



From the desk of President Harrison



Saint John Lutheran Church
15538 State Route 127
Nashville, IL 62263-2374



June 2022

Dear Christian Friend,

The love of strangers. Throughout the New Testament, the love of strangers is listed as a trait inherent in Christian love. Said another way, Christians love strangers. When Paul talks about the characteristics of a pastor in 1 Timothy 3, love of strangers is listed. Christians love strangers. If you looked up “love of strangers” in the Bible, however, you would find zero references. That’s because we translate the Greek word for “love of strangers” as “hospitality.”

When discussing how to live out the love of God in Christ, Paul tells the church to “contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality” (Rom. 12:13).

Since the Russian attack on Ukraine, the Christian church has shown a great ability and enduring desire to love strangers, to show hospitality. Lutherans in Ukraine, Romania, Latvia, Germany, Lithuania, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and other places have welcomed refugees into their homes, provided food and clothing, helped with transportation and essential paperwork, and served in myriad other ways.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod was able to respond immediately with financial assistance thanks to your generosity and contributions. God provides for His people more than we ask, and His abundant provision from our contributors has positioned the LCMS to be able to respond quickly and in many ways to situations that arise throughout the world.

The LCMS has been working with Rev. Serge Maschewski, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine. Bishop Maschewski has been a friend of the LCMS since he studied at our seminary in Fort Wayne during the 90s. Through his leadership, the LCMS was able to send funds to address acute and critical situations of the Lutheran church in Ukraine. This includes buying food and supplies, as well as protective gear and other provisions that allow pastors to visit their parishioners as long as possible.

“Please express our thanks to the congregations [of the LCMS] who have provided for those in need. It is very important,” said Rev. Mindaugas Sabutis, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania. “We open our doors to sinners. ... We are seeking to share the Gospel

(over, please)

with them and to pray. These people are in a very post-traumatic situation. They came to us with nothing. We try to be sure that we will provide help ... to carry this cross with these people for a long time.”

The situation continues, as does the growing number of refugees and displaced Ukrainians with various and serious needs. Congregations in the United States should prepare to receive those who make their way here. In the meantime, we are continuing to work with Lutheran churches throughout Europe to aid any who flee and are in need of compassion and care.

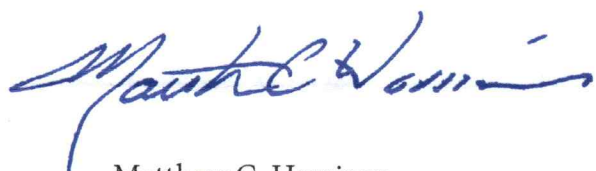
Because of God’s immeasurable grace, and through you, we are able to demonstrate this compassion and care wherever the need is greatest through LCMS World Relief and Human Care. Designating your gift to this ministry allows us to offer aid in every part of the world, including the United States, even as we offer aid in Ukraine and its surrounding areas.

You can help show love to these strangers (people you don’t know personally) as you contribute to the ability of churches in Europe to lend aid and assistance. Although we cannot travel to Ukraine or the surrounding countries to help, we can continue to support our church partners and Lutheran friends in the region. **Your contribution to LCMS World Relief and Human Care enables and encourages the church to show hospitality — the love of strangers — to people all over the world.**

And our prayer is that these people are no longer strangers. In Christ, we are brothers and sisters. Some are not yet in the fellowship of believers, so we seek to share the Gospel with them, that all may share together in the fellowship that is ours in Christ. Even in this, God promises to work in all things for good (Rom. 8:28).

“We have the command of our Lord to love our neighbor, and especially of the household of faith,” said the Rev. James A. Krikava, associate executive director of the LCMS Office of International Mission, Eurasia and Asia Operations. “We do have members of the household of faith coming to us. We want to help them, even though the household is a bit messy at this point.”

In Christ’s love,



Matthew C. Harrison

President

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

P.S. Please continue to join me in prayer that the war and violence would end. We pray to the Prince of Peace that this situation would cease and that the Gospel would have free course throughout the world. As long as this current situation continues, we will, with your help, care for all those God allows us to serve. Thank you for your contributions, care and prayers.



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