



## Federal Chaplaincy Ministries

Federal Chaplaincy Ministries extends, promotes and supports the mission and witness of the ELCA as we are “church together, for the sake of the world.” Only together can we develop, endorse and deploy federal chaplains who will carry the gospel and sacraments to prisons, hospitals and U.S. service members around the globe in places of pain, peace, war, healing and incarceration. ELCA federal chaplains, through their specialized training, have a unique call to accompany the people to whom they minister into places that local congregations cannot go.

The ELCA, *through* the Office of the Presiding Bishop in *support* of our synods and on *behalf* of congregations sends chaplains and chaplain candidates (25) to the Department of Defense (118 chaplains), the Veteran’s Administration (34), the Department of Justice (2), and the Bureau of Federal Prisons (2). The ELCA Federal Chaplaincy Ministries aspires to be the U.S. government’s premiere provider of chaplains who are ecclesiastically connected, theologically educated at the highest level, and pastorally compassionate to provide excellent care.

### **Federal Chaplaincy Ministries has three main emphases:**

1. To recruit, develop, and deploy chaplains as a premiere provider of ministry and care to the U.S. federal government, in order to fulfill a biblical mandate as well as a U.S. constitutional right to the freedom of religion;
2. To strengthen the relationships and mission between federal chaplains and the congregations, synods, churchwide organization, and various institutions of the ELCA; and
3. To interpret, educate, and represent the church on issues of war and peace, church and state, and ministry within a highly constrained environment of diversity and pluralism.

### **To accomplish these goals, Federal Chaplaincy Ministries:**

- Visits the 30 plus colleges, universities, and seminaries of the ELCA in order to educate, motivate and recruit the best pastoral candidates for chaplaincy ministry;
- Develops resources that will supply chaplains with tools for ministry, including the *Prayer Book for the Armed Services* and *Hear My Voice: A Prison Prayer Book*;
- Increases scholarship funding for candidates to complete seminary education, acquire clinical pastoral education (CPE) certifications, and continue their lifelong learning to remain fully qualified for ministry in the ELCA and the federal government;
- Serves as a learning laboratory for best practices in engaging U.S. culture with the gospel and shaping a distinctively Lutheran response. The Federal Chaplaincy Ministries hosted a “Day of Theological Discernment” to devise an implementation strategy for the ELCA social statement *For Peace in God’s World*. That effort resulted in a recommendation, along with resources, to develop a congregational study of the ELCA’s social statement; and
- Networks with synods, congregations, and individuals through the Centurion Connection program, which seeks to identify at least one person in every synod to serve as a communications liaison and leader for active and retired military veterans.

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