

ELCA WORLD HUNGER

SPRING-SUMMER 2014

# Congregation Connections

LINKING ELCA WORLD HUNGER TO WORSHIP  
AND CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

## LOOK INSIDE FOR:

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- World Malaria Day 2014
- Sermon starters



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

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## How to use this resource

“Congregation Connections” is published twice per year and distributed to congregational leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Each issue is specially designed to help leaders integrate hunger themes throughout worship and congregational life. This issue is specifically designed with ideas, resources and activities to help you plan from February 2014 through July 2014. All lectionary references are taken from the Revised Common Lectionary.

**Download** the electronic version of this resource at [www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources).

**Order** more copies of this resource by visiting [www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources) or calling 800-638-3522.

**Editor:** Rachel Claman

**Writer:** Kjersten Priddy

**ELCA World Hunger**  
8765 W. Higgins Road  
Chicago, IL 60631

800-638-3522, ext. 2616  
[hunger@elca.org](mailto:hunger@elca.org)

# FEBRUARY 2014

## Sermon starter | SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9

### ISAIAH 58:1-9

How often do we “put on” religion one day, only to mistreat our neighbors the next? The author of Isaiah 58 paints a picture of people going through the motions of devotion. This is especially true of their fasting. The people may forgo food on fast days, but their fast is a sham. The author makes clear that the sacrifice God desires is not empty devotion but self-giving service in which we share our bread with the hungry and bring the homeless into our homes.

Luther responded to false piety by saying, “If you want to fast, put on mercy and love for the neighbor, so that you may do good to him” (Martin Luther, “Lectures on Isaiah,” Ch. 58.6, Luther’s Works vol. 17). What would it mean to live this kind of faith and sacrifice during Lent or year-round? How might (or does!) your faith move you from the pew to the street, from piety to service?



The ELCA is launching a five year, \$200 million comprehensive campaign to grow ministries within this church. ELCA World Hunger is taking part by growing and providing expansion of long-term solutions to hunger within communities in at least ten countries. Beginning in February 2014,

all gifts to ELCA World Hunger will support the movement forward to fulfill the expanded goal of this campaign. Look for more information at [www.ELCA.org/campaign](http://www.ELCA.org/campaign).

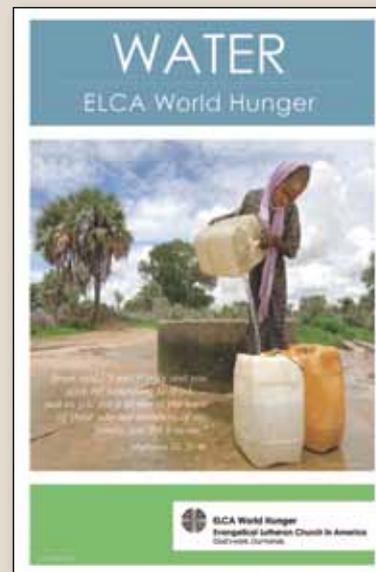
## Souper Bowl of Caring

On Feb. 2, 2014, the states of New York and New Jersey will come together to host Super Bowl XLVIII. Also, on Feb. 2, 2014, thousands of people across all 50 states will come together to warm the hearts and bellies of people in their communities with the Souper Bowl of Caring.

The Souper Bowl of Caring is a youth-led ecumenical movement to combat hunger. Participants gather donations of money and goods for the organization of their choice. Last year over 8,000 groups participated, raising almost \$7.5 million in cash and food items for over 6,000 different charities.

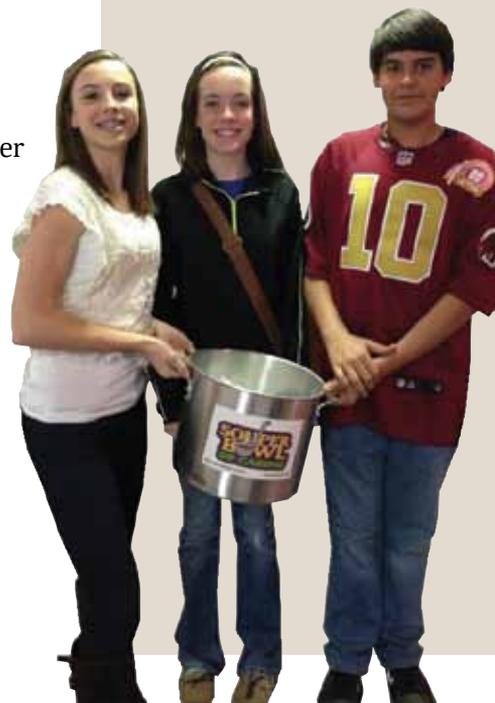
This year, consider splitting your monetary donations between a local charity and ELCA World Hunger, making a difference both locally and globally. Help make a big impact and register your group at [www.souperbowl.org](http://www.souperbowl.org).

## ELCA World Hunger water brochure



Clean water is one of the most powerful ways to make change in the world. Gifts to ELCA World Hunger help support water projects and other programs that get at the root causes of hunger and poverty. This trifold brochure addresses the need for clean water around the world.

Order this resource for free at [www.ELCA.org/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/resources) and look for ELCAMA1204.



## “Buck-A-Chick”



This year instead of marshmallow chicks, provide hope for a family in need with some real chicks. In addition to being cute, chicks grow up to lay nutrient-rich eggs, perfect to feed growing kids. Extra eggs can be sold, generating extra income to help a family escape poverty for good. And at only \$1 a chick, they are a best-seller in the ELCA Good Gifts catalog! Join congregations around the ELCA to host a “Buck-A-Chick” sale. Invite worship attendees to purchase and color a paper chick for \$1, with the proceeds going to ELCA World Hunger. Hang the decorated chicks around your congregation. Download the coloring page at [www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources).



# MARCH 2014

## Sermon starter | SUNDAY, MARCH 9

### MATTHEW 4:1-14

While fasting in the wilderness, Jesus, in his eating and drinking humanity, must have hungered for a morsel of food. Yet, he resisted the devil's temptation to turn stones into bread and kept his fast. The temptation the devil offered was the easy way out. “Are you hungry? Then EAT!” In the United States, 16.7 million children do not get enough to eat. How many caregivers must have heard their cries and wished for the power to turn stones into bread? Yet, solving hunger is not simply a matter of saying, “Are you hungry? Then EAT!”

ELCA World Hunger's programs address the complex causes of hunger, none of which can be solved simply. What's more, as Christians, we recognize that humans do not live by bread alone, that physical hunger is one symptom of larger needs – physical, spiritual and emotional. How are we tempted with simplistic satisfaction of all forms of hunger?

## Lenten meal series

Does your congregation share a meal together before Lenten services? This year, consider using the ELCA World Hunger Lenten series to share a global meal, connecting with brothers and sisters from around the world. Each meal plan features country statistics, recipes, table prayers, printable placemats, table tents and more. Instead of charging for the meal, consider taking up a free will offering to support the work of ELCA World Hunger in the countries listed and in other countries around the world, including the United States. Choose from 18 different themes.

- 100 Mile Meal
- Bolivia
- Bangladesh
- Cambodia
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Food Stamps
- Haiti
- India
- Malawi
- Mexico
- Nepal
- Nicaragua
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- West Bank

## Into the Wild: A Lenten Liturgy and Intergenerational Study on Hunger

This Lent, follow the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness and learn what it means to live out our baptismal faith in a world filled with hunger, suffering and hope. How does faith move Lutherans to respond to many human needs, especially the need of our neighbors who are hungry? This five-part series is an intergenerational liturgy and lesson that explores common Lenten themes as they relate to hunger. Each session is divided into small-group and large-group settings and can be adapted to fit your congregation's educational forums, workshops and mid-week gatherings. The program also includes a conversation guide for families to use at home during the Lenten season.

Download and print this resource at [www.ELCA.org/hunger/resource](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger/resource).

## 40 Days of Wonderings

This Lent, bring the story of Jesus in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-21) into your home with ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Wonderings: A Family Discussion Guide for Lent. This guide features brief discussion starters drawn from the themes featured in the resource *Into the Wild: A Lenten Liturgy and Intergenerational Study on Hunger*, a new seasonal program from ELCA World Hunger. 40 Days of Wonderings can be used with all ages to spark conversations about hunger, faith and living with hope in the "wilderness." This is a great way to keep the conversation going from your church's Lent program to home!

Download and print this resource at [www.ELCA.org/hunger/resource](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger/resource).

## Other Lenten ideas



**Lenten fast:** Fasting helps us turn from what distracts us and focus back on God. Try giving up coffee, soda, movies, etc. Consider donating the cost of whatever you are fasting from to ELCA World Hunger.



**Noisy offering:** Involve children in taking a noisy offering. Decorate milk jugs or jars with paint, stickers or fabric. Use the jars to collect coins. Invite the children to shake the jars and make a joyful noise in the fight against hunger.

## God's math: a 40-day hunger calendar

God's math doesn't just add up, it multiplies! This Lent, use the ELCA World Hunger calendar to journey with your family, small group, congregation or individually through 40 days of praying, learning, giving and deepening your commitment to walk with neighbors in need. The calendar pairs well with the ELCA World Hunger Feed the World coin box. Order or download this and other ELCA World Hunger resources at [www.ELCA.org/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/resources).

## Build a barnyard

Create a barnyard display in the narthex or fellowship hall. The display can be a poster, a bulletin board, a fishpond, or an actual barnyard space. As money is collected and animals are purchased, display them with stickers, colors or stuffed animals. This is a great way to display your congregation's progress toward funding God's Global Barnyard.



## A Prayer for Easter

Jesus Christ, Incarnate Word, Prince of Peace, and Lord of Lords, for us and for our salvation you came and walked among us, preaching and teaching, healing and forgiving. You died so that we might be dead to sin, and rose so that we might have eternal life. Help we who are witnesses to your healing power bring new life and hope to all who suffer. Especially we pray for those who suffer from hunger and poverty. Make us your hands and feet in the world, so that all may have enough. In your great name we pray. Amen.

## God's Global Barnyard bulletin inserts



Use this bulletin insert to share more information about God's Global Barnyard and how animals help families in need. The back is a coloring page for children.

# APRIL 2014

## Sermon starter | SUNDAY, APRIL 13

### PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11 (PALM SUNDAY)

This section of Philippians is so out of place in Paul's otherwise informal letter that many people think it could be a first-century hymn. If so, it gives us a glimpse of how the earliest Christians viewed Jesus. And what do we find there? The cross, of course! Even as Paul thanks God for the Philippians, there the cross stands. Paul is no stranger to the awesome, all-powerful grace of God. Yet, even he knows that all roads lead through the cross. It looms over Palm Sunday, casting its shadow on all our pretensions. Our inability to save ourselves, according to Luther, means that we cannot avoid death. By grace alone, we are saved from this end. Yet, we are not saved so we can avoid the cross, but so that we can choose it freely, answering God's call to empty ourselves and take on "the form of a slave" (2:7) for the sake of our neighbors.

## Celebrate Easter with the gift of new life

Instead of a plastic egg filled with candy, give a gift that keeps on giving. An animal from God's Global Barnyard in the ELCA Good Gifts catalog provides hope for a family in need. From chicks to ducks to cows, as well as life-saving medication, projects to provide clean drinking water, school supplies and so much more, ELCA Good Gifts provide hope to people in 90 countries worldwide, including the U.S. Visit [www.ELCA.org/GoodGifts](http://www.ELCA.org/GoodGifts) to learn more.



## New video: spotlight on Malawi



Watch your gifts in action! The ELCA Malaria Campaign is working with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi, equipping people and congregations to combat malaria. Find this short, two minute video at [www.ELCA.org/malaria/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/malaria/resources).

## ELCA Malaria Campaign



In 2010, the ELCA pledged to raise \$15 million by 2015 in an effort to help to make malaria history. In just three years, the ELCA Malaria Campaign has already raised over \$10 million. That money is already at work with our 13 global partners and companion churches in Africa, providing necessary

resources for life-saving care. We are a church that believes God is calling us into the world – together. Our efforts are helping, but there is still more to do. Visit [www.ELCA.org/malaria](http://www.ELCA.org/malaria) to find information on how you or your congregation can become involved.

## World Malaria Day is April 25, 2014



World Malaria Day is April 25, 2014, and we are turning this day into a special week – focusing on the work of the ELCA Malaria Campaign. You and your congregation are invited to join ELCA members across the U.S. and millions of people around the world in celebrating World Malaria Day. There are lots of ways to get involved.



**ANNOUNCE** that you will be joining people across this church and around the world in observing World Malaria Day.



**INVITE** your congregation to dedicate that day's offering to the ELCA Malaria Campaign. You can make a gift online at [www.ELCA.org/malaria](http://www.ELCA.org/malaria), order free offering envelopes and other resources at [www.ELCA.org/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/resources).



**PRAY** for the work of the ELCA Malaria Campaign, our 13 global partners in Africa and those who have suffered from this disease.



**SHARE** the ELCA Malaria Campaign resources, like the Malawi video, with your congregation.

Host a World Malaria Day worship service on April 27.

Find resources, activities and much more at [www.ELCA.org/malaria](http://www.ELCA.org/malaria).

## ELCA Malaria Campaign resources

Find great resources to help equip you to educate and fundraise for malaria in your congregation.

### POSTERS



Hang an ELCA Malaria Campaign poster in a prominent location to show your congregation's support. Order a free poster at [www.ELCA.org/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/resources).

### COUNTRY PROFILES

Download these country profiles to learn how the ELCA Malaria Campaign is making a difference in:

- Angola
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Nigeria
- Uganda
- Tanzania
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

## A holy cause



This year, Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Creve Coeur, Mo. celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and members decided to commemorate this milestone with a gift. But not just any gift – a “good gift.” ELCA Good Gifts were used to help raise awareness and fundraise more than \$10,000 to support ELCA World Hunger. Many displays were made throughout the building, and speakers talked about how one small gift can make a big difference. The entire congregation got involved and was educated about the difference their donation made. Find an ELCA Good Gift and resources to activate your congregation at [www.ELCA.org/GoodGifts](http://www.ELCA.org/GoodGifts).

## LIVING LUTHERAN

Connect with others, read stories, view pictures and so much more at [www.LivingLutheran.com](http://www.LivingLutheran.com).

# MAY 2014

## Sermon starter | SUNDAY, MAY 11

### ACTS 2:42–47

Three thousand converts from one sermon! What many of us wouldn't give to have Peter's talent for preaching. The crowd was so moved they didn't just smile and nod, they formed a whole new community, one in which everyone's needs were met because they all shared their possessions “as any had need” (v. 45)!

Sharing possessions with those in need was a distinguishing mark of the early church (Acts 2:45; 4:32-35). It was “costly grace” at work that impelled believers to make real, significant changes to their lives. Luke writes that as a result of this loving koinonia (community), “day by day the Lord added to their number” (Acts 2:47). The community grew from less than 150 (Acts 1:15) to thousands (Acts 4:4)! As we face declining church membership and participation, what might we learn from these early believers about how to be “church”? What should distinguish our communities?

## Celebrate Mother's Day with an ELCA Good Gift

This year honor Mom with a gift that makes a difference. ELCA Good Gifts support mothers and families around the world. Consider hosting a Mother's Day tea party featuring fair trade coffee, tea and chocolate from Equal Exchange. Collect donations or a freewill offering at the Mother's Day tea party to support ELCA Good Gifts. See pages 14–15 in the ELCA Good Gifts catalog for projects that benefit women and children around the world.



*Photo credit: ACT/Paul Jeffrey*

For more information about ELCA Good Gifts or to shop online visit [www.ELCA.org/GoodGifts](http://www.ELCA.org/GoodGifts).

## Digging In: A Leader's Guide to Service Learning



Is your congregation planning a summer mission trip or service activity? This new resource, *Digging In: A Leader's Guide to Service Learning*, will help your group make the most out of their experience. Developed in consultation with the Service and Learning Leadership Team, the guide introduces leaders to service learning, an intentional process of action and reflection in which the entire process is as important as the service activity itself. Organized into four steps (preparation, action, reflection and celebration)

it teaches leaders how to dig deeper into service activities, apply what you've learned to other contexts and share what you learned with your congregation. Whether you are planning an afternoon at a food bank or an international mission trip, learn how to move your group from "service learning" to "service living." Order your free copy at [www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources) and look for ELCAMA1199.



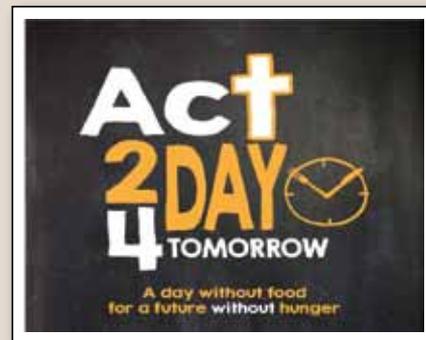
## Food for a week

Food for a week is an interactive simulation that gives participants an opportunity to make decisions that a person living with hunger faces when trying to provide food for their family for one week. Participants in the simulation encounter issues of food access and availability as they take on the profile of families who are food insecure and are tasked to go to three stations: a grocery store, a food pantry and a benefits office. The Food for a Week resource includes "helps and handouts" that provide local data to help leaders contextualize the simulation. This resource is designed for participants from middle school age to adult and can be used in a variety of settings and events. Visit [www.ELCA.org/hunger/resource](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger/resource) for more information.

## Domestic hunger grants

Is your congregation already engaged in the fight against hunger? Could your efforts use some additional support and resources? ELCA World Hunger wants to help! Domestic hunger grants are available, with applications due in July 2014. For more information or how to apply for a grant to support your group's efforts, visit [www.ELCA.org/hunger/domestic](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger/domestic).

## Act 2Day 4 Tomorrow



ELCA World Hunger's new lock-in resource is a program for youth that allows them to come together and learn about the role they can play to eradicate hunger and poverty in the world. As the group takes part in the spiritual practice of fasting for the duration of the event, they will be led through activities and times of reflection centered around seven faith practices. Each activity is designed for in-the-moment learning and reflection to help youth and adults alike to apply what they discover in their congregations and communities. Come take part as we Act 2Day 4 Tomorrow! Find this resource at [www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources).

## ELCA World Hunger toolkits

Looking for a resource to help engage your entire congregation in learning about hunger and hunger-related issues? ELCA World Hunger toolkits are a practical, easy-to-use, intergenerational resource that can help. Visit [www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources) to download a toolkit today.

## The Kafley family: ELCA World Hunger video series



The Kafley family settled in Chicago, Ill. after living in a refugee camp in Nepal for 18 years. Learn more about their journey and how ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services work in partnership to support refugees. View the video at [www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources).



## Pray for refugees

Gracious Lord, there are many in your world today who have been forced from their homes by persecution and violence. Keep them in your constant care, and bring them to a place of safety. Find this prayer and other worship resources at [www.lirs.org](http://www.lirs.org).

# JUNE 2014

## Sermon starter | SUNDAY, JUNE 8

### JOHN 7:37-39

Tabernacles (Sukkot) is an agricultural festival during which the Jews of Jesus' day prayed for the rains they would need for an abundant harvest. In one ceremony, the priest would pour water into the ground to symbolize the anticipated gift of rain. It was during this ritual that Jesus stood up and declared, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me, drink." While the people gather to observe the symbol of water, Jesus promises that the Spirit will flow from him as "rivers of living water" to quench their spiritual thirst. In the Messiah, what was symbolized is now made real, and what was once hoped for has been received. The ritual reminds them of their dependence on God, the presence of Christ assures them that their needs will be met and the Spirit, which shall flow forth, empowers them to go into the world and meet the needs of others.

## Refugee Sunday is June 22, 2014

Refugee Sunday is an opportunity to reflect on the long and often painful journey refugees make each day for freedom. And it's also an opportunity to make a difference. Since World War II, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has been helping to welcome migrants and refugees in our country as well as advocating for refugees around the world. This year marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this shared ministry, supported by Lutheran congregations around the United States and your gifts to ELCA World Hunger alike.



Photo credit: ACT/Paul Jeffrey

Celebrate this milestone by dedicating all or a portion of your worship service on Sunday, June 22, to observe World Refugee Day. Sign up for a toolkit with leader's materials to plan worship or other activities for ELCA congregations at [www.lirs.org/june22](http://www.lirs.org/june22).

JULY 2014

Sermon starter | SUNDAY, JULY 6

**MATTHEW 11:16-19, 25-30**

Lazy. Freeloading. Ignorant. Tax burden. It seems as if there is no limit to the degrading words people use to describe others living with poverty. The price of success is high; the penalty for poverty seems high, as well. To be poor in America is to have failed, to be guilty of financial mismanagement, poor decision-making or a variety of other social “sins.” What is the voice of the church in the midst of this? In this passage from Matthew, Jesus, “a friend of tax-collectors and sinners” (v. 19), declares to all who are weary, “I will give you rest” (v. 28). The church is in the business of communicating the free gift of grace, the gift that unencumbers the heavy-laden – “for [Christ’s] yoke is easy, and [his] burden is light” (v. 30). How does this work challenge the burden of blame and stigmatization that often follows people living on the margins of society?

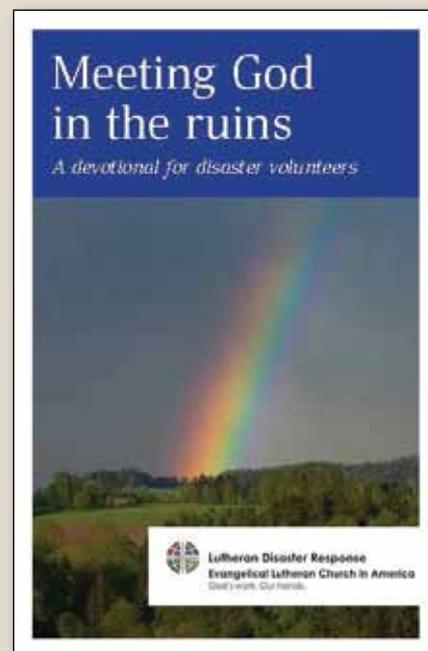
## Lutheran Disaster Response



Photo credit FEMA/Andrea Booher

When a disaster strikes, life changes in an instant. Whether the disaster is international or domestic, natural or human-caused, Lutheran Disaster Response is there to respond. Lutheran Disaster Response partners with synods, global partners and local organizations to provide both immediate support and long-term recovery. Find more information about how Lutheran Disaster Response works and what disaster work is being done at [www.ELCA.org/disaster](http://www.ELCA.org/disaster).

## Meeting God in the Ruins



Meeting God in the Ruins is a devotional guide for disaster volunteers. Use this resource alone or in a group setting. Order one for free at [www.ELCA.org/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/resources) and look for ELCAMA1220.



Order a supply of Lutheran Disaster Response offering envelopes to be prepared to respond after a disaster. To order visit [www.ELCA.org/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/resources).

# Act 2 DAY 4 TOMORROW

**A day without food  
for a future without hunger**

#### ON THE WEB

ELCA World Hunger  
[www.ELCA.org/hunger](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger)

Lutheran Disaster Response  
[www.ELCA.org/disaster](http://www.ELCA.org/disaster)

#### ELCA Malaria Campaign

[www.ELCA.org/malaria](http://www.ELCA.org/malaria)

#### Resources and publications

[www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources)

#### CONTACT US

ELCA World Hunger  
8765 W. Higgins Road  
Chicago, IL 60631-4101

800-638-3522, ext. 2616  
[hunger@elca.org](mailto:hunger@elca.org)



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