



FAITH IN • *action*

STRENGTHENING FAITH
THROUGH SERVICE

2022 **INGATHERINGS**

HELPING MOTHERS
FEEL THE LOVE

MEET **MARTHA PIEDRASANTA**

A NEWSLETTER ESPECIALLY FOR LWR QUILTERS & KIT MAKERS | **WINTER 2023**



**LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF**

LOVING OUR NEIGHBORS

DEAR QUILTERS & KIT MAKERS,

I am so thankful for your continued support. This ministry would not be possible without your time and talents, something I witnessed firsthand this fall during Ingatherings across the country. You never cease to amaze me with your dedication and passion.

Speaking of dedication and passion, I'm thrilled to announce that Martha Piedrasanta has officially accepted the position as our new Quilt & Kit Ministry Senior Manager. Martha is one of the most committed and passionate colleagues I know. You can read more of her story in the Q&A on pages 6 and 7.

I am grateful for Martha's willingness and commitment to take on this important role and lead us into the future of this

ministry. She will be your partner as we continue to grow and support your faithful work.

And most importantly — thank you! The overwhelming passion and dedication that you bring to your service to others and our recent Ingatherings will make it possible for so many of our most vulnerable neighbors to be ready for the winter and whatever else lies ahead.

In gratitude,



Lisa Kipp
Director, Congregational Engagement

STRENGTHENING FAITH THROUGH SERVICE: THE 2022 SEATTLE INGATHERING

For a community that values putting their faith into action, it's not surprising that faith comes up so prominently when the volunteers and organizers behind the Seattle Ingathering talk about their motivation. It may be stamina and commitment that helps put roughly 50,000 pounds of quilts, Baby Kits, School Kits, Personal Care Kits and Fabric Kits on several 53-foot trailers, ready for rail transport from Seattle to the Baltimore warehouse, but it is faith that is the real driver behind the event.

Rich Mathes and his wife Candy have been coordinating the Seattle Ingatherings twice a year since 2006. He said the volunteers find a real pleasure in knowing they are helping their neighbors overseas and find a sense of community in coming together in this way. And while community is an important benefit of this work, Rich said it all comes back to his faith.

"It's as Jesus said, the second greatest commandment is love your neighbor as yourself. And I think this is a good way to do that. They're not close neighbors. They're part of our earthly neighbors."



Volunteers at the Seattle Ingathering pose in front of the second 53-foot shipping container filled with boxes of quilts and kits. Pictured left to right: Novian Junus, Adam Greenwood, Morgan Hendrickson, Brandon Hendrickson, and organizer Rich Mathes

Candy echoes this feeling. She believes this work is important and it has strengthened her faith and her sense of community.

Candy Mathes has been working alongside her husband Rich Mathes (not pictured) to coordinate the Seattle Ingatherings twice a year since 2006.



MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE THROUGH ACTION

"I think we all look for things that supply meaning in our life," Candy said. "When Rich retired, it was like, OK, what can we do as a team to help make the world a better place? We kind of fell into Lutheran World Relief and it fit."

Kelly Peterson, a Girl Scouts troop leader in the community, volunteered at the Ingathering for the second time. The Ingatherings have served as a source inspiration for her faith.

"Having that reminder of God is bigger than my life ... you know, we've done the small part, here's the next medium part. But this is so much bigger than what we're doing."

Her troop came the second day of the event to help load boxes. She believes it's important for young people to be a part of initiatives like this.

"It's so easy to see your world as your small, insular self and your community," she said. "For them to be able to say, I have a role in this is really great."

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- Kelly Peterson

MOTIVATED BY FAITH, BRAVING THE ELEMENTS

This year's fall Ingathering was held November 4-5 in the parking lot of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church. Volunteers, many of whom have been helping load the containers with quilts and kits for years, arrived in the still-dark early morning hours to prepare for the first drop-offs of the day, which were scheduled for 8 a.m. The western Washington region has roughly 120 churches that participate, either at the spring Ingathering in May or the fall Ingathering in November, and in many instances, volunteers will drop off at both events.

Some of the quilters and kit makers had to brave downed trees, power outages and high winds to get their boxes to the Ingathering. It is not uncommon for those making the journey to take ferries and bridges to get to the church, but the sentiment was the same across the board — the boxes must get to the Ingathering because there are people who need these supplies. Participants ranged from third-generation quilters to first-time kit makers. Some of the drivers were the quilters and kit makers themselves while others were friends and members of the church who volunteered their time and vehicle to get these donations to the next stage in the journey, one step closer to those who need them.

Rich and Candy know that their efforts in Seattle are part of a much larger picture. **"Lutheran World Relief helps people recover from disasters in other ways than just giving quilts,"** Rich said. "There's a lot of work to do out there."

Thanks to the incredible team behind the Seattle Ingathering for putting in the work. We are all closer to the future we envision — one where we reach every neighbor in need — because of you. ■

Kelly Peterson (right), a local Girl Scout troop leader, helped load and stack boxes onto shipping containers at the Seattle Ingathering.



ON THE COVER:

Jackie Thomsen (right) and Sallie Wilson (left) in the fabric room at the Seattle Ingathering on November 4, 2022. Jackie, a member of Queen Anne Lutheran Church since she was 17, had spent her adult years caring for her daughter and then for her granddaughter, Chloe. Since she was in grade school, Chloe had been attending her church's quilting group with her mom and suggested her grandmother give it a try. After putting it off for nearly a year, Jackie decided she would humor her granddaughter and check it out. Now, six years later, Jackie helps with both quilting and kit assembly.

2022 FALL INGATHERINGS



Memphis, TN

November 4-5, 2022
Diane Reimold, site coordinator for the Memphis Ingathering, and volunteer Susan Burkey hug after a long and productive day loading trucks. Susan attends Christ Lutheran Church in Paris, Tennessee, and drove an hour and a half to participate. The Memphis Ingathering was held at Immanuel Lutheran Church and brought in **1,222 pounds of quilts and kits**, nearly double last year's Ingathering.

Seattle, WA

November 4-5, 2022
Eleanor Ultis (left) and Ella MacGregor (right), members of Girl Scouts Troop 42013, stand in the parking lot of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church with stacked boxes of quilts and kits at the Seattle Ingathering. The girls helped make a quilt with their troop as well. "I'm pretty proud that our troop was able to make some quilts and how we're also helping load up quilts that other people have made," Ella said. "And I just feel happy that those are going to get shipped off to people who need them."



Beaverton, OR

Oct 28-29, 2022
Volunteers from the Beaverton Ingathering. Bottom row, from left to right: Larry Vachal, Sharon Fako, Dan Fako, Liz Hardy, Pat Sandquist, Liz Andersen, Sandi Beavers. Top row, left to right: Pam Farr, Pastor Mark Bocker, Rochelle McIntire, Bill Beavers. This year's Ingathering collected **2,729 Quilts, 2,231 School Kits** and **642 Personal Care Kits**. Since 1999, the Beaverton Ingathering has contributed an overwhelming total of 183,337 Mission Quilts, 86,157 School Kits and 66,155 Personal Care Kits. "The impact the Lutheran World Relief ministry has on people's lives around the world is what drives the work of volunteers from St. Andrew Lutheran Church every Ingathering," said Key Leader Rochelle McIntire.



Salina, KS

November 3, 2022
In Salina, Kansas, at St. John's Lutheran Church, which hosted the Ingathering for the first time, hardworking volunteers loaded their truck full of quilts and kits from across northern Kansas. "It doesn't take much time to realize that our quilters and kit makers are truly the heart of LWR. It's a privilege to see their compassion up close," said LWR staff member Matt Dymoke after attending his first Ingatherings this year.



Sandy Miller, here with LWR's Planned Giving Manager Lee Grant and Susan Lewis, has been the site coordinator at Epiphany Lutheran Church in Houston for over 15 years. "In the beginning, I used to worry about so many things. Will I get enough volunteers? Will it rain? Will everything fit on the trailers? I soon came to realize that everything works out because God always provides even if it's a different plan than mine. I am humbled by the blessings God pours out to me each day."

Naperville, IL

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Naperville, IL hosted their first Ingathering this year. All in all, some 22 churches participated, which served as one of the Ingatherings for the greater Chicagoland area. Jeannine Allen, who helped Jayne Reishus organize the event, said "There's a purpose God has in this community, in this church. This is just one small thing, but it's tangible and easy to do. The numbers of kits we made were great, but the real success was the shared joy of coming together in this way. And the opportunity to collectively pray for those who would receive these items."

"...the real success was the shared joy of coming together in this way."

This article highlights just a few of the more than 125 Ingatherings that took place this fall. We are grateful for each and every one!

SAVE THE DATE:

MARCH
18

NATIONAL QUILTING DAY 2023

National Quilting Day 2023 is fast-approaching. We hope you'll celebrate with us! Log on to lwr.org/nqd for ideas to celebrate in your congregation and community. National Quilting Day is the perfect opportunity to celebrate your mission quilting and invite others to join you. Make plans today to celebrate **March 18!**

Quilter Profile

JACKIE THOMSEN is a quilter at Queen Anne Lutheran Church in Seattle, Washington. She finds the work of quilt and kit making especially fulfilling. "We don't have to worry about food or water or being warm. And so much of the world does need to worry, or they just simply don't have access. "You feel responsible to other people, which then **gives you a connection to the world** in a way that you don't when you're sitting at home."



Kit Maker Spotlight

20+ YEARS, 500 BABY KITS

'I HOPE MOTHERS FEEL THE LOVE'

Barbara Brumbaugh and her husband were overwhelmed with excitement. They had just received a call that a longed-for baby was waiting for them.

"They said, 'We have a child for you!' 'How old?' 'Five days old!' Needless to say, we were not prepared for that," laughed Barbara, remembering that moment, long ago.

Over the years, Barbara had read about mothers in need across the globe. "I've read so many of the stories that come out, like a mother giving birth on a trail, a mother who ripped part of her skirt to wrap the baby in," she said.

But preparing for the immediate arrival of her own adopted child brought it all home to Barbara. She went to Sears and purchased some things, and her family had a baby shower for her.

INSPIRED TO HELP OTHERS

It's part of what inspired Barbara to begin a decades-long labor of love, making Baby Care Kits to send around the world to mothers in dire poverty.

"I lived in a city that had all kinds of stores and could pay," she said. "But the poor woman who gave birth on the trail, she didn't have that."

The daughter of an accomplished seamstress, Barbara began making sweaters. Over the years, she started shopping yard sales and thrift stores to find high-quality items to include in the kits.

Barbara's husband had a truck and a trailer, and over the years she estimated she's created 500 kits. **That's five hundred babies she has touched with her service.**

In the 1990s, the couple made service trips to LWR's warehouse in Maryland to help with the kits. "We were all retired, a bunch of old folks doing this for six or more hours a day," she remembered. "One year I did back rubs to keep everyone going."

Barbara rallied other members of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, her church in Goshen, Indiana, to help. Karon Ahrendt, the organist, credits her involvement in LWR kit making to Barbara's enthusiasm. "Barbara asked me to help with the buttons, and it grew from there," said Karon. "Barbara is one of the best ambassadors for LWR that you'll find."



Barbara Brumbaugh (right) has made an estimated 500 Baby Care Kits over the past 20 years, inspiring friend and fellow Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (Goshen, Indiana) member Karon Ahrendt (left) to join her along the way.

HOLDING UP OTHERS SO THE BATTLE CAN BE WON

Barbara didn't let anything stop her. "When we had the pandemic, I had to do the blankets. I was pretty much glued to my sewing machine," Barbara recalled. "I went through thread like you would not believe. I had 20-30 empty spools!" Karon said the sweater work was also unending: "Our little fingers were knitting so fast."

As a musician, Karon thinks of these lines from a beloved hymn when making kits:

*"Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of thy love."*

For her part, Barbara feels compelled by the Gospel call to help the vulnerable. "When Jesus says, 'Let the little children come to me,' that's what inspires me," said Barbara. "These little children belong to God. **Hopefully their mothers feel the love that's been put into the kits and can use them.**"

As Barbara, now 83, looks back on her decades of dedicated service to neighbors in need, a Bible verse inspires her. It's Exodus 17:12, another Bible verse in which Aaron holds up the arms of Moses. "As long as he was holding up his arms, they'd win the battle. When his arms were down, they were losing," said Barbara.

"I am holding up someone's arms so the battle can be won." ■

"I am holding up someone's arms so the battle can be won."



WELCOME Martha Piedrasanta!

Lutheran World Relief's new
Quilt & Kit Ministry Senior Manager



Q&A WITH MARTHA PIEDRASANTA, QUILT & KIT MINISTRY SENIOR MANAGER

We recently sat down with Martha, who rejoined Lutheran World Relief with our Quilt & Kit Ministry team in April 2022 and began leading the ministry in October. Prior to that, she served on our International Programs team from 2016-2019. A great leader and a deeply faithful Lutheran, many of you got the chance to work with her during one of the 125+ Ingatherings she managed this past fall. Martha juggles details with ease and has a deep passion for LWR quilters and kit makers. Please reach out to her for any of your needs or questions at mpiedrasanta@lwr.org.

Can you talk about your background?

I grew up in rural Connecticut and my background is in public health. I've always worked in nonprofits. I've spent a lot of time abroad, especially in Latin America (*editor's note: Martha is fluent in Spanish*) and Africa, living and working in many developing countries. But I was looking for a way to put my faith into action, to share my faith in a job. I first worked at LWR as a program manager and loved my experience because of my international background. I had a brief period where I worked for Lutheran Social Services, building a program from zero. But then I saw the Quilt & Kit Associate position on the LWR website and knew the Quilt & Kit Ministry was exactly where I needed to be. It's the perfect place to combine my understanding of Lutheran theology and the Lutheran church with my program management skills and experience in international and domestic settings. And so that's what brought me back to LWR, which felt like coming home, honestly. I really was glad to come back and work with such wonderful, amazing people.

What first drew you to this role?

The Quilt & Kit Ministry is Lutheran World Relief's oldest program. The first quilts were delivered to families in Western Europe post- World War II. I think the quilters and kit makers are truly the backbone of what LWR is and what we are all about. As Lutherans, we believe all people have a vocation, God has a calling for every person to serve. Our Quilt & Kit Ministry provides a platform for people to really put their faith into action and carry out what they hear as their calling. They trust us with this work, and they are an incredibly passionate group of people.

What do you do in this role?

This fall, the focus was on helping to coordinate and support all the Ingatherings, the key leaders and site coordinators, making sure everyone that wanted to help was connected to a site where they can drop off their boxed quilts and kits, and set up the transportation of quilts and kits to LWR warehouses. My main goal was to connect and work with all of you, the critical element that makes our ministry a success. You are an inspiration.

Do you have a vision for the future of this ministry?

Two things are most important for this ministry:

1) I want to help you figure out how to reach more people, especially younger people, and get them involved. You have told us that you want to grow your
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Quilt & Kit Ministries or groups at your churches, and I'm here to help. We are so grateful for our quilters who have been a dedicated part of this ministry for decades and I think being able to share their legacy and bring others into the fold is critical to the future.

2) I want to be able to better share the impact that your work has throughout the world. I will share stories of how you are radically making a difference in the lives of women, children and families every day. I am so grateful for the work you do!

Anything else you'd like to tell our quilters and kit makers?

I'm definitely humbled and very much in awe of YOU — all the quilters and kit makers who make this ministry possible. You are literally blanketing the world with your love and putting your faith into action. You serve as such an example to me, and I am so thankful and grateful for all the work you do. I remember my mom and dad came to see one of our warehouses in Maryland before he passed. They were so thrilled to see it, and took lots of pictures and even a video. For years, in the winter months, they spent their time in Florida and went to a small Lutheran church there that contributes to the Quilt & Kit Ministry. When my mom shared the pictures and video with her church, they asked her to do a presentation, and the reaction was overwhelming. It really brought home how passionate people are about this ministry and supporting LWR and the work you all do. It truly is a privilege to do this job and be surrounded by people who are so dedicated to helping others. So, thank you to all of those supporting this work. ■

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

LWR HEADQUARTERS:

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700 Light Street | Baltimore, MD 21230 USA
Phone: 800.597.5972 | Email: lwr@lwr.org

LWR BROCHURES AND VIDEOS:

800.597.5972 | lwr.org/resources

QUILT & KIT MINISTRY GUIDELINES:

lwr.org/getinvolved

Warehouses are OPEN! Call for hours.

LWR WAREHOUSES:

398 East Richmond Street
South St. Paul, MN 55075
Phone: 651.457.9009

601 Main Street
PO Box 188
New Windsor, MD 21776
Phone: 410.635.8795



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SHARE GOD'S LOVE WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS THIS LENT

Support the Quilt & Kit Shipping Fund

Lent may be a time of waiting, but it need not be one of inaction. By making Personal Care Kits, you can deliver tangible hope to our neighbors in need around the world. Go to lwr.org/lennt to access all the information and resources you need to lead your congregation's Personal Care Kit drive. Our neighbors in crisis need as many Personal Care Kits as you can send. **How many Personal Care Kits will you make?**

Interested in making a donation? Please scan the QR code for more information.

lwr.org/lennt
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Baltimore, MD 21297-1061

SEASON OF
HOPE
LENT

