

God's Love IN ACTION

HELP FEED FAMILIES IN DANGER

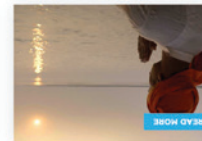
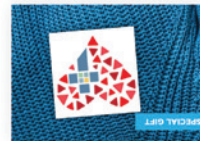
LENT RESOURCES INSIDE: MAKE PERSONAL CARE KITS



Visit lwr.org/congregations today.

- 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.

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HELP FEED FAMILIES IN DANGER

For years Elizabeth Nyalam Gai, her husband and their five children managed to dodge the ongoing violence in South Sudan, keeping a low profile and scraping by as best they could. But one day a rebel militia arrived on their doorstep and killed Elizabeth's husband, just because they could — shattering the family's peace and security in an instant.

Elizabeth knew her only choice was to grab her children and run.

HUNGER BECAME THEIR GREATEST ENEMY

For seven months, Elizabeth and her children hid in the bush from soldiers and wild animals, surviving on whatever twigs, berries and bushmeat they could find. Most days, it wasn't much.

“When [my husband] was killed, life was terrible and we went hungry,” Elizabeth recalls. “When we were hungry we would just lie down, because we had no energy.”

While her children slept, she kept watch — worrying every moment that the soldiers would find them, or that her children would starve.

TO TRULY START OVER, THEY NEED FOOD

Elizabeth and her children eventually stumbled upon a displacement camp about 300 miles from the home they left behind. They arrived weak, starving and at the mercy of the strangers living there.

“When you're a displaced person, you leave without bringing anything,” Elizabeth explains. “We have no utensils, blankets, tarps, nothing.”

Until she regains her strength and can collect what she needs to start a garden, Elizabeth is relying on the kindness of others living in the camp — families just like hers who fled their homes with nothing — to keep her family fed and help her obtain basic supplies for survival.

YOUR CONGREGATION CAN HELP FAMILIES LIKE ELIZABETH'S

Elizabeth's story is harrowing, but she's not the only mother struggling to feed her children and keep them safe in the face of



Sean Hawkey for LWR

DEAR PARTNER IN MINISTRY,

Happy New Year! Thank you for your continued commitment to sharing the Good News with your congregation and your neighbors around the world.



When it comes to supporting mission partners, we know you have many worthy organizations from which to choose. As you make decisions this year about how you want to make a difference in the world, I hope you will share your congregation's generosity with your neighbors through Lutheran World Relief.

Our neighbors like Elizabeth and her children desperately need your love. They live in one of the hardest to reach areas in the world's newest country — South Sudan. Lutheran World Relief operates the only health centers in their region. **That's because when others leave, we stay behind.**

We are committed to reaching Elizabeth and so many others like her because we envision a future where all people, in every corner of the world can live full, dignified lives. **But we can't reach our neighbors without the kindness of congregations like yours.**

Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions about how your congregation can become more involved in our ministry. We have a great team of pastors and staff ready to help connect your congregation with our work around the world.

In Christ's love,



REV. LISA KIPP
Sr. Manager of
Congregational Engagement
lkipp@lwr.org

A SEASON OF HOPE

LENT

SHARE GOD'S LOVE WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS THIS LENT

Lent may be a time of waiting, but it need not be one of inaction. By making Personal Care Kits, your congregation can deliver tangible hope to our neighbors in need around the world.

Go to lwr.org/lent to access all the information and resources you need for your congregation's **Personal Care Kit drive**.

You'll also find **a new video** to share with your congregation showing how your generosity is making a difference and spreading hope in the world.

Our neighbors in crisis need as many Personal Care Kits as your church can send.

How many Personal Care Kits will your congregation make?



Clemence Elijah for LWR

extreme adversity. **Your congregation's generosity will provide emergency food for families in crisis as well as longer-term efforts to support sustainable livelihoods and farming.**

Please join us in loving our neighbors as Christ did by feeding the hungry and caring for their needs.

**Until your love
reaches every neighbor.**



Visit lwr.org/congregations for a powerful video and publicity tools to share Elizabeth's story or to make your congregation's gift online. You can also mail your gift using the enclosed envelope.



Memories of a local disaster spur one congregation to **DISASTER RELIEF**

by Brenda Meier Kimaro

In 1978, Rochester, Minn., was struck by a devastating flood. Torrential rains covered about a third of the city. With more than \$60 million in damage and five lives lost, it was the worst flooding in Rochester's history. Still, even forty-plus years later, the memories of the natural disaster are strong for many.

"My husband grew up in Rochester and tells me stories about the flood — there was a river running right by Bethel," says Pastor Anjanette Bandel, who serves as lead pastor at Bethel Lutheran Church. "Those things really stick with you and change your whole perspective."

Pastor Anjanette credits the long-lasting memories of that 1978 flood with inspiring Bethel to generously respond when natural disasters strike around the world. "It's in our DNA," she says.

When it comes to international disasters, Bethel members have long trusted Lutheran World Relief to express their love and God's love to people in their time of greatest need. "LWR does a great job of communicating what's happening in all of these places," Pastor Anjanette





Rochester support WORLDWIDE

Allison Shelley for LWR

With Rochester being home to the world-famous Mayo Clinic, a significant portion of Bethel's members are medical professionals and they especially resonate with responding to health-related needs — clean water, hygiene, access to food. Bethel's most recent gift supported LWR's disaster response to Haiti's August 14 earthquake. The congregation generously gave \$4,500 to provide earthquake survivors emergency food, clean water, hygiene kits and medical care. Last year they gave \$2,000 to help LWR respond to back-to-back Hurricanes Eta and Iota in Central America with emergency food and hygiene supplies.

“We have a great deal of trust in LWR,” says Pastor Anjanette, “because of its history of integrity as an organization that makes a difference and its transparency with spending, and we appreciate the faith connection — this is faith in action. We not only know that our dollars make a difference but we do this in response to what God has provided us and we can provide for our neighbor.” ■

- **LEFT:** Roseziana Bernard with four of her seven children in the remnants of their home in Haiti following a 7.2 magnitude earthquake that rocked the region in August.
- **BELOW:** Pastor Anjanette Bandel in front of Bethel Lutheran Church in Rochester, MN. **(top).** Members of Bethel Lutheran Church assembling kits **(bottom).**



says. “We know what the needs are that are being addressed there. That’s a strength of LWR.”

A few years ago, the congregation’s Social Missions Team reflected on how Bethel could make the most impact with their giving. They wanted to focus their giving, making a deeper impact by supporting fewer organizations rather than being pulled in several different directions. **The twelve-member group that oversees Bethel’s giving to external organizations asked themselves where they saw the greatest impact being made with their giving. “LWR was at the top of that list,”** Pastor Anjanette says.

Bethel’s members see LWR as an extension of their calling to “minister to human needs,” which is one of the tenets of their mission statement.

“Though we can’t all travel to these destinations, knowing that we’re sending a donation for disaster relief draws us into relationship beyond the boundaries of distance. We discover that we can care for each other in ways that help us to all thrive as God’s people,” Pastor Anjanette explains.

PERSONAL CARE KITS BRING HOPE AND COMFORT DURING COVID



• **ABOVE:** Sabina Sevilla receives a Personal Care Kit in San José, Honduras.

Sabina Sevilla has lived with constant abdominal pain for over a year, but she says her appointment with a doctor for tests was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Her village in San Jose, Honduras, was hit hard by an outbreak of the virus several months ago, and she was terrified due to her age and limited access to medical care. She felt trapped by the virus on one side and her pain on the other. “I’m afraid if I even try to travel to the doctor, I’ll get coronavirus,” she said.

Her village received a delivery of Personal Care Kits from Lutheran World Relief, assembled with love by our generous supporters, to help families like Sabina’s have access to soap and supplies for handwashing and general hygiene. Local health officials hope the kits will help to curb another outbreak, but Sabina says just the thought of having the kit brings her comfort. “It means so much to have this,” she says, holding the items close. ■

INVITE YOUR CONGREGATION TO MAKE PERSONAL CARE KITS

Visit lwr.org/lent for resources and more info.