



## **NAMMA AND MTS LAUNCH THE MARE PROJECT, THE DIGITAL CENTER FOR SEAFARERS' MINISTRY**

### ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

*December 17, 2015* - The North American Maritime Ministry Association is launching a new project aimed at enhancing the ability of traditional shore-based seafarers' welfare agencies to connect with seafarers' using innovative digital tools. Supported by The Mission to Seafarers, NAMMA's MARE project seeks to develop and test the best new ways to support the welfare of the 1.5 million seafarers on the world's oceans.

The MARE project (pronounced *Mar-Ay*; Latin for the "Sea") is an exciting new initiative of the North American Maritime Ministry Association, funded with strategic support from The Mission to Seafarers, a leading international Christian seafarers' welfare charity. NAMMA is a broad association of Christian ministries founded in 1932 that provides encouragement, advocacy, and professional development to its members. By founding the MARE project, NAMMA's key concern is to equip maritime ministries to use the Internet as a primary opportunity to broaden their service of seafarers.

The MARE project will serve three purposes: first, to provide a tool that will actively help seafarers make the connection with shore-based seafarers' welfare personnel. Second, to produce and distribute social media on seafarers' welfare that is sharable by local maritime ministries. And, third, to produce high-quality Internet-based professional development tools for those involved in maritime ministry.

Dr. Jason Zuidema, Executive Director of NAMMA and MARE project leader explained: "like many other traditional social service ministries, our members have had great success using bricks and mortar centers or when they visit in person on board. But it is not always clear how to serve those who live more and more online and don't seem to need our personal services. Can maritime ministries still be useful even if they can't meet seafarers in a center or face-to-face on a ship visit? NAMMA's MARE project should help develop new digital tools so that all ministries can continue to be effective."

Rev. Marsh Drege, Executive Director of Seafarers' International House and Chair of the Board of NAMMA, commented: "A central commitment of our maritime ministry association since its founding in 1932 has been to collaborate with others for the benefit of local seafarers. Nothing shows our values better than both doing something that benefits member ministries and doing it with an international partner, The Mission to Seafarers."

Based in London, UK, The Mission to Seafarers works in over 200 ports worldwide, many also members of the NAMMA network in North America. Commenting on the importance of developing digital tools for maritime ministry, the Revd Andrew Wright, Secretary General, said, "We are delighted to partner with NAMMA in this exciting project. Technology has changed the way seafarers interact with their loved ones and we have made much progress in adapting to ensure our support remains relevant and effective to their needs. We hope that the MARE project will inspire all maritime ministries to try new methods of service delivery that will enhance seafarers' wellbeing.

To better understand the projects of NAMMA and its partners, you can view the inaugural edition of the project's publication, the MARE Report here:

<http://issuu.com/namma9/docs/marefullissuu>

For more information on how to stay up-to-date on the MARE project or support the work of NAMMA, please contact:

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# MARE

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NORTH AMERICAN MARITIME MINISTRY ASSOCIATION

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