

**Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries** hosted the 4th Annual Battle Rattle 5K Run/Walk at St. John's Lutheran Church (Lake Township) on October 29, 2022. Thirty participants enjoyed a pleasant and mild Fall morning running or walking to support veterans.

We are so grateful to our participants. We also thank our sponsors and volunteers for helping make the event a success!



**2022**



## Why Help LMVFM?

**Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries'** team provides free Christ-centered counseling and programs to veterans, military contractors and their families who are at grave risk of suicide or other destructive behavior.

**LMVFM has never accepted government funds or support. We rely solely on gifts of supporters like you.** Our ability to provide our services is a direct result of the generosity of our ministry partners and individuals like you.

**Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries, Inc.**  
**3480 Stellhorn Rd., Fort Wayne, IN 46815**  
 260.755.2239 www.lmvfm.org  
 Christmas 2022

## The Season of 'Christ'mas

But the Angel said to them, **"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people."** - Luke 2:10

In our recent Fall newsletter, we highlighted our joy at reaching our 15th year of ministry to our veterans, contractors and their family members. It has truly been a blessing to serve so long, and we are thankful that God, who is the source of that blessing has faithfully allowed us to serve our brothers and sisters and their family members. In the middle of our celebrating, we have also seen one of our busiest travel schedules - training congregations, groups as well as sharing the Good News of Christ with individual veterans and their family members. In other words, our mission continues fully engaged in these post-pandemic days.

While we cherish these interactions more than ever, we are seeing a great increase in people we meet who struggle with loneliness, depression and anger; not only from veterans, but their family members as well. There are so many opportunities to see the effects of a lost and broken world - and so many opportunities to then share the "good news of great joy"!



**What an Impact!**  
 This year, LMVFM has received over \$7,200, directed to our ministry by Thrivent members.

Thrivent financial provides many benefits to its clients. One particular benefit is the ability to donate funds, at no cost to you, to LMVFM. According to Thrivent, "Through Thrivent Choice®, our clients with membership can contribute to organizations and causes they care about—and influence how Thrivent distributes some of its charitable grant funding through Choice Dollars®. You can make a personal donation to your favorite enrolled organization—Thrivent pays the processing fees. Eligible clients with membership can also direct Choice Dollars or nominate an organization to be a part of the program. Through Thrivent Choice, more than \$520 million has been distributed to churches and nonprofits nationwide."

### Spot the Oddity

We have purposefully inserted some good humor into this edition of the Newsletter. Did you spot it?

Humor is certainly a gift from God. It helps alleviate the stress and strain of life. It binds us together with a good laugh. It helps us escape the mundane and dull moments. God's Word is full of references to happiness and joy! So, look carefully for the 'oddy'. If you find it, rest assured that you win nothing but bragging rights and our respect!



So far this year, our ministry team has traveled to Indianapolis, IN; Orlando, FL; Champaign, IL; Flatville, IL; Manistee, MI; Glenrock, PA; Warren, MI; Landis, NC; Granite Falls, NC; Napoleon, OH; Uniondale, IN; Lakeville, MN; Connersville, IN; and most recently to Edgewater, MD and Ridgeway, PA. We list these locations not to brag about the number of the geographic locations we visited, but to share with you the outreach efforts of your LMVFM team, and the blessings we have received by meeting with the people in each of these locations.

Each and every encounter we've had, be it in a convention center, church, or even a gas station or diner, has been a ministry opportunity. We are so thankful to the congregations and groups that have invited us to visit. Not only have we been able to share LMVFM's military ministry mission, but we have witnessed a growing number of people hungry for hope and the good news of Jesus Christ. The Angel was right: Fear Not! Your support has meant so much to us. It has allowed us to keep our doors open to those we are called to serve; travel to extend our impact and equip churches with their military outreach missions; and to serve as



laborers in His great harvest. Later in this newsletter, you will read about a wonderful opportunity to help our ministry continue this good work as well as honor or remember a loved one who has served.

That's right! It is time for the 2022-23 Christmas Ornament Appeal. This is our biggest annual fundraiser, and it has grown each year. This year's goal is to raise \$90,000. Every donation that is made between 1 November and 31 January will be used to "adopt" hand-crafted ornament made by a veteran, contractor or family member. Your adopted ornament will be hung on our tree with your name, or that of someone you wish to honor, attached. We then photograph the ornament and post it on Facebook and our website for you to see and share. Above is a photo of Stanley Tucker & Patrick Dooly resting in front of our tree last year. From your LMVFM team, thank you in advance for considering a gift this Christmas season, as well as for your prayers all year long. To Him be the glory!

### Donation at no cost to you!

That's right. Take advantage of the generous programs offered by **Thrivent**. Each year, Thrivent distributes a portion of its funding to charity. Eligible Thrivent members have an opportunity to direct "Choice Dollars" to LMVFM at no direct cost to them! Visit **Thrivent.com**, or call **1-800-847-4836** for more information.

## Christmas Gift Shopping?



**AmazonSmile** is a simple way for you to support **LMVFM** every time you shop, at no cost to you. **AmazonSmile** is available at **smile.amazon.com** on your web browser and can be activated in the Amazon Shopping app for iOS and Android phones.

When you shop with **AmazonSmile**, you'll find the exact same prices, selection and shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added benefit that **AmazonSmile will donate 0.5%** of your eligible purchases to LMVFM.

We receive a significant amount of financial support from shoppers who designate **LMVFM** to receive their **AmazonSmile** donations. It is simple to do, and allows you to support our ministry with absolutely no cost to you! If you have any questions, please reach out to us and we can help you set up **AmazonSmile**.

### Other Ways to Help

There are many ways to help LMVFM care for our veterans. Gift cards of any amount, large and small envelopes, and unused postage help us complete everyday tasks by providing necessary supplies.

Our ministry requires assistance of all types, from a variety of sources, to keep our programs and services free to those we serve. No gift is too small to be used by God for His purpose!



### IN THIS EDITION:

- "The Season of 'Christ'mas" Page 1
- News from the Front; What's in a Name? Page 2
- Christmas Ornament Appeal Page 3
- Making a Difference Page 4

[www.lmvfm.org](http://www.lmvfm.org)

- Leslie, Deb, Rob, Stanley and Dooley



### Army Tells Soldiers to Get Help From Friends and Family for Mental Health Issues

The headline above seems to be appropriate, if not obvious advice at first glance. But as we dig deeper into the nature of this recommendation from the US Army's annual meeting we see a different picture.

At the same time, the Army announced plans to cut medical staff. Amidst fears from soldiers and their families, the service claims that such cuts will not reduce access to care.

Army leadership acknowledges a shortage of mental health providers and tells troops to get help from family and friends. While family and friends can often help temporarily with certain mental health issues, the reality is that many are either not equipped to help, or as need of healthcare themselves. Although

**Suicides among soldiers in 2021 were at their highest since before World War II and also the highest seen since 9/11.**

the service is working to increase the number of behavioral health providers available to personnel, it is important to reach out to other resources such as your family, your friends, your golf buddies, your running partners, or LMVFM.

It is concerning that cuts are made, followed by promises of continuing levels of access to care. Meanwhile, the Army suggests seeking help elsewhere. LMVFM provides that help and remains a resource our veterans can count on.

### What's in a Name?

During a recent trip, the LMVFM Team encountered a situation that confirms there is still a lot of work to be done to educate many of our fellow Americans about what defines a veteran. Over an otherwise peaceful breakfast meal in a quaint little restaurant, we overheard a man at a nearby table proclaim to a couple of guys at his table that "Bill" (a mutual friend of theirs) was not a veteran because he was "just in the National Guard, you know, a weekend warrior." Unfortunately, the man was just one of too many people we encounter that share a serious misconception: that serving in the National Guard or Army Reserve does not count as real military service, or qualify a person as being a veteran.

**It is tough to listen to such statements and not take offense when you know that:**

- In 2020, the National Guard activated more troops for duty than any time since World War II, as the U.S. dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic, wildfires and civil unrest.
- Tens of thousands of Guardsmen logged 8.4 million duty days in the last year, mobilizing in all 50 states, 3 territories, and Washington D.C. A majority of those efforts were related to the pandemic.
- The National Guard is comprised of 440,000 soldiers and aviators, and during the twenty years since 9/11 have become a seamless part of U.S. military missions.
- 39% of the Army's operational forces come from the National Guard.
- 30% of the Air Force's operational forces come from the Air National Guard.
- Over 4,000 Guard and Reserve troops have been deployed to the US-Mexico border in 2022, and 8 have died during their deployments.



Our supporters may have a mental picture that LMVFM's outreach efforts involve leading discussions in a church fellowship hall, or a women's quilting group - and those pictures are indeed accurate. But now and again God gives us opportunities to make a personal impact with an audience of one. We trust that all of these conversations, large and small, are done with His blessing. We hope that they have a long term positive impact similar to those that Jesus Christ engaged in, whether He gave a sermon on a hill, or spoke with a single woman at Jacob's Well. Because of our faithful supporters, we can continue having these conversations!

### A Worthy Cause

LMVFM's mission is to provide free care and counseling to veterans, contractors and their families, as well as civilian caregivers to recognize the silent wounds of war and to provide more effective care themselves.

Through LMVFM's annual Christmas Ornament Adoption Appeal, our donors provide nearly half of our ministry's operating budget. The event has grown over the years with God's grace and blessing. It has become a popular way for our supporters to give while also seeing a tangible expression of their gift.

The appeal is simple: make a gift during the months of November, December and January, and a very special Christmas ornament will be hung on the LMVFM Christmas tree.

### Hand-Crafted!

These are not random store-bought "Made in China" ornaments. Each ornament is unique, and has been created by a veteran, contractor or a family member. When we receive your donation, and ornament will be selected for adoption and your name, or the name of the person you want to honor/remember, will be attached to it. It will then take its place on our tree.

### Honor & Share

Once your ornament is hung on our tree, we photograph it and post the photo on our Facebook page and website for you to see. You can also share the photo of the ornament that you have adopted with those being honored.

Each ornament signifies not only a gift to this ministry, but it is a symbol of the many sacrifices made by someone dedicated to protect the liberties and freedoms embodied in this wonderful country of ours.

As you view your ornament, you can be assured that your gift helps us to bring the hope that Christ gives to those who have sacrificed so much for the freedoms we enjoy today.

### Don't "Moose" Around! Get Your Ornament



Will you be one of the first to adopt an ornament to hang on our tree? Each of our ornaments is one-of-a-kind, and once an ornament is adopted, it is never duplicated. So, adopt your ornament early!

### Our Goal: \$90,000!

Our generous donors helped us reach our goal of raising \$80,000 during last year's Christmas Ornament Appeal. We are confident that, with God's provision, we can reach higher!

This year, we have set a lofty, yet doable, goal of raising \$90,000 to help offset the impact of rising inflation. Raising this amount will help insure that we have the resources to continue providing our veterans with counseling, care and programs at no cost to them.



Adopt your ornament with a gift of any size to LMVFM, online at [lmvfm.org](http://lmvfm.org) or by mail to: LMVFM Christmas Ornament Appeal 3480 Stellhorn Rd., Fort Wayne, IN 46815.



Over 300 ornaments are ready for adoption

### Hand-Painted



### A few examples...

