appeal



Each year, November 1st marks the beginning of LMVFM's annual Christmas Ornament Adoption Appeal. Your generous gift received between **November 1-January 31** will be recognized with a one-of-a-kind, handcrafted Christmas ornament, made by a veteran or *family member*, like the one pictured left, that will hang on the Christmas tree here at LMVFM in Fort Wayne.

You and those you honor will be able to see your ornament on LMVFM's Facebook Page, and website. You will have the joy of knowing that your gift gives hope to those who have sacrificed for the freedom to

worship and celebrate the freedoms that we enjoy.



Adopt your ornament today with a gift of any size to LMVFM, online at lmvfm.org or by mail to **LMVFM Christmas Appeal, 3480 Stellhorn Rd., Fort Wayne, IN 46815.**

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.*



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.



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Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries.