



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



# Reproducible Stories 2020

Use these stories in your Sunday bulletins, 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 study, reflect and give during ELCA World Hunger's 40 Days of Giving. Experience how the grace of Christ moves us to engage in transformative works of love around the world through ELCA World Hunger as God calls us into the ministry of hope, liberation and restoration for our 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.

**Learn more at [ELCA.org/40days](http://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](http://ELCA.org/40Days).

**Phone** 800-638-3522

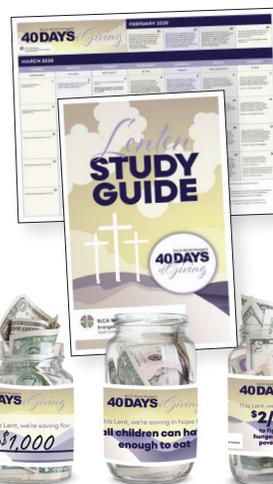
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# This Lent,

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Lent is a time of reflection and repentance, of sacrifice and self-examination. But Lent is also a season of hope — hope in the work God is doing in the world, even in the most challenging times. This Lent, join ELCA World Hunger as we journey with our neighbors in hope for a just world where all are fed. Bring ELCA World Hunger into your congregation and home with resources including:



- 1) A **devotional calendar** with daily ideas for reflection 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; and
- 3) Additional resources, including an **inspirational weekly email series** and **coin jar wrappers** to invite children and families into the practice of giving to programs to end hunger and poverty.

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

**Visit [ELCA.org/40days](http://ELCA.org/40days) to get started today.**

## WEEK ONE:

# Hope for safety and stability

South Carolina



Manhal says that the day in June 2009 when Lutheran Services Carolinas (LSC) met him at the airport was the best day of his life.

A refugee from Iraq, Manhal says he realized that starting over wouldn't be easy, but with hard work he's forged a career for himself in the Columbia hospitality industry. He began his hotel career doing things that no one really enjoys, like cleaning bathrooms. Some days, he said, he'd go home and cry. But he never doubted that he could make something of himself. Within a year and a half he was promoted to supervisor, and later, he earned his current job as a manager.

Manhal is not alone in his success. Dylan Gunnels, a job recruiter for LSC's refugee services program, explained that 96% of LSC's refugee clients in the Columbia area become self-sufficient within the first 180 days of arriving

in this country, which means they are getting and maintaining jobs and able to cover their expenses. In the long term, Gunnels said, studies have shown that refugees will eventually contribute more in taxes than they received in relocation benefits and other public assistance. Manhal already has a good hotel job but says he hasn't achieved all of his goals – he aspires to be a general manager one day.

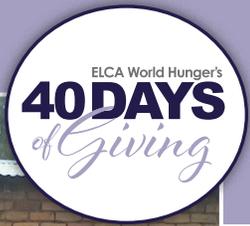
"I will never stop dreaming about my future," he said.

Gifts to ELCA World Hunger have supported Lutheran Services Carolinas and other ministries as they provide support for refugees who are working to build a new life in a new home.

## WEEK TWO:

# Hope for sufficient livelihoods

Malawi



The hope for sufficient livelihood that could provide for her family inspired Mrs. Kamela to join a village savings and loan group through Evangelical Lutheran Development Service (ELDS), which is supported by ELCA World Hunger. With the combined savings of the group and additional training in business management, Mrs. Kamela was able to start a small business. The income she earned through her hard work and the support of ELDS and ELCA World Hunger helped her provide for her children and improve her home. Now, instead of a dilapidated thatch house, she has a brick home with iron roofing – a safe and secure dwelling that will withstand the rains.

"This project has changed my life from a nobody to a somebody," she says. "My life has changed from the worst to the better, and there is a bright future for me and my children."

This is church. Mrs. Kamela's hope is grounded in knowing that she is not alone, that the future can be bright for her and her children because of the community and church that walk with her. Gifts to ELCA World Hunger support this program and address hunger and poverty in 60 other countries around the world with creative and courageous action.

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
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## WEEK THREE:

# Hope for justice for all

Kenya



Raised in a Maasai community in Kenya, Evelyne was first exposed to the Women's Literacy Program of the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church (KELC) while attending a seminar on girls' rights. Only 14 years old at the time, she was preparing to start high school, even as her father was arranging for her to marry into a polygamous marriage with a much older man.

Evelyne tried to explain to her father that she wanted to continue her studies, but he refused to listen. With only two days remaining before her wedding, Evelyne reached out to Alice Mwanginga, coordinator of the women's department at KELC. Alice, alongside her church, began working with Evelyne to help her leave her situation and continue her education. With

the help of police, she moved to a nearby community. The marriage was called off, but her father was furious and refused to welcome her back home.

Evelyne was safe, but she needed support to realize her dream of a high school education. Through the Women's Literacy Program, supported by ELCA World Hunger, KELC has been able to provide her with fees and other resources needed to attend secondary school. Evelyne has thrived in her studies, and her teachers praise her hard work and good grades, certain she has a bright future ahead. Eventually, church leaders and community elders worked with Evelyne as she mended her relationship with her father. Seeing what a strong, intelligent woman she had become, he acknowledged that continuing her education had been the right choice for her, and gave her a traditional blessing to encourage her to succeed in school.

"The program has given me a sense of joy and fulfillment that I can give hope to the hopeless girls who are being oppressed," Evelyne said. "It has given me a reason to work hard and improve somebody's life."

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## WEEK FOUR:

# Hope for creative and courageous leadership

California



For Jamie Stark, a lay mission developer in the Bay Area of California, that call to play a role in God's plan began when he first learned about Holy Communion and the idea of "food as a gateway to God." Inspired by the work he saw in El Salvador, Jamie moved to the Bay Area and co-founded Farming Hope, a farm-to-table job-training nonprofit organization, which is supported by ELCA World Hunger and the Sierra Pacific Synod of the ELCA. Farming Hope provides transitional employment and job training to unhoused and low-income people in the community. As part of the program, participants learn to farm, grow and cook food – job skills and life skills that can help them earn a living to support themselves and their families. Farming Hope works with hiring partners to hire graduates of the program after they complete it.

Farming Hope might not look like a church, but as Jamie describes it, "it is a holy place," a place where relationships are formed and community is nurtured

while basic vocational needs are met. Jamie's vision of food as a gateway to God and the restoration of relationships that God intends is at the core of Farming Hope's work. "When I sit at the table at Farming Hope's restaurant in San Francisco (Manny's), if I open my eyes, I see communion exactly as Jesus of Nazareth intended it to be – friends, eating intentionally ... we're all welcome."

For Jamie, seeing Holy Communion for what it was – a table at which all are welcome – and being inspired by the work he witnessed in El Salvador fostered hope that, by focusing on relationships built through food, Farming Hope could create opportunities for both jobs and community in San Francisco.

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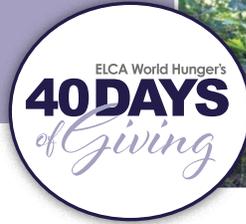
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## WEEK FIVE:

# Hope for renewal of the earth

Honduras



Carlos and Anita live in the Santa Ana community of Honduras, a region that is part of the “dry corridor.” In this area, farmers face difficult challenges accessing water for their households and farms. Rain comes in only four months of the year, and residents face long periods of drought, which puts them at heightened risk of hunger.

“This problem forces women to work even harder in order to collect water,” Anita said. “Here, we do not sleep during the summer months, in order to grab a little water; we need to wait several hours by the well.”

The lack of water is especially challenging for farmers, who depend on water for crops and animals. With support from ELCA World Hunger and the Lutheran World Federation’s World Service/Central America program, local organization Red COMAL (the Alternative Community Markets Network, in English) is helping farmers such as Carlos and Anita learn new techniques and strategies that will help reduce their vulnerability to food insecurity while protecting the land on which they rely.

Through a project implemented by Red COMAL, Carlos was trained in agroecology,

an approach that focuses on food production and sustainable management of resources. Carlos has learned to diversify his crops and helped establish a system of stockpiling corn for times of scarcity and emergency. He also learned how to select, rescue, reproduce and store native seeds, which has helped him plant new crops for his family and help other farmers in his community.

In addition to planting fruit trees, sweet potatoes and squash, Carlos has also reforested his plot of land with trees such as laurel, cedar and mahogany. The wood can be used to build houses and generate income for his family. Native hens provide meat and eggs, while cows provide milk, all of which help Carlos and Anita earn income from their farm.

The dry corridor of the Santa Ana community still presents challenges for residents like Carlos and Anita. But with the support of ELCA World Hunger, LWF and Red COMAL, they are able to learn new approaches that will help their farms be profitable and sustainable for years to come.

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# “May God bless your thoughtful gestures”

Zimbabwe



In March 2019, Cyclone Idai made landfall, causing widespread flooding and destruction in parts of southeast Africa, including Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi. Reported as one of the worst tropical cyclones to affect Africa on record, the storm killed more than a thousand people, with many more missing.

Enia, a 60-year-old woman from the Chimanimani district of Zimbabwe, survived Cyclone Idai. She remembers saying goodnight to her husband as they went to bed that night. Just a few moments later, the rain started to pour, and they heard loud noises outside. Enia’s husband went to see what was happening. It was the last time she saw him alive.

“All of a sudden I saw rocks and muddy waters coming into our room through the windows,” she said, “and within the short period of time I was half-buried under the rubble, and it all happened so fast that I couldn’t figure out what was really happening.” Eventually, Enia escaped,

but her husband did not. Enia was injured, and in addition to losing a loved one, she lost her home, food reserves, clothing and other property.

Through your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response, Enia knows she’s not alone. Enia is one of more than 3,200 people in the Chimanimani district you helped support as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe distributed nonfood items for immediate relief and offered psychosocial support to survivors. Because of her injuries, she can’t walk to the distribution center to pick up supplies, so things such as food, clothing and blankets have been brought to her. “May God bless you for your thoughtful gestures as I am able to survive,” she said.

DRS20

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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