

# God's Love IN ACTION

Gregg Brekke for LWR

## WHEN WALLS CRUMBLE AND LEVEES BREAK, LOVE NEVER FAILS

Back-to-back hurricanes destroyed homes, jobs and hope.  
Your congregation can help them recover and rebuild.

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Visit [lwr.org/congregations](http://lwr.org/congregations) for details.

Now through May 31, 2021  
**BUY 2 BAGS OF COFFEE, GET 1 FREE**  
This special deal is just for Lutheran congregations.

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## DEAR PARTNER IN MINISTRY,

We recently received this message from a pastor:

*We are interested in financially helping LWR in your work in getting the COVID-19 vaccine to countries in Africa and elsewhere who seem to be on the bottom of the list. We know that at this time there is limited vaccine available and many of us in my congregation have not received our shots yet. However, we would like to direct some funds to help the most vulnerable get the vaccine.*



Wow. If I could come up with a description for what the last year has felt like at Lutheran World Relief, that could be it. In a time when so many congregations might be tempted to draw inward and take care of themselves, your love continues to turn outward toward our most vulnerable neighbors in the world.

Thank you for your relentless pursuit to share your love with your neighbor.

Lutheran World Relief's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has infiltrated all our work around the world. And **in the coming months, congregations will be invited to be part of the largest global health effort in human history** and help those who would otherwise be forgotten gain access to a COVID-19 vaccine.

Today and always, none of this would be possible without your love. **Visit [lwr.org/congregations](https://lwr.org/congregations) to sign up for updates to ensure that you receive the latest information about how your congregation can help in this worldwide vaccine effort as it unfolds.**

God bless you this Easter season and always.

**REV. LISA KIPP**  
Sr. Manager, Congregations  
[lkipp@lwr.org](mailto:lkipp@lwr.org)



## TAKE YOUR CONGREGATION ON A **WORLD TOUR** WITH A VIRTUAL ADULT FORUM

Your congregation's love is at work through Lutheran World Relief in four regions around the world: Asia, Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

**Our team is ready to take your congregation on a virtual world tour as we highlight each of these locations and show you the innovative and faithful ways we are putting your love — God's love — in action.**

Through videos and stories, your congregation will learn about rooftop farming in India, quilt and kit distributions in Lebanon, cocoa farmers in Honduras, Venezuelan neighbors seeking refuge in Peru, and much more.

An LWR forum would not be complete without a proper thank you to the quilters in your congregation, so please be sure to invite your quilters to join and share their stories.

**Visit [lwr.org/congregations](https://lwr.org/congregations) to sign-up today** and let us know when your congregation would like a virtual visit. We are available to join live via Zoom or can send a pre-recorded video. ■



# ONLY A FLOOD OF LOVE CAN REBUILD THEIR LIVES AFTER BACK-TO-BACK HURRICANES

**ELSA MARINA AMAYA** was just a child when her entire village of Waller Bordo, Honduras, was destroyed by Hurricane Mitch in 1998. The destruction was so complete that everyone carried their few remaining belongings across the river to rebuild the village on higher ground.

Today Elsa is 30, and she has three young daughters of her own — ages 9, 3 and 6 months. When back-to-back storms Eta and Iota swept through her village last fall, they brought a level of devastation that Elsa and her neighbors had hoped they'd never see again.

Even before the storms hit less than two weeks apart in November 2020, Elsa was struggling to make ends meet. In fact, half of all families living in the low-lying areas near San Pedro Sula, Honduras — one of the poorest places in the world — didn't know where their next meal was coming from.

In the past, Elsa has provided for her family by working as a cook. But when COVID-19 reached Central America last spring, all the kitchens closed and her income dried up. By the time the storms came, she had been unable to find work for months.

Elsa told Lutheran World Relief that her biggest needs right now are food, diapers, milk, medicine and vitamins for her children — only the very basics for their health and survival.

Elsa isn't alone. While most of the homes in Waller Bordo were spared the worst of the damage, the storms' heavy rains completely wiped out the village's primary livelihoods — corn

and palm oil production. Their hard work and hope for the future were literally swept away. Now these families have no idea how they'll feed their children or pay their bills in the months to come.

**What Elsa and her family need today is love, and your congregation can help.** With your congregation's gift, you can share love with your neighbors affected by hurricanes Eta and Iota in the form of food, water, safe temporary shelter, tools and building supplies. Your generosity will also walk alongside these families in the years to come, as they rebuild homes and restore crops and livelihoods. Your gift will also help in our urgent efforts to get COVID-19 vaccines into the arms of people who are at high risk in countries like Honduras.

**Please see the enclosed envelope for ways to give.**

By reaching out in love, your congregation can be the difference between life and death for people like Elsa and her children.

**Until your love reaches every neighbor.**



## LET YOUR CONGREGATION KNOW HOW THEIR LOVE IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Find easy to download updates to insert into your congregation's publications at [lwr.org/congregations](http://lwr.org/congregations). A newsletter article, bulletin announcement and social media kit are available for your use to share Elsa's story with your congregation.

Visit [lwr.org/congregations](http://lwr.org/congregations) for the free download.

## PERSONAL CARE KITS

LWR Personal Care Kits, lovingly assembled by congregations like yours, are an important part of the relief effort that has reached **12,630 PEOPLE** from **2,526 FAMILIES** in Honduras so far. Many say the emergency food packs, hygiene supplies, COVID-19 prevention and emergency psychological support they've received from Lutheran World Relief is the only help they've received since the storms.

Thank you for your continued support — both financial and through your Quilt & Kit Ministries — that ensures we are ready to act quickly whenever disasters strike.





## A Special Gift for LWR Quilters and Kit Makers



### SEEKING LWR AMBASSADORS

Qwagdhi is 7 and cannot walk.  
**Who will carry him in their heart?**

Qwagdhi cannot speak.  
**Who will share his story?**

When the bombs destroyed his home in Yemen,  
Qwagdhi's family lost everything.

**Who will share their blessings with him?**

If someone in your congregation is moved by stories  
about neighbors like Qwagdhi and longs to take  
meaningful action, they may feel called to be an  
Ambassador for Lutheran World Relief.

**WATCH AND SHARE:** Watch our video about  
Qwagdhi and learn more about the Ambassador  
program at [lwr.org/congregations](http://lwr.org/congregations).



**LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF**

AMBASSADOR



The past year was so hard, and we are  
deeply grateful to our quilters and kit makers  
who have risen above the challenges to  
continue serving a world in need.

To say thank you, we've created the  
**Quilt & Kit Affinity Pin** as a special gift.

Please encourage the quilters and  
kit makers in your congregation to order  
their **FREE PIN** to let their love shine!

**Visit [lwr.org/congregations](http://lwr.org/congregations) for details.**

*Individual orders, please. We are not able to process group orders.*



# ONE CHURCH'S CLOSURE IS THE BEGINNING OF HOPE FOR THOUSANDS

**B**yron Nelson never imagined he would chair a meeting to close his church, but it's exactly where he found himself when members of Trinity Lutheran Church in Walnut Creek, Calif., made the difficult decision to close. Byron said they experienced a loss and grief similar to the death of a loved one. "It's hard to drive by a place you've been for 46 years, where your kids were communed, confirmed and married — and say, 'Wow, that's over.'"

**But the promises of Easter remind us that from death springs new life.** The sale of the church building gave Byron and his Trinity Lutheran family the opportunity to leave a legacy of love.

"This will grow the kingdom," Byron said. "This is our calling and our legacy."

Byron helped create the Legacy of Trinity Committee, which generously donated \$194,000 to Lutheran World Relief. This gift is reaching families in India and Nepal, who are struggling to survive in an extremely poor, rural and flood prone region.

Their love is helping entire communities conduct emergency simulation exercises, so they can quickly evacuate before the next flood. They are helping families learn how to protect their crops from flood waters by using flood tolerant seeds and planting gardens on their rooftops. And they are helping



families protect themselves from COVID-19 with face masks, sanitizers and information about how to prevent the spread.

Vijay Singh, pictured above, is one of the more than 15,000 people that Trinity Lutheran is reaching with their gift. Vijay and his family live along the Gandak River in India.

"The coronavirus combined with the flood have caused us great harm," he said. "I hope that my children will be healthy and they'll be able to go back to school. I pray we'll be able to make ends meet once again."

**While Vijay prayed for his family's well-being, halfway around the world Byron Nelson prayed that Trinity's legacy would change lives. Though the two men will likely never meet, God's love in action has forever connected these two men and these two communities through answered prayers.**

Even as Trinity Lutheran members find new congregations to join, Byron says they will never be the same again.

"We will be talking outreach, outreach, outreach and worrying a lot less about ourselves because we have found so many opportunities to witness," he said.

**Thank you, Trinity Lutheran, for being a living example this Easter season of the new life Jesus promises. ■**