

SPECIAL EDITION

God's Love

IN ACTION

A PUBLICATION FROM



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

How your
congregation's
LOVE
is reaching
our neighbors
from Ukraine

The long
road ahead
for Ukrainian
refugees

**FREE SUMMER
BIBLE STUDY:
SEEING OUR NEIGHBORS**

DEAR PARTNER IN MINISTRY,

From the beginning of the Ukraine crisis, the generosity of congregations across the country has been overwhelming. You saw our Ukrainian neighbors fleeing in the harsh winter cold, children and belongings in tow, and you welcomed them with quilts and kits. You saw refugees separated from loved ones, in strange new countries, and you provided them with emergency supplies and support to rebuild their lives after destruction.

Thank you for your compassion, prayers and incredible generosity.

In this special edition, we're reporting back to you the ways your love is reaching our neighbors now, both in Ukraine and those in nearby regions who have fled their homes.

Thank you for being a congregation that extends God's love when and where it's needed most. Because of your care, our staff and partners on the ground will continue to respond to immediate and long-term needs.

In deep gratitude,



**AMBASSADOR
DANIEL SPECKHARD**
President and CEO

P.S. We are so grateful for the leading generosity of Nelsonville Lutheran Church and Peace Lutheran Church in Amherst, WI — both of the Tomorrow River Parish — for providing the initial funds for our Ukraine gift match. Visit lwr.org/congregations to read more about this caring congregation.

Please share the stories from this special edition with your congregation. Visit lwr.org/congregations to download photos for use in your publications.



FREE SUMMER BIBLE STUDY

Seeing Our Neighbors



Visit lwr.org/congregations today to download a Bible study to use this summer with your congregation. **Seeing Our Neighbors** is a three-week study based on Matthew 25:31-46.

*I was a stranger and you welcomed me.
I was sick and you took care of me.
I was hungry and you gave me food.*

Using Scripture, images, the practice of **Visio Divina** and prayer, invite your congregation to see how God is calling God's people to reach out in love to neighbors across the street and across the globe.

Download today at lwr.org/congregations.

Personal Care Kits Needed



Our neighbors in crisis need your faith in action. The essential items in a **PERSONAL CARE KIT** — including soap and a towel — are the number one requested kit by those we serve around the world. Please help us replenish our shelves so that your love can provide dignity and hope to those who need it most.

Visit lwr.org/congregations to get all the information and resources you need for your congregation's Personal Care Kit drive.

THE LONG ROAD AHEAD FOR UKRAINIAN REFUGEES



Marta Detsyk was forced to leave her husband in Ukraine and flee with her three children. "Even if the adults do not eat," she shared, "I must make sure my children have proper food." Marta was looking for work in Poland as a housekeeper.

The needs and the number of refugees continue to grow. What may not be so evident is the long-term impact our neighbors from Ukraine — many turned refugees overnight — will face beyond the immediate crisis.

Here are the top three challenges refugees around the world face in the longer term — and how you can help.

FOOD SECURITY

Millions of people have fled Ukraine since the start of the violence, with millions more displaced within the country. Many were forced to leave with no notice, bringing only the clothing they wore on their backs.

Being a refugee means relying on the kindness of strangers for food, and meals are often skipped when there are no other options. This can be especially detrimental for still-developing young children. This concern can remain even after they have made their way to physical safety, without a regular source of food.

The flood of refugees to host communities puts pressure on food and other supplies there as well. Your generous love helps provide food and other critically needed items.

LIVELIHOODS

Those fleeing leave more than just their homes and material possessions behind them. They also leave their ways of life

and the livelihoods that help sustain them. Natural disasters and conflict-driven emergencies ravage the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people each year.

Refugees often find themselves having to start over completely. Your support helps God's love reach those who find themselves without the economic means to provide for their families in the long-term through livelihoods training and support.

HEALTH CARE

From the start of the conflict, many Ukrainians have been cut off from basic health care services. Hospitals and health care workers alike have been attacked, leaving behind only destruction and hopelessness. Families in crisis situations are prioritizing their safety over their health, ignoring urgent health needs until escaping from immediate danger. Your gift can support our neighbors in and around Ukraine by providing medical supplies or support for emergency medical services.

THANK YOU

Our teams on the ground are meeting immediate needs and planning longer-term responses as families rebuild their lives around the world. But we can't do it without you. ■

Give online at lwr.org/congregations.
Checks can be mailed to Lutheran World Relief,
PO Box 17061, Baltimore, MD 21297-1061.

HOW YOUR LOVE IS RE

Since the conflict began in late February, millions of people have fled Ukraine, with millions more in dire need within their own country. Your love and support greeted them, providing both short and long-term needs during some of their darkest days.

HERE'S WHAT YOUR HELP LOOKS LIKE:



Maria Kozak was unable to withdraw any cash before she fled Ukraine because the lines were so long at the banks and she worried for her safety.



EMERGENCY FUNDS FOR UKRAINIAN REFUGEE FAMILIES IN POLAND, DISTRIBUTED THROUGH A COMBINED PROGRAM WITH LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION.

Cash and vouchers allow refugees to make the best decisions for themselves based on their families' individual needs.

In a converted school gymnasium in Poland, refugees are given food, clothing and a temporary place to sleep.



FOOD, SHELTER AND EMERGENCY SUPPLIES.

Your love is supporting our Ukrainian neighbors with the critical short-term relief they need to meet basic needs while deciding their next move.

ONGOING SUPPORT FOR ST. MARTIN LUTHERAN CHURCH IN KRAKOW, POLAND,

which has established a hostel for Ukrainian women and children. Your generosity has provided residents with essential supplies including milk, energy biscuits, personal hygiene products and room partition panels.



TEACHING UKRAINIANS



An LWR Mission Quilt is a reminder of God's loving presence in the midst of suffering.

▲ **SHIPPING AND DISTRIBUTION OF MISSION QUILTS AND PERSONAL CARE KITS.** Thanks to Lutheran quilters and kit-makers in the United States, 7,400 quilts and 8,000 kits prepositioned in Lutheran World Relief's Dubai warehouse were rushed to Poland. When refugees arrive to safety, your support shows up in the form of a comforting quilt and much-needed care kits.



Halyna Tadai and her children, Nadya and Vladimir, were some of the first refugees to be welcomed at St. Martin's. Halyna left Ukraine out of fear for her children's safety.



Adrianna Pogan treats refugees near the Ukrainian and Poland border. She shares that many are dehydrated and some face more serious conditions because of their long, tiring journeys from Ukraine.

▲ **SUPPORT OF CRITICAL HEALTH NEEDS THROUGH THE PROVISION OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND SUPPORT FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES.** Once refugees have reached safety, they often need medical attention and care. Your gifts provide that critical help. Additionally, your love is getting medical supplies and equipment delivered to a hospital in Ukraine.

SUPPORT FOR PROTECTION SERVICES FOR REFUGEE WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHO ARE FACING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION. Lutheran World Relief is very concerned about sexual abuse and trafficking in Ukraine and for Ukrainian refugees. Protection services will be offered to refugees at our emergency cash distribution sites and beyond. ▼



LWR staff member Maryna Hayes points out a poster warning refugees of human trafficking.



When she heard the violence was spreading, Svitlana Andryshchenko packed a suitcase and fled Ukraine with her two daughters. Pictured here with daughter Hanna, Svitlana told us, "To leave your country in one day with your children, going into nowhere, is very difficult, I just can't tell you." Svitlana and her daughters found refuge at St. Martin's.

YOUR LOVE IS HELPING UKRAINIAN REFUGEES IN LUTHERAN CHURCH SHELTER

"What do you need?"

Sometimes it's the simplest questions that mean the most.

Pastor Łukasz Ostruszka, the newly inducted pastor of St. Martin's Lutheran Church in Krakow, Poland, didn't hesitate with his answer. He urgently needed supplies so his congregation could welcome and care for Ukrainian refugees.

To prepare, the congregation of St. Martin's rapidly remodeled the church basement to shelter several families. In the space of a week, the ordinary bathrooms were fitted with showers, beds were brought in, and workers redid water pipes and electrical wiring to accommodate more users.

"This was a space for our parish meetings, but now it's a hostel for refugees," said Pastor Ostruszka. "A place to sleep, to be warm."

When Lutheran World Relief staff in Poland found Pastor Ostruszka's church in desperate need, the timing seemed

almost divine. Because of your compassion, when families arrive at the church, they are greeted with toys and milk for the children, toothpaste and toothbrushes, hygiene products, toiletries and energy biscuits.

"We were in shock. It's like something from a movie," said Pastor Ostruszka of his congregation members. "We never expected this. We didn't expect so many people from Ukraine."

The first group of families came from Kharkiv, a city heavily hit by the war. Pastor Ostruszka's wife coordinated the families' 3-hour journey by bus from the border to Krakow. The women and their children will have a safe place to rest and won't have to worry about finding essential items.

St. Martin's has helped refugees before, like during a crisis on the Belarussian border. They also helped people coming from Afghanistan, Iraq and countries in Africa.

“Everyone is welcome,” said Pastor Ostruszka. “We hope they will feel at home.”

The numbers now are staggering, and it’s clear that the renovated church hall will be a haven for an ongoing stream of frightened, exhausted mothers. As the buses keep coming, your love also carries Ukraine’s refugees, bringing them support and aid in a time they need it the very most.

Pastor Ostruszka knows there’s a long road ahead. “This is just the start,” he said heavily.

He and the congregation are committed to the long haul, and with your love, so are we.

“We should do this. Our Lord gives us something beautiful, and we should go to other people and give to them,” he said. ■

Mothers support one another as they arrive to St. Martin’s shelter, grateful for the peacefulness and warmth of the hostel. “They sheltered us, you know?” said guest Svitlana Andryshchenko. “Here we are with all these bags. I can’t even express how grateful I am.” ▼

Pastor Łukasz Ostruszka and his congregation are able to host 25-30 refugees at a time in their converted church basement.





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MORE THAN HALF OF UKRAINE'S CHILDREN DISPLACED

Tumyr Pokusa, age 5, left Ukraine with his mom and grandparents. Other family members had to stay behind.

RYNA SUKHOTA, 49, is a child psychologist and Ukrainian refugee who is working in a temporary kindergarten/day care in Krakow, Poland for Ukrainian refugee children.

“As soon as we heard the first sounds of shots, I immediately told my family: we’re packing up and leaving, because it was very important to me to save my children, myself,” said Iryna about her own family’s escape from Ukraine in February 2022. “I understood that by saving myself I’ll be able to help others, and we left immediately.”

Before she even arrived in Poland, Iryna had already started to apply to volunteer centers offering help. “I realized as a child psychologist that children now require attention most of all.”

Iryna works with children to stabilize their well-being and gives parents information about what happens to children and how they can be helped.

Iryna Sukhota, a child psychologist and Ukrainian refugee, cares for children who have arrived in Poland.



“All children without exception are very worried about where their dads are. They ask, ‘where is Papa?’ and ‘when can he return?’” she said. “These are two important questions which all of them ask.”

“All the mothers are very exhausted and tired. They are stressed too,” she said.

Since the start of the war in Ukraine began, millions of Ukrainians – mostly mothers and children, because men aged 18 to 60 are required to stay in Ukraine – fled to Poland and elsewhere to escape bombs and bullets in their hometowns. More than half of Ukraine’s children have been displaced from their homes because of the violence.

Your continued support is needed to help us reach the millions of children displaced within Ukraine and around the world. ■

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