

FAITH IN *action*

THANK YOU FOR RESPONDING TO THE CALL TO SEW FACE MASKS!

(SEE WHERE THEY WENT)

MEET A NEW, 2ND-GENERATION KEY LEADER



FIASP21-33K-0421

Our Gift to You: THE LWR QUILT & KIT AFFINITY PIN



This beautiful pin was created especially for YOU, our beloved quilters and kit makers.

This pin is a symbol of Christ's love spread by the work of your hearts and hands in making quilts and kits for some of the world's most vulnerable. It's a small token of appreciation to you for being faithful in your service.



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

700 LIGHT STREET
BALTIMORE, MD 21230 USA
LWR.ORG

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
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Dulles, VA

To order your FREE pin, go to [LWR.ORG/QKPIN](https://www.lwr.org/qkpin)

DEAR FRIENDS,

Can you feel it? Spring has sprung! Here in Baltimore the temps are steadily increasing, and the longer days are a welcome change. I hope you're feeling the joy of the springtime, too.

And with spring comes Ingathering season again. This year's Ingatherings may still look a bit different as we all continue to adjust to ever-changing pandemic conditions, but please know there are Ingatherings happening in some regions and your quilts and kits are needed more than ever.

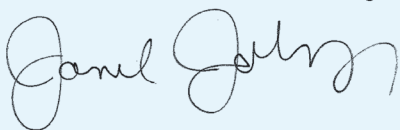
The items we received from fall Ingatherings are already on the way to their recipients. There are people needing the loving touch of your quilts wrapped around them, and the sense of dignity that a personal care kit or school kit gives. Please continue with your quilting and kit making!

For up-to-date information on 2021 Ingatherings, log on to ingathering.lwr.org.

Speaking of Ingatherings, I'm excited to recognize two very special people in this issue of Faith in Action. Larry and Phyllis Vachal have been serving as Key Leaders in Portland, Oregon, for more than 20 years. As they now pass the torch on to their daughter Rochelle McIntire, they leave a legacy of everlasting love, grace and care to so many hurting people in the world.

Each time I sit down to write my greeting message to you for a new Faith in Action issue, I struggle to find the right words to tell you just how important you are to this ministry. The quilts you stitch and the kits you assemble bring comfort and joy to our neighbors in need around the globe. YOU make that joy possible. Thank you.

With Gratitude,



JANEL JOHNSON-MOMANYI
Quilt & Kit Ministry Manager

ON THE COVER: Children receive quilts and care kits at the Upendo Children's Cancer Ward at Muhimbili National Hospital in Tanzania. Photo taken prior to COVID-19 pandemic. (Clemence Elish for LWR)



URGENT NEED

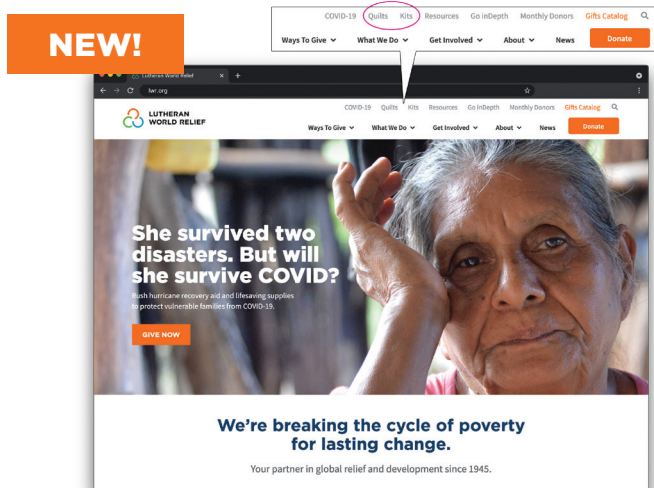
PERSONAL CARE KITS

Thanks to those who took part in our Season of Hope collection of LWR Personal Care Kits during Lent! As those kits reach our warehouses they will quickly be processed and shipped out. Now more than ever, as the pandemic continues to threaten already vulnerable communities, we need a steady supply of kits to meet the demands of our partners worldwide.

Last year more than **70,000 PERSONAL CARE KITS** were distributed to 13 countries — Angola, El Salvador, Haiti and Lebanon to name a few. More countries stand in the waiting to receive shipments.

Personal care kits are a great congregational activity, but even for those who are still not able to meet in person at church, making kits can be a great project for your family at home. **Can you commit to helping us meet the needs for personal care kits?** ■

Quick and easy access to LWR Quilt and Kit making information online!



The screenshot shows the LWR website interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for 'COVID-19', 'Quilts', 'Kits', 'Resources', 'Go InDepth', 'Monthly Donors', and 'Gifts Catalog'. Below this is a secondary menu with 'Ways To Give', 'What We Do', 'Get Involved', 'About', 'News', and 'Donate'. A prominent orange banner on the left says 'NEW!'. The main content area features a large image of an elderly woman with the text: 'She survived two disasters. But will she survive COVID?' and 'Both hurricane recovery aid and lifesaving supplies to protect vulnerable families from COVID-19.' Below the image is a 'GIVE NOW' button. At the bottom of the page, it says 'We're breaking the cycle of poverty for lasting change.' and 'Your partner in global relief and development since 1945.'

Have you struggled with finding the information you need about making quilts and kits on our website? The struggle is over! Now all you need to do is go to lwr.org and look for the Quilts and Kits “quick links” on the very top of the home page. With one click you'll be taken to a wealth of information on making quilts and kits, packing and sending them to us, and stories about where they've gone and the people who've received them. **CHECK IT OUT TODAY!** ■

Gregg Brekke for LWR

CHALLENGE MET!

Lesbia de Bejarana's home in Honduras was flooded by Hurricanes Eta and Iota. She and others in her community received COVID prevention kits from LWR that included your handmade masks.

Thank you for caring for vulnerable neighbors with your homemade face masks!

Not long after COVID-19 was declared a pandemic last March, many of you responded to our urgent call for face masks to help protect our neighbors in need around the world. Your response was overwhelming — collectively you sewed and donated 123,985 face masks!

Your masks have made their way to some of the world's poorest communities, where families risk a COVID-19 infection but have little means to protect themselves from it.

THE MASKS YOU MADE REACHED:

- Shelters for hurricane survivors in Honduras and Guatemala
- Overcrowded slums in Haiti
- Tent-filled displacement camps of Mali
- Internally displaced persons and at-risk communities in Georgia
- Refugees and asylum seekers in Angola

Thank you for your hard work and for responding to our call. You are the hands and feet of Christ as you share love with your neighbors!

Please note that our face mask collection is closed and we are completing all planned distributions. If you have made more face masks, we encourage you to find local groups that can put them to use in your own communities. They will be appreciated locally just as your loving kindness has been appreciated globally. ■





Quilts are bright, beautiful, colorful bursts of God's kingdom into the world! Thank you, quilters, for dedicating your faithfulness, creativity and compassion to this ministry of quilt-making.

RECAP

NATIONAL QUILTING DAY 2021

Every year in March we look forward to celebrating **National Quilting Day** and lifting up the incredible ministry of LWR quilters. Often, local quilting groups will host their own celebrations too. But as social distancing mandates have limited the possibilities this year, we celebrated online by dedicating our new Quilt & Kit Affinity Pin. (Haven't seen the pin? Check out the ad in this issue to learn how to get yours.)

Janel Johnson-Momanyi, LWR's Quilt & Kit Ministry Manager, led the dedication ceremony, sharing a video featuring a quilt traveling from the U.S. to Tanzania, and a series of photos of LWR Quilt recipients from across the globe. Melanie Gibbons, LWR's Director of Outreach & Engagement, led a prayer to dedicate the pin and honor the quilters of LWR. Here's a modified version of that prayer you may use yourself when you receive your Affinity Pin, or even as a prayer to bless the quilts you make:

*Dear God,
Thank you for this beautiful community you have stitched together across the United States and across the world. We celebrate all that brings us together in this community, and dedicate our faithfulness, creativity and compassion to this ministry of quilt-making.*

Please bless the work we do together, those our quilts comfort and warm, and everyone involved in transporting, protecting and distributing these gifts of our hearts and hands. Open us to see your face in one another whether in person, through the miracle of technology, or even in the warm embrace of our imagination.

Thank you for inviting us in to be part of these bright, beautiful, colorful bursts of your kingdom into the world!

Amen



You can watch the replay of the dedication service at **LWR.ORG/QKPIN**.



LWR Key Leaders Larry and Phyllis Vachal

A SECOND-GENERATION KEY LEADER

As her parents retire,
a daughter steps
up to serve

LARRY AND PHYLLIS VACHAL have never met an LWR quilt or kit recipient, yet they've made it possible for thousands of quilts and kits to reach the people who need them most.

Since 1999, Larry and Phyllis have served as Key Leaders for 330 Lutheran congregations in Oregon, western Idaho and southern Washington. They organize two Ingatherings a year, happening every May and October, that take place in the parking lot of their church, St. Andrew in Beaverton, Oregon.

Larry and Phyllis inherited the role of Key Leaders from Cliff and Leona Bangsund, who at that time were about the same age Larry and Phyllis are now — 81. Larry still remembers the day they were approached by the Bangsunds to take over as Key Leaders: “They invited us out to dinner, to wine and dine us so we couldn’t say no,” Larry laughs. “But it’s turned out great.”

To prepare for the Ingatherings, Larry arranges for a 53-foot freight container to be placed at the church. The Ingathering happens all day on Friday and until noon on Saturday. Then, the container is sealed, taken to the railhead by truck and then carried by train to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. From there, the LWR warehouse in New Windsor, Maryland, picks up the container and hauls it back to the warehouse for processing.

The container fills up completely, Larry says, and a few years they received more boxes than could fit. “We have no idea how many people to expect,” says Phyllis. “We send a letter out and they just come.” In the old days, that letter was printed, stuffed into envelopes and sent by bulk mail to all of the churches in the area. Now, they communicate with most churches by email, but Phyllis says they still send out about 100-125 hard copies of the letter.

Hospitality is a big part of the Ingathering, and Larry and Phyllis arrange for coffee to be served to those who deliver the quilts and kits, some of whom drive for hours to get to Portland. “It’s very rewarding to have Ingatherings and gather materials that are beneficial for people in need. It’s also good to get to know the people you’re working with. You develop great friendships with people like you who have an interest in helping others in need.” she says.

“We’ve gotten to know a lot of people,” Larry says. “I’m not so good at names but I’m pretty good at faces, so I can recall who they are and where they’re coming from.”

“And he likes to talk, so he’s a good greeter,” Phyllis chimes in.

“I think that’s called a gift,” Larry retorts back with a laugh.



The Vachals retired as Key Leaders in 2021, turning over the Ingathering operation to their daughter Rochelle McIntire.

Phyllis serves as statistician for the Ingatherings, tracking how many quilts and kits are collected each time. According to her records, since the fall of 1999 their Ingatherings have brought in **155,072 quilts**, **81,693 school kits** and **64,130 personal care kits!**

With the exception of 2020, when both Ingatherings had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Vachals have never missed an Ingathering. But as time went on and they were growing older, they knew they would need to recruit someone to take over for them soon. They didn't have to look far, though, as their daughter Rochelle stepped up to take on the role as Key Leader.

"I've always been interested in the work of LWR and the impact it has on the world," says Rochelle. "I saw this as a great way to get involved and carry on the work my parents have been passionate about for years." Rochelle says Larry and Phyllis have also inspired Rochelle's daughter to get involved as well. "I'm hoping we can have all three generations involved to some extent in this work."

Rochelle's first Ingathering will be May 2021. Larry and Phyllis feel her technology skills will be a great asset in her role as the new Key Leader. "She's capable of doing an excellent job," says Larry. "She's very organized." They also look forward to Rochelle involving younger volunteers to help out at the collection events.

"They have a pretty good system set up, but I think I can add a little automation to the tracking and communications. I'm lucky that my parents are so organized and have all the records saved for all their years they have been in this role," says Rochelle.

"We are so grateful that Larry and Phyllis created what we call a 'legacy plan,'" says Janel Johnson-Momanyi, LWR's

Quilt & Kit Ministry Manager, who works closely with LWR Key Leaders nationwide. "Ingatherings are vital to the sustainability of the Quilt & Kit Ministry; they help ensure that we have a steady supply of quilts and kits at the ready to provide our global partners. Because Larry and Phyllis planned ahead and recruited someone to carry on as Key Leaders after them, those 330 congregations still have an Ingathering to get their quilts and kits across the country to our warehouse, so that we can distribute them across the world to hurting families."

"My parents' dedication to LWR is inspiring," says Rochelle. "They have given a lot of time over the years, which they have done gladly as they gain from the feeling of helping out the world with this work."

And though Larry and Phyllis are stepping down as Key Leaders, they won't be absent from the Ingatherings. "It's hard to give up something you've been doing for such a long time," says Phyllis. "This isn't something you walk away from and forget about it."

"We'll still be involved ... probably until we're in the nursing home!" says Larry with a laugh. "And there's always something you can do to help." ■



Volunteers load a 53-foot container at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Beaverton, Oregon.