

THE  
*Episcopal*  
CHURCH



JUNE 26, 2016 – SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (C)

On June 25, people around the world reflect on the mariners who are responsible for transporting over 90 per cent of the world's trade – goods and resources that keep us clothed and fed. Many of these mariners are men and women who come from labor-supplying countries such as the Philippines, China and Eastern Europe. But in the United States, more than 11,000 Americans crew the Merchant Marine, each one spending up to a year away from family and sacrificing important life events, including the birth of their children, anniversaries, graduations, and the day-to-day joy of family life.



It is to the world's seafarers that the Episcopal Church reaches out with a message of love and hope. Since the early 1800s, people of faith have visited ships. For the last 160 years, The Mission to Seafarers (MtS) has had a central place in the life and mission of the Anglican Communion. MtS is the world's largest port-based provider of maritime ministry, working in over 200 ports in more than 50 countries. In 2015, our network of chaplains and ship visitors met over 550,000 seafarers on board their ships, and transported over 327,000 crews to our mariner communication facilities, city centres, and places of worship. We also provided

professional and pastoral support in over 2,400 welfare cases where crews faced non-payment of wages, overseas abandonment, piracy, and armed robbery at sea.

In Seattle Washington, being ready to meet the needs of visiting crews is at the heart of this ministry. Recently, a tanker arrived in port after a long voyage from East Africa. During a routine ship visit by Assistant Port Chaplain Jake Pass, a seafarer told him that the crew didn't have enough water. Each of the 20 men was rationed to less than a gallon a day, and if they needed any more they had to pay. The welfare team moved in and provided nearly 2,000 bottles of water until the crew could get supplies at their next destination.



“A mariner's working life isolates them from the people they love,” says Jake, “So when difficulty arises, in many ports chaplains are the only people they can turn to for help. The United Nation's Day of the Seafarer, along with Sea Sunday in July when the Episcopal Church celebrates maritime ministry, gives each of us the chance to say thank you to the men and women who silently support our way of life.”

There are currently two Young Adult Service Corps members working with the Mission to Seafarers in Hong Kong and Kobe, Japan.

For more information, visit [www.missiontoseafarers.org](http://www.missiontoseafarers.org) and [www.seasunday.org](http://www.seasunday.org).