

The Rev. Christopher L. Otten

We are delighted to welcome The Rev. Christopher L. Otten as our Churchwide Representative at our 2021 Synod Assembly!

The Rev. Christopher L. Otten was called as the *Assistant to the Presiding Bishop* of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as the *Director* of Federal Chaplaincies in January 2019.

Chaplain Otten has served twenty-one years as a full-time Federal Chaplain, activated United States Air Force Chaplain, and Air National Guard Chaplain. He now oversees the 181 ELCA Chaplains who serve the Federal government in the military, Veterans Administration hospitals, and Bureau of Prisons.



Most recently, Ch, LtCol C. Otten returned from Operation Enduring Freedom, where he was the Wing Chaplain for the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing in Afghanistan. In that combat setting, he led a group of 5 Religious Support Teams to provide spiritual care for thousands of NATO Troops at Bagram and Kandahar airfields as well as Hamed Karzai International Airport.

Previous to that, Chaplain Otten was the full-time support Chaplain for the 175th Wing of Maryland's Air National Guard, responsible for the spiritual welfare and morale of 1,500 personnel and their families. He advised the Commanding General, developed the integrated Airman Care Team, and was active in the State Partnership Program with Estonia. In addition to Afghanistan, he deployed to Kyrgyzstan, Estonia, and Aviano AFB, Italy, as well as domestic missions for disaster recovery (Hurricane Katrina), a Presidential Inauguration, and for civil unrest in 2015 and 2017.

Chaplain Otten was assigned to three Wings: the 175th Wing in Baltimore, Maryland, where he was Commissioned in 1999; the 178th Fighter Wing in Springfield, Ohio (2005-2008); 149th Fighter Wing at Lackland AFB, San Antonio, Texas (2008-2013); and he concluded his career back at the 175th Wing (2013-2019) on February 6th, 2020.

Pastor Otten was Ordained in 1995 after completing his BA in Philosophy at Nyack College, New York, and his MDiv at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. He has served congregations as a Pastor, Assoc. Pastor, and Sr. Pastor in the DC/MD/VA area, as well as Wahiawa, Hawaii; Cleveland, Ohio; and McAllen, Texas. Chaplain Otten lives in Baltimore with his teenage son, Elliott Samuel, and their Pomeranian dog, Augustus. He commutes into DC, where he works in the ELCA's Capitol Hill office.