

# Lifelines

Fall 2023

For supporters of  
**ELCA WORLD HUNGER AND  
LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE**  
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Read  
Bernard's  
story inside!



ELCA  
World Hunger



The Rev. Daniel Rift  
 Director,  
 ELCA World Hunger  
 and Lutheran  
 Disaster  
 Response  
 Funding



Marie Anne Sliwinski  
 Senior Director,  
 Building Resilient  
 Communities

### How to give

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ELCA  
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### Contact us

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LifeLines

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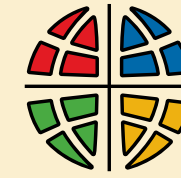
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ELCA World Hunger

50  
 years



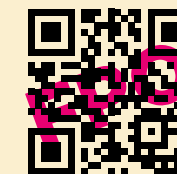
ELCA  
 World Hunger

## In 2024, ELCA World Hunger will celebrate 50 years of global impact.

**We are eager to share and equip you with stories, resources and special opportunities as we look ahead to the future of this important ministry of our church.**

**Even as we have worked to transform the world with and for our neighbors, our church has been transformed.** Together we have learned how hunger, poverty and other justice issues intersect. We have deepened our understanding of how baptism calls us to “strive for justice and peace in all the earth.” We have been strengthened in hope by the decline in hunger since we began this work. And we have nurtured relationships with local communities to ensure that the work we support will be sustainable, effective and authentic.

We have been part of this story — a story of faith in action, a story of hope, but most of all a story of a church set free for bold, abundant love and service, a church that responds, with creativity and courage, to God’s invitation to transform the world. Despite the challenges we face, the story goes on. And in faith, we know how it will end: “They will hunger no more, and thirst no more ... and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Revelation 7:16-17).



**Join us and be part of the story of our next 50 years together — boldly and faithfully pursuing God’s promise of a just world where all are fed.**



## Palm oil production in Burundi transforms a community



**E** LCA World Hunger partners with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in rural, isolated eastern Burundi, near the Tanzanian border. The region was hard hit by the violence of civil war between Hutus and Tutsis in the 1990s and again by political unrest in 2015. Because of this history, migrants and displaced people head for the border region in hope of entering Tanzania.

Now, as refugees return home to Burundi, they experience poverty due to the lack of employment opportunities and limited access to land ownership. LWF accompanies neighbors facing these challenges in the region and has collaborated with community members to implement a holistic set of programs that empower adults and youth to create opportunities for themselves and their families.

Bernard leads a local palm oil production cooperative in Burundi. Initially Bernard and his co-producers were using strenuous and inefficient methods to extract oil from the palm fruits, which limited their profits. However, after hearing about LWF's work in the region, Bernard led an effort to request funding for new machinery that would increase the cooperative's production enough to provide members with a sufficient, more stable income.

Thanks in part to gifts to ELCA World Hunger, LWF was able to meet Bernard's request. The new machinery had a significant impact on the community: neighbors and people from nearby villages brought their fruits to Bernard's cooperative to have the oil extracted for a fee, which created an additional income stream for the cooperative.

As president of the cooperative, Bernard was responsible for organizing meetings and managing the group's finances. He was able to hire four workers to help harvest his crops, and the oil-extraction project had a significant impact on his life. With the increased profits from it, Bernard built a nice house near the market for his family and was able to pay for their medical expenses.

The project's success is a testament to LWF's commitment to supporting communities in need, in collaboration with partners such as ELCA World Hunger. Bernard's leadership and hard work were crucial in making the project's success a reality.



**Bernard led an effort to request funding for new machinery that would increase the cooperative's production enough to provide members with a sufficient, more stable income.**

*Photos: LWF/Lea Gillibert*



You support programs, including agricultural training, that help people facing hunger, homelessness and other challenges to get jobs, increase their earning potential and break the cycle of poverty for good.

## “I realized I was not alone”

**A**na lived with her husband and four children in a safe, secure village in Sinjar, a town in northern Iraq. But then an ISIS attack changed everything. Ana lost several family members in the attack, including her father, mother, brother and sister.

Trying to figure out what might be next for their family, Ana and her husband survived tough conditions, without food or water, before moving into a temporary camp. Eventually they returned to Sinjar, but it had been destroyed.

The ISIS attack traumatized Ana. Overwhelmed and unsure where to turn, she decided to seek medical treatment. When her friends and neighbors heard about her situation, they recommended that she visit a women’s center in Sinjar for support.

The women’s center is part of a larger project, supported by ELCA World Hunger, that empowers women and youth from marginalized communities to claim their fundamental rights in Iraq. The project builds on relationships that ELCA World Hunger has established through prior work with local communities supported by ELCA World Hunger in Sinjar and Sumel, and works with local neighbors to build sustainable livelihoods.

“I visited the center and explained my situation to the staff, who were very helpful and kind,” Ana said. The staff recommended that she participate in individual and group sessions aimed at supporting people such as Ana as they struggle to cope with traumatic experiences in their everyday lives.



**“I realized I was not alone and that many other women were facing similar struggles.”**

—ANA

“During my participation in those sessions, I realized

I was not alone and that many other women were facing similar struggles,” said Ana. “We were able to openly discuss our problems with each other and learn from each other. These sessions really increased our awareness and helped us manage and overcome our problems and stress, allowing us to feel positive and alive again.”

With the center’s support, Ana and other women facing similar challenges are better equipped to cope with the stress of rebuilding their lives after such significant loss. Such support is critical in equipping neighbors to overcome the poverty and hunger that often result from violence and vulnerability. With the support of ELCA World Hunger, Ana can envision and begin to claim a hopeful future for herself and her family.

## “I have regained my love for learning and am excited about my future.”

**M**ariela, a 16-year-old girl living in Bolivia, was a committed student but struggled with reading and writing, which made school challenging. She is the oldest of five children, and her parents lacked adequate resources to help her. Mariela wasn’t sure where to turn, but she knew she needed help.

Then Mariela’s mother heard about the Mi Esperanza Center, a ministry of the Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELB) that provides educational support for children with learning challenges in an impoverished neighborhood near the Bolivian capital of La Paz. The center promotes quality education for all, affirming that education is a fundamental right. By improving access to education and supporting children such as Mariela, the center provides new opportunities and reduces the risk that children will be exploited through child labor.

Mariela found the environment at the center welcoming, and feeling heard and supported gave her confidence. Thanks to her teacher’s patience and the center’s assistance in providing school supplies, teaching materials, and tablet and computer equipment, Mariela made progress in her studies and is now able to pass her classes.

Mariela called her experience at Mi Esperanza transformative. “I am grateful for the values I have learned at the center, such as perseverance, trust, respect for others and gratitude to God and those around us,” she said. “I feel more confident in doing my homework and am even socializing with my classmates and teacher. Thanks to the center’s help, I have regained my love for learning and am excited about my future.”



**“I am grateful for the values I have learned at the center, such as perseverance, trust, respect for others and gratitude to God and those around us.”**

—MARIELA

Donors such as you, who give generously to ELCA World Hunger, build a foundation for lives free of hunger and poverty all over the world, including the life of 16-year-old Mariela in Bolivia. Thank you for supporting programs that have the power to usher in a future filled with hope.



Women and girls around the world are more vulnerable to hunger and poverty than men are. Your support makes it possible for ELCA World Hunger to accompany ministries that equip women to create income streams, including through health care and human rights initiatives, to support themselves and their families.



Worldwide, girls are far less likely than boys to be enrolled in school. You support educational programs that keep girls in school. When you educate a girl, you open a world of opportunity for her future and the future of her family and community.



# Forging a path to empowerment and employment in Baltimore

**B**rian Chapman is a leader of North Ave Mission, a synod-authorized worshipping community (SAWC) in the Station North neighborhood of Baltimore, Md. He manages the Farm to Stoop Free Market, an ELCA World Hunger Domestic Hunger Grant partner, which serves as a hub for people to gather, share resources such as food and clothing, celebrate and check in with one another.

The ministry is situated in a diverse, majority-Black community where the median income is \$18,900 and many older adults and people with disabilities live nearby in subsidized housing. The grant from ELCA World Hunger, made possible by your generosity, supports leadership training so that people who love the Station North community – like Brian – can serve their neighbors and forge a path to employment.

As manager, Brian has built a program where fellow community members can work together and serve one another. Ministering to others has been meaningful for Brian, and he loves finding ways for others to know they are valued. “I live for this every day,” he said. “We built a program where the community can come and be volunteers, so they know they are wanted and there is a place for everyone.”

With the Domestic Hunger Grant from ELCA World Hunger, Brian said, “We can help more people week after week, month after month, to show there is a place where you can come and be one.” The market volunteers can also attend monthly leadership training workshops as Brian did, moving along a path to empowerment and employment as new market vendors or in the wider workforce.

“We can help more people week after week, month after month, to show there is a place where you can come and be one.”

—BRIAN

Photos: Ash Esposito



Brian and other leaders want to show their neighbors that God is with them, opening a path forward. They believe that everyone has a place in their community and that they can provide people with the tools they need to succeed. Through their work, leaders such as Brian aim to reduce harm, increase empowerment and promote healing in the community.

Your support makes it possible for North Ave Mission to bring together people from different backgrounds, including those who are unhoused, food insecure or living with substance abuse disorders, disability or mental illness. At North Ave Mission and the Farm to Stoop Free Market, people hear, and know, that they are children of God.



## North Ave Mission

Baltimore, Md.



You support programs, including vocational training, that help people facing hunger, homelessness and other challenges to get jobs, increase their earning potential and break the cycle of poverty for good.



**“I’ll never feel alone, and I’ll take the help of others to withstand any disaster situation.”**  
—SURYA

## Building confidence in the wake of disaster

**F**looding is not uncommon in India, especially during the rainy season.

The city of Cuttack is bordered by the Mahanadi and Kathajodi rivers, so it often floods in the summer. But the flooding in 2022 was more severe than usual. When the waters swept through Surya Tudu’s house, she and her neighbors managed to move only some of their belongings to higher ground.

Surya is an Adivasi (Indigenous) woman and the mother of two small children. She used to be a domestic worker, but a broken leg forced her to stop working. Because Surya lost her main source of income, she didn’t have much money to buy food or supplies for her family after the floods.

Lutheran World Service India Trust (LWSIT), a longtime partner of Lutheran Disaster Response, reacts quickly to flooding, often prioritizing support for Dalit and Adivasi families like Surya’s.

Immediately after the flooding, Surya received food from the government, but it lasted only a few days. She and her family were among hundreds of families to receive food and hygiene supplies from LWSIT. The food lasted weeks, and the hygiene kits helped prevent waterborne illnesses, a common concern after major flooding. Other families also received tarps and additional materials to build temporary shelters after losing their homes.

The support from LWSIT made a difference for communities not only in the immediate aftermath of the flooding but also in the long run.

“I’ll never feel alone, and I’ll take the help of others to withstand any disaster situation,” said Surya.

Because flooding in India is only getting worse, LWSIT is helping communities build capacity to withstand future disasters. Surya was among those to receive disaster-risk-reduction training. She learned how to be better prepared by protecting her belongings and saving money throughout the year. After learning from LWSIT, she took that information and shared it with her neighbors, encouraging her entire community to become more resilient.

“Although I was afraid to face the flooding disaster earlier, now Lutherans have taught me what I must do at the onset of a flooding situation and how to take care of my children and belongings,” said Surya.

Your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response make a lasting impact on communities around the world. They allow our partners to respond quickly to disasters and to help communities rebuild stronger than before.

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



*Read the latest issue of “Thrive.”*



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 support disaster survivors as they work to rebuild.

# LifeLines

ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
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**ELCA WORLD HUNGER AND LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE**

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## NEW SEASONAL RESOURCES FROM ELCA WORLD HUNGER!

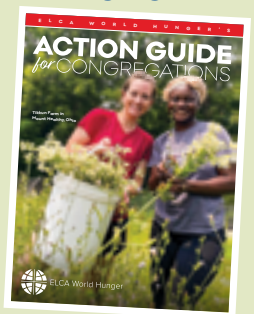
The  
glory  
of the  
Lord  
shall be  
revealed.

Where and how do you encounter God?  
Through the prophet Isaiah, God urges us  
to take comfort, trusting that “the glory  
of the Lord shall be revealed, and all  
people shall see it together” (Isaiah 40:5).

**2023 Advent**  
Calendar and Study Guide



**Action Guide for**  
Congregations



**2024 Lent**  
Calendar and Study Guide



**New ELCA**  
Good Gifts poster!

