



**LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF**



God's Love **IN ACTION**

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Celebrating 80 years

God's Love IN ACTION

DEAR PARTNER IN MINISTRY,

This year we mark 80 years of Lutheran World Relief's service to the world. It's amazing to consider how many lives have been touched by the love of Christ across the generations.

LWR was founded to help Lutherans in Europe recover from the devastation of World War II. Since then, our mission has grown, and the devotion of Lutheran congregations has grown with it.

As we celebrate this anniversary, we are celebrating the many congregations that make this work possible. We can do so much more together, as the Body of Christ, than we can ever do alone.

This issue looks back on the impact congregations like yours supported in 2024. **We are so grateful for every church** that made a commitment to end poverty, injustice and human suffering this year and for the past 80 ... and until your love reaches **every** neighbor.

In Christ,



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P.S. The final spread of this issue is a poster for your church's bulletin board!

P.P.S Don't forget to visit lwr.org/80 to watch and share our anniversary video!



A LOOK

1. In times of crisis

War, disaster and other emergencies affect everyone, **but it's the world's poorest who suffer most.** That's why Lutheran World Relief is there to help, wherever and whenever disaster strikes. Here are some ways congregations like yours met your neighbors' urgent needs this year:

SOUTH SUDAN: EXTREME FLOODING AND VIOLENCE

Multiple crises have uprooted millions in South Sudan — including young widow Nyaluit Chuol and her five children. When it was no longer safe where they lived, the family walked 70 miles to find dry land and peace in a displacement camp. Yet the lifesaving health care they needed was still out of reach, because the nearest hospital is only accessible by boat.

Then, thanks to compassionate Lutherans, **they got a ride to the hospital** in a motorboat — purchased specifically to serve hard-to-reach communities that don't have roads.

BACK at 2024:

3 ways Lutheran congregations changed lives near and far

Nyaluit Chuol and her family outside their tent in South Sudan where they received urgent health care.

BELOW LEFT: The boat used to carry medical supplies and patients in South Sudan.

BELOW CENTER: Lutheran organizations joined together to provide food for survivors of the tanker explosion in Liberia.

BELOW RIGHT: LWR staff unload water for displaced Lebanese families.



LIBERIA: FUEL TANKER EXPLOSION

Annie Vuku was running errands when an oil tanker crashed and exploded. Although she kept a safe distance, Annie suffered third-degree burns when a man who was on fire ran into her. Tragically, the blast killed 89 people and badly burned 100 more.

With congregational support, affected families like Annie's received **food packages**. These eased the burden for people who lost income, as well as nourished those taking medication for their injuries. Then our donors replenished the **medical supplies** on the local hospital's shelves.

LEBANON: MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

In September 2024, violence between Israel and Hezbollah dramatically increased — an extension of the conflict between Israel and Gaza. Attacks on south Lebanon became constant, leaving millions of innocent people scrambling for survival as bombs fell on homes, schools and workplaces. Many families fled with nowhere to go; others who stayed suffer from food shortages and other hardships of war.

Caring congregations provided **emergency food parcels, clean water, hygiene supplies, shelter, LWR Quilts & Kits** and more to help meet their urgent needs.



It gets very, very **bitterly cold at night,**” Leyla says. “We are very happy that **you thought of us.**”

Leyla Güleriyüz (right) and her mother Seher with their quilts and kits.



2. Quilts & Kits

Stitch by stitch, bundle by bundle, quilts and kits are tangible gifts of love. In times of greatest need, **our quilters and kit makers wrap that love around their neighbors’ shoulders** and provide comfort, dignity and hope. Here are some ways these handmade gifts blessed our neighbors this year:

TÜRKIYE: EARTHQUAKE-AFFECTED FAMILIES

Almost two years after earthquakes destroyed their home, Leyla Güleriyüz still lives in a tent with nine family members. Since the February 2023 disaster, generous Lutherans distributed 11,880 LWR Mission Quilts, 14,440 Personal Care Kits and 5,760 Baby Care Kits to families like hers.

MARYLAND, USA: KEY BRIDGE COLLAPSE

In March, a ship crashed into the Francis Scott Key Bridge, very close to Lutheran World Relief’s office in Baltimore. The bridge collapsed, killing six people and trapping 11 ships in the port for several weeks. Because LWR depends on

seafarers to carry your love around the world, we felt called to make their stay more comfortable. Thanks to our donors, we delivered quilts and Personal Care Kits to show hospitality to stranded crews.



ABOVE: The Rev. Josh Messick (right), executive director of the Baltimore International Seafarers’ Center, helped with distribution. He is pictured with Hu Xin Peng, chief officer of the JY River ship.



QUILT & KIT MINISTRY EXPANDS TO HELP U.S. NEIGHBORS!

In September, we announced that the LWR Quilt & Kit Ministry was officially expanding to reach neighbors in need in the United States for the first time in our 80-year history. We were thrilled by the outpouring of support from our quilters and kit makers following this news. Thank you for so generously loving your neighbors, near and far!

3. For the long term

The world's poorest families need more than relief. **They need patient, longer-term support to overcome the challenges that trap them in poverty.** Here are some examples of families churches have helped to break the cycle this year:



NEPAL: OVERCOMING GENERATIONAL POVERTY

Nageswor Chaudhary tried many jobs to provide for his family, but he always came up short. Even though he is intelligent and hardworking, as a Dalit — a member of the lowest caste — his opportunities were limited.

Congregations like yours are helping the poorest families learn new farming skills to increase their incomes. For Nageswor, that meant building a greenhouse and learning to grow new, stronger crops. With LWR by his side, he has increased the size of his farm sixfold in three years. Now he can afford to feed his family and pay for his children's education, with enough left over to save a little.



UKRAINE: RESTORING FARMS DESTROYED BY WAR

Since retiring, Valentina and Alexander Starikova have farmed their land for food and income. But when Russian troops attacked in February 2022, their village was among the first to be invaded. By the time the troops retreated several months later, the Starikovas' farm was badly damaged.

The kindness of Lutheran congregations provided agriculture support to 5,500 families like the Starikovas' this year, including



Valentina in her field.

“It is hard work,” Valentina says, “but working on the land is **not only about obtaining food to eat, it is also for the soul.**”



Valentina and Alexander host their neighbors for a meal with ingredients grown on their newly restored farm.



“Now I do not need to rely on others, or stretch out my hands to others for money,” he says.



Nageswor in the greenhouse that changed his life.

training on how to assess fields for landmines. Farmers learned new techniques for increasing production and received small grants to restore operations. We also provided seeds to grow the ingredients for borscht — a nutritious staple meal in Ukraine that offers comfort and the strength to keep going. ■

3

ways congregations changed lives in 2024

Through Lutheran World Relief, **congregations serve as the hands and feet of Christ in a hurting world.** Wherever there is war, poverty or disaster, their compassion is there — **sharing love with our neighbors** in life-changing ways.



2 QUILTS & KITS: HURRICANES IN THE UNITED STATES

When a shelter for homeless veterans flooded in Asheville, North Carolina, residents gratefully received quilts as they moved into temporary housing.

“It gave me something to hold on to in the midst of a crisis.”

- EDWARD LYNCH



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF



1 IN TIMES OF CRISIS: EARTHQUAKES IN TÜRKİYE

Dilan Cabiogcu, 17, lives with her parents in a **container home** you provided. She became depressed when her damaged school could not reopen, until she started attending **classes** and **counseling** at an LWR-supported **youth-friendly community center**.

“If it wasn't for this place, I would probably still be experiencing the shock of the earthquake.”

- DILAN CABIROĞCU



3 FOR THE LONG TERM: FLOODING IN SOUTH SUDAN

Gabriel Gatluak, who lost his leg in a landmine explosion, received support upon arriving at a displacement camp. Today Gabriel works for LWR, teaching other residents about nutrition and gardening.

“I'm very happy. If I'm alive, then my children go to school, and then I will support my community.”

- GABRIEL GATLUAK

To read more, view the 2024 annual report at lwr.org/congregations.



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF
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Thank you FOR 80 YEARS!

Lutheran World Relief was born in **1945** out of a call for Lutherans to **love their neighbors** in Europe recovering from World War II. With each generation, this ministry has grown, reaching farther and staying longer to **end poverty, injustice and human suffering.**

Until your love reaches every neighbor.

VIDEO: WATCH & SHARE WITH YOUR CONGREGATION



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

80

years of loving
our neighbors

**Celebrating 80 years of
sending compassionate
care to our neighbors
around the world**



A special 80th anniversary video is
available online at lwr.org/80



SHARE YOUR CONGREGATION'S LOVE.

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

To receive updates, join our email list for congregational leaders at lwr.org/congregations.