

Forward!
Rev Keith Haney
LCMS Northern Illinois District Mission Facilitator

“¹⁴The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.” ¹⁵ The Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. ¹⁶Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground.” Exodus 14:14-15

I have always had a healthy respect for those who serve our country, but on November 7, 2018, when my son Todd, along with four other battalions of men and women walked through a cloud of smoke for the family day, my heart swelled with pride. They were completing ten emotional and physical weeks of grueling training and preparation. When I got the chance to process with my son what he learned, he said, it wasn't the physical part that was so tough; it was the emotional part. Without going into too many details, a major part of the training is mental, equipping our soldiers to adapt to obstacles. It reminded me of what the people of Israel faced leaving Egypt. They had a rough physical life, but they were not spiritually tough. They met every obstacle they faced with grumbling against Moses and eventually God. The first major test was the Red Sea. Their arrival – even though they had experienced the power of God securing their release – was met with doubt and a sense of hopelessness. I love God's response to the grumbling, *“The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”* Shut up and keep moving was the message from God. There is a spiritual lesson there for us. When we doubt the power of God, be silent and keep moving forward in the will of God.

The slogan for the Army is great: “Always Forward!”

As a part of the ceremony the Sargent said, “...you are one of us. You are part of the Army family.” When I travel, I always buy a hat to remember the places I have been. I picked up only one hat on this long, ten-states, ten-day trip and it reads on the front, “Army Dad”. It is one I wear with pride. It is a reminder that when life places barriers in your way, be silent and remember, “Always Forward!”