



Human Care Ministries

Lutheran Christians have been called by the Holy Spirit through the Word and Sacraments to faith which trusts in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. In response to God's underserved love they seek to serve God and their neighbors. They have heard the Lord's strong mandate to proclaim the Gospel, faithfully communicating the Word of God in their words and deeds. Congregations throughout the Ohio District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod have discovered countless ways to express Christian love wherever there is pain, alienation and despair.

Human Care Ministries in the Ohio District is working to support and coordinate congregational efforts to help their members serve as instruments of God's love wherever it is needed. Ohio District congregations have served through partnerships with Recognized Service Organizations, the Lutheran Disaster Response and Parish Nurse programs. Lutheran Older Adults have found meaningful service opportunities and opportunities to enjoy Christian fellowship. Our Deaconess community serves faithfully to work in faith, labor in love and remain steadfast in the hope of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are truly blessed by the gifts God has delivered to the Ohio District to lead us all into meaningful and relevant service to Him and for the benefit of His people.

Since the last convention of the Ohio District a change occurred in staffing for the position of the Coordinator for Human Care Ministries formerly served by Lou Ann Limbird. Lou Ann's service to the congregations of the District was deeply appreciated and her leadership truly blessed our work together, especially during the critical time of responding to the devastation resulting from Hurricane Katrina. The District is now served by Rev. Dr. Mark J. Hill, who serves part-time as Director of Human Care and serves full-time as the Vice-President of Development for Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio, Toledo. Pastor Hill has represented the Ohio District Human Care Ministries at the Lutheran Services in America – Ohio meetings and currently serves as Chair of the Lutheran Disaster Relief – Ohio.

Recovery from Toledo, Ottawa, Findlay, Norwalk, Cleveland flooding in 2007 required disaster recovery services for over 8,000 households and involved over 1,300 volunteers. Katrina aid ended in October 1, 2007 but many volunteers continue to assist in recovery services throughout the Gulf Coast in response to Hurricanes Rita, Wilma and Ike. LDR – Ohio Disaster Coordinator, Mary Woodward, assisted congregations throughout the District as unmet needs were addressed by Long Term Recovery Committees to assist those affected by these devastating floods.

LCMS World Relief and Human Care sponsored the first annual District Disaster Response Coordinators Conference in January 2008. Rev. Glenn Merritt, Director of Disaster Response for LCMS World Relief and Human Care, provided a major resource for use by congregations and Districts throughout Synod. LERT or Lutheran Early Response Training was presented to assist congregations in responding to disasters. The mission of the Lutheran Early Response Team consisting of those who have had the LERT training is to provide teams of trained volunteers, serving our churches and communities as part of a disaster outreach ministry,

assisting in a collaborative and coordinated response in cooperation and communication with Ohio District Disaster Response Coordinators & Teams. The first training opportunity for LERT was held at Atonement Lutheran Church in Columbus, Ohio on September 25th as the District Disaster Response Committee members were provided an overview of the program. Phase II training was also provided by Rev. Merritt at Bethany Lutheran Church in Columbus, Ohio on January 17th. The goal of the Ohio District Disaster Response Committee is to train at least two LERT volunteers in each circuit who can also train and lead local congregation volunteers in responding to disasters. Adjustments are in process to integrate the LERT preparedness disaster training with Lutheran Disaster Response Ohio procedures previously adopted by the Ohio District Disaster Committee.

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League Ohio District Convention at Montpelier, Ohio invited Ohio District Human Care Ministries to meet with the LWML under the theme "The Lord is my strength and my shield." The exhibits included opportunity to dialogue with LWML members and leaders and explore future partnerships with initiatives. A grant was approved for the Ohio Division Orphan Grain Train which will assist Disaster Relief efforts throughout the District, especially flood victims.

Other activities include a presentation of Human Care Ministries to the pastors of Circuit 5 concerning the LERT program on January 20, 2009 at Hosanna Lutheran Church in Columbia Station, Ohio. Also, a presentation and welcome to the New Workers Orientation at the Ohio District Mission Support Center on September 10, 2008. Pastor Hill is available for speaking on behalf of the Ohio District Human Care Ministries throughout the year as his schedule allows.

Rev. Dr. Mark J. Hill
Director of Human Care
Ohio District LCMS

Lutheran Services in America – Ohio Agencies

Association of Older Adults (ALOA), Kettering
Filling Memorial Home, Napoleon
Graceworks, Dayton
Luther Home of Mercy, Williston
Lutheran Chaplaincy Service, Cleveland
Lutheran Family Services, Cleveland
Lutheran Home of Concord Reserve, Westlake
Lutheran Homes Society, Toledo
Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry, Cleveland
Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio, Columbus
Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio, Toledo
Osterlein Services for Youth, Springfield
Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Retirement Center, Austintown
St. Luke Lutheran Community, North Canton
Urban Mission Ministries, Cleveland
Wernle Youth and Family Treatment Center, Richmond, Indiana