

FOR FAITHFUL SUPPORTERS OF ELCA MINISTRIES

CIRCLE

Leadership

Spring 2022

NEWSLETTER

ELCA.org



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

*“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,
‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’
And I said, ‘Here am I; send me!’” –Isaiah 6:8*

Dear friends in Christ,

As people of faith, we strive to respond to God’s call as Isaiah did. Responding “here I am” may be difficult at some moments, but we know that our faithful God never stops calling us and inviting us to share the good news of Jesus near and far. As a member of the Leadership Circle and a trusted partner of the ELCA, you say “Here I am; send me!” every time you support the vital work of this church.

The Leadership Circle is composed of people like you, who consistently answer the call to support the important work we do as church together. Because of this, we want to keep you as informed as possible about what goes on in our church and our networks around the world, especially during a period fraught with international conflict, when we might feel things can change at a moment’s notice.

This issue of the Leadership Circle newsletter contains the latest updates from the steadfast leaders of our ELCA ministries. Here you will read about the integral work being done by ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response to build resilient communities in the United States and around the world. You will hear about the bold challenge for the future issued by the ELCA Fund for Leaders as it celebrates its 25th anniversary. And you will learn about the work we are doing hand in hand with our many companion churches through ELCA Global Mission.

We know that when God calls us, we are invited to step forward and support our neighbors. For all the times when you have said “Here I am!” to your siblings in Christ, and on behalf of the many people whose lives have been impacted by your generosity, thank you.



In peace,

Rachel Wind

Rachel Wind

Executive for Philanthropy, Development
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

On the cover: Rev. Kelsey Kresse (left) is the associate pastor of Abiding Presence Lutheran Church in Burke, Va., where she focuses primarily on youth and college-age ministries. She is a Fund for Leaders alum and a 2021 graduate of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. She is pictured with Bishop Leila Ortiz of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod at the University of Maryland Memorial Chapel, where Kelsey was active in campus ministry.

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HOW TO GIVE

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Gifted, passionate and faithful leaders are essential for nurturing and developing vibrant congregations and ministries. Twenty-five years ago, our church rallied together and sounded an important alarm. The cost of seminary education was rising astronomically, and students were graduating with unmanageable debt. Across the church, all agreed: for ministry to thrive and for more people to hear and embrace the good news, our church needed leaders healthy in body, mind and soul. In response to this call, the Fund for Leaders was born.

For 25 years, generous support from individuals, congregations and synods has enabled the Fund for Leaders to invest in the people who will lead our church forward, free to serve wherever God calls them. In the year 2000, we awarded our first eight scholarships, to one student at each of our ELCA seminaries. Now, Fund for Leaders supports over 300 students every year with over \$3 million in scholarship awards! The vision our church articulated in 1997 — supporting every candidate for ministry who attends an ELCA seminary — seemed impossible. While we haven’t yet realized this goal, our progress is truly remarkable.

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of these students and all the communities to whom they will minister. Through them, you are creating and sustaining the church of tomorrow. We hope that you will consider lifting up the ministry of the Fund for Leaders as we celebrate this important anniversary. To spread the word, find resources and read stories from alums, visit ELCA.org/FundforLeaders25.

Marissa H. Krey
The Rev. Marissa Krey
Director, ELCA Fund for Leaders



“To have that kind of network of people to go on the seminary journey with is really important for me. It’s been humbling to think that I would not be able to follow this call if there were not financial support for these studies . . . which is just such a gift, and so I’m very grateful for that.”

—KRYSTLE MORASKA, 2019 scholarship recipient

Rev. Mary Louise Frenchman (right) and her daughter Wanda Frenchman run Native American Urban Ministry in downtown Phoenix, Ariz. Wanda is a TEEM Fund for Leaders scholarship recipient.



FFL LAUNCHES NEW TEEM SCHOLARSHIP

Fund for Leaders is thrilled to expand scholarship assistance to Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) candidates for the 2022-2023 academic year. The TEEM program is for students already serving as leaders in their communities. Their ministry formation is accelerated and highly contextualized. Rather than leaving their ministry site to be trained at seminary and sent anywhere in the church, TEEM candidates commit to theological education and formation while simultaneously serving the communities that nurtured their call. TEEM students study at home with local pastors serving as mentors and gather for on-campus learning three times a year. Currently, TEEM candidates are most likely to attend Wartburg Theological Seminary (25 students this year) or Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (34 students); our other seminaries are working to expand their ability to serve this important group of leaders.

On a traditional seminary track, tuition typically costs students about \$19,000 a year, but tuition for TEEM students is just \$8,000. In this first year of the program, Fund for Leaders is committing over \$330,000 to support this exceptional group of students. As our church strives to raise up leaders who both reflect and can speak to the cultural diversity in our communities, the TEEM program is an invaluable tool.

Gifts received in support of this new scholarship will not be invested in the Fund for Leaders endowment but will go immediately to support current students.

Celebrate with us! Learn more about the Fund for Leaders 25th anniversary at ELCA.org/FundforLeaders25.



"There is one institution on earth with the capacity, the presence, the credibility, the endurance and the passion to perform the ultimate act of caring for the poor. It is the church, the body of Christ."

—Dr. Scott C. Todd, president, OneChild

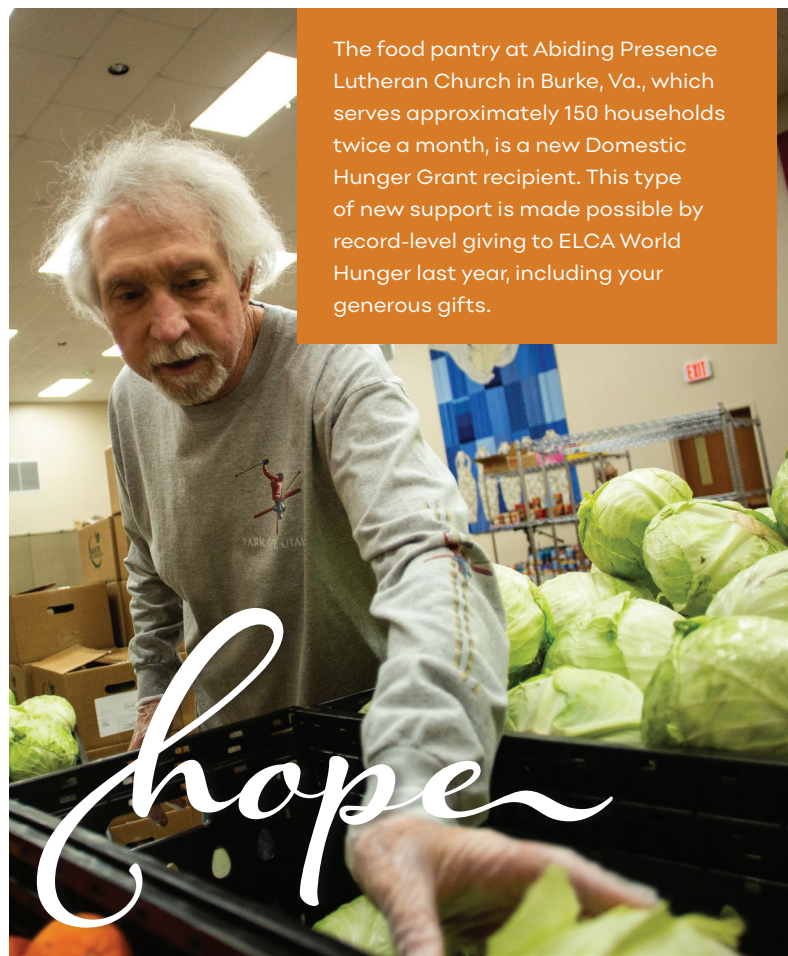
In 2021, giving to ELCA World Hunger rose to a record level. For Lutheran Disaster Response, income that had dipped in 2020 returned and exceeded that experienced before COVID-19. The pandemic posed many challenges in 2021, but thanks to your generosity, these vital programs grew. Through wise stewardship of resources and nimble program expansion, more giving has meant more hope, more help for communities and more futures reclaimed.

Last year, ELCA World Hunger supported work in 67 countries and in 43 states or territories of the United States. The work supported by Lutheran Disaster Response reached 47 countries and 17 U.S. states and territories. With each of these projects, the approach was to reach individuals by supporting community-based work that encouraged immediate action and long-term stability.

The size of our footprint and the force of our impact are possible only because we do this work as church together. Thank you.



Daniel Rift
The Rev. Daniel Rift
Director, ELCA World Hunger
and Lutheran Disaster
Response Funding



The food pantry at Abiding Presence Lutheran Church in Burke, Va., which serves approximately 150 households twice a month, is a new Domestic Hunger Grant recipient. This type of new support is made possible by record-level giving to ELCA World Hunger last year, including your generous gifts.

Hope

BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Perhaps we can think of the church's work as a tree branch – firmly connected to the trunk and roots, it has both the strength to weather a storm and the flexibility to move in the wind and grow toward the sun. In 2021 the domestic and international work of both ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response merged into one team, Building Resilient Communities, which resides within the Service and Justice home area.

This new alignment allows us to coordinate our relief, development and advocacy work. The lessons we learn in one country might be applied to another. Ideas that work overseas might inform how we work in the United States, and vice versa. As one team working on hunger and disaster, we can be more efficient, the global church connecting us to communities we might not otherwise reach.

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR 2022

Old divisions in the world are deepening as we face war in Europe and in the Horn of Africa. COVID-19 rates continue to rise in many areas of the world. Those with the fewest resources find themselves most impacted by inflation. Changing climates render old agricultural practices obsolete. Ethnic and racial exclusion leaves communities divided and perpetuates inequality. Has there ever been a time when the good news of the church in action was more important?



Bishop Leila Ortiz of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod speaks at a rally for citizenship and immigration.

Healing

As we seek to address these complex and intersecting issues, the work of ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response includes the following areas:

- MIGRATION**

The number of people on the move, either internally displaced in their own countries or forced to flee across borders, continues to grow. We cannot address food security when so many people are on the move or homeless. However, the family of Lutheran churches and organizations to which we belong forms the largest faith-based network on migration.
- HOUSING**

As rates of eviction and residential insecurity in the U.S. continue to rise, ELCA World Hunger is prioritizing support for domestic programs that address homelessness and assist those vulnerable to eviction. ELCA Advocacy has given significant voice to the church's concern and the challenges our neighbors face, bringing that word to federal officials in many states.
- GLOBAL FARM CHALLENGE**

ELCA World Hunger planned to use the 2022 Youth Gathering as a forum for promising possibilities in agricultural adaptation, market access and food sovereignty. Though the Youth Gathering had to be canceled, networks of ELCA congregations have carried forward this opportunity in a renewed Global Farm Challenge.
- DISASTER RESPONSE**

The network of organizations that have come together to respond in crisis and disaster has been meeting the challenges, one after another. Lutheran Disaster Response actively supports work on the ground, addressing disasters that make the headlines but also many that do not. With our dynamic presence through congregations, synods, affiliate organizations and companion churches, we can reach across this nation and the world.

UKRAINE CRISIS: YOUR IMPACT THROUGH LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE
Your gifts of over \$5 million to support relief for those impacted by the crisis in Eastern Europe are already at work. *Thank you!*

EXAMPLES OF RESPONSE PROJECTS

- Cash support for refugees and displaced people
- Emergency items such as beds, blankets and shelter
- Food, clean water and hygiene items
- Protection and safeguarding of vulnerable individuals and groups
- Psychosocial care, pastoral support
- Gender justice and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse

POLAND
Partners: Lutheran World Federation, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland

UKRAINE
Partners: Lutheran World Federation, German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine

SLOVAKIA
Partners: Lutheran World Federation, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia

HUNGARY
Partners: ACT Alliance, RGDS-Phiren Amenca, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary

ROMANIA
Partners: Lutheran World Federation, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Romania

Lutheran Disaster Response
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands. *Map is current as of 4/27/2022

Additional responses with partners in these countries and others in the region are expected in the coming weeks and months. Learn more and give by visiting ELCA.org/Ukraine.

Never has support for ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response been more important. Thank you for your recent gifts and, in advance, for your renewed giving in the months ahead. We are truly honored to help those whose hearts are moved make a practical difference as they persistently share their prayers and treasure.

We invite you to learn more and to access educational resources for congregations at ELCA.org/hunger and ELCA.org/disaster.

As a community of believers, we have uttered the words "Lord have mercy, hear our prayer" for as long as we can remember. But over the last couple of years, these words have had a different ring as we sought to understand and hold on to God's hope.

Your love and support continue to show us the endless possibility of what we can do together around the world.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to supporting the global programs of the ELCA.



Rahel

Rahel Mwitula Williams
Director, Global Mission Funding



Naomi Mbise, Dora Houma, Marina Fomgbami

YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

Equipped with the knowledge and leadership skills that your generous gifts helped develop, scholars in the International Women Leaders (IWL) program are pioneering innovative approaches to gender justice.

One exciting example is the African Girls Scholarship and Mentorship Program, designed and implemented by three current or former IWL scholars. Grateful to the IWL program for their experiences, Dora Houma of Cameroon, Marina Fomgbami of Cameroon and Naomi Mbise of Tanzania are "paying it forward" by opening doors to education and leadership for girls in their home contexts.

The African Girls Scholarship and Mentorship Program gives girls in Cameroon and Tanzania the opportunity to earn a high school diploma while participating in a mentorship program with accomplished women from all walks of life. Women of the ELCA and other supporters fund the program, which is executed in partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Participants in the program will receive wrap-around support and mentorship in areas such as leadership, self-love and life skills.

"By empowering women through education, we can help them develop the skills and knowledge they need to stand up for themselves, as well as the self-confidence necessary for them to participate fully in the development process of their communities and countries," writes Dora Houma about the initiative.

Young women scholars such as Dora, Marina and Naomi are designing and implementing projects such as this one around the world, contributing to the growing gender justice movement throughout the Lutheran communion. By giving to IWL, you not only lift up individual women but build a foundation for future generations of women leaders.



Tamar Haddad is a scholar from the International Women Leaders graduating class of 2021.



SAVE THE DATE!

Join us for a virtual celebration of the 2022 graduating class of International Women Leaders scholars. The celebration will take place on the ELCA Facebook page, Facebook.com/Lutherans.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN LEADERS

The International Women Leaders (IWL) program continues to accompany global companion churches as they equip promising young women for leadership in church and society. Currently, 26 IWL scholars study at 11 ELCA colleges and universities across the country, representing 19 global companion churches. They are part of a wider scholastic community of almost 200 ELCA scholarship recipients studying around the globe.

Because of the framework provided by IWL, we have reached some exciting milestones across all scholarship tracks. Out of all current scholarship awards, about 75% support young adults (age 35 and under) and about 70% support women and those of other underrepresented gender identities. This is the future church.

This spring, eight IWL scholars will earn their bachelor's degrees, joining an extensive alum community who are leading across all sectors of the global Lutheran community. For a video recording of our International Women's Day panel on March 8, visit ELCA.org/LeadershipCircle.



Dec. 10 encounter in Mexico City between AMMPARO delegates and key members of Grupo de Trabajo Sobre Política Migratoria (GTPM).

YOUNG ADULTS IN GLOBAL MISSION

The Young Adults in Global Mission program is back! This fall the ELCA will send 30 volunteers to Jerusalem/West Bank, Senegal, the United Kingdom and Argentina/Uruguay. This is a smaller number than we have sent in the past. Nevertheless, we are grateful to restart the program and engage our global partners through its work.



Mark Jacobson served as a missionary doctor for 38 years, helping to establish the Arusha Lutheran Medical Centre as well as many other health projects in his home of Arusha, Tanzania.

MISSIONARIES

"I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

With deepest gratitude for the life of ELCA missionary Mark Jacobson – who shared his faith, expertise and compassion with unwavering commitment through our shared global mission ministry – we join together as friends, congregations, synods and the family in Christ to establish the Mark Jacobson Memorial Endowment Fund. To learn more about the fund or make a gift, contact rahel.mwitula-williams@elca.org.

As a church, we have pressed forward in the work we have been entrusted to do by God. This year we finally deployed missionaries hired in 2021, and we thank God for the work of our current missionaries:

- **Stephen Deal, Costa Rica.** In December, Stephen made his first trip outside Costa Rica for AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) since the beginning of the pandemic, landing in Mexico City and traveling to Tapachula, Mexico. During his visit, he saw the surge of migrants driven to Mexico by the profound political and economic crises in Central and South America.
- **Mike Busbey and Hellen Rios Carrillo, Costa Rica.** In Cuba the COVID-19 pandemic has been exacerbated by economic crisis, so the ELCA joined with the United Evangelical Church in Cuba Lutheran Synod to provide medical supplies to the Cuban people. In El Salvador, the Salvadorean Lutheran Synod has organized a campaign to advocate for preserving water quality in the Jiboa and San Antonio river basins.
- **Philip Knutson, South Africa.** In March more than 30 Lutheran and Moravian women pastors and church leaders from southern Africa gathered for the annual Gender Justice and Women's Empowerment Consultation in Johannesburg, South Africa, held in person for the first time in two years. Member churches were equipped to work for gender justice, transformation, peace and sustainable development.

CIRCLE Leadership

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631-4101
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SPRING 2022



ELCA Fund for Leaders
1997 **25**th 2022
Anniversary

25 Years of the Fund for Leaders

Join us as we celebrate the 25th anniversary year of the Fund for Leaders! Together we are working toward our ultimate goal: a future in which every ELCA seminary candidate can graduate without the burden of financial debt. Learn more at ELCA.org/FundforLeaders25.



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ELCA.org/LeadershipCircle

Visit the Leadership Circle website to access the latest updates from the ELCA's churchwide ministries.