Our community is mourning the September 2019 loss of S. Christine (Chris) Mummert, a long-time supporter and friend of Lutheran World Relief.

Chris was an active member of St. Peter’s Lutheran Church in Neffsville, Pa., and a faithful donor to Lutheran World Relief for 18 years. Known for her insatiable passion for helping others and propensity for seeing opportunities instead of roadblocks, Chris was on the President’s Council for Lutheran World Relief, and she served as one of LWR’s Ambassadors, speaking to countless congregations about our work. She was also a mighty force behind LWR Farmers Market Coffee.

In addition to her active support of LWR and other charitable organizations, Christine loved to stay physically active through cycling, skiing, walking and dancing. We will remember Chris fondly for her devoted activism and philanthropy, her deep love of her family and friends, her spirited nature and her positive outlook.

Thank you, Chris, for putting your faith into action so wholeheartedly.

A wave of recent disasters means a backlog of requests for School Kits. Items available at your neighborhood store can help a child return to normalcy after trauma or disaster. Make a difference in a child’s life today!

To learn more about making LWR School Kits, visit lwr.org/schoolkits.
DEAR FRIENDS,

I learned to crochet sitting hip-to-hip with my grandmother on the living room sofa. She kept her hands busy with needle and yarn fashioning snuggly masterpieces morning and night. Every time I visited, we’d get down to business with our projects — she with skill and precision, and me with my fingers tripping over my crochet hook. Even more important than what we created with our hands was the beautiful, loving connection we built in our hearts.

This love is what drew me to the LWR Quilt & Kit Ministry. Your Quilt is God’s love wrapped around a refugee’s shoulders. Your School Kit accompanies a child into the classroom with the message, “There is hope and a future.” Your Personal Care Kit tells its recipient, “You are precious and cared for.”

These gifts of love echo around the world in ways only God can make possible.

I, too, have been a beneficiary of the deep love of our community. In October, I visited the quilters at Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Gettysburg, Penn. During my visit, they presented me with a gorgeous prayer quilt they had made just for me, to welcome me into my new role. What they didn’t know was that my grandmother had passed away just weeks before. To me, that quilt was love — I could feel my grandmother in its stitches and the comfort of our Holy God hemming me in.

When you put your faith in action, God knows just what to do with it.

I have enjoyed getting to know many of you personally over the last couple of months, and I am so grateful for the warm welcome you have extended to me. Melanie served this ministry and community with great passion and love, and I am committed to doing the same. Please contact me with questions, concerns or just to say hello at 410.230.6701.

In gratitude,

Janel Johnson-Momanyi
Quilt & Kit Ministry Manager

Lutheran World Relief is a ministry of U.S. Lutherans, serving communities living in poverty overseas.

Janel Johnson-Momanyi, LWR Quilt & Kit Ministry Manager, had the unique opportunity to hand deliver a quilt made by St. James Lutheran Church in Gettysburg, PA, to Esther Erasto Liguda and her son Asaye Erasto Liguda during a January 2020 distribution at Muhimbili National Hospital in Tanzania. Esther and Asaya are living at the hospital while Asaya completes treatment for leukemia.
Connection is Key at Seattle Ingathering

By Emily Esworthy, LWR’s Manager for Content and Storytelling

Like squares on a patchwork quilt, many people and details come together to make a successful Ingathering.

After 13 years of organizing the Seattle Ingathering, Rich and Candy Mathes have the wrinkles smoothed out of their process. Yet they say it’s not the planning or logistics that make their Ingathering a true destination for LWR quilters and kit-makers: it’s the continual effort to create community.

For Candy, that starts with the quilting group at her own church, Queen Anne Lutheran in Seattle. Her secret tactic: instead of inviting people to come and sew, she just invites them to the coffee break. She tells the story of one woman who came for coffee and found that she really enjoyed making diapers for Baby Care Kits. Now the woman attends every week. Candy laughs, “If I had asked her to come make diapers, she would’ve said, I don’t think so! She came for coffee, but she joined the community.”

And that community is who keeps the Quilt & Kit Ministry going strong — and will keep it going strong after the Matheses pass the torch — and who shows up again and again when volunteers are needed.

It takes about 45 volunteers to make each Seattle Ingathering run smoothly. Working in shifts, one set unloads trunks and vans, while others pack the boxes onto the truck. Volunteers greet participants and invite them inside for fellowship. They exude hospitality and warmth, even when it’s raining. (It is Seattle, after all.) Rich reviews the loading form with each driver and again extends the invitation to stay awhile.

More volunteers offer food and warm conversation. This is the key to “creating a destination,” as Candy calls it, for quilters and kit-makers to get together around their shared compassion for those in need. Participants are also drawn inside the church by the boxes of free fabric — discontinued samples donated by a local fabric store — they can take home to keep the cycle of creating and giving going. This is community being fed, and it’s beautiful to see.

How do they get so many people involved?

They ask. And ask!

“Volunteers don’t just appear out of the woodwork, but it’s amazing the number of people who will volunteer — if they are asked,” says Candy.
In fact, that’s how the Matheses became Ingathering hosts: when the previous organizers, Ken and Ruth Helling, decided to retire after 32 years, they asked Rich and Candy to take over. Though the Matheses had volunteered for decades, they had never considered leading until they were asked.

**Today, Rich handles the logistics for the more than 100 churches that bring their LWR Quilts & Kits to their Ingathering twice a year.** These include churches as far as Alaska, whose shipments arrive in Seattle by barge. Rich engages the community by sending out two newsletters a year, targeting at least two people per congregation in case someone is sick or traveling. He also arranges the transportation, coordinates the volunteer schedule (“which can be time consuming,” he says), picks up the Alaska shipments at the port and, of course, makes volunteer recruitment and community building a daily part of life.

After all, LWR Quilts & Kits bring us closer to our global neighbors, and we make them to remind families in crisis that they are not alone. This is community, and there’s no better way to do it than by pulling someone in and saying, “Come join us!”

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**TIPS FOR A HAPPY INGATHERING:**

1. **Find a logistics mentor.**
   Rich says organizing transportation logistics and navigating trucking companies was tricky at first. So he asked Larry and Phyllis Vachal, who lead the Ingathering in Beavertown, Ore., for some pointers.

2. **Have a contingency plan.**
   Sometimes, logistics just don’t work out — even when you do everything right. Consider where you might store your shipment temporarily if a truck is late or doesn’t show: a U-Haul? A storage unit? Leverage your church members’ contacts to think about your plan B.

3. **Schedule volunteers in shifts.**
   Offer shorter shifts instead of intimidating full-day commitments. It takes some extra coordination, but it might just expand your volunteer base.

4. **Apply for a Thrivent Action Team grant.**
   Nothing builds community like food, and Thrivent funds may be available for expenses like feeding volunteers and participants. Visit [lwr.org/thrivent-action-teams](http://lwr.org/thrivent-action-teams) to learn how to apply.

5. **Work with the people and resources you have.**
   There’s no one right way to host your Ingathering. “As long as the quilts and kits make it to the warehouse, that’s success,” say the Matheses. The mission matters more than the details.

6. **Ask everyone for help.** “And not just Lutherans!” says Candy. Coworkers, neighbors, students in need of volunteer hours — there’s a job for everyone. When asked, “Why did you decide to volunteer?” the Seattle volunteers invariably responded, “Because Rich asked me to.”

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**CELEBRATE**

**NATIONAL QUILTING DAY**

**MARCH 21 2020**

Host your own event to celebrate 75 years of comforting the world with quilts! Join LWR and fellow quilters across the country in a day of quilting, fellowship, and the sheer joy of this ministry. Learn more and get resources at [lwr.org/nqd](http://lwr.org/nqd).