

LifeLines

For supporters of
ELCA WORLD HUNGER

Fall 2016

ELCA World Hunger is a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to end hunger in the United States and around the world. ELCA.org/hunger

A better tomorrow, today

Resettling in Chicago

At the table by grace

A food ministry serving more than food in Omaha

The courage to start again

Returning home and rebuilding in the Central African Republic

Healing wounds of war

Protection and provision in Jordan

Welcome the neighbor

Accompanying families and children in the U.S.



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



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Dear friend of ELCA World Hunger:

How many generations has it been since you, or one of your ancestors:

- moved from one country to another;
- fled or were physically removed by war, poverty or slavery; or
- were forced off the land of your birth by the changing powers of a nation?

Perhaps you don't have an answer to this question because your birth family is unknown to you.

For me on my father's side, the answer is one generation.

Seeking refuge in a new land or location is a common experience to our human family. I find it awe-inspiring that when God chose to be in this world, God took on the flesh of a baby whose family was forced to flee from a tyrant. When you see the woman, man or child seeking refuge at our border, can you see the Christ child? Can you see yourself in that person?

In our church's work to overcome hunger and poverty, we have made great strides in settled communities. But our commitment of working "until all are fed" is too often undone when a community of people is forced to flee or resettle.

At the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, voting members affirmed the church's strategy for coordinated work for Central American children and their families at our border. This initiative, under the name AMMPARO, is a holistic, whole-church commitment to accompany children today and in the future.

Lutherans are known in much of the world as people who take practical action to bring new life to those seeking refuge. We pray you are inspired by the stories in this issue as you discover the work you make possible with your gifts to ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response.

Thank you for your partnership and investment in the work that God calls us to do - together. Thank you for the hospitality you extend in your own community and for joining in the work we do here at home and around the world.

Blessings on your ministry,

THE REV. DANIEL RIFT
 DIRECTOR,
 ELCA WORLD HUNGER AND DISASTER APPEAL



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How to give

Online
ELCA.org/hunger/donate

Phone
 800-638-3522

Mail
 Make checks payable to
 "ELCA World Hunger"
 and mail to:
 ELCA
 P.O. Box 1809
 Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

Contact us

Email
hunger@elca.org

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 800-638-3522, ext. 2616

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Refugee Resettlement



More than 65 million people have been forced to leave their homes due to war, conflict and disaster. Helping newcomers resettle in a new country, through our congregations and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, is one way ELCA World Hunger is pursuing a world of justice where all are fed.



The Bhattarai family at their home in Chicago

In the United States, your gifts to ELCA World Hunger support the work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, work that is achieved through a network of 28 local organizations in 26 states, most of which are Lutheran social ministry organizations.



A better tomorrow, today

In Bhutan, “until the early ’80s, people of all ethnicities were treated with respect,” Hasta Bhattarai says. When differences in language and tradition began to be seen as a threat, those who practiced the customs and traditions of Nepal found themselves in harm’s way. Hasta remembers, “(Those in power) raped the women; people were beaten. They seized the bank accounts, the crops ... they threatened us. We had to leave the country or face death.”

Hasta and his family fled, walking for days until they reached India. From there, they made their way to southern Nepal, where they lived in a refugee camp for 16 years.

In 2008, the Bhattarais had the opportunity to resettle in another country. They flew into Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport, with the help of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), an ELCA World Hunger grant recipient.

The family was greeted by LIRS’ local partner, RefugeeOne, and members of Holy Trinity Lutheran

Church in Chicago. The congregation had been working closely with RefugeeOne to collect donations to cover the family’s first three months of rent and goods to furnish the family’s apartment.

RefugeeOne’s support continued as they helped the Bhattarais through case management, immigration assistance and job placement. And through the years, Rita Schnell, a member of Holy Trinity, accompanied the family as they acclimated to life in the U.S.

Today, Hasta is a doorman at a prominent hotel in downtown Chicago. His wife, Chandra, recently earned a master’s degree in math and works as a tutor. The couple and their two sons have also moved into their first home.

Now fluent in English, Hasta helps other refugees navigate life in the U.S. – whether it’s overcoming the language barrier or cultural differences – so they, too, can adjust to their new home.

Your gifts to ELCA World Hunger have a lasting impact. Thank you for your commitment and for helping our church sow seeds today for a better tomorrow.



Photo: David Joel

Nutrition



Soup kitchens, pay-what-you-can restaurants, food pantries and meal programs provide immediate support to those in need. Community gardens and agricultural programs help families grow food to nourish themselves and build safer, healthier communities for the long term. These are some of the ways ELCA World Hunger accompanies communities as we work to put an end to hunger - for good.



Photo: David Joel



Matt and Simone Weber, managers of Table Grace Cafe

Each year, your gifts to ELCA World Hunger help support more than 300 programs in the United States, like Table Grace Cafe, programs that help our sisters and brothers move from hunger to wholeness.



Noah Mejstrik, a Table Grace Cafe staff member, prepares a meal in the café's kitchen.

At the table by grace

In downtown Omaha, Neb., Table Grace Cafe is a place where lasting connections are made and the needs for healthy food and job opportunities are met. The café is an extension of Table Grace Ministries and the dream of managers Matt and Simone Weber. This ministry is one of more than 300 programs in the United States supported by your gifts to ELCA World Hunger.

At this pay-what-you-can restaurant, anyone who walks through the door is served a nutritious meal regardless of their ability to pay. In place of a bill, patrons are asked to pay what they are able through monetary donations or through the giving of their time. "This is a give-give relationship," Matt says. "What you give is free-will. Donate or volunteer - our goal is 100 percent participation."

The café's connection with its patrons often goes beyond food. A 10-day training program is available to community members who are experiencing homelessness or are seeking to re-enter the workforce but lack the job skills or training. "We help them build their résumés and coach them so they can find culinary and restaurant jobs," shares Simone. And, sometimes the job is at Table Grace Cafe.

Noah Mejstrik was without a home when he first arrived at the café. Today, Noah has an apartment and is one of seven paid staff members. He holds a certificate in food safety and oversees the café when Matt is not there.

Matt and Simone continue to dream. They are planning to do even more - provide more healthy meals and serve even more people through their job-training program. Your gifts to ELCA World Hunger are helping the Webers do just that - more of the work that God has called us to do together. Thank you!



Photo: Franklin Ishida/ELCA

Agriculture



Climate change, conflict and crisis put many of the world's 2.5 billion smallholder farmers at risk of extreme poverty. Long-term sustainability requires innovative approaches to agriculture, disaster-risk reduction and advocacy, the kind of approaches supported by ELCA World Hunger.



"Building and rebuilding brings hope."

— ELCA MISSIONARY SUSAN SMITH

The courage to start again

As the Central African Republic continues the long road toward lasting peace, the effects of several years of conflict can be seen in fallow fields and fallen homes. In Bohong, 68 miles north of Bouar, about 75 percent of the homes were destroyed.

Yet, many residents of Bohong have returned and are rebuilding with the support of the Association of Volunteers for the Protection of the Environment and the Water Resource Management Program, programs of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic that are supported in part by your gifts to ELCA World Hunger.

"What courage the people show who have come back and begun the rebuilding process," ELCA missionary Susan Smith marvels. "Could I do it? Could you? To return to the place where your house and life were leveled to the ground and start to rebuild?"

The courage of the people of Bohong can be seen in a variety of ways. Local farmers are returning to their fields and are learning improved farming techniques through the program. This is a shift from traditional practices, which were often less effective and more damaging to the environment. The programs also provided seeds to some farmers who lost their crops and livelihood in the conflict, and the community now has access to fresh water from newly constructed or repaired spring boxes and wells.

"Building and rebuilding brings hope," says Smith. Sustainable livelihoods, new homes, clean water and health care are helping the community move from hope to reality. The people also pray that a lasting peace won't be far behind.

Thank you for your continued support of ELCA World Hunger. Through your faithful gifts, our church is able to walk alongside our sisters and brothers as they courageously rebuild their lives.

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE



More than 80,000 refugees have been living in the Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan.

Healing wounds of war

The civil war in Syria has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people and millions have had to flee the country. More than 80,000 refugees have been living in the Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan. More than half of them are children. These children have lost their homes; they've experienced war and witnessed violence and now live under difficult conditions with uncertain futures.

Not only are gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response, working with The Lutheran World Federation, providing basic necessities of food, diapers, blankets, water, health and hygiene kits - your support is also helping provide psychosocial services for children - children like Lyla*.

"I was very sad to leave my country, but we came here looking for safety," 11-year-old Lyla says. Lyla lost her father in the Syrian war. Her mother said they tried staying in Syria, but it was too dangerous. "I saw five men die right in front of me," she recalls. Eventually the family left and found a new home in the Za'atari refugee camp.

"We thought going away was only for three months. We didn't take anything, as the journey was long and dangerous, and now we are not able to go back," Lyla says. She is one of many children taking part in the Peace Oasis, a psychosocial center supported in part by your gifts.

The Peace Oasis supports youth and children like Lyla. It is a safe place for children to participate in activities such as drama, visual arts, games, group discussions and workshops on conflict mitigation skills. They learn how to better communicate, solve problems and build self-esteem.

Lutheran Disaster Response, working with The Lutheran World Federation and as a member of ACT Alliance, will continue to provide protection, shelter, education and basic necessities for refugees, especially children. With your prayers and financial support, we will work toward a future filled with hope and peace.

*The name Lyla was changed in this story and was adapted from The Lutheran World Federation.



Photo: ACT/Sean Hawkey



Welcome the neighbor

As members of the ELCA and as people of faith, we are called to love and welcome all. During the past few years, the United States has seen an unprecedented number of children migrating from Central America, mostly from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. These children are forced to flee their communities because of complex and interrelated reasons, including chronic violence, poverty, environmental displacement and lack of opportunities.

As a church, through Lutheran Disaster Response, and working with companion churches, in congregations, synods, with social ministry organizations and other ministries in the U.S., we are helping ensure vulnerable children are protected. Together, we are walking with these children and their families - children like Cristian.

"In El Salvador, we are seeing a very ugly situation," Cristian says. "When gangs approach young people and ask them to join, and when the young people reject their offer, many times they are killed or abducted and no one ever knows what happened to them." This situation became all too real for Cristian when gang

members approached him. "I had to abandon my studies because they told me the next time they saw me, they would kill me."

Cristian is one of many minors who have come to the United States seeking safety and a better future. We are walking with children like Cristian through Lutheran Disaster Response and as a church through the AMMPARO strategy.

Gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response have helped support the coordination of local work on the ground and through congregations, providing lawyers, free of charge, for children seeking asylum and other immigration statuses. Gifts also support programs and ministries that are welcoming and providing protection and basic necessities, as well as assistance to help reunite family members and sponsors in this country.

At the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, the ELCA's strategy for AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) was approved. For more information about how you can be involved, visit ELCA.org/AMMPARO.

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ELCA World Hunger
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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ELCA.org/hunger

Join ELCA World Hunger for the season of Advent

Discover new and exciting ways to join in the fight to end hunger and poverty here at home and around the world.

Find resources and more at ELCA.org/hunger/resources.



Advent Calendar



Advent Study

