



LUTHERAN  
WORLD RELIEF

# *God's Love* IN ACTION

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the long-term

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# God's Love IN ACTION

## DEAR PARTNER IN MINISTRY,

It's been more than a year since the earthquake wrought devastation in Türkiye, and two years since the war in Ukraine began. For many of us, this time has flown by ... yet I know that for our neighbors who live in these places, every day has been full of grief and hardship.

As we mark these somber milestones, I want to **thank you** and your congregation for being the **first to respond** to these crises — and for being the **last to leave**.

The catastrophic damage in Türkiye means there is a long recovery ahead, and the crisis in Ukraine is ongoing. In times of trial, it is a rare friend who will both rush to your side and accompany you for the long haul.

I am so grateful for congregations like yours who continue to offer your love and support to your neighbors in need, even when the rest of the world has moved on.

**In faith,**



**REV. LISA KIPP**  
Director of  
Congregational Engagement  
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**COVER:** Diana Yurchenko and her grandparents narrowly escaped when Russian soldiers invaded their community. With support from Lutheran congregations like yours, the family has found safe refuge in a shelter, where they have a private room and nourishing meals.

## VIDEOS: WATCH & SHARE

Congregations like yours have touched so many lives since a massive earthquake devastated Türkiye.

**10,600 lives ... and counting.**

That's 10,600 children, women and elderly neighbors who have received urgent and long-term support.

We invite you to meet some of them and hear, in their own words, how this support has made a life-changing difference.



**Visit [lwr.org/congregations](https://lwr.org/congregations)**  
to watch and share these videos.



**The Halal family** survived for months in a tent after their house was destroyed in the earthquake. Their new container home has given them safe shelter, comfort and new hope.



**Meet Leyla**, whose family of nine has been living under a tarp for over a year. Thanks to your LWR Quilt & Kit ministries, they received supplies to help meet their basic needs.

# Your Quilts & Kits offer comfort in *Türkiye*



**ABOVE:** Leyla Gülerüz (right) and her mother Seher Gülerüz (left) hold some of the LWR Quilts, Baby Care Kits and Personal Care Kits their family received following the collapse of their home in the February 2023 Türkiye earthquakes.

Over a year after the earthquake destroyed her home, Leyla Gülerüz still lives under a tarp with eight other people. Her family includes her chronically ill parents and her four-month-old nephew.

**“It gets very, very bitterly cold at night,” Leyla says.**

Thankfully, Lutheran World Relief Quilts & Kits — assembled by congregations like yours — provide warmth, comfort and dignity to families like Leyla’s who have lost so much.

Leyla says she was grateful that someone cared enough to make and deliver these handmade items. **“With these things you have brought, we will be able to warm up in a better way,”** she said. **“We are very happy that you thought of us.”**

**Thank you for all the ways you’ve loved your neighbors in Türkiye!**

Hear Leyla tell her story in her own words by watching the video online at [lwr.org/congregations](https://lwr.org/congregations).

## Thanks to your generosity, families in Türkiye received:

**5,760 Baby Care Kits**

**11,880 Quilts**

**14,440 Personal Care Kits**



Each icon represents a quantity of 1,000.



# UKRAINE:

## Providing shelter in the time of storm



Diana Yurchenko and her grandmother Lidia Sokalenko

Seven-year-old Diana Yurchenko has one of the sweetest, shyest smiles you've ever seen. And given all she's been through, each smile is a blessing.

When Russian soldiers invaded their town in 2022, Diana and her grandparents endured the horrors of bombing and food shortages. For more than three months, the only supplies and food they could get came directly from Russian soldiers. Diana's grandmother Lidia Sokalenko says many people refused the Russian aid at first. But eventually they had no choice.

She recalls one day the Russian soldiers invited the residents to come receive supplies. "Then, just two hours later, shells and cluster bombs started to fall," Lidia said. "Many people were wounded there." It was a trap, and her husband barely escaped.

Soon after, the shelling reached so close to home that Lidia used her own body as a shield to protect her granddaughter from shrapnel. Their home was no longer safe, so Diana and her grandparents had to hide in the forest. For weeks, they lived off the fish Diana and her grandfather caught in a stream.

"You were scared, right, sweet Diana?" Lidia asks her, describing their harrowing experiences. Diana nods quietly.

### **Our broken world has failed children like Diana. But not you.**

Since the war began, Lutheran congregations like yours have reached across the world to help families in Ukraine find refuge and healing.

First, **you provided safe shelter and daily nourishing meals to 1,624 displaced families** like Diana's for more than 12 months across six housing centers. You have also distributed supplies to the most vulnerable families throughout the country, including folding beds, pillows, heaters, cookstoves, firewood, laundry detergent, toilet paper, toys, hygiene items and Lutheran World Relief Quilts and Kits.

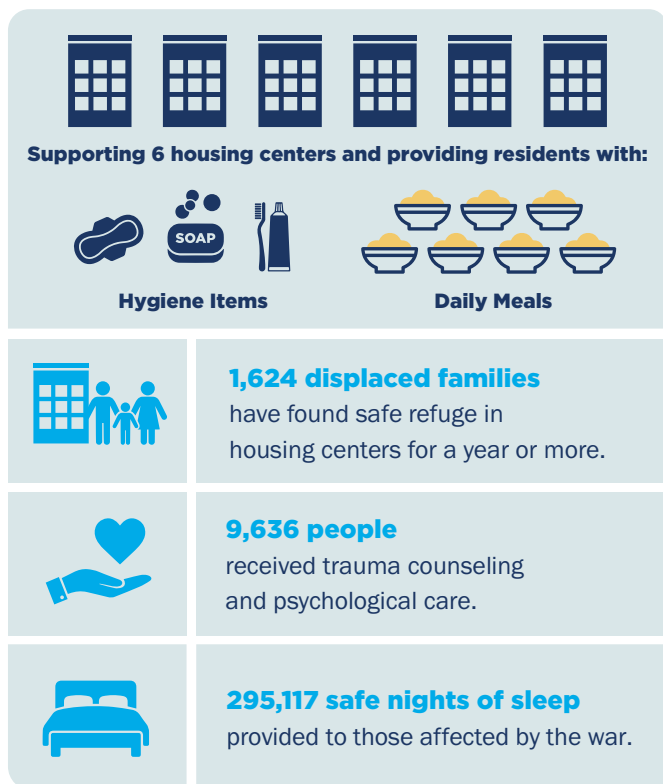


“You were scared,  
right, sweet Diana?”

## WATCH THE VIDEO:



### Your impact in Ukraine so far:



**BELOW LEFT:** Diana making a doll at an art activity hosted by Lutheran World Relief in the housing center where she lives with her grandparents in Kharkiv, Ukraine.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** Diana and her classmate Nikita. Nikita is the only other child Diana's age living at the housing center. The two have become close friends as they participate in online school classes together.

**BELOW RIGHT:** A boy and his grandmother participate in an art activity at a Lutheran World Relief-supported housing center in Kharkiv, Ukraine.

But meeting physical needs is only the start. Families have endured unimaginable trauma, and they often suffer from anxiety, panic attacks and other signs of distress that completely disrupt their lives. To help foster hope and healing, you have provided **counseling and psychological care to 9,636 people**. This includes the **art therapy sessions** at the housing centers that have helped children like Diana express their emotions and process trauma.

"The children are still impacted by what they had to go through," says Lidia, watching her granddaughter laugh with a new friend. **"But she's not as scared as she was before."**

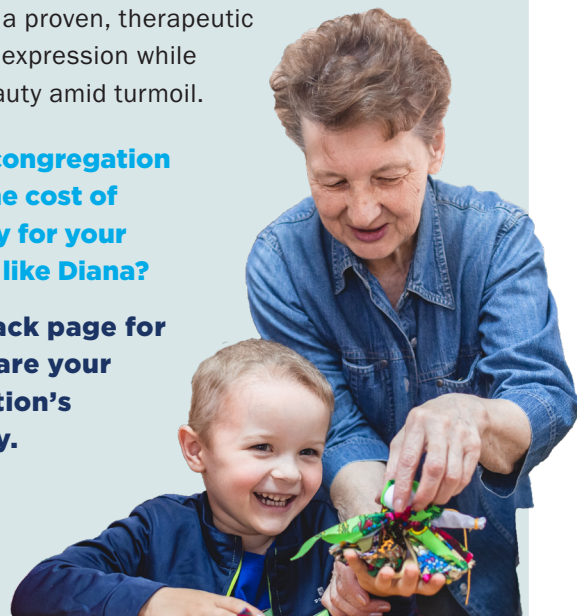


## HOW TO HELP:

**\$2,500** can provide art therapy for 350 women and children who have experienced violence and psychological trauma. Your compassion will support a proven, therapeutic form of self-expression while creating beauty amid turmoil.

**Can your congregation support the cost of art therapy for your neighbors like Diana?**

**See the back page for how to share your congregation's generosity.**







# IN UKRAINE, THE NEEDS PERSIST.

## So do you.

**ABOVE:** Frosia Aksenova, 96, was found malnourished and with multiple broken bones in a basement. Abandoned by family, she was brought to a Lutheran World Relief-supported housing center where she is provided with food, shelter and health care.

**T**wo years and counting. That's how long our neighbors in Ukraine have endured the immense hardships of war. Congregations like yours have rallied together to mount the largest humanitarian response in Lutheran World Relief history.

Here's how you've helped more than **50,000 Ukrainians** so far, and what's happening next:

**Mobile medical clinic.** In hard-hit communities near the frontlines, health care has been hard to access. Because of your generosity, a mobile clinic carries doctors to the people who need them. Located in a tractor-trailer, the mobile clinic has reached more than 12,400 people and provided 43,443 medical services.

**1 mobile clinic**  
traveling to the  
most vulnerable



**4 doctors**  
working together



**12,400**  
**patients**  
seen in the  
mobile clinic



Each icon represents 1,000 people.

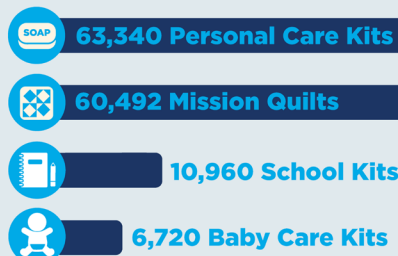
**43,443**  
**medical**  
**services**  
administered  
to patients



Each icon represents 1,000 services.

**Shelter and supplies.** When your neighbors had nowhere else to go, you found a way to offer hospitality from across the world. In addition to providing shelter and basics to Ukrainians who stayed behind, you provided emergency cash to help more than 66,000 refugees settle in Poland. (This was the second largest Ukrainian refugee cash support program at the time.)

**Quilts and kits.** Our faithful quilters and kit makers have comforted thousands of people with their handmade gifts. The following have been distributed in Ukraine and Poland to those affected by the war:



**Agriculture support.** During Russian occupation, farmlands and livelihoods were destroyed. You recently launched a new effort to restore or establish small farms in the formerly occupied Kharkiv region. This effort will help more than 7,000 families — providing concrete support and hope for the future in Ukraine.



**Thank you for loving your neighbors in Ukraine, yesterday, today and in the future!**



**ABOVE LEFT:** Quilter Sharryn Melin trusts that LWR will get their quilts to the people who need them in the world.



**ABOVE RIGHT:** Members of Zumbro Lutheran Church light candles and pray during Lent worship for their neighbors around the world.

## “IT’S GOING TO TAKE ALL OF US”

### How one church unites to help neighbors in need

**Zumbro Lutheran Church in Rochester, Minnesota, has supported Lutheran World Relief for decades.**

One of the pastors, Shelley Cunningham, says, “Zumbro has an incredible love for mission. We live out our faith when we are actively caring for one another.”

#### Hands-on ministry

Like many congregations, Zumbro has an active Quilt & Kit Ministry. Quilter and former church secretary Sharryn Melin says the quilting group meets every Tuesday and makes 2-3 quilts a week.

“We all think LWR is just phenomenal,” Sharryn says. **“There are so many needs in the world, and LWR takes care of them.”** She often sews quilt tops at home for the group to assemble. As she looks out her window at a picturesque forest of trees, she hopes the recipients of the quilts will be able to choose ones they find beautiful as well as useful.

Always looking for intergenerational service projects, the church also assembles hundreds of kits each year. Pastor Shelley explains, “This is the kind of serving opportunity that helps people become invested. They become closer in community by working side by side ... and even if it’s only in a small way, you’re able to make a difference for someone.”

#### Mobilizing for Ukraine

When news of the war in Ukraine broke, “there was an immediate, compassionate response,” Pastor Shelley says. The congregation quickly mobilized to take advantage of matching funds offered by LWR. In addition to general

offering and mission funds, the music director organized a benefit concert to raise money. Using traditional Ukrainian pieces, the handbell ringers connected attendees with their neighbors through the universal language of music.

Together, the congregation gave more than \$25,000 to help their neighbors in Ukraine — Zumbro’s largest gift to LWR to date.

Church member and former chair of the Mission & Outreach Committee Jan Vetter says, “We knew the money would be well spent. There are so many things that happen in this world, and you don’t know where your donations are going. But **we knew Lutheran World Relief would help the people who needed it.**”

#### Loving neighbors during Lent

This spring, the church dug even deeper into loving their global neighbors through a weekly Lent series featuring people from Ukraine and beyond whose lives were impacted by Lutheran World Relief — and whose stories are a reminder that everyone is a beloved child of God.

**“So, love the world!”**

Pastor Shelley says, “The goal was to help people look outward. It’s convicting to be reminded that **it’s going to take all of us.** It’s going to take you and me: supporting, praying, giving, acting. God so loved the world. **So, love the world!”**





## LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

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# RESOURCES FOR PASTORS

We heard your feedback and are excited to share a suite of free congregational resources! ***Who will your love reach next?*** is meant to be easily adaptable for your congregation and can be used in its entirety or as individual elements. Use these tools to support LWR as your mission of the month, spotlight your love in the world for an LWR Sunday, use the Bible studies with your small group, or share the videos during an offering mission moment.

View the resources today at [lwr.org/mission](http://lwr.org/mission).

**WHO WILL**  
*Your Love*  
**REACH NEXT?**



Small group  
study guides



Bulletin  
inserts



Inspiring  
videos



Quilt & Kit  
blessing litany



Children's  
message prompts



And  
more!

## SHARE YOUR CONGREGATION'S LOVE.



Share restoring hope with God's children by giving online at [lwr.org/congregations](http://lwr.org/congregations) or by mailing a check to **Lutheran World Relief, PO Box 17061, Baltimore, MD 21297-1061.**

**NOTE:** The dollar amount listed in "How to Help" represent the actual average cost of providing the respective services. Your gifts contribute to the entire mission of Lutheran World Relief, to be used where need is greatest.

To receive updates, join our email list for congregational leaders at [lwr.org/congregations](http://lwr.org/congregations).