

Lasting Promise

M A G A Z I N E

Keeping families together in Guatemala

How estate gifts help
Neighbors in Need

SUPPORTING
Ukraine's mothers and children



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

Lasting Promise

MAGAZINE

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ON THE COVER:

Katherine Fernanda Ramirez De Leon (4) hugs her mom, Roselvina De León González (31) on their family's farm in northern Guatemala. Roselvina has helped her community to see that 'women can also do work and generate income for our families.'



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friend,

As we watch the horror of war unfold in Ukraine — a catastrophe Europe has not seen for generations — I'm reminded of the biblical call to respond to "strangers in a strange land."

Lutheran World Relief is working on the ground in Poland, where more than 3 million Ukrainian refugees have sought safety. As of late April, 2 million more have fled to other European countries. As we work to bring desperately needed supplies, emergency cash transfers and medical aid to those who are suffering, I want to share with you the words of Evelyn Bonander, one of our **Partners in Lasting Promise**. She gets to the heart of what we do, and why we do it:

"As I see mothers and their children — the refugees leaving — I'm thinking about how distraught mothers are. How do we walk with these mothers and their children? How do we give them food and what they need while also supporting them in their fear and anxiety?"

Evelyn's words ring in my ears. We must walk with our suffering neighbors, tending to their material needs but also their emotional pain. That's what Lutheran World Relief is here for, and that's why we are so grateful for your pledge to remember neighbors in your wills.

Because of people like you, and Evelyn, we can respond to this dramatic, heartrending moment in history. Thank you!

In Christ,

**AMBASSADOR
DANIEL SPECKHARD**
President and CEO

We want to hear from you!

Your stories and the love you share with others are truly inspiring. There's no better way to grow this society of Partners in Lasting Promise than by motivating others with your real-life stories of faith, compassion and belief. Share with us your calling, and what reminds you each day to share God's will to love and care for your neighbors.

I'm particularly interested in what persuaded you to share your love for others less fortunate through a planned gift to Lutheran World Relief. Your stories will be shared amongst our networks to highlight the importance of planned-gift commitments.

Please contact me at LGRANT@LWR.ORG or 410 230 2827 to arrange a time to speak.

In appreciation of all that you do,

LEE GRANT
Planned Giving Manager



KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER IN GUATEMALA



In Guatemala, as in many Central American countries, limited ways to earn income often force people to leave their homes in search of ways to support their families.

Oribel De León González is one of the hardworking Guatemalans who had to choose: stay in his village or leave it behind in the hopes of finding a job.

“We used to migrate to Chiapas (Mexico) mostly to harvest coffee,” Oribel says. “There we earned some pennies to support ourselves.”

But for many Guatemalans, neither leaving nor staying at home leads to a sustainable way of life.

When they migrate, they have no ownership of their labor and may even find themselves in dangerous or exploitative situations. If they stay in their villages, they have no way to earn a living.

YOUR KINDNESS HAS OPENED UP A NEW PATH

Through the transformational gifts of Partners in Lasting Promise like you, vulnerable Guatemalans now have better options when it comes to employment that doesn't force them to leave their families and homes behind.

Your enduring support has helped Guatemalan farmers improve their

cacao production and sell more raw beans at better prices. They now have a 500-tree test garden where they can graft highly productive and disease-resistant local trees onto their farms for higher yields and greater resiliency – all within their home communities.

There's even a group of female chocolatiers who have the knowledge and ability to create chocolate to sell locally. And a network of young Guatemalans are in place to help other families like themselves improve crop production and minimize pests and diseases.



◀ Oribel De León González (28) stands in the oyster mushroom greenhouse he owns with his sister, Roselvina. Oribel and Roselvina work with others within their community to explain the process and benefits of programs like theirs.

“This (work) allows youth to stay close to home,” says Pedro Tiul Caal, a member of the network.

SUSTAINABLE CHANGE THROUGH PLANNED GIVING

By leaving a gift in your will, you lift families out of poverty and ensure they can stay together — today, tomorrow and for generations to come.

“We no longer have to migrate to Mexico because we can sustain ourselves here,” Oribel says. “We generate an income.”

Roselvina De León González, who has a vegetable and mushroom farm in San Marcos, shares her knowledge with other farmers, so they have the skills to produce their own food on their own land. Once a family can farm their own land more effectively, they can sell their surplus for a profit.

“We have learned how to feed our families, how to feed our children,” she says. “Thanks to the income we earn from the products we now own and sell, we no longer have to leave our families and homes.” ○



Lutheran World Relief supports programs where farmers learn about shade management, pruning and fertilizer application. Partners also teach the communities about clonal farming, fermentation, solar-powered drying and chocolate making.

CACAO CONNECTIONS

Teddy Miguel Ruiz Ruiz (36), General Manager of Cacao Verapaz, shows off some of the raw beans purchased from one of the six associations that they partner with.

Recently, I made a cross-country move to San Francisco. One weekend I was exploring downtown and found myself at an indoor market. As I squeezed past strangers in the bustling hall, I noticed a display about single-origin cacao.

In November, I traveled with Lutheran World Relief to visit project sites in Guatemala. Lutheran World Relief has a decades-long history of working hand in hand with rural communities to improve livelihoods in developing countries. While there, I met with cacao farmers and heard about the struggles that many community members face when trying to find employment to feed their families.

Lutheran World Relief partners train a cooperative of these farmers in more effective agricultural practices. After harvest, the cacao beans are transported to Cacao Verapaz, a nearby exporter that Lutheran World Relief works alongside to bring cacao to market worldwide, at a higher price for farmers.

Back in San Francisco, I wandered into the store with the display, but to my disappointment, I couldn't find anything from Guatemala. The woman behind the counter told me that they were out of stock. I said it was all right and turned to leave. She stopped me and said, "Actually ... I may have one bar. The label was damaged, so we weren't able to sell it." She pulled the bar out from a drawer and handed it to me.

I couldn't believe my eyes. The label mentioned the same coop I'd seen when I traveled to what seemed like such a remote community of cacao farmers in the hills of Guatemala. I had met with the coop president under the shade of his trees and with the directors at Cacao Verapaz in a small town nearby.

And now, 3,000 miles away, I was holding this finely-produced bar of chocolate that had originated from those very same hills in Guatemala.

We are all much more connected to the global community than we might realize. ○



*By Amy Vu, Senior Associate,
Multimedia Design*

‘SO THEY MIGHT HAVE LIFE’

Husband and wife leave a lasting footprint

“I went to the settlements outside of Nairobi, visiting mothers who knew they would die from AIDS.”

PASTOR DAVID WANGAARD remembers the time years before HIV treatment was available, when millions of children became orphans.

“I went into a ramshackle house with a tin roof, 5x6 feet. I was scared,” he recalls. “A mother served us a cup of tea. She was grateful we were there. She knew that because of our presence, her children would have life.”

Pastor Dave saw the same light in other mothers. “Sitting with these women who had HIV, I was struck with their faith and trust in God. They knew that their children would be cared for.”

Pastor Dave and his wife, the **REVEREND SUSAN TJORNEHOJ**, spent decades ministering to people in need in the United States and overseas. They knew they wanted to sustain the trust that our neighbors have: a trust, that through them, God would take care of their children.

“The word ‘legacy’ has always been important to me. In the waters of my baptism, Jesus called me to leave a legacy,” Pastor Dave says. He and Sue decided that a gift to Lutheran World Relief was a way to make that happen — and to keep a promise to the world’s poorest. “I knew of no other organization that would help me leave a lasting footprint on the world so well.”

“We sat down with a financial planner and looked at our assets — what God had given us,” he says. They picked out the organizations that meant the most to them, and Lutheran World Relief was one.



“Sue and I have been so impacted by the lives of the most vulnerable,” he explains. “It’s through them that we become aware of God’s love.”

The couple began their ministry in a village in Alaska, where people were totally dependent on the migration of animals like ducks, fish and seals for food. “One year, the ducks and seals and geese weren’t in,” Pastor Dave remembers. “People in our village were eating canned food like beans.”

Surrounding villages heard what was happening and they brought food.

“I realized then that nothing belongs to you alone, but to the community,” he reflects. “Sue and I so hope that our gift will help the most vulnerable know how loved they are by God and by people in the U.S.” ○

HEARTBREAK FOR UKRAINE: YOUR LOVE HELPS US RESPOND



WHEN BOMBS BEGAN FALLING in Ukraine in late February, our humanitarian action teams knew we had a massive job ahead of us. And as the number of refugees climbed to over 5 million in weeks, we mobilized to serve them.

The sheer scale of the war has been staggering and heartbreaking. Not since Lutheran World Relief provided food and assistance to families after World War II have we witnessed such calamity on the soil of Europe.

Thanks to planned gifts and gifts in wills from partners like you, we had funding reserves and could act immediately. We're working with local groups to provide for the most urgent needs.

WE ARE ALSO:

- Providing medical supplies and support for emergency medical services
- Supporting church efforts to provide shelter, food, and basic necessities to refugee mothers and children
- Distributing emergency funds to refugees

We also plan to respond in other countries suffering from the inevitable ripple effects, like fuel and food disruptions.

It's thanks to donors like you, who have foreseen these future needs, that we can respond so quickly when disasters strike. By leaving a share of your estate to Lutheran World Relief, you've committed to reach out in love to people who might need help decades from now. When they do, Lutheran World Relief will be there, as we are now with food, warmth and comfort for our suffering neighbors. ○

◀ Ukrainian refugees are given food, clothing, and a place to sleep in a converted school gymnasium in the small town of Przemysl, Poland near the border with Ukraine.

STRENGTH FOR TODAY, BRIGHT HOPE FOR TOMORROW

HOW ESTATE GIFTS HELP NEIGHBORS IN NEED



GUATEMALA

Your generosity helps families in poor rural areas grow more and better crops and boost their income. Our neighbors are now producing quality cacao — the bean that becomes cocoa — and oyster mushrooms, a popular ingredient in Guatemalan cooking.

YOUR IMPACT: Your generosity helps families in poor rural areas grow more and better crops and boost their income. Our neighbors are now producing quality cacao — the bean that becomes cocoa — and oyster mushrooms, a popular ingredient in Guatemalan cooking.



HAITI

The 7.2-magnitude earthquake that struck Haiti last summer caused widespread damage to homes, schools and health centers, leaving vulnerable families, including the elderly, sick and injured, traumatized and without shelter.

YOUR IMPACT: Support from planned gifts rushed water purification tablets, tarps for temporary shelter and LWR Quilts, Personal Care Kits and Baby Care Kits to hard-hit communities. And the work continues as we repair damaged health clinics and replenish supplies including syringes, goggles, masks, gloves and personal protective equipment.



Thank you for entrusting Lutheran World Relief to carry out your vision for a brighter future for your neighbors around the world! Here are some places where gifts in wills are helping families to overcome challenges — and how we're planning to build on this work through future planned gifts to create impact that lasts for generations to come.

UKRAINE

The Russian attack on Ukraine has caused terrible and widespread suffering. Millions of our Ukrainian neighbors have fled their homes for safety in what is now the fastest and largest displacement of people in Europe since World War II.

YOUR IMPACT: Funds from planned giving helped us launch response plans immediately. This includes delivering urgent support and care, like emergency cash for people that lost their income when they fled for safety, LWR Quilts and Care Kits for refugees and families still in Ukraine, and medicine and supplies for clinics.

Bijaya Mani Hartamchali Rai for LWR

NEPAL

The COVID-19 pandemic hit Nepal especially hard. The most dramatic spike, in May 2021, overwhelmed the country's health system and left our poorest neighbors struggling to stay healthy and maintain their incomes.

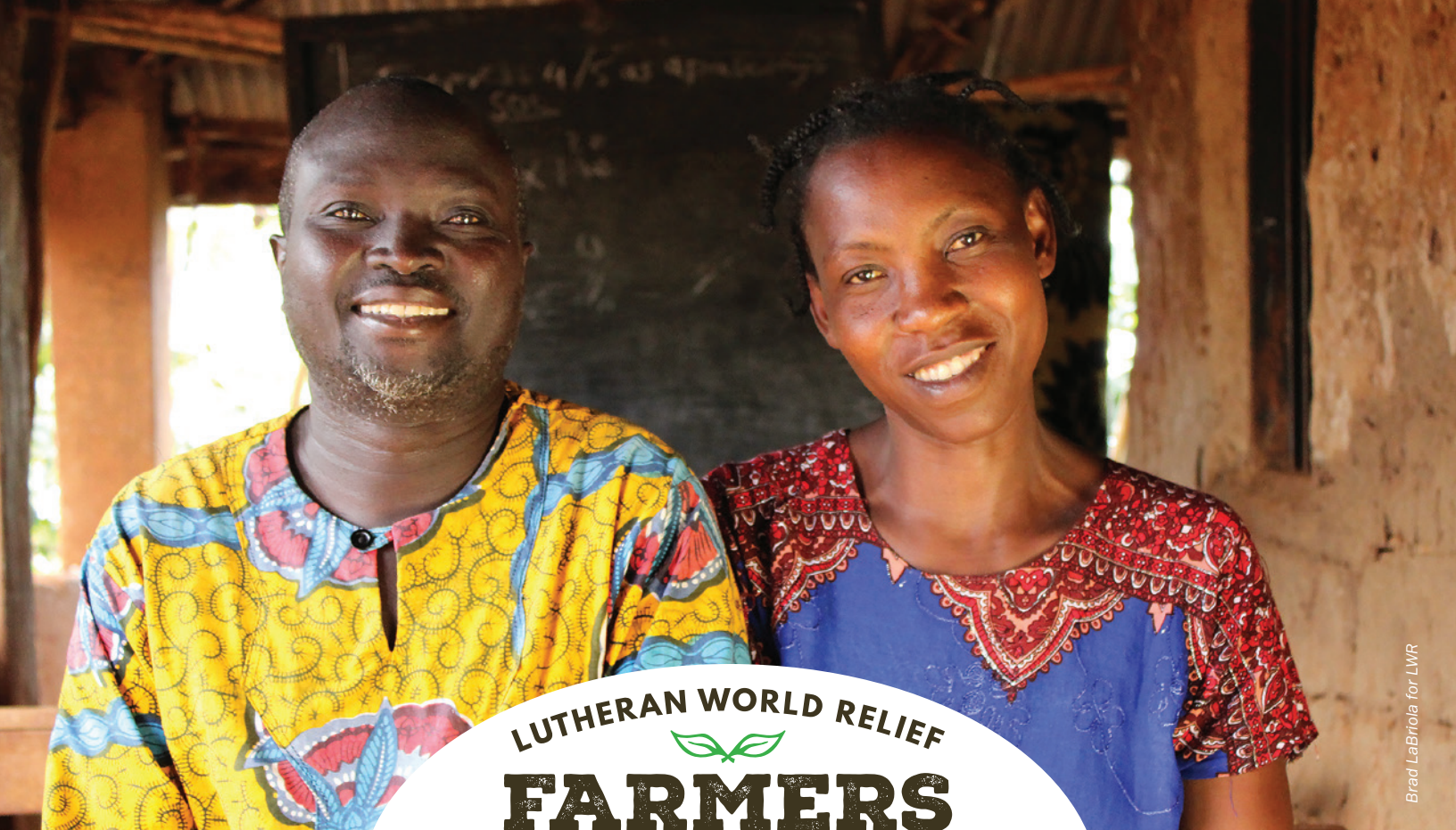
YOUR IMPACT: Love like yours helped women, men and children get to health centers when they needed care and stocked clinics with lifesaving supplies. It also helped families who depend on their small farms to survive get the equipment they needed to continue processing and selling their crops.

UGANDA

Around the world, families in poor communities do not have enough to eat. For those in extreme poverty, hunger creates a domino effect leaving children without the strength and energy to thrive.

YOUR IMPACT: In Uganda, your love answers the prayers of our neighbors who are hungry and struggling. You provide emergency food, as well as the tools and knowledge they need to help their crops — and their families— thrive. Farmers have seen their financial yields on crops more than triple thanks to your generous heart.





Brad LaBriola for LWR

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

**FARMERS
MARKET**
C O F F E E

THE FARM OF WADAMBA DISON AND NAFUNA OLIVER IS TEEMING WITH LIFE.

Nestled in the lush landscape of Uganda's Mt. Elgon, a visit to their farm might find mother hens on their porch pecking around their chicks, as dozens of children assemble in a classroom at the onsite school the couple started, while other members of the community prepare meals for the children, as Wadamba and Nafuna themselves tend to the crop that makes it all possible — coffee.

In many ways, the couple's farm perfectly illustrates what Lutheran World Relief hopes to accomplish in working to change the way we reach coffee farmers — helping coffee farmers not only grow better coffee, but also better lives.

Above: Wadamba Dison (52) and his wife Nafuna Oliver (48) grow coffee on their farm in the Mayiyi region of Mt. Elgon, Uganda. The couple own a farm and also a school, which is wholly supported by coffee income. In addition to their children, they care for two other children in their home.

Coffee: An inequitable supply chain that fuels poverty

Most of the world's coffee supply is grown by farmers working modest plots of land, and whose families depend on that land — and that crop — for survival. But that survival is influenced by much more than crop yields.

“There are many market forces that can destabilize the price of coffee beans, and drive farmers deeper into poverty,” says Louis Castriota, Managing Director of Farmers Market Brands, who manages the packaging and sales of LWR Farmers Market Coffee. “Most farmers have little control over these factors and don't have the collective power to influence them.”

To add to this dynamic, in traditional coffee systems, after a coffee farmer harvests and sells their beans, they no longer benefit from that crop, even though it goes through many steps to increase its value before it is sold to consumers. Coffee farmers do not share

HOW IT WORKS



in the profit of the final sale of the coffee made from their beans.

These factors, along with a host of others, mean that once a farmer's beans are harvested and sold, farmers are left with too little income and far too many needs.

Changing the game by changing the market

For decades, Lutheran World Relief has worked with coffee farmers around the world to increase the quality of their coffee beans, diversify their income sources and strengthen farmer cooperatives — all with the aim of helping coffee farmers lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

But several years ago, a different idea took hold.

What if Lutheran World Relief supporters could actually buy coffee from the farmers they help?

That idea took root and became LWR Farmers Market Coffee. The model for this coffee company is simple.

LWR Farmers Market Coffee is sourced from farmers helped by your gifts to Lutheran World Relief. For every bag of coffee you buy, farmers get a strong up-front price for their beans and share in the profit from the sale of the coffee.

That means when you buy and drink this coffee, the person who grew that coffee directly benefits from each and every purchase.

Changing the way we change the coffee market

Coffee has long brought communities (especially Lutherans!) together and LWR Farmers Market Coffee is no exception. By buying and drinking LWR Farmers Market Coffee you join together in community with coffee farmers to create a more just, equitable coffee market — and world.

For Wadamba and Nafuna, selling their coffee in this way has been a game-changer. Earning a good price for the coffee beans has not only improved the lives of their six children, but also given them the opportunity to help their community by starting a school at their farm.

And none of those efforts would be possible without the generous hearts and spirits of those supporters like you, who have chosen to remember their neighbors around the world with a gift to Lutheran World Relief in their will. **THANK YOU!** ○



WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WADAMBA AND NAFUNA'S STORY?

Scan this code on your phone to visit our website.



SAVING NEPAL'S SMALL BUSINESSES DURING COVID



“DURING THE PANDEMIC, IT WAS HARD TO GET WORKERS,”

says **Dhan Bahadur Gurung**, who grows corn in rural Nepal. Another farmer, **Jayantri Kewat**, struggled to get his banana plants pesticides and fertilizers, due to COVID border closures with nearby India. And 40-year-old **Shankhi Kumari Chaudhary** wondered if her onion-growing work would be in vain.

Other small businesspeople were affected, too. Ranjita Gurung used to sell items from a vending cart, standing outside the gate of a local school. When schools stopped, so did her source of income. Her husband, a migrant worker overseas who sent money

home, was sent back to Nepal because of the pandemic.

When COVID-19 began spreading in the Asian country, it disrupted both lives and hard-won livelihoods. Nepalese people who had struggled to develop small farms and businesses saw the work of years under threat.

In the past, generous gifts in wills have helped farmers and others sustain livelihoods in Nepal. When the pandemic struck, we couldn't let that progress be lost.

We set to work to save lives by providing oxygen, medical supplies, ICU beds and training on how to prevent the disease. We also made sure villagers had what

they needed to continue growing crops, selling their products and earning an income.

Thanks to far-seeing donors, we had reserves to use immediately. “When there are disasters and difficulties, we join hands with the community immediately,” says Kiran Ojha, Country Director for Lutheran World Relief Nepal. “Generous donor giving has made it possible to support the victims of disasters in Nepal at the time of need.”

Shankhi Kumari Chaudhary received support from an LWR partner to improve onion production on her farm. (Shruti Shrestha for LWR)

Dhan Bahadur Gurung received equipment that helped him keep his farm work going during the pandemic (Bijaya Mani Hartamchali Rai for LWR)



Dhan Gurung, for example, received threshing equipment to harvest his crops. Even with less manpower available, “this machine helped me continue the work,” he says. Jayantri also learned to make pesticides with local materials. Other farmers received harvesting machines, and small vendors received vending carts. The farmers were able to harvest on time despite labor shortages. The vending carts helped poor households maintain their income by going door to door selling vegetables and other food. A women’s cooperative received supplies for grinding and packaging turmeric, so its members could make income during the pandemic.

“The pandemic’s fallout has had a devastating effect on the country’s subsistence farmers,” Kiran says. “We knew that they might not be able to get supplies or equipment through their normal channels, but we were able to draw from pre-identified regional and national level vendors. That’s why we sent seeds and machinery that benefitted more than 800 of the people who were most marginalized during the second wave of COVID in 2021.”

Kiran remembers another sharp shock that hit farmers several years ago: an earthquake. “We had gift-in-will funding to support the victims of 2015. With that money, we supported around 1,500 poor

families with livelihood recovery programs such as vegetable farming, coffee and citrus farming,” he recalls. “With these donations, we initiate something, and we find avenues to make it sustainable in the long run.”

Just as today’s gifts are sustaining the livelihood programs built in the past, so your future gift will preserve the hard work of these farmers and small business owners. Instead of seeing years of effort wiped out, they see hope — a hope that you make possible. ○

A close-up photograph of a woman with short dark hair, looking directly at the camera with a gentle expression. She is holding a newborn baby who is sleeping peacefully. The baby is wearing a white onesie with blue and red patterns. The woman is wearing a light green shirt. The background is softly blurred, showing an indoor setting with green and white walls.

//INFOCUS

Lusamba Nkashama hugs her daughter, Mishika, at a health care center in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where your generosity embraces families with love and hope. Lusamba is determined to keep her daughter safe and healthy, and she is thankful this clinic serves her community.



IN TIMES OF GREATEST NEED

Brian Clark for LWR

***“Shout it aloud, do not hold back.
Raise your voice like a trumpet.”***

— Isaiah 58 (NRSV)

...Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter-- when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.

Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk,

and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.

The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings. ○

**Until *your love* reaches
every neighbor.**



**LUTHERAN
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**It's about
more than
the coffee.**

**It's about
the love.**

After you read on page 10 about how estate gifts like yours help farmers like Wadamba and Nafuna (pictured), take a moment to visit their farm in Uganda — it's teeming with life, laughter and love.



Point your phone's camera
at this code to meet
Wadamba and Nafuna!

Brad LaBriola for LWR