

LifeLines

For supporters of
**ELCA WORLD HUNGER AND
LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE**
ELCA.org/hunger | ELCA.org/disaster

Fall 2024

50
years



ELCA
World Hunger



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Director, ELCA
World Hunger



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Director, Lutheran
Disaster Response



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Director, ELCA
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Justice Giving

How to give

Online

[ELCA.org/hunger/donate](https://elca.org/hunger/donate)
[ELCA.org/disaster/donate](https://elca.org/disaster/donate)

Phone

800-638-3522

Mail

Make checks payable to
“ELCA World Hunger” or
“Lutheran Disaster Response”
and mail to:

ELCA
P.O. Box 1809
Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

Contact us

Email

hunger@elca.org
disaster@elca.org

Phone

800-638-3522, ext. 2616

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ELCA
World Hunger

“Remember, I am with you always,
to the end of the age.”

–Matthew 28:20

Dear friend,

This year, as we mark 50 years of ELCA World Hunger, let us take stock of everything this ministry has accomplished. Ours is a remarkable history. Over the last half-century, donors such as you have grown ELCA World Hunger into a globe-spanning, core ministry of our church. To look back on the individuals, families and communities changed along the way is a powerful experience.

However, the 50th anniversary of ELCA World Hunger is not just about the past. With this milestone, let us also look toward our next 50 years together and dream about what we might accomplish in the future. **Your generosity has only made those dreams bigger and more vibrant.**

This issue of “LifeLines” is full of stories about people looking toward the future with hope because of your support. In Zimbabwe, a nursing student is starting a new career that will strengthen her livelihood and the health of her community. In Guatemala, multiple generations are learning how to sustainably grow fresh fruits and vegetables. In Indonesia, an island farming community is setting sail toward greater connection with the rest of the world.

Through your support for Lutheran Disaster Response, you have also remained alongside your siblings in Ukraine, where so many people have seen their past way of life destroyed. You helped bring the sun of a new day into one woman’s home.

Thank you for your faithful generosity. **You are making an immense difference to your siblings in Christ around the world right now, and you will remain alongside them for years to come.** We look forward to continuing the journey with you, all the way to the end of the age – when we fulfill God’s promise of a just world where all are fed.

Together in Christ’s fellowship,

Haemin Lee
Director, ELCA World Hunger

Maryn Olson
Director, Lutheran Disaster Response



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Feeding ministries and meal programs provide immediate support to those in need. With community gardens and agricultural programs, your generosity enables communities to grow food to nourish themselves and build stronger futures.

Digging deeper in Guatemala

Micaela had tried to grow vegetables in her home garden in Guatemala. She planted seeds and watered them diligently, hoping to use the fresh produce to feed her family. But she couldn't get her plants to thrive. Despite the effort she put into the garden, it gave her very little in return.

Things began to shift when she connected with the program Sembrando Esperanza y Dignidad (Sowing Hope and Dignity), or SEED, through her church — first as a participant and then as a leader, helping her neighbors get involved. The program, which is supported by your gifts to ELCA World Hunger, works in rural communities in Guatemala to help families establish and tend home gardens. SEED gardens are producing fresh tomatoes, pineapples, green beans and more for families across the country. The program also teaches families how to grow ancestral crops that are native to Guatemala, such as madre de cacao, kohlrabi and achiote.

In addition to providing resources for adults, the SEED program is engaging the next generation of gardeners. Kids are getting involved in tending to their families' gardens, and program leaders have helped establish gardens at village elementary schools. Fourth- through sixth-grade students are caring for the plants at their schools and learning about recycling, soil improvement and more.

Micaela learned that she needed to fertilize her home garden and that her earlier planting had been too shallow. "I realized that I needed to dig deeper," she says. She also gained access to seeds that were hard to find. In one season, Micaela's garden has grown to four times its previous size. She has been able to feed her family and sell some of the produce, improving not only the family's nutrition but also its finances.

As Micaela grows her own plants, she is also growing the SEED program in her community. An active program leader, she is engaging new families and coordinating follow-up visits with them.

Through your generosity to ELCA World Hunger, you are making a difference to people such as Micaela, her children and her neighbors — right now. You will also journey alongside them in the years to come as their community gets stronger and their gardens continue to grow.



"I realized that I needed to dig deeper."

MICAELA





“I have a soft spot for helping whoever is in need.”

SIBUSILE

A passion to provide care

Sibusile, who lives in Zimbabwe, had almost given up on her dream of becoming a nurse. After secondary school, she applied to nursing school, but she wasn't able to enroll right away. Soon enough, new responsibilities took precedence: she had children and needed to provide for them. Sibusile made a small income by selling some of the vegetables she grew, but she barely scraped by. “Basically I lived hand-to-mouth,” she says.

Still, she never lost her passion for nursing. “I have a soft spot for helping whoever is in need,” she explains. “I believe for one to be an effective nurse, one has to be passionate about other people's well-being.” Sibusile continued to apply to nursing school. Finally, after nearly 10 years, she found a way to enroll with the help of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ), a partner of ELCA World Hunger.

In Zimbabwe, medical resources can be scarce and difficult to access, especially in rural areas. The goal of the ELCZ nursing program is to provide nurses and quality nursing care to hospitals across the country. Over half the program participants, such as Sibusile, are low-income women from the communities they will eventually serve.

Thanks to donors such as you, Sibusile can train for her new career without having to worry about how to support her family. On top of pursuing her own education, Sibusile can now afford to send her daughter to school.

Sibusile has confirmed her long-held belief that her caring nature would make her a great nurse. As she has learned new skills in patient care and technology, she has renewed her passion for helping others. Socializing and interacting with different types of people has built her confidence. Now, when she looks toward the future, her dreams for herself and her community are even bigger. She hopes to help empower other women and girls the way she has been empowered.

Your gifts are making a difference in Zimbabwe – to women such as Sibusile, and to all the people they will teach, help and heal.



ELCA World Hunger supports health programs around the world where your gifts fund clinical care, maternal and child health, education of health professionals, and community health care workers as they provide early screenings and education in disease prevention.

Sailing toward a hopeful future

AGRICULTURE



The Sua Hamlet community assembles a natural roof for a hut that will host organic-farming classes.

Sua Hamlet is located on Siberut Island, off the coast of Indonesia, with rugged terrain on one side and the Indian Ocean on the other. The journey to the nearest market takes two to three hours by boat. But even though villagers are physically isolated from the world beyond their island, your gifts to ELCA World Hunger are helping them find ways to connect to a greater network of support.

Your generosity has been at work in the village for several years, supporting organic farming. With funds from ELCA World Hunger, a local partner has supplied farmers there with the seeds, tools and training they need to successfully grow sustainable and climate-resilient crops. The training has helped villagers steward their new and existing resources. “We really need this kind of training,” says Sundarsin, a program participant. “Sometimes we already have the land, we already have the resources, but in the application and implementation we are still very lacking.”

Abundant crops of cloves, areca nut, durian and bananas are growing in Sua Hamlet now. But until

recently, community members didn’t have a reliable way to bring their produce to market. Their boats couldn’t withstand the harsh, unpredictable weather, and fuel costs for the long journey were high. This limited the growth of their economy.

As crops on the island began growing stronger with ELCA World Hunger’s support, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) was also inspired to get involved in the community. LWF enabled it to begin a new grassroots initiative, Setting Sail for Hope, to procure more reliable boats with fuel-efficient engines. Community leader Mae Jasman spearheaded the project, working alongside his neighbors to construct the dugout canoes and install the engines. The first boat was ready to go earlier this year. In addition to taking produce to market, it can also be used in emergencies to transport people to the nearest medical facility.

Your generosity has empowered the Sua Hamlet community in more ways than one. With your support, villagers are working in solidarity to build a more resilient future. They are sailing forward with hope.



You support programs that give people the resources they need to grow food in sustainable, climate-resilient ways. Your generosity helps people facing hunger, homelessness and other challenges to feed their families, increase their earning potential and break the cycle of poverty for good.



Sharing the extravagant love of Christ

The Helping Hands feeding ministry - an ELCA World Hunger grant partner - began about 40 years ago at First English Lutheran Church in Great Falls, Mont. Since then, attendance at First English has declined. After several years of persevering as a small congregation, the church went through the process of holy closure this past year. At the same time, the Helping Hands ministry has continued to grow. When First English closed, the congregation gifted its entire church building to Helping Hands as a ministry headquarters. Thanks to that act of generosity and the support of donors such as you, this church's legacy of service will endure.



Your generosity is providing care for our closest neighbors. By supporting domestic programs such as feeding ministries, you are helping to meet immediate needs and strengthen communities for years to come.



In 2020, almost 15% of residents in Great Falls were living in poverty. Though Helping Hands was originally founded to provide meals for members of First English, it quickly expanded to respond to the needs of the wider community. Now Helping Hands provides food, hygiene items and ID assistance to over 12,000 people across the city.

Carrie Parker has served as executive director of Helping Hands for several years, but she is still astounded to see the difference this ministry makes in people's lives. She recalls a story she heard about a guest at Helping Hands who had been charged with theft multiple times. When he appeared in court after his most recent offense, he told the judge, "I was having a hard time feeding my family because I lost my job. I couldn't feed my family, but I'm not going to be stealing anymore." The judge asked him how he could be sure. He replied, "Well, let me tell you, I found this place. They give out food every week. This place, Helping Hands."

Carrie has seen the ministry make a difference in the lives of not only its patrons but also the volunteers who serve there. People of different backgrounds and ages show up week after week to do the work and form meaningful relationships. "The joy always comes from seeing our guests and being able to just love them unconditionally," Carrie says, "and to try to be an example of the extravagant love of Christ."

Carrie is grieving the loss of her first church home - First English is where she was married, where her daughter was baptized, and where she came to know Christ. But she knows that the church will continue to make a positive impact in the community, and that gives her hope. Your generosity sustains that hope by supporting ministries such as Helping Hands. Even as one chapter ends at First English, you are helping to continue the church's story of service, grace and love.



LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE



This apartment building in Kharkiv, Ukraine, was damaged in a Russian missile attack in February 2024.

“You brought the sunshine back”

Over 6 million people left Ukraine after Russia’s full-scale invasion of the country in 2022. Since then, many have returned to Ukraine, whereas others never left at all. Millions of people are registered as IDPs – internally displaced people, refugees in their own country.

Residents of Kharkiv, Ukraine, are familiar with the sights and sounds of war. This eastern city near the Russia-Ukraine border is a frequent target of Russian attacks, which cause extensive damage and recurring blackouts.

Because of the dangers of being in the city, the severe needs of residents must be addressed daily. Your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response have helped provide aid to impacted people in Kharkiv, the majority of whom are women and children.

Your generosity has enabled Lutheran Disaster Response’s local partners to establish heating points throughout Kharkiv. These are designated places with generators where residents can come during blackouts to charge their phones, use the internet and keep warm.

In addition to managing heating points and operating collective centers (shelters for displaced families), Lutheran Disaster Response is at work in communities, repairing damage and providing supplies during power outages.

One woman’s fifth-floor apartment was impacted by the Russian bombing. Though her building wasn’t hit by a direct strike, her windows were shattered and parts of the outside wall of her apartment were damaged. Fortunately she had a “community mobilizer” (case worker), supported by Lutheran Disaster Response, who regularly checked on people after bombings, especially older residents.

With assistance from Lutheran Disaster Response, the plywood covering the broken window was removed, the wall was repaired and a new window was installed. Looking out through the window in her kitchen, she said with a smile, “Look, you brought the sunshine back.”

In Kharkiv, Lutheran Disaster Response is also welcoming evacuees from areas closer to the front lines, providing them with mattresses, bedding



Lutheran Disaster Response shares hope, healing and renewal with people in the United States and around the world whose lives have been disrupted by disasters. Your gifts go to work in the immediate aftermath of disasters and in the years that follow. For the latest information about emerging responses around the world, visit [ELCA.org/disaster](https://elca.org/disaster).



Photos of Ukrainian soldiers who have died compose an informal memorial that stretches for blocks in Kyiv, Ukraine.

and other household necessities as they move into temporary shelter. Our partners are helping these internally displaced people pursue education and employment opportunities to maintain some sense of normalcy.

Your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response continue to support Ukrainians impacted by the war, both inside Ukraine and throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Your generosity shows a shared hope for renewal in communities such as Kharkiv.



Read more stories of your impact through Lutheran Disaster Response in the latest issue of “Thrive”!

The stories in the 2024 issue of “Thrive” show the holistic approach of Lutheran Disaster Response. As we accompany individuals around the world, from Maui to the West Bank, your support for Lutheran Disaster Response demonstrates the value of our relationships.



Download
“Thrive” here!

LifeLines

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NEW SEASONAL RESOURCES FROM ELCA WORLD HUNGER!

This Advent and Lent, ELCA World Hunger invites you into a celebration of storytelling. “Set every peak and valley **humming with the word**, the Lord is coming” (ELW 248).



GOOD GIFTS
POSTER



2024 ADVENT
CALENDAR AND STUDY GUIDE



ACTION GUIDE
FOR CONGREGATIONS



2025 LENT
CALENDAR AND STUDY GUIDE

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