



Reproducible Stories 2021



Use these stories in your bulletins, online newsletters and other communications to highlight the lifesaving work made possible by gifts to ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response, and to invite participation in ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving.

This Lent, you're invited to join together with fellow supporters to pledge to work to end hunger during ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving. Your support is critical to people around the world facing hunger and poverty. You're invited to study, pray, reflect and give with us during ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving — for our families, our neighbors and communities around the world.

To invite your congregation to participate, share the introduction to ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving to the right before Lent begins, and the next five stories weekly during Lent. The stories may be copied and pasted for use in online communications such as bulletins and newsletters, or photocopied for use in printed communications.

Learn more at ELCA.org/40Days

Give Today

Mail Make your check payable to "ELCA World Hunger" and write "40 Days of Giving" on the memo line.

Place your gift in your congregation's offering plate or mail it to:

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

Online Give online with a credit card at ELCA.org/40Days

Phone 800-638-3522

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WEEK ONE

ELCA World Hunger's 40 DAYS of Giving

In the last year,

as the world has reeled from the effects of a deadly pandemic, we have seen the number of hungry people around the world rise, watched as food pantries and soup kitchens expanded to serve an ever-growing number of guests, and longed together in hope for the time when we **"will hunger no more, and thirst no more ... and God will wipe away every tear from [our] eyes"** (Revelation 7:16-17).

This very yearning is at the heart of who we are as church together. Yet our longing has never led to inertia or despair, despite the discouraging forecasts. We are an Easter people, ever journeying toward the cross but trusting in faith that God's story does not end on that hill.

This Lent, you're invited to join together with fellow supporters to pledge to work to end hunger during ELCA World Hunger's **40 Days of Giving**. Your support is critical to help people around the world who face hunger and poverty.



- 1) A **devotional calendar** with daily ideas for reflection, giving and action.
- 2) A **weekly study** with inspirational stories and information about how your gifts to ELCA World Hunger are at work in the world.
- 3) Additional resources, including an **inspirational weekly email series**.

We invite you to **study, pray, reflect and give** with us during ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving — for our families, our neighbors and communities around the world.

WH40Days2021

Visit ELCA.org/40Days to get started today.

WEEK TWO

India

Providing safety and opportunity for girls and young women



When Kamini Dhurvey was just a child, her mother died and her father remarried. Her stepmother abused her, and her father did not step in to protect her from his new wife. Unprotected and unsafe, Kamini left home when she was older and eventually found a place to rent and a job in a small shop.

But even out on her own, she did not feel safe. Kamini feared that the landlord who owned her residence would hurt her. Through a door-to-door survey, Kamini learned about Naari Shakti, a project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Madhya Pradesh in India that is supported in part by ELCA World Hunger. Naari Shakti works for gender equality through advocacy for women's rights, provides training in tailoring and computer skills, and offers emergency medical support to girls and women in vulnerable situations. The project also provides housing assistance and psychosocial support to those who need it.

With counseling and support from the project, she was able to leave the place she was renting and move into a hostel for girls. The project later arranged for Kamini to stay in a women's rehabilitation center, where she is living and pursuing her studies. Kamini has found a home at the center.

The Naari Shakti program provides her a safe place to live, books and additional support for her education. This is just one project of hundreds supported by ELCA World Hunger in 60 countries around the world. With your gifts, people such as Kamini can have the support they need and hope for a better future.

Your gifts to ELCA World Hunger support innovative solutions that fight hunger and poverty in more than 60 countries around the world, including the United States.

Will you help with your gift today?

YES! I would like to support ELCA World Hunger (WHG0038)

- I have enclosed my gift of \$100
 I have enclosed my gift of \$250
 Other \$ _____

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WEEK THREE

Milwaukee

Preventing lead exposure in Milwaukee communities



At Hephatha Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, Wis., a city with high rates of both poverty and lead exposure, leaders are working hard to keep children safe. The church, with support from ELCA World Hunger, provides lead-free kits with water filters, tape and mops. As the kits are shared, they explain that the tape can cover lead paint that is chipping, and the mops clean up dust from the paint so that children and adults don't inhale it. The church also helps adults learn about the dangers of lead, which can cause serious health problems and is especially dangerous for children and pregnant women. Exposure to lead can cause severe, long-term effects ranging from behavioral problems to anemia and kidney damage.

But filters, tape and mops can go only so far. The issue of lead — and the crisis of unsafe water, more generally — is an issue of justice. Environmental policies, housing regulations and health care access are all woven

together when it comes to keeping people safe from lead poisoning. That's why Hephatha also worked with neighbors to start an advocacy group to talk with legislators about keeping the community safe.

Pastor Mary Martha of Hephatha links this work to the calling of the church: Advocacy. Advocacy and education "[lead] us back to the font, where we stand with people at the holy water that makes us God's children and sends us out to serve God's justice."

This is just one of many ELCA World Hunger-funded projects around the world ensuring people have access to safe water. With your support, children such as those in Milwaukee can access the safe, clean water they need to thrive.

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Building economic stability and independence for women

In Washington, D.C., the Beloved Community Incubator is based on the idea of investing in people and in the Logan Circle neighborhood. The project began with a listening campaign by Luther Place Memorial Church with support from ELCA World Hunger. In this campaign, residents of the community expressed their desire for cooperatives that would allow them to use their skills and talents to build wealth and income that would stay in the community.

The first cooperative incubated by Luther Place was Dulce Hogar, a cooperative of women who provide cleaning services for homes and businesses. Together, the women learned how to run a business, how to pursue just employment and how to develop their own skills as leaders. As one participant describes it: "The vision of the cooperative is that all eight of us are well-paid and well-trained, and that we get to invest money in our families and in our community."

The members of the cooperative were even paid for the time they spent in meetings and trainings. They learned together that their time and labor had value that far exceeded the wages they had been offered before. And now, with an investment in them, they will be able to invest in others.

Projects such as the Beloved Community Incubator offer a counter-witness to the policies and practices of disinvestment that have created communities with high rates of poverty and food insecurity across the United States. These policies and practices are rooted in the misperception that some communities are worth investing in and others are not. But the residents of Logan Circle know that, despite the challenges they face, their community is worth the investment, and a better future is worth pursuing. With your support, ELCA World Hunger can continue to accompany communities such as this one.



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Working for peace and justice



Carolina Camargo, a nurse, is part of the work God is doing through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Colombia (IELCO) and the church's Justicia y vida (Justice and Life) initiative, which is supported by ELCA World Hunger. Together with others, Carolina works toward future reconciliation in Justicia y vida's "From War to Peace" project, which weaves ties of solidarity between the church and communities in Colombia that have been beset by violence for many years.

Carolina and other volunteers are at work in the area of Urabá. Since the 1990s, Urabá has witnessed a war involving the Popular Liberation Army (EPL), insurgents, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and paramilitary groups. The conflict led to more than 103 massacres in the region and 32,000 people displaced between 1998 and 2002. Today, social leaders remain at risk from paramilitary units over disputes involving land.

The peace process has been a long road for Colombia, and IELCO has been traveling on it for many years. In San José, former combatants and their families are given a

chance to start again through the work of the church. In San José de León, they are able to build and maintain homes and resume their former lives raising fish, pigs and chickens. It's a chance to rebuild some of what was lost in the years of conflict.

Addressing conflict and working for peace are central to ending hunger. Conflict is one of the most significant reasons for hunger increasing around the world. The United Nations estimates that up to 80% of humanitarian needs around the world are caused by conflict.

Building peace is a critical step in ending hunger. With your support, leaders such as Carolina can keep walking toward it. She says of the people with whom she works: "They are working together, united, to show the country and the world that this is the way to fight for peace."

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Lutheran Disaster Response

Italy

Fighting COVID-19 in Naples



Last spring, Italy was one of the first countries hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Hospitals filled up, and Italy recorded the highest death toll in the world in the months after the pandemic was declared. One of these hospitals was L'Ospedale Evangelico Villa Betania, a Lutheran institution in Naples, Italy.

The hospital is a key provider of health care to people in the community experiencing poverty. But a shortage of personal protective equipment put both patients and caregivers at risk and made it more difficult to provide support to neighbors in need. Lutheran Disaster Response provided a grant to help the hospital get the personal protective equipment it needed, along with other critical supplies. "More so than the amount of the donation, it was the timing that was perfect," explained Dr. Antonio Sciambra, the hospital's medical director. The grant "arrived when it was needed most."

The hospital was also able to continue providing health care to people experiencing poverty in its community, a key part of the hospital's work.

"With our church's foundation we helped the people of the center of Naples with care packages," said Cordelia Vitello, president, Fondazione Evangelica Betania, which manages the hospital as part of its broader work in the community. "This was a special initiative because the hospital was partially closed. Only people who really needed specific medical care could be allowed inside, so we couldn't organize community health workshops and open our doors to people."

Cordelia reflected on what the pandemic had taught her and her fellow Italians.

"It taught us ... that we should always be grateful for what we have, to be grateful for many things," she said. "We should even be grateful for each other. Sometimes we forget these things."

Thanks to your generosity, Lutheran Disaster Response has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with more than \$1.8 million around the world, and has also been able to respond to disasters that have continued to take place during the pandemic, such as wildfires and hurricanes. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response help the church respond to the needs of people after a disaster strikes. Working in collaboration with other disaster response organizations and church entities enables the greatest stewardship of resources and maximum impact of response.

Will you help with your gift today?

YES! I would like to support Lutheran Disaster Response (DDG0060)

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