



The Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod is turning the challenges of a leadership shortage and a changing religious landscape into an opportunity by launching 6261 Ministry Communities, named for six congregations coming together to share two pastors, six lay ministers and one deacon. The result is one sustainable ministry community that shares a ministry focus and is better able to serve its community. Deacon Kathleen (“Kat”) Tigerman, whose position as the synod’s director for evangelical mission is funded through your gifts to Where Needed Most, distills the project to hope: “We wanted our churches to thrive, not just survive.”


Deacon Kat says that 6261 Ministry Communities began with a simple idea: “All of our congregations have strengths, and they can do so much more when they share their strengths with each other.” She likens this approach to a shared meal: “We put everything on the table. We don’t ask what’s on just our plate; we look at what we all bring to share.” Six churches might share not only staff and a ministry focus but also programming, worship resources, boards or even choirs.




Each ministry community hosts activities, including worship, at different times and locations throughout the week, so the Innovation team of the ELCA churchwide organization, funded by your gifts to Where Needed Most, is developing an app to help people find programs that interest them and work for their schedules. As Innovation partner Sarah Weaver remembers, “We learned about each church and their needs, then asked, ‘How can we use technology to meet these needs in a way that works for these people?’”

6261 Ministry Communities is still quite new, but the synod hopes to expand the concept to connect 120 congregations across 20 ministry communities by 2029. Deacon Kat sees 6261 as a move away from scarcity to an embrace of God’s abundance: “When we come together with the expectation that we can meet all of our needs, it is a very different conversation. ... **Yes, there is sacrifice, but there is always possibility.**”

## IN 2024, YOUR GIFTS TO WHERE NEEDED MOST PROVIDED:

**113**   
**seminary students**  
with ELCA Fund for  
Leaders scholarships.

**700**   
**young adults**  
the chance to connect to the ELCA through  
25 Gather small groups (and 400 to attend  
the first-ever Young Adult Gathering).

**25**   
**new-start**  
congregations or ministries  
the ability to serve  
their communities.

**340**   
**grants**  
to rural and urban ministries exploring new,  
innovative ways to serve their communities  
through ELCA New Ministry Development  
and Evangelism.



## BUILDING BACK STRONGER

Before the smoke cleared from Maui's devastating wildfires, the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) began planning its response in support of its community. Within four months, CNHA served almost 1 out of every 4 residents in the area. It also recognized that recovery efforts would take years because residents were without homes or even basic services, so it launched the Kāko'o Maui Relief & Aid Services Center, thanks to a grant from Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) that was funded directly by your gifts.

Your support allows CNHA to focus on providing supplies, housing and support to its community. It also ensures that this work is staffed and led entirely by Native Hawaiians and local residents, who know their community and its needs best. Community care navigator Kapili Akima says this provides a necessary sense of home: "When you get here, you're going to feel like you're at home. That's our goal: we want to make sure this is a place where locals can come to and everyone they'll see here is family."

For one local resident, the center's impact is as simple as it is profound: **"I appreciate actually being treated as a person, not as someone who was displaced."**

Be sure to attend the next **FIRESIDE CHAT** for more stories from around the church. **Join us on July 10 to hear from Global Mission!**



A primary focus of the center going forward will be building homes, which were in short supply even before the wildfires. Thanks to your support of LDR, the center is not only housing more than 900 people but also building 126 modular homes and refurbishing 450 homes, ensuring that those who lost their possessions can know stability as well as comfort when they are able to move back. "These are not just homes, they are actually symbols of hope, endurance, and a testament to what's possible when we all come together," says Kūhiō Lewis, chief executive officer for CNHA.

"With a long journey ahead of us, empowering the people of Maui is the key to keeping them here," Lewis says. Your gifts to LDR allow CNHA not only to meet its community's immediate needs but also to dream about and realize its future in the years to come. One sign of hope for Maui's future came in CNHA's short-term housing solutions program: one family welcomed a healthy new baby with all needs met and a caring community all around.

## THE GLOBAL IMPACT OF YOUR SUPPORT IN 2024

World Hunger supported programs being carried out in

**62**

**countries** and **U.S. states**

**40**

**and territories.**



**24** 

**young adults** served in **6 countries** around the world through Young Adults in Global Mission.

Lutheran Disaster Response coordinated responses in

**53**

**countries** and **U.S. states**

**36**

**and territories.**



**101** 

**missionary families** accompanied our neighbors in **35 countries.**