

VOL. 1 | ISSUE 4

Lasting Promise

M A G A Z I N E

**YOUR
GENEROSITY**
TODAY TRANSFORMS
TOMORROW

**Sustainable
Solutions
for Future
Generations**

**TELL US YOUR
LASTING
PROMISE!**



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF



THANK YOU

FOR BEING A

Partner in Lasting Promise

You are a valued member of a committed group of friends who have pledged gifts in their wills or committed an enduring planned gift to Lutheran World Relief.

You are a **Partner in Lasting Promise** because it is through your gifts that our lifesaving work will go on, continuing to reach families in need around the world...

**Until you love reaches
every neighbor.**

**AS A *Partner in Lasting Promise*,
YOU CAN EXPECT:**

- A biannual copy of this magazine.
- Updates on how planned gifts are changing the lives of those who need it most.
- Invitations to exclusive events, featuring projects funded through estate gifts.
- Support and information from our Planned Giving Manager.

Being part of this society allows you to choose which communications you would like to receive from Lutheran World Relief, to ensure that we are sharing the appeals, updates and success stories you want to see.

**THANK YOU FOR BEING A VESSEL
OF GOD'S ENDURING LOVE!**



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF



Lasting Promise

MAGAZINE

Volume 1, Issue 4 (2023)

EDITOR:

Kara Eberle

ON THE COVER:

Krishna Gurung, 50, smiles because she knows the bananas in this field will thrive no matter what the future holds. The new banana variety that is flood and water-logging resilient was introduced in the Nawalparasi District in Nepal, one of many sustainable innovations made possible through your loving gifts. (Jake Lyell for LWR).

INSPIRING FUTURE Partners in Lasting Promise



As one of our most committed supporters, your opinion matters. Please complete a brief online survey to share your thoughts, motivations and experiences, so that we can continue to grow this wonderful Partners in Lasting Promise society. If you would rather, please contact me directly. I will be delighted to hear from you!



Point your camera at the QR code to access your private link. You may also visit lwr.org/survey.



LEE GRANT

Planned Giving Manager



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friend,

My heart is filled with gratitude for you and for how you answer God's call to love your neighbors through your lasting support of Lutheran World Relief.

The last year has been an especially trying time for so many around the world. It feels like there are huge shifts happening in the world right now that will reverberate for years to come.

- **50 million** more people facing emergency level of hunger
- **1 in 7 countries** in the world are facing some form of violent conflict
- A record **100 million people** — children, women and men — displaced
- Global inflation increasing the cost of basic staples
- Extreme weather causing natural disasters at a pace not seen since the 1970s

For the first time in decades, we have lost ground in our fight to end extreme poverty. And the world's poorest are bearing the steepest costs of these challenges.

You are at the heart of this battle.

Because we need to do more. And we need to revolutionize the way we've always approached these issues.

To do this, we need to make long-term commitments to the people and places where we work. We are looking 10, 20, 30 years down the road. That's why your vision and careful plans for the future are so important.

You are the solution. Today, tomorrow and for generations to come.

May God bless you and your loved ones as you bless others.

In Christ,

AMBASSADOR
DANIEL SPECKHARD
President and CEO



Bhagwanti Devi, 55, raises seedlings in a hanging nursery at her home in Bihar, India. Agricultural techniques like this allow Bhagwanti's crops and valuable seedlings to escape destruction from floods or water logging during the rainy season. (Jake Lyell for LWR)

YOUR LOVE HELPS FAMILIES WEATHER STORMS IN NEPAL

THE NEXT FLOOD SEASON IS COMING.

Your neighbor Bhagwanti Devi and her family rely on the rich, fertile soil near the Gandak River to grow their crops and support their livelihoods. But as the river gives, it also takes away.

When the Gandak overflows its banks again during the next flood season, the homes, crops and livelihoods are in the path of destruction — affecting thousands of people like Bhagwanti already living in poverty. Families in the Devis' community cannot move their homes to change their situation.

They are part of a caste system that keeps certain classes of individuals in the margins where danger lurks. Dangers like floods. Dangers like chronic poverty.

These families are caught between the world's injustice and the dangers that could kill them. **And it's precisely where you bring God's love.**



INNOVATIONS ANSWER AGE-OLD QUESTIONS

During the pandemic, India wrestled with one of the world's most rapid and significant infection rates. The coronavirus spread here because communities like Bhagwanti's are forced to live in cramped conditions with little access to what will keep them safe: clean, running water. Sanitation supplies. Masks.

The virus added to the danger in communities that already face a significant risk of drowning or other diseases. Yet poverty might be the deadliest killer... and the cruelest. It sits silently amid the houses on the floodplain, waiting for crops to be claimed by floods. The annual flooding cycle sets a deadly pace.

THE KINDNESS OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU HELP US TO GET AHEAD OF IT.

YOUR LOVE provides access to the kinds of supplies all of us use to stave off diseases.

YOUR LOVE teaches families at risk how to farm in flood-resilient ways, providing flood-resistant seeds and methods of planting.

YOUR LOVE allows families to ensure their crops and their property before the floods arrive, opening doors not otherwise possible in such a restrictive and exclusive culture.

YOUR LOVE makes critical repairs to roads, culverts and bridges that will keep flood waters from engulfing homes.

YOUR LOVE trains young adults to develop entrepreneurial skills to improve their incomes and quality of life. ○



Bhagwanti and her husband Bashu Dev Ram, 57, weed a seedling bed with their grandsons Ayush Kumar, 3, and Priansu Kumar, 4. Bhagwanti and Bashu plant the off-season crops to diversify their agriculture-based livelihood to make it less prone to shock during heavy rains and flooding. (Jake Lyell for LWR)

CHARCOAL PRODUCTION

In Tanzania, your generosity is helping young entrepreneurs like **UPENDO NGUSSA** to launch and grow new businesses.

Your generosity helped Upendo, 21, purchase machinery to manufacture sustainable charcoal briquettes — an idea she developed several years ago after helping her mother cook with smoky, inefficient fuel. Upendo uses rice hulls, a renewable byproduct of rice production that is often thrown away, to produce a cleaner-burning charcoal.

Today Upendo makes more than a metric ton of briquettes daily, and she can't keep up with demand. Her business has attracted investors, and last year she won an international award for student entrepreneurs. As this hardworking young entrepreneur works to expand her business, you can learn more about her process. ○



Gregg Brekke for LWR

HOW TO MAKE CHARCOAL BRIQUETTES

- 1 GRIND** the rice hulls. Small, uniform grains carbonize more evenly.



- 2 LOAD** them into a kiln. The heat evaporates the water and breaks down the fiber to carbonize the hulls into charcoal.



- 3 MIX** the charcoal with cassava flour and water. These additives bind the charcoal together so it can be shaped.



- 4 PRESS** the mixture through an extruder. Under pressure, the mixture passes through a die mold to form briquettes.



- 5 SET** them out to dry. Let any remaining moisture evaporate.



- 6 LOAD** them up. Customers are waiting!





//IN**FOCUS**

Riding her motorbike, Elsa Ospino faces obstacles like flooded roads, high rivers and dangerous snakes to give women hands-on training in organic growing techniques. Elsa is a cacao agronomist who works with the Qori Warmi women's cacao cooperative in the highlands where the Andes mountains meet the Amazon Rainforest of Peru. Thanks to her work, women have been able to increase their income and improve their families' lives by growing organic cacao. As a Partner in Lasting Promise, your support is vital to work that leads to lasting change in Peru and beyond.

YOUR LASTING PROMISE

Thank you for being a faithful partner and fueling programs that deliver effective solutions to the world's greatest challenges. Your support positions us to secure ever more support from institutions and expand our programmatic and geographic reach.



UKRAINE

Because of the enduring generosity of Partners in Lasting Promise, we were able to mount the **largest humanitarian operation in our history**. We are meeting the needs of families who were forced to flee the violence for the long haul. Thanks to you, these families have received medical care, warm meals and a safe place to rest their heads.



YEMEN

We have been delivering lifesaving care in Yemen since 2015. Health workers operating out of mobile clinics in 4 communities — where most of the population are internally displaced families living in camps — cared for thousands of children, women and men. Before this program started, patients walked more than 20 miles to the closest clinic. Now, because of you, the care comes to them.

SE TRANSFORMS LIVES



**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF CONGO**

Our **8-year-long effort** to strengthen the health system across five provinces has culminated in lifesaving service delivery. Because of you, lives are being saved every day because people can access health care and medicine. An astounding 2.3 million births were attended by skilled health personnel at health facilities.



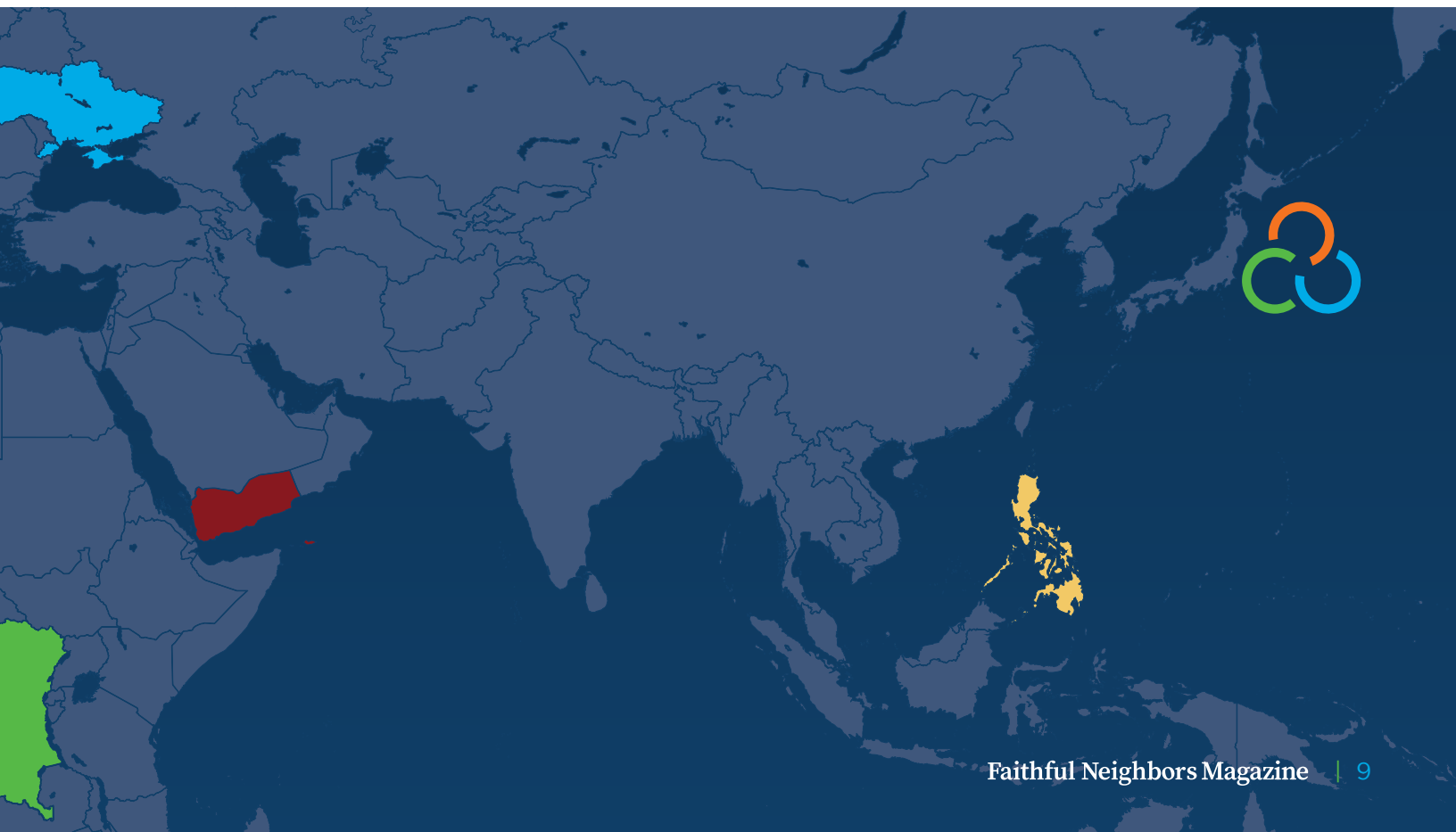
MALI

Across Africa, where Lutheran World Relief is trusted by communities for our decades-long track record of success in developing productive and stable rural economies, the price of staple grains has gone up as much as 40%. Your steadfast support meant we didn't have to hesitate to respond to this mounting crisis, providing food and seeds to vulnerable families right away.



PHILIPPINES

Underserved or unserved communities now have access to a safe water supply, sanitation services and more sustainable water management of surface and groundwater resources. Nearly 30,000 people have safe water to drink because of your thoughtful and careful planning.



HOME GROWN HOPE

Zoemía Solís, 30, and her son Yorban, 9, hold up their recent harvest. She feeds her family and earns an income off the surplus. With your support, her family has access to more nutritious foods and is learning healthier habits.



The town of La Democracia feels a bit like a refuge. Located about an hour inland from Guatemala's Pacific coast, the roads leading into the small community are rugged and broken, hugging steep, curvy hills, and showcasing tranquil, beautiful vistas. Close to Zoemía Solis' house, three little girls play together behind a pickup truck that no longer starts. They jump in the back and giggle together, content and oblivious in their own world. Tiny ducklings waddle past, racing to keep up to their mother. Even the air feels fresher here somehow.

Despite the idyllic setting, however, the community faced real challenges. Easily accessible clean drinking water was a rarity. Because of the pandemic many people couldn't find work, making it hard to afford food for their families. When they did have food, it often wasn't healthy or diverse due to the general lack of understanding around nutrition. Women faced discrimination, seen only fit for roles as mothers and caretakers for their husbands and homes.

Because of your faithful support, things in La Democracia are changing.

Zoemía stands next to her family's vegetable plot. Vibrant purple beets and bright green spinach peek through the fertile soil. Yorban, her 9-year-old son gazes proudly at her, his arms draped around her shoulder. Zoemía received this plot from her father in law, Enrique. Enrique heard of the opportunities Lutheran World Relief was providing through their project with FundaSistemas focusing on improving health and nutrition. He wanted Zoemía to be able to take on her own opportunities.

Although she hadn't previously grown vegetables, with the help of a mentor, Zoemía's first harvest flourished. Her family's nutrition has improved, and she no longer worries about feeding her family. She sells extra produce in the local market, adding to the household income.

With her newfound confidence and leadership skills, Zoemía is even shifting gender roles in her community. She was recently elected to vice-president of the local community council.

Your generosity is transforming lives in Guatemala. Your support has provided agricultural training and mentoring,

access to clean water, and leadership opportunities for women like Zoemía.

"I feel proud of myself," Zoemía said. "I am very proud. I want to set a good example for my children, to give them my best. And I'd like to motivate others as well." ○



"I FEEL PROUD
OF MYSELF"



‘CARETAKER’S’ LOVE EXTENDS TO LEAVE A FOOTPRINT IN THE FUTURE

NEAL AND LOIS OPPENHEIMER’S deep Christian faith anchored their modest life in northern Illinois. It also shaped their view of the world and the role of the faithful in it.

“He was such a caretaker, always caring for people,” Jennifer Gutzwiller remembers. “He thought supporting charity was part of caretaking, and not just in the United States but around the world.”

Gutzwiller, the couple’s goddaughter, says the Oppenheims’ informed world view is what prompted the couple to leave sizable gifts in their will to Lutheran World Relief, among other charities.

Neal Oppenheimer worked for the former Montgomery Ward department store chain for more than 30 years. Trained as a teacher, he left the classroom early in his working life to enter the then-burgeoning field of IT.

“He was always on call and wanted to help if anything was wrong,” Gutzwiller said.

The Oppenheims had no children, and their modest life did not belie a couple who could make sizable bequests. Yet Gutzwiller says she is not surprised that they would want to be generous in their estate planning, as they were in life.

Lois Oppenheimer died a few years ago, an experience that brought Gutzwiller and her godfather closer. Ultimately, Gutzwiller journeyed with Neal Oppenheimer through his experience of losing his wife, his own failing health and, ultimately, his passing in 2019.

“**He was a wonderful man,**” Gutzwiller said.

“**He wanted to make sure everyone was taken care of, and I think that’s what his gift is about.**” ○



HOPE AND A FUTURE

REFUGEE FINDS HOPE IN A BEEHIVE

“BEEKEEPING IS IN MY BLOOD,”

Walaa Ali al Ali says, smiling beneath her screened hat. “My grandfather kept bees, and I remember him showing me things when I was a child.”

As smoke swirls from her pitcher, quieting the hive so she can harvest its honey, Walaa’s mind swirls with memories. Before the war drove her family from their home in Syria, she had dreams of opening a restaurant. Now they live as refugees in Lebanon, and dreams are hard to come by.

Walaa, 30, is the primary provider for her household, which consists of her mother, her developmentally disabled brother, a niece and a nephew. Work has been scarce, making it difficult to support her family.

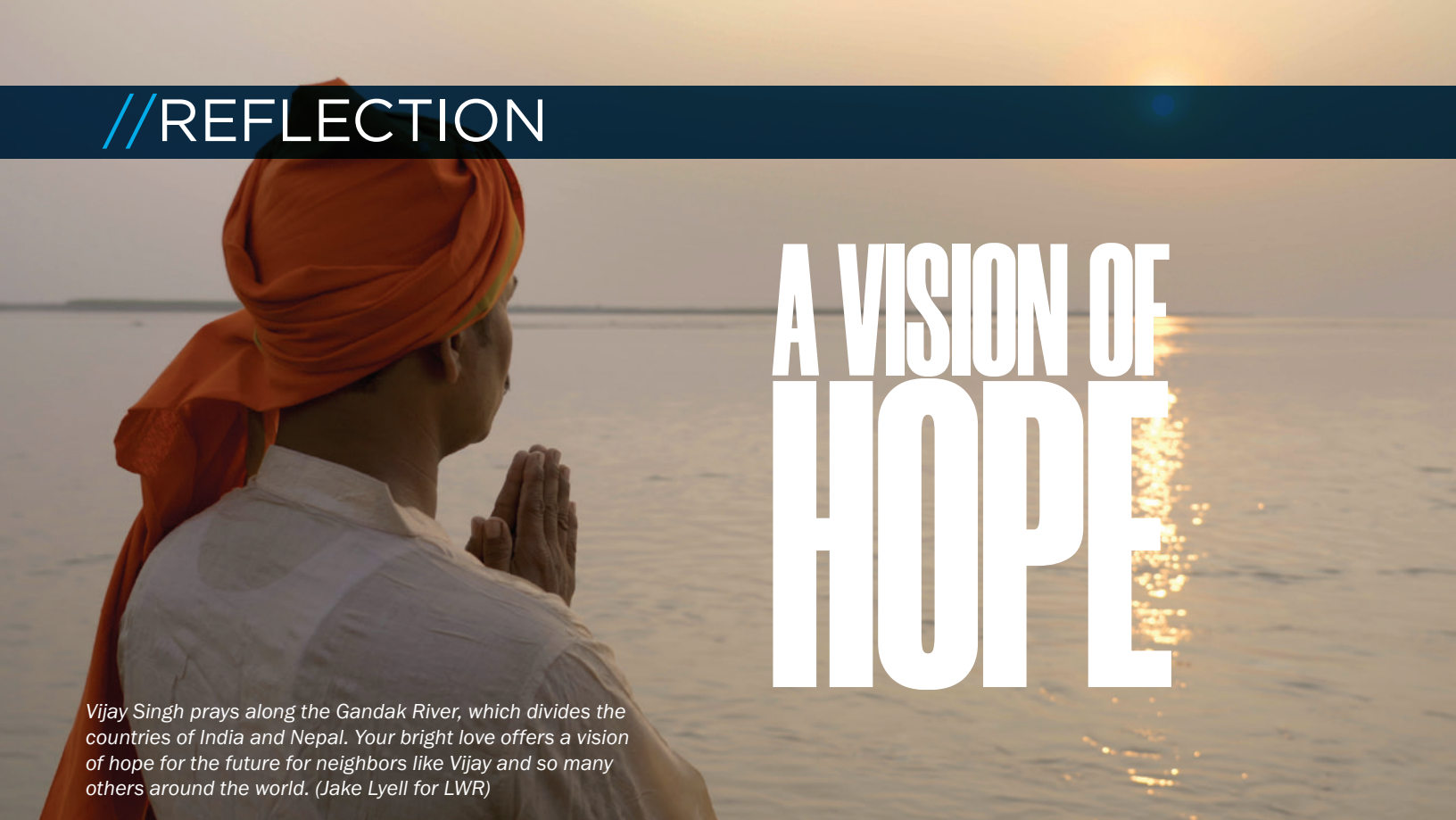
Then your generosity opened a door to a better future — one that connects her to her past. Through a program to help refugees start a new life, you gave Walaa the tools to create a stable livelihood: two hives, training and basic supplies for beekeeping. Within a few months she doubled her honey production and has begun growing vegetables to feed her family and sell for additional income.

“I see a future where I have maybe 20, 40 or 60 or more hives,” she said. “I still want to open a restaurant someday, whether I get to go home or I stay here. But honey will be part of it for sure.”

Thank you for ensuring neighbors like Walla and her family have hope and a future! ○

Your neighbor **Aminata Traoré**, 67, lives in the Ségou Region of Mali, one of the most vulnerable and challenging places to live in the world. She is raising her granddaughter, 6-year-old Oumou, in their traditional mud-brick home. Amid the global food crisis that has caused unprecedented levels of hunger worldwide, we were able to reach them with food and fertilizer to make ends meet. **Thank you for helping to ease the challenges for neighbors like Aminata and Oumou that come between them and a brighter future.**





A VISION OF HOPE

Vijay Singh prays along the Gandak River, which divides the countries of India and Nepal. Your bright love offers a vision of hope for the future for neighbors like Vijay and so many others around the world. (Jake Lyell for LWR)

Just before the journey of Lent begins, the gospel writers and lectionary curators take us on a journey up the Mount of Transfiguration where God offers a vision of the future, a vision where Jesus shines bright and brings together the old and the new.

Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Matthew 17:1-2

Jesus knows his followers will need to hang on to this vision because he knows that the road ahead leading them to Jerusalem is going to be hard.

There has been no shortage of hard weeks for our neighbors around the world. Crippling drought and famine. Divisive and violent political insecurity. Rising food prices. A devastating earthquake.

But amid this great suffering, there are also moments of grace and light that shine through. Glimpses that offer a vision for the future where devastation doesn't have the last word.

I recently visited a village in Tanzania up in the Southern Highlands that has been transformed by your love. Elders go to bed warm at night because of the warm quilts you have sent. Children are learning in new ways with the supplies you've provided in School Kits. Parents put their children to bed at night with full tummies because your love has taught them new farming techniques.

The Southern Highlands of Tanzania aren't the Mount of Transfiguration. There was no glimpse of Jesus shining in bright white and no voice spoken through the clouds. But there was a vision of a new and different future. A future that is possible because of the generosity of strangers thousands of miles away.

Dear friends in Christ, thank you for making that vision a reality — for our neighbors up in the Highlands of Tanzania — and for so many more around the world. Your love is sharing the light and hope of Jesus. Thanks be to God. ○

Rev. Lisa Kipp



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