



Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots U.S.
Christ's Kingdom. Every Native American Nation.

Thank you for your inquiry about volunteer service through the Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots U.S.!

We are grateful for your interest in sharing your Christian witness and skills with the people whom we serve. Should your interest come to fruition, you may find yourself enjoying a first-time experience of contact with aboriginal people and culture in a community setting. It may continue an interest you have had all of your life, or, it may be a brand-new interest put on your heart by God. Whatever your interest, if God is calling you to a short-term, cross-cultural mission, we want to do everything we can to determine if Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots U.S. is your place to serve.

To that end and for your further information, we enclose this brief summary of our ministry and an application for you to look over and complete should you desire to follow-up your initial interest.

Where Will You Serve?

Our volunteer ministry serves in communities throughout Alaska and in the lower 48 states. While Christian ministry has been carried on in native communities of North America for several centuries, many factors have contributed to the difficulty for some areas and people to receive effective ministry.

For 25 years, the Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots U.S. has shared the Gospel with Native North American people. Our objective is to reach American Indian, Native Alaskan and First Nations people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to disciple them in their faith, and to provide theological and leadership training opportunities to nurture, strengthen and empower them for service in the church and throughout the world.

Our volunteer ministry is two-fold; Vacation Bible School and Servant Events.

The Vacation Bible School program is comprised of teams of people who love Jesus and want to share their faith in the teaching of God's Word to children. Servant Events teams have the opportunity to repair, paint, construct, or other "building type" projects in the native communities where we serve.

Alaska

The majority of Alaskan communities are Native – Inupiaq (formerly referred to as Eskimo) Athabaskan, Haida, Tlingit - who have lived off the land for generations. The people may speak both their native language and English or just one of the two.

The Lower 48

We serve the Makah, Lower Elwha and Quileute Tribes on the Olympic Peninsula of Washington State; the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Agency Reservations in Montana; the Navajo Reservation in New Mexico; the

various tribes of South Dakota and Minnesota; the Winnebago Reservation in Nebraska and a Lutheran Campus Ministry at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas. Volunteer opportunities are not always available at each location, but we will be able to identify those that are for the time of service you request.

In both Alaska and the lower 48 states, we seek people to teach Vacation Bible School and serve on Servant projects who have a clear and positive commitment to the Christian faith, people for whom Christianity means a living relationship with Jesus Christ. We seek people who have a willingness to work with other Christian denominations; those who have the ability to “rough it” without the comforts of urban living; those willing to accept and understand another culture and adapt God’s Word to it. We are committed to strengthening existing ministry. Therefore, teams are under the authority of community spiritual leaders. You will be expected to seek their advice and take direction from them.

Be sure you bring with you a spirit of adventure and awareness that you are guests of the lands’ original inhabitants who have invited you to their community.

How Will You Get There?

Alaska

You are responsible for getting from your home to the ministry site where you will serve. Commercial airlines are available into Fairbanks, Alaska. Local carriers are available from Fairbanks into the community where you will serve. While you will need to plan in advance for your flight into Fairbanks, it is not necessary to reserve a space on the commuter flight into the community you will serve until you arrive in Fairbanks. We will do our best to suggest the least expensive, yet reliable commuter service for Alaska’s interior. The commuter flights average \$300.00 round trip.

When you Arrive in Fairbanks

There are many hotel and lodging facilities in Fairbanks that are reasonably priced and easily accessible from the airport. Another option is lodging at the dormitories at the University of Alaska - Fairbanks. Most can be contacted, and reservations made, through the Internet.

Please allow one to two full days in Fairbanks upon arrival before you leave for the community where you will serve, and after you return to Fairbanks, before departure home. It’s important to remember that it can take a good part of the day to reach the community from Fairbanks. Inclement weather can cause a delay ranging from a few hours to a day or two. Adaptability and flexibility take on a new meaning in the North. Coming a day or two early may be in everyone’s best interest and give you a chance to get acclimated and do some sight-seeing.

The Lower 48

As it would be in traveling to Alaska, your travel to any of the Reservations in the lower 48 states is your responsibility. However, depending on where you live, air travel will not be the only method of transportation. Although remote, all of the Reservations where we serve are accessible by car or van.

What to Expect in a Native Community

You are probably wondering what the community you will be serving will be like. Typically, native communities are small, varying in size from 50-2000 people. The residents live in various size (but usually

small) houses spread around in an un-surveyed “town-site.” Each community may be the hub of or one of several population centers of a reservation. Generally, all the people on a reservation belong to a single tribe with its own chief and community council.

The Tribal Council is the official government authority. It has the authority to invite people to come as well as to leave the Reservation. You should be aware that you are in the community because the Tribal Council has invited you - through Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots U.S. They, in turn have been in discussion with the local religious leaders who have recommended that volunteers be allowed to work in their community. Your presence there is essentially to strengthen the existing ministry. You are not necessarily bringing the Gospel to these people for the first time though there may be some persons for whom this will be true. The work of the church in these communities goes faithfully onward. In most places, worship services are held every Sunday.

Where Will You Stay?

Our staff, together with the community leaders, will make arrangements for your accommodations. Housing will range from very spartan (no running water or indoor bathrooms) to very comfortable (running water and showers). Be prepared for either extreme – it depends on what is available in the community at that time. We will be able to give you more specific information related to your assigned community as the time for your service approaches.

As for what to bring, a recommended checklist of items is attached and will also be provided upon acceptance, as part of your orientation.

\$\$ Costs

Your financial obligations will be dependent upon your service assignment – i.e. VBS or Servant Event. As previously noted, you will be responsible for the cost of transportation to and from the place where you will be serving. Your lodging en route, food for your time of service and supplies for VBS projects and selected Servant Events are also the responsibility of the volunteer.

Many congregations or church groups sponsor individuals or teams as part of their mission outreach program. Some people or teams organize fund raising projects to cover their costs. Also check with your local Thrivent representative about the possibility of receiving a matching grant.

We invite you to partner with us in this ministry. And, we ask you to prayerfully consider God’s will for you in serving the American Indian, Native Alaskan and First Nations people of North America.

Please do not hesitate to contact our office with any questions you may have regarding volunteer service with the Lutheran Association of Missionaries and Pilots U.S.

God’s blessings and peace,

Kathleen Walrath

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Executive Assistant

