

Cherish Our Children Gains National Status from ELCA

On March 16, 2007 the ELCA granted Cherish Our Children affiliation status as a social ministry organization, incorporated in the state of Minnesota. With this affiliation comes membership in Lutheran Services in America, an alliance of 300 organizations, the ELCA, and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.

“The Cherish Our Children board members have been working diligently towards this affiliation since September 2006, so this is a welcome step forward in our



ongoing effort to engage all levels of the ELCA in keeping our children and young people safe from commercial sexual exploitation,” stated National Director Amy L. Hartman. “I am very pleased to be affiliated with the

ELCA in this way; I believe it strengthens the work we are seeking to do with congregations.”

Cherish Our Children is a congregation-based ministry of prayer, education, relationship-building, and action to implement the ELCA’s Message on Commercial Sexual Exploitation.

Currently there are six ELCA synods that have Cherish Our Children task forces engaging congregations in this ministry: Minneapolis Area, Northwest Wisconsin, Southwestern Minnesota, Western North Dakota, Southeastern Iowa, and Northern Texas–Northern Louisiana. Five additional synods are in the initial stages of engagement with Cherish Our Children.

Earlier in March, Amy Hartman gave a lunchtime presentation at the Conference of Bishops in Galveston, Texas. Bishops in attendance shared their particular concerns about the commercial sexual exploitation of young people in their synods. Current Cherish Our Children bishops stated their commitment to this ministry and their hope for congregational involvement.

“Getting Cherish Our Children out in six ELCA synods as well as in front of the Conference of Bishops is now greatly enhanced through Cherish Our Children’s affiliation with the ELCA. The board of directors looks forward to an even greater broadening of this vital ministry to protect our children,” stated Douglas B. Spiotta, Cherish Our Children board chair.

For more information, visit www.mpls-synod.org and click on the Cherish Our Children logo.

Pastoral Care Training Scheduled to Support Veterans and Families

by Amy Blumenshine

A training event for pastoral care providers which will kick off a synod-wide pastoral care network for veterans and their families will be held Saturday, May 19. The event will probably be held at Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church, 2315 Chicago Avenue South, Minneapolis. Visit the www.oursavioursmpls.org website for updated information. The May 19 training is being organized by the Coming Home Collaborative, the action group that formed out of the January ministerium.

Recent media reports are drawing attention to problems soldiers are having as they re-integrate with their home communities after war-zone military service.

The Coming Home Collaborative encourages congregations to think about who within their network has been affected by military service. They are then encouraged to recruit pastoral care providers from within the congregation to be trained and serve as the “arms of Christ”—one person or a group of congregation members who are interested in assuring that veterans and their families know that their churches care about their successful coming home.

These pastoral care providers or “sincere listeners” should not have been in a significant relationship with the person to whom they are assigned. This is not about “counseling” or “fixing” the veteran, nor is it about traditional evangelizing. The role of the pastoral care providers is simply to accompany or “walk with” the families during their time of transition, while being in contact with the wider network of providers. Care providers would begin, if possible, relationships with their assigned soldiers during their deployments.

This pastoral care network for veterans and their families is part of the fulfillment of the Minneapolis Area Synod resolution passed in April 2006. The Coming Home Collaborative organized a special Way of Cross service on Good Friday 2007 for veterans and their families. The service was intended as a prototype for future spiritual healing opportunities for those dealing with the traumas of war-time military service. The Coming Home Collaborative plans to offer veterans and their families a variety of programs and resources in coming months.

The “sincere listeners” will also assist those veterans who respond to their church’s invitation for 11/11/07: “Help us understand your war experience.”

For more information or to volunteer contact me at 612.822.6059.

