Longtime FLWR Chair Leaves Legacy of Service
By Matt Hackworth, Senior Advisor, Marketing & Communication

One of the things people who knew her are quick to say about Elizabeth Gotsch is that she had strong opinions on two subjects: theology and politics.

“She didn’t hesitate to share her thoughts,” a friend of five decades, Nadine Ilten said. “It made for very good conversation.”

It also made for fuel in her long-standing support of Lutheran World Relief. Gotsch died July 27, leaving a legacy of service and support to neighbors in need, most notably as a long-time president of the board of Friends of Lutheran World Relief (FLWR).

“He loved people, all kinds,” motivated her, FLWR vice president, Donna Walz said. “She had a real compassion for people in need. She was passionate about helping as much as we can. She just loved to help others.”

Friends of Lutheran World Relief began as a project of the Women’s Auxiliary of the Lutheran Council of Greater Chicago (a pan-Lutheran organization formed in the post-World War II years) to foster inter-Lutheran cooperation and service. The group has grown to include more than 500 congregations in the Chicago area.

“I always looked up to her because she was such a deep thinker,” Walz said. “She read a lot, and with her husband being a pastor I’m sure they had deep conversations.”

Elizabeth and her late husband, Richard, had four children. She had immense love for her family. Gotsch’s sister, Alice, Bruening said concern for neighbors in need began in her and her sister’s childhood. Their father had been sent to Canada to work on a farm as a boy, when his family in England fell on hard times.

“We knew that kind of hard existence is in the world,” Bruening said. “We’re very comfortable now and we know what it’s like not to be.”

Gotsch and her sister traveled the world extensively, and she says Gotsch felt it her responsibility to make things better for neighbors in need.

“She saw responsibility every day in the news,” Bruening said.

“She was very much up to speed on causes in the world,” Ilten said. “Not just local needs but things happening globally, and she brought those things with us on the Board. She was a very spiritual person. She was a person who would seek out opportunities to help.”

Please join LWR and the Quilt & Kit ministry in honoring the memory of this dear friend and servant.

Questions? We are here to help.
If your 2020 Ingathering is postponed or cancelled, please help us explore alternatives for your area by completing the quilt and kit survey at lwr.org/qksurvey or call 800.597.5972.
If you are planning an Ingathering, we can provide tips and guidance regarding COVID-19. Contact us by phone or email LWR Quilt & Kit Ministry Manager Janel Johnson-Momanyi at quiltsandkits@lwr.org.

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Go to lwr.org/qkpin to order your FREE Affinity Pin!
**DEAR FRIENDS,**

My job at Lutheran World Relief is to support your ministries as quilters and kit-makers. One way I do that is to make sure you have all the information and guidance you need from start to finish.

To that end, I’m excited to announce that we have a new-and-improved online experience for our quilting and kit-making community. We’ve listened to your feedback on how we can make our website work better for you, and I invite you to visit our new quilt and kit pages at lwr.org/quilts and lwr.org/kits.

That’s right: quilts and kits each have their own homepages now, making it easier to navigate and find exactly what you need. All of the downloads, assembly instructions and shipping, tracking and Ingathering information are still there (and easier to find!), along with videos, stories and other resources to help inspire community members.

As with any new website experience, it can take a few visits to get reoriented. As you do, please let me know what you think!

As we awaited this last piece of information, the fourth container cleared customs in Tripoli and travelled over land to join the other three in Anera’s Beirut warehouse, once again making our website work better for you, and I invite you to visit our new quilt and kit pages at lwr.org/quilts and lwr.org/kits.

Finally, I just want to say thank you. After reading about my personal COVID-19 experience in the last newsletter, so many of you sent me such kind notes. I am so blessed to be a part of this caring community.

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**An Update on Quilts and Kits Caught in the Beirut Explosion**

The news and evolving reports out of Beirut following the deadly explosion of August 4 has had many of our heads whirling in the last couple months. As many of you know, three containers of quilts and kits were in the port awaiting customs clearance on the day of the blast. Immediate reports from the port authority indicated that the containers could not have survived.

A fourth container had been separated at the port in the United States and was still on the water at the time of the explosion. It was rerouted to the port in Tripoli.

As we joined with many of you in our shared lament, we were deeply inspired and humbled by your determination to keep going, keep creating, keep serving, keep sharing your love with our neighbors all over the world.

On the morning of August 26, we received an urgent update from our partner, Anera: they had been given access to the port, and against all odds, the containers were intact!

Following this incredible news, LWR staff held our breath until the quilts and kits could need to be assessed for damage. Finally, we learned on September 22 that, despite the magnitude of the blast, the seal of the containers containing the LWR Mission Quilts and Kits was not broken. The placement in the port, inside a concrete storage building and surrounded by other shipping containers, protected the containers enough to even prevent chemical contamination.

As we awaited this last piece of information, the fourth container cleared customs in Tripoli and travelled over land to join the other three in Anera’s Beirut warehouse, once again bringing the full shipment together.

We give thanks to God that the love of hundreds of Lutheran congregations contained in this shipment will be able to be shared with more than 24,000 of our neighbors in Beirut and across the country of Lebanon – many refugees from across the region, and now also those affected by the blast in the heart of Beirut. From the ashes of this crisis rises a beautiful ray of hope: your love, intact and powerful, in just the right place, at just the right time.

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**Become a Faithful Neighbor through monthly giving.**

Your monthly gift of $29 or more will do so much. For Punam, your faithful giving saves her family from hunger until they can feed themselves, then sends help to the next family in need.

Learn more and get started at lwr.org/monthly.

**LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF**

Until your love reaches every neighbor.

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**RISING FROM THE ASHES: AN UPDATE ON QUILTS AND KITS CAUGHT IN THE BEIRUT EXPLOSION**

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**Beirut Beyond Quilts & Kits**

As your gifts are distributed in Lebanon, LWR is also providing emergency food, helping families to repair and return to their homes, distributing appliances and cooking supplies to help them restore normal life, and more — all thanks to your love and generosity. To learn more, visit lwr.org/beirut-blast-donation.