

## Veteran's Ministry Guide

### **Purpose:**

Arizona is home to over 500,000 Veterans and their families with Nevada adding an additional 211,000 Veterans. These Veterans include those who served in WWII, Korea, Viet Nam, the Gulf War, and the present war on Terrorism. As our Nation and the World move forward, we can expect more Veterans and an increased demand for Veteran services.

Numerous organizations ranging from Government to Non-Profits exist to assist Veterans with issues of finance, housing, education, career counseling and psychological issues. Most of these agencies are secular in nature. One aspect missing from Veterans care is Spiritual Care.

### **From the United Methodist Revised Social Principles 2020**

#### ***F. War and Military Service***

***The church deplores war and all other forms of violent conflict and urges the peaceful settlement of all disputes. We yearn for the day when there will be no more war and people will live together in peace and justice. We reject the use of war as an instrument of foreign policy and insist that every peaceful and diplomatic means of resolution be exhausted before the start of armed conflicts.***

***We honor and offer support to those who choose military service as a result of personal conviction and urge that they perform their duties in harmony with the tenets of the Christian faith and in accordance with the laws of the Geneva Conventions.***

The intent of this ministry is not to condone war but to *honor and offer support to those who have served honorably* as well as offer their families Spiritual Care. Specifically, we desire to honor Veterans of our military forces and their families.

### **Goals:**

- A. Identify, recognize, and honor Veterans who are members of or frequent attendees of churches within the Desert Southwest Conference of the United Methodist Church.
- B. Educate our congregations around the issues and benefits they have earned due to their service to the United States.
- C. Reach out to Veterans and their families in the surrounding community.
- D. Community Involvement through Veterans Service Organizations and the VA.

Steps: Once a church has discerned that Veterans Ministry is one, they desire to participate in, it is recommended the following steps be followed.

- A. Identify Veterans: Many churches already recognize Veterans on or near Veterans Day and this is an opportunity to learn who is a Veteran. Placing an "ask" in the Sunday Bulletin and monthly newsletter asking Veterans to provide their name, service branch

and dates of service and asking new members about their military service are just a few other ways of identifying Veterans.

- B. Recognize: In addition to Veterans Day, each military branch has a “birthday” the date it was authorized. The U.S. Marine Corps was authorized on Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>, 1775. On or about Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>, ask all Marines to stand in honor of this date. The same can be done for all branches of service. You might also honor Veterans on or around the date a conflict, war or the Cold War ended by recognizing those who served during that era. Recognizing Veterans may take place anytime during the year.
- C. Honoring Veterans: This is a formal recognition of individual or a group of Veterans which involves presenting each Veteran with a Certificate of Appreciation and pinning them with an American flag lapel pin/symbol of their military branch.
- D. Educate the congregation regarding benefits, issues, diseases/illness’s, and other concerns of Veterans.
- E. Community Outreach: This may be accomplished via an article in a local/neighborhood newspaper, contacting a Veterans Service Organization, neighborhood canvas, etc. Offer educational class to the community and provide way for the community to get involved with Veterans.
- F. Community Involvement: Sunday School classes, youth groups, UMM, UMW and individual members are to be encouraged to volunteer with one or more Veterans Service Organization, the VA, Arizona Veterans Home, a local hospice, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans or similar organization.

## Definitions

Airman:	A member of the U.S. Air Force
Coastie:	A member of the U.S. Coast Guard
Marine:	A member of the U.S. Marine Corps
Sailor:	A member of the U.S. Navy
Soldier:	A member of the U.S. Army
Veteran:	A former member of the armed forces of the United States. For this program, anyone who served honorably in a military service of an Allied Nation should be recognized and honored. <sup>1</sup>

## Veterans

Administration: A U.S. government agency responsible for providing:

1. Healthcare to U.S. veterans.

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<sup>1</sup> Some non-combatant Veterans do not consider themselves a Veteran and not entitled to recognition. If one served, they are entitled to recognition.

2. Assisting Veterans with benefits such as home purchases, educational support and help in transitioning from active duty to civilian life.
3. Operates 142 National Cemeteries to insure, “those who served this nation are never forgotten”.

#### Veterans

Service Organization: A **veterans' organization**, also known as an **ex-service organization**, is an organization composed of persons who served in a country's armed forces, especially those who served in the armed forces during a period of war. The organization's concerns include benefits for spouses and children, veterans' claims, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) issues, and other topics related to veterans and to their families.

Reporting: It will be helpful for you to assist the ministry by letting us know the details of your church program. This can be done by either phone call (Bryan Ruth @ 480-266-4113) or email: bryanrutha7@yahoo.com. Filing semi-annual reports from participating churches is necessary to judge the effectiveness, quality, and success of the program. Reports should include the following: (a) number of Veterans served, contacted or Honored (b) number of congregants volunteering with VSO's, VA or Hospice, (c) number and type of Veterans event (s) sponsored or participated in, (d)

Reports are to be received no later than January 15<sup>th</sup> for the period January 1 through June 30<sup>th</sup> and July 15<sup>th</sup> for the period July 1 through December 31<sup>st</sup>.

#### Resources:

AMVETS, [amvets.org](http://amvets.org)

American Legion, <http://www.legion.org/>

Arizona Coalition for Military Families, <https://arizonacoalition.org/>

Arizona Department of Veterans Services, [dvs.az.gov](http://dvs.az.gov)

Disabled American Veterans, <http://www.dav.org/>

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, <http://iava.org/>

National Hospice & Palliative Care Organization(NHPCO)  
<https://www.wehonorveterans.org/>: Oversees a nationwide We Honor Veterans program for Hospice and Palliative Care organizations. It is an excellent resource for Power Point Presentations, Certificates of Appreciation, specific needs, and Veteran Benefits.

Reserve Officers Association, <https://www.roa.org/>

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, [va.gov](http://va.gov)

Veterans of Foreign Wars, <https://www.roa.org/>

Vietnam Veterans of America, <https://www.roa.org/>

Wounded Warriors Project, <http://woundedwarriorproject.org/>

### Flag Pins:

You may use any source to obtain lapel pins. We are providing the following list to assist you:



Awards and Gifts US: [awardsandgiftsus.com](http://awardsandgiftsus.com)

Flag Center: [flagcenter.com](http://flagcenter.com)

Flags International: [flagsinternational.com](http://flagsinternational.com)

Martin Awards: [martinawards.com](http://martinawards.com)

World Flag Pins: [worldflagpins.com](http://worldflagpins.com)

Reference:

Military Birthdays:

Air Force: September 18, 1947

Army: June 14, 1775

Coast Guard: August 4, 1790

Marines: November 10, 1775

National  
Guard December 13, 1636

Navy: October 13, 1775

Suggested wording for bulletin and or newsletter.

RE newsletter:

Veterans!

Are you a Veteran who participates in our church? If so, please the following information send to the Church Office:

- Your name, branch of service, and years served.
- Also, do you have a photo of yourself in uniform? If so, please attach a copy to your email. Would you send us the photo? If you need help, let us know! We would love to see you! Please send us this information as soon as possible to Bryan Ruth at \_\_\_\_\_ or by email at \_\_\_\_\_, at the latest.

### Honoring (Pinning Ceremony):



There are two types of pinning ceremonies, group and individual.

**Group:** usually five or more Veterans being recognized at the same time. Call each Veteran forward one at a time to be recognized and presented with their certificate and pin. It is suggested your first ceremony be a group one where you recognize Veterans in the Church.

This ceremony should be conducted for neighborhood Veterans, VOS's and any time there are several Veterans to recognize.

**Individual:** the photo above depicts an individual pinning. An individual ceremony is appropriate when a Veteran joins the church or whenever a neighborhood Veteran is identified and is willing to be recognized.

Whether conducting group or individual ceremony, make sure you have the correct spelling and branch of service for the Veteran.

Pick a date, time, location, and type of ceremony you are preparing for. Are you honoring Church members or neighborhood Veteran?

Will there be a reception following the ceremony?

Prepare the appropriate Certificate of Appreciation and decide if it will be framed or placed in a certificate holder.

For the actual presentation, it is preferable to have a Veteran do the pinning. In a group ceremony one might contact a Reserve unit or the National Guard and ask if a uniformed member would be available to do the pinning.

Local Oversight:

Ideally a member of the congregation who is also a Veteran will oversee the Churches program.

Conference Oversight:

Bryan Ruth, Chair Veterans Ministry Desert Southwest Conference, is responsible for the overall management of this program. He is available for training, conducting ceremonies, consultation, and program development. He may be reached at email [bryanrutha7@yahoo.com](mailto:bryanrutha7@yahoo.com) or cell phone 480-266-4113.