

Lifelines

For supporters of
**ELCA WORLD HUNGER AND
LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE**
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Fall 2018



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



The Rev. Daniel Rift

Director,
ELCA World Hunger
and Disaster Appeal



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

Dear friend of ELCA World Hunger,

I love the holidays, in part because we gather joyfully with our friends and family. We gather around the table, sharing food that reminds us of years past. We gather in our congregations, joyfully singing our favorite hymns and carols. And perhaps we gather around a Christmas tree or fireplace, exchanging gifts we thoughtfully chose in the hopes of seeing delight on the faces of our family and friends.

For all the things that we gather around, the news of Christ's birth is the central point of it all.

In this issue of LifeLines, we're bringing you stories of gifts that last far beyond the excitement of the season. From six chickens providing eggs to feed a family in rural Mexico, to training that helped a female farmer in Malawi multiply her harvest – your gifts to ELCA World Hunger have lasting impact. And in places where our neighbors' lives have been interrupted by disasters, your gifts are helping this church stand with them until their lives are rebuilt, whether that takes weeks or years.

For ELCA World Hunger, our strategy is all about investing in sustainable change. Our programs are meant to leave a lasting impact on communities as they work to end hunger and poverty. Thank you for partnering with us in this work. We're grateful for you this season and year-round.

With deep gratitude,

The Rev. Daniel Rift
Director, ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal

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Watermelon farming generates sustainable income in Cambodia

Kay Peh and Nouv Vann live in Kampong Chhnang, a province in central Cambodia where 85 percent of people are farmers. The couple lives on a plot of land they received through a social land concession, a government program intended to provide people who don't own land with space for homes and to generate income through agriculture.

Often the land granted by the government is small, remote and not ready for farming. For Kay Peh and Nouv Vann, the first few years on their new land were difficult. The land was covered with stumps and thick bushes, making it unusable for growing crops.

However, in May 2015, supported by your gifts to ELCA World Hunger, the family and 524 others received help to clear their land so it could be used for growing crops to eat and sell at the market. Then they settled in. They put up a fence, planted fruit trees and built a house. They were also able to grow their first crop of watermelons, selling it for the equivalent of about \$75 US, generating their first income from the land.

Gifts to ELCA World Hunger, which partners locally with an organization called Life With Dignity (LWD), also helped in other ways. Kay Peh and Nouv Vann also received solar panels to recharge a battery-powered lantern and flashlight, giving them access to electricity. They also received six hens, a flock that has since multiplied to 30 chickens. They raise the chickens to sell during the dry seasons and support themselves. Five chickens will sell for about \$17.50 US.

Earning income in the dry season has enabled Kay Peh and Nouv Vann to purchase seeds. Along with watermelon, they now grow spinach, cilantro, shallots, morning glory, pumpkin and wax gourd.

"Life With Dignity doesn't just provide financial support, but moral and technical support too," Kay Peh said. "I have learned a lot from the training courses on farming techniques, and LWD has been here for every step."

A long-standing partner of ELCA World Hunger, LWD is run by local leaders working to empower rural communities, like Kay Peh's, to reclaim their rights and engage in sustainable land management. Your gifts to ELCA World Hunger are brought together with the skills, capacity and resources of local communities to make transformative change.



"I have learned a lot from the training courses on farming techniques, and LWD has been here for every step."

-Kay Peh

Income



Income-generating activities help families pay for essentials like food, medical costs and school fees, while microloans enable starting or upgrading small businesses. These and other long-term solutions to ending hunger are at the center of the programs supported by ELCA World Hunger.



Agriculture



Equipping farmers with livestock, seeds, tools and training can help families grow food to nourish themselves and improve their communities. These programs are critical in the fight against hunger and poverty.



“We used to be hungry, but [now] that is not the case. Now I see a good future for our children.”

-Maria

‘Now I see a good future for our children’

Maria stands in the middle of her soybean field at the top of a hill in Chole, a village of 400 households in the Dowa District of Malawi. She wears a big, proud smile, and she’s eager to show off the bountiful harvest.

But life wasn’t always easy for Maria, a mother to five children, all under the age of 18. She and her family spent decades tending to the family farm where they grew maize. To Maria and many other members of her village, the words “maize” and “food” are synonymous. Maize, ground into a flour and mixed with boiling water, creates nsima, a staple porridge served for nearly every meal.

If there was a drought, the harvest would yield less than expected. And that would mean that there were weeks – even months – without a reliable source of food. With five growing children, each with growing appetites, the situation was particularly worrisome.

“We lived in poverty,” Maria said. “When we could not afford to buy other food, like bananas or sweet potatoes, we would go hungry.”

So when Maria was invited to attend a Farmer Field School through an agricultural training program offered by the Evangelical Lutheran

Development Service in Malawi and supported by your gifts to ELCA World Hunger, she quickly accepted.

She joined 40 other farmers in her community to learn about crop diversification and planting techniques. She was given new seeds and tools to get started.

Maria’s strategy was to plant new, more resilient crops that would provide a wider safety net if maize failed. She planted soybeans and sweet potatoes, and she happily shows off her land, which now expands down the hill and far into the valley below.

With more variety on her farm, she’s better equipped to handle the in-between times when the maize harvest is minimal. Better yet, she’s witnessed a change in her children’s health and energy with a wider variety of nutrients in their diet. Now they’re focusing more at school and are able to help on the family’s farm.

“We used to be hungry, but [now] that is not the case.” Maria said. “Now I see a good future for our children.”



Growing healthy food sources in rural Mexico

In the remote and mountainous community of Illano de las Pierdas, Cochoapa el Grande in Guerrero, Mexico, poverty and lack of opportunity can make generating enough income – and enough food – difficult.

Thanks in part to gifts to ELCA World Hunger, a local organization, Amextra, is helping community members grow their income.

Ignacio, left, received seeds, fencing and a watering hose to build a vegetable garden in his backyard. His garden includes radishes, potatoes, beets, cilantro and cabbages. His family eats many of the vegetables and sells any extra at the market. He can sell a bunch of radishes, for example, for 50 cents, earning income he can use for other essentials. He also learned from Amextra how to keep his garden healthy by weeding, spacing and watering – all without using chemical fertilizers.

Amextra works in communities dealing with extreme poverty, a lack of access to basic services and healthy nutrition, and limited opportunities for economic mobility. The program in Illano de las Pierdas focuses on training leaders to develop and direct development projects in their communities.

Other community members are participating as well. When Marcelina and her daughters, Imelda, 12, and Esmeralda, 10 (pictured), received six chickens, it made a big difference. Before, Marcelina and her daughters could afford to eat eggs – their main protein source – only three times per week. Amextra provided the family with chickens, materials for chicken coops and training on how to care for the poultry. Now they have eggs anytime for free and sell the extra eggs at the market for additional income, which can be used for food or other essentials.

Another community member, Concepción, received seeds, materials and training for her vegetable garden too. She is very pleased with her harvest, which helps feed her five children and grandchildren.

Through your gifts to ELCA World Hunger, you're accompanying the members of this community as they work together to improve their futures.



ELCA Good Gifts: How animals can help transform a community

Through your gifts to ELCA World Hunger, you're accompanying the members of this community as they work together to improve their futures.

For a family experiencing hunger, animals – like Marcelina's chickens – can make a big difference. Adding an animal to a family's farming activity can provide access to food, like eggs or milk, and it can also provide financial security. Extra products can be sold at the market, and if a medical or other emergency strikes, an animal can be sold to cover the unexpected costs.

ELCA Good Gifts supports programs that help equip families around the world with things they need to improve their livelihood, including animals. You can give a gift in honor of a loved one this holiday season. To learn more about ELCA Good Gifts, visit ELCA.org/goodgifts.

Nutrition



Gifts to ELCA World Hunger support families as they grow food to nourish themselves and build safer, healthier communities for the long term. This is one of the ways ELCA World Hunger accompanies communities as we put an end to hunger – for good.



Health



Clinics and community health programs provide health education and medical assistance for people living in poverty and reduce the burden of HIV and AIDS, malaria and waterborne diseases.



The ELCA made a commitment to carry special priority to end deaths from malaria as part of a special five-year campaign. The work at Burure Clinic coincided with that commitment and continues with the support of ELCA World Hunger.

With women in power, malaria doesn't stand a chance

It is easy to think of malaria prevention as simply providing mosquito nets and medicine to those who have fallen ill. But there's much more to it than that.

Burure is in the Gokwe Region of Zimbabwe, bordered by rivers that are notoriously difficult to cross during the rainy season. It is an area that has been plagued by outbreaks of malaria in the past. It is one of the most remote areas served by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ).

ELCA World Hunger supports Burure's schools and the Burure Gokwe Clinic – institutions that provide education and health care to a catchment area of approximately 10,000 people.

Jairos Charedzera is a village health worker supported by the ELCA Malaria Campaign. With a contagiously enthusiastic and upbeat demeanor, Jairos teaches malaria prevention and control in Burure and the surrounding villages and is a “trainer of trainers” for income-generating savings groups in each of the villages.

“Health and income that reduces poverty must never be separated,” Jairos said. “When a household's income rises, so does the likelihood of good health.”

In each of the village savings-and-loan groups, the members (all women) contribute money each month. That money is pooled together to invest in income-generating activities. The women plant and nurture a nutritional garden, growing squashes, peanuts, greens and spices. They also harvest honey from beehives they had built and maintain.

The profits of these activities are then used to provide goats, hens, pots, pans, mosquito nets or other necessities for each member of the group and their households.

Strong women are at the center of Burure's journey toward a future of hope and possibility. When women gain access to income, the whole community benefits.



East Boston Community Soup Kitchen

Nutrition



Soup kitchens, food pantries and meal programs provide immediate support to those in need. Community gardens and agricultural programs help communities grow food to nourish themselves and build stronger communities.

Alaskan community nourished by congregation's garden

“**T**he Holy Spirit spoke to me and said, ‘This is what you need to do in your congregation,’” said Don Bladow of Anchorage, Alaska. “I was in a composting workshop.”

Don listened.

Lutheran Church of Hope in Anchorage had been trying to figure out what to do with the extra land behind their church for more than 30 years. At that synod assembly, Don, a member of the congregation, knew he would plant what became the Hope Memorial Garden. With an initial \$3,500 from the church council, Don got to work clearing the land.

All the wood from the spruce harvested while he was clearing the land went to firewood for members of the congregation. Don turned the birch he harvested into bowls, which he sold to congregations and at synod assemblies to support the garden.

In 2017, Hope Memorial Garden yielded about 2,700 pounds of food – including peppers, potatoes and broccoli. The produce is donated to social services organizations and soup kitchens.

Along with the money from the birch bowls and support from the congregation, Hope Memorial Garden received a Domestic Hunger Grant from ELCA World Hunger. This garden is just one of the hundreds of programs that are funded by your gifts to ELCA World Hunger in the United States and more than 60 other countries.

Don is dedicated to and believes in the garden, manages it and recruits organizers to manage the materials and people required. Earlier this year, he also took part in a training hosted by ELCA World Hunger in Washington, D.C., on advocacy, where he shared what he’s up to with his senator.

“A bountiful harvest, in one way or another the Lord will provide,” Don said. “Guided by



“A bountiful harvest, in one way or another the Lord will provide,”

-Don

the Holy Spirit, we will plow forth until row upon row of our work is accomplished and our community is better nourished.”

In 2017, ELCA World Hunger Domestic Hunger Grants allocated \$691,810 to support 347 domestic projects and programs in the United States.

The grants accompany congregations and their partners throughout the United States and Caribbean as they draw on the strengths of communities to address local issues such as food security, housing, job readiness, clean water, human rights, policy change, leadership development and more. Together, these ministries are part of a comprehensive approach to breaking the cycle of poverty and hunger – for good.

To learn more, visit ELCA.org/domestichungergrants.



Lutheran Disaster Response



Lutheran Disaster Response brings hope, healing and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. Our approach is comprehensive and extensive.



‘I am grateful for everything that you all have done for me’

More than a year after Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico, many residents are still struggling with ongoing challenges.

An estimated 90 percent of households in Puerto Rico – 1.1 million – registered with FEMA to ask for assistance repairing their homes. It took nearly a year to restore power to most homes, and outages are still common as the electrical grid is weak.

Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) is working in Puerto Rico, as well as the other areas hit by hurricanes in 2017 – Texas, Georgia, Florida, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Haiti and Cuba.

LDR’s work includes immediate relief, but the ministry is best known for staying long after the headlines change. A year later, LDR is focusing on long-term recovery, including coordinating and supporting volunteer programs to help people rebuild their homes, helping survivors make personalized plans to help them recover, and providing emotional and spiritual care.

“In Puerto Rico, the devastation from Hurricane Maria is so widespread and intense that the recovery will take years,” said Joseph Chu, LDR associate program director. “When I visited Puerto Rico, I saw suffering, but I also experienced the spirit of resiliency and hope of the people. Not only do they want to bounce back from their loss, they want to help build a stronger Puerto Rico, one that can withstand future storms.”

Pedro J. Colón lives in Toa Baja, Puerto Rico, an area that was particularly hard hit by Hurricane Maria. He owns a house that he has given to his daughter Katherine, 27, who recently underwent a kidney transplant. During the hurricane, the house sustained significant damage, including losing most of its roof.

However, Colón said that because he also owns a home in Cincinnati and the house is not in his daughter’s name, they have been denied aid. Many FEMA applications in Puerto Rico were denied because of details like lack of formal title.

“People keep saying, ‘Forget about the house,’ but this house is for my daughter,” Colón said. “Because of her illness, she won’t have anything if I don’t. She has tried to work, but she couldn’t because of her recent operation on her knees.”

Colón is living in the house despite the broken roof and entryway. He said he can’t leave it alone because he fears someone will come in and steal the family’s belongings.

LDR provided him with a new mattress to replace one that had gotten wet in the storm, food and tarps for protection from ongoing rains where the roof has blown off.

Despite his frustrations, he echoes many of the hurricane survivors’ sentiments.

“Help needs to go to those who need it the most, and I know there are those who are worse off than I [am], but I need help too,” he said. “I am grateful for everything that you all have done for me.”

To read a full report on the hurricane response to date, visit ELCA.org/disaster.



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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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For supporters of
ELCA WORLD HUNGER AND LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

New resources are available from ELCA World Hunger to enrich the life of your congregation this Advent.



Learn more and order free resources
at ELCA.org/resources.

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