

God's Love IN ACTION

“I WAS TREMBLING.”

-ONELLA MICHEL, AGE 6
HAITI EARTHQUAKE
SURVIVOR

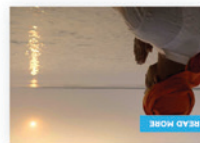
LOOK INSIDE FOR HOW YOUR
CONGREGATION CAN REACH
OUR NEIGHBORS WHEN
DISASTERS STRIKE.



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- Videos to download and share with your congregation
- Publicity tools that make it easy for you to share stories in your church's newsletter, bulletin or on social media
- Creative ways to engage your congregation in hands-on ministry

Created specifically for pastors and church leaders like you, this resource hub includes:



Receive up-to-date resources each month to assist you as you inspire your congregation to share God's love with your neighbors around the world.

**SIGN UP FOR OUR
CONGREGATIONAL
LEADER EMAIL LIST.**



ATTENTION PASTOR

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LWR.ORG



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DEAR PARTNER IN MINISTRY,

Crises upon crises. This is the best way I can describe the realities so many of our neighbors are forced to live through.

Fears of COVID-19 infection for those already experiencing crushing poverty and food insecurity in the African Sahel.

Children going to bed hungry in Uganda because families lack the necessary tools and training to farm the land.

Thousands of neighbors living on the streets of Haiti after a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck the country already dealing with political unrest and a hunger crisis.

Our neighbors with the very least are facing unimaginable suffering. On any given day, it is difficult to know where or how we might be able to make any difference. And yet God calls us together as the body of Christ, each with our individual gifts and passions, **to share our love with the world.**

In this edition, we're inviting you to respond to a variety of needs. I know you can't care for all the people whose needs come across your desk. But you know your congregation best. If the heart of your congregation is motivated to ensure that children don't go to bed hungry, I hope you'll share Suzan's story and respond generously. If your congregation rises to the occasion to help neighbors in need when natural disaster strikes, please consider a gift to our World of Good Emergency Response Fund.

We are the body of Christ. Thanks be to God that we can do far more together than any of us can on our own.

In deep gratitude for your compassionate generosity,



**AMBASSADOR
DANIEL SPECKHARD**
President and CEO



A SEASON OF HOPE

ADVENT SERMON SERIES

Are you planning ahead?

Invite your congregation to experience **A Season of Hope** during a 4-week series based on the RCL Advent texts from the gospel of Luke.

FREE FOR YOUR USE THIS ADVENT:

- 4 weeks of sermon illustrations
- Accompanying photos to help you tell the story
- Powerful video to be used each week during worship and/or on social media that highlights your congregation's love in action around the world
- 4 week small group Bible study guide
- Candle lighting litany

View and download this suite of resources at lwr.org/advent.



HER CHILDREN ARE HUNGRY. WILL YOUR CONGREGATION SHARE GOD'S LOVE?



Jake Lyell for LWR

SUZAN NZABAKE TOILS ON HER FARM, DAY IN AND DAY OUT, TRYING TO GROW COFFEE AND VANILLA THE BEST WAYS SHE KNOWS HOW. BUT THE FLOWERS KEEP DROPPING OFF HER PLANTS BEFORE THE FRUIT HAS A CHANCE TO DEVELOP, AND HER YIELDS ARE ALWAYS SMALL.

Suzan's family lives in extreme poverty in Kasese, Uganda. They sleep on the floor of a tiny mud hut, and they have very little to eat. Her children are sick "all the time," she says, and she has to make frequent visits to the hospital with them.

"They don't play," she laments. "The little ones just spend time crying and dozing off." At school, the older ones fall asleep in class because they're hungry and have no energy.

Suzan often eats just once a day so there's enough food for her children to eat twice. Her stomach rumbles and she feels lightheaded while she digs the soil by hand, but there's nothing else to eat to keep her going. She says when she came down with malaria recently, it took a long time to recover because she was so weak from hunger.

"Our family and I survive, but life isn't good," she says.

Still, Suzan prays fervently for a better future. "The Bible says you should ask God what you desire, and I pray that he blesses me through my land and that what is within it should uplift me."

Your congregation can be the answer to her prayers.

**"...FOR I WAS HUNGRY AND YOU GAVE ME FOOD,
I WAS THIRSTY AND YOU GAVE ME SOMETHING TO DRINK,
I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU WELCOMED ME..."**

MATTHEW 25:35



Lutheran World Relief visited Suzan's farm to see how we could share God's love with her family. Soil tests showed that there were very little nutrients to sustain her crops, and she had no access to fertilizer or basic farming tools.

That means no matter how hard she works, Suzan will labor in vain unless she receives training and tools to improve her yields and her income. No matter how many times her children visit the hospital, they won't thrive — and they may not survive at all — if they don't have enough to eat.

Suzan, her children and so many others have done everything they can to help themselves. But they are poor, hungry and exhausted.

As followers of Christ, will your congregation extend your hand to these precious neighbors — to feed them when they are hungry? To provide what they need so they can learn to provide for themselves?

Your congregation's love can be the answer to their prayers. ■

**Until your love
reaches every neighbor.**

Visit lwr.org/congregations to download publicity tools for sharing Suzan's story or to give online.



Shruti Shrestha for LWR



Bijaya Mani / Hartamchali Rai for LWR

WATCH & SHARE



Visit lwr.org/congregations for more information, including a powerful video you can watch and share with your congregation.

COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE

We are so grateful that many congregations have generously donated to reach neighbors who would otherwise be forgotten during the COVID-19 pandemic. Already, these gifts are at work in displacement camps, remote villages and poor communities that urgently need them.

-  In **Mali**, your love arrived in the form of food vouchers and farming supplies to help increase food security among hungry families displaced by conflict.
-  In **Nepal**, your gifts are spreading the word that COVID vaccines are safe and will help to prevent severe illness. You're also supporting health centers in vulnerable areas to obtain, store and administer the vaccines.
-  In **Kenya**, your support has delivered ICU beds, personal protective equipment and other critical supplies to help health workers treat COVID patients in the poorest slums of Nairobi.
-  In **Yemen**, your congregation reached families living in remote camps after civil war drove them from their homes. In addition to food, your kindness provided critical water and sanitation supplies to help prevent COVID-19 and other communicable diseases.

...and more.

Your congregation's gifts are feeding the hungry, protecting vulnerable families from COVID and sharing God's love with neighbors throughout the world. Thank you!

But the pandemic is not yet over, and the needs are still tremendous. To send your congregation's help, visit lwr.org/congregations. ■



LIVING OUR SERMONS BY LOVING OUR NEIGHBORS

REV. DR. JON DIEFENTHALER TELLS THE STORY OF AN OLD PASTOR WHO WOULD GO AROUND AND ASK PEOPLE, “WHEN IS A SERMON A GOOD SERMON?” AS IT TURNS OUT, THE PASTOR KNEW THE RESPONSE HE WAS LOOKING FOR: WHEN IT IS LIVED.

This longing to encourage people to live the gospel is at the heart of Pastor Diefenthaler’s longstanding relationship with Lutheran World Relief. “We hope the gospel that we preach will accomplish something in the lives of the people; that they will actually do something to live out their faith in Jesus Christ.” For Diefenthaler, giving to Lutheran World Relief is one way he inspires others to **contribute to the process of bringing the kingdom of God into this world.**

Pastor Diefenthaler has supported the ministry of LWR in a myriad of ways throughout his career. As a parish pastor for nearly 30 years, his congregations were filled with strong advocates for LWR. Later as a District President, he deepened his relationship with LWR as one of its board members.

While serving on the board, Pastor Diefenthaler had an opportunity to witness the love of Jesus at work in Tanzania. Lutheran World Relief, working in partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, was teaching school-aged kids how to properly use bednets to eradicate malaria. He will never forget a conversation he had with a pastor who described in agony the 70- plus funerals the pastor had conducted the previous year for people who had died from malaria. In that conversation, Pastor Diefenthaler realized how important the work of LWR was for the church’s ministry.

“The work LWR is doing overseas is making such a significant difference in people’s lives,” Pastor Diefenthaler says. “LWR is transforming lives and in many cases, saving lives, which I believe is part of the ministry to which our Lord has called us.”

Today Diefenthaler lives out his faith by serving as a Church Relations Adviser for LWR. He is passionate about helping congregations fulfill Jesus’ command to love their neighbor as themselves. **If you’re looking to deepen your congregation’s relationship with LWR, please reach out to Jon at jtdiefen@aol.com.** ■