

# FROM DEATH TO NEW LIFE

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted...

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2



After Grace Lutheran Church in Needham, Mass., closed, the congregation left a gift to Lutheran World Relief.

## How closing congregations create lasting impact

The difficult decision to close a church is always accompanied by grief. And yet as Christians, we cling to the resurrection promise that from death comes new life. In recent years, congregations have taken this message to heart — making generous gifts to Lutheran World Relief when closing their doors.

### “It’s living on still.”

It took 13 months of discernment before Grace Lutheran Church in Needham, Massachusetts decided to close. But Pastor Elizabeth Nees says her congregation took great comfort in knowing their closure meant making transformative gifts to trusted ministries.

By giving to Lutheran World Relief and participating in the Quilt & Kit Ministry, they had long enjoyed **feeling like they were a part of something much bigger than themselves** — and they trusted that LWR would continue their legacy.

“As Christians, we know **death is never the end of our story**,” Pastor Nees reflects. “Congregations may close. It may not look like we thought it would. But **our church and the gift we made in closing will make such life-changing impacts for others**. It’s living on still.”



## HONOR YOUR QUILTERS and KIT MAKERS

Lutheran World Relief quilters have been a part of the fabric of countless churches since 1945. Many closing congregations have included a final gift to Lutheran World Relief to honor the love that their quilters shared throughout their ministry.



## Three ways a closing gift can make a difference

Through Lutheran World Relief, congregations are the hands and feet of Christ in a hurting world. Wherever there is war, poverty or disaster, your compassion will be there to love your neighbors in life-changing ways — even after your day-to-day ministry ends.

### IN TIMES OF CRISIS



Dilan Cabioglu grew depressed after earthquakes destroyed her home and school in Türkiye. Her outlook has improved since LWR gave her family a container home and invited her to spend time at our teen center. There, she sees a counselor, enjoys robotics classes and is making plans for her future. “If it wasn’t for this place, I would probably still be experiencing the shock of the earthquake,” she says.

### FOR THE LONG TERM



No matter how hard he worked, Nageswor Chaudhary, a farmer from Nepal, struggled to provide for his family. With LWR by his side, Nageswor built a greenhouse and learned to grow new crops to increase his income. Now he can afford to feed his family, pay for his children’s education and even save a little. “Now I do not need to rely on others, or stretch out my hands to others for money,” he says.

### QUILTS AND KITS



When Hurricane Helene flooded a facility for homeless veterans in North Carolina, Edward Lynch was displaced. Again. But he was excited to choose a quilt to take to the hotel where he would stay until the longer-term housing was repaired. “I’d just like to say thank you to the people that put their time and love and patience in making these beautiful blankets,” he said. “It gave me something to hold on to in the midst of a crisis.”

## One last time

“Our hearts are happy knowing that while our beloved church does not exist, someone’s life will have more dignity, someone will feel God’s love and someone will feel safer. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to do something we love to do, one last time.”

—Dielda Kuhlmann, member of Bethlehem Lutheran, Renton, WA

**To learn more about how a closing congregation can provide lasting hope into the future, please contact:**

Rev. Lisa Kipp, Director of Congregational Engagement  
507.358.6335 | [lkipp@lwr.org](mailto:lkipp@lwr.org) | [lwr.org/congregations](http://lwr.org/congregations)



**LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF**