

ISSUE 6

Lasting Promise

M A G A Z I N E

BOLD COLORS, BRIGHT FUTURES

SEASON OF
RENEWAL IN
SOUTH SUDAN

NEXT DOOR:
MEET IRMA



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF





CREATING BEAUTY FROM ASHES

Seven-year-old Diana's smile is sweet and shy, a true blessing considering what she's been through.

She's faced invasions by Russian soldiers, bombing and food shortages. When her grandparents' home in Ukraine was destroyed, they had to hide in the forest, surviving for weeks on fish caught from a stream.

Our broken world has failed children like Diana. But you haven't. Your faithfulness has reached across the globe to provide them with peace and healing, offering safe refuge, supplies and nourishing meals.

You're also fostering hope through counseling, including art therapy sessions. Children are processing their traumas and discovering their creative power, even amid war.

"The children are still impacted by what they had to go through," says Diana's grandmother Lidia, observing the child laughing with a new friend.

"But she's not as scared as she was before."



◀ Art therapy helps Diana dream about her future, while healing from her past.

Lasting Promise

MAGAZINE

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EDITOR:

Niki Clark

ON THE COVER:

A simple intervention changed **Pabanbati Chaudhary's** life in Nepal. Learn how your compassion today builds a brighter future on page 4.



FREE COFFEE FOR YOU

During this season, we celebrate Holy Week and the resurrection of Christ. I am blessed to share this special time with you through these pages.

The stories you'll find highlight the transformative change that's possible through gifts like yours. May they bring you comfort and inspiration, knowing that you are making a positive difference in the lives of others.

If you'd like to share your motivations to inspire other Partners in Lasting Promise, I'll gladly send you a small gift from our world-famous Farmers Market Coffee.

Thank you for your selfless contributions to others.

In Christ,



LEE GRANT

Planned Giving Manager

LGRANT@LWR.ORG

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friend,

He has risen! As we celebrate the promise of the Resurrection and new life through his love, the world around us awakens with life, reflecting his glory.

Within these pages, you'll find stories of renewal and rebirth, made possible by the generous support of our **Partners in Lasting Promise**. Reflecting on these stories fills me with gratitude; each act of kindness defining humanity more as Christ desired.

Together, we journey to **South Sudan**, where your love enables widows, challenged by profound turmoil, to create a confident new future. I am always amazed by how indomitable the human spirit is when fueled by your support and solidarity.

In **Nepal**, your compassion empowers women facing limited opportunities and devastation. Through your generosity, they learn to weave both artisan handicrafts that sustain their families as well as beautiful new beginnings.

We also honor the spirit of transformation in our own neighborhoods. Witness how closing congregations bring renewal to our neighbors around the world, creating lasting change for generations to come.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership. When the world seems bleak and cruel, I pray you are uplifted by the love you share with others and the love you feel in return. Let us continue to craft a lasting promise of renewal, until we reach every neighbor.

In Christ,

AMBASSADOR

DANIEL SPECKHARD

President and CEO



A woman, Pabanbati, is standing next to a large, multi-colored woven mat. She is wearing a vibrant pink and blue sari with a green blouse. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows a rustic structure with wooden beams and a thatched roof.

COLORFUL SOLUTIONS: YOUR LOVE IN NEPAL

Pabanbati stands proudly in front of one of the mats she's made. She's selling them for 300% percent more than before, thanks to your caring compassion.



Because of you, women in Nepal
have brighter futures (and hands!)



FROM ITS PAINTED SUNSETS TO THE INTENSELY HUED SPICES OF ITS MARKETS, NEPAL IS A COUNTRY OF COLOR.

Pabanbati Chaudhary, 55, embodies the kaleidoscope of her homeland. Her fingers are stained a vibrant hot pink, the mark of her craft. Her sari — Nepalese traditional dress — is a beautiful shade of turquoise. Even her spirit seems to radiate color, as if joy had a shade.

If you had visited her four years ago, however, the colors would have been dimmer, muted by her challenging circumstances. Providing for her family was an ongoing struggle. Nepal is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world and as a result, economic stability is a constant challenge.

Pabanbati and her neighbors took matters into their own hands. They began crafting mats to sell, fashioning them from bulrushes gathered from the wild. These mats served a variety of purposes, from sleeping and sitting to drying seeds.

But without the necessary skills or knowledge, their efforts yielded little success. Meager offers resulted in financial losses, and limited sales made it challenging to feed their families and educate their children. In times of health crises, they were forced to borrow money at exorbitant rates.

THEN YOUR LOVE ARRIVED.

Your compassion provided much-needed training, teaching the women how to make higher quality mats with colorful patterns. By learning the importance of fixed pricing and how to determine it, the women now make 300% more per mat sold than before.

Pabanbati was able to build a new brick and concrete house, transforming her previous house — a small, shed-like structure — into her workshop. Her children are educated and she's saving monthly for future emergencies. And she's gained confidence. In a country that often confines women's work to the home, your support is changing perceptions.

"We couldn't even converse with people," she says. "But now, we can greet or talk to others comfortably. We learned a lot from this. We can make more improvements if given the opportunity."

Thanks to you, Pabanbati's future — and that of her children — now shines as brightly as the colors of her beloved country. ○



Pabanbati is one of 28 women who received transformative training.

PLANTING SEEDS, *Sprouting Hope*

IN SOUTH SUDAN



Nyalual Mathieng has faced the death of her husband, devastating flooding and extreme hunger. You greeted her with open arms.



Nayalual's daughters Majok and Nyagak play with their goats while their mother prepares a nutritious meal for them and their siblings.

NYALUAL MATHIENG is a proud woman. Her walk is confident, her head held high, as she surveys the abundant crops of okra and beans before her. She bends to fill her basket; her children will have their favorite soup tonight.

This is a new beginning for Nayalual. She stood in the face of unimaginable tragedy, but out of the hottest fire came the strongest steel.

Nyalual is a survivor.

Like many women in her community of Ayod, South Sudan, Nyalual became a widow during the civil war. This devastating conflict claimed the lives of nearly 400,000 and left another 4.5 million displaced. In her culture, widows are often shunned and marginalized. Amid her own heartbreak, Nyalual found herself both a single mother and the sole provider to her small children.

She survived more profound loss when her village flooded. "The water just kept coming," she says. "So, I had to leave."

She found a canoe, loaded her children into it, and started paddling.

Ultimately, after a week in a canoe and days on foot, Nyalual and her children arrived in Ayod. Life wasn't any easier. They survived by foraging for and selling firewood. When her youngest child became very ill, an officer at the health clinic recognized that the child was malnourished and referred her to a nutritionist.

This is where kindhearted neighbors like you reached her.

The nutritionist told her about a Lutheran World Relief program for families like hers.

"When I came here, I didn't have utensils, like jerrycans for water, I didn't have seeds to grow food," Nyalual says. "I was given a bucket to go to the borehole, then the jerrycan, now I have a cup that my children can use to drink safe water from the bucket."

Your compassion provided seeds for her garden, which have sprouted both sustenance for her family and hope for her heart. She no longer has to buy vegetables or sorghum at the market and even sells her surplus there for income. She's been trained on the nutritional importance of a varied diet and has opportunities to practice farming skills. It's connected her with other widows as well. They help each other with child care and provide support in uncertain times.

"I am planning for a better life for my children,"

Nyalual says. Her children are now in school, and she hopes to expand her farm to ensure her children can follow any dream they have.

For the first time in her life, she's able to make them come true.

BECAUSE OF YOU. ○

YOUR Lasting Promise

Your transformative power spans generations. Through Partners in Lasting Promise, lives are renewed for decades to come. A profound investment for this type of lasting change is livelihoods support. You equip our neighbors to better provide for themselves today and change the future for their children tomorrow.



LEBANON

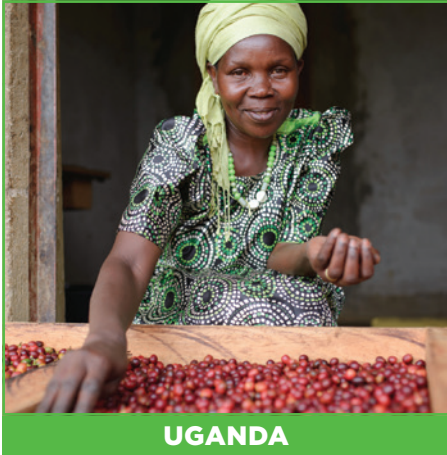
Your support empowers chef Lauren to grow her small business beyond the family table. Her newfound confidence has helped her discover a renewed sense of purpose after the death of her husband.



INDONESIA

Your giving heart enables farmers like Libranita to play a productive role in combatting climate change. It teaches them new techniques while helping them generate additional income for their families.

nise *RENEWS LIVES*



UGANDA

Because of you, coffee farmers like Kusolo have witnessed a remarkable surge in both the quality and value of their product. Thanks to training centers, organic certification programs and a focus on inclusion of women, our neighbors have a lasting sense of security.



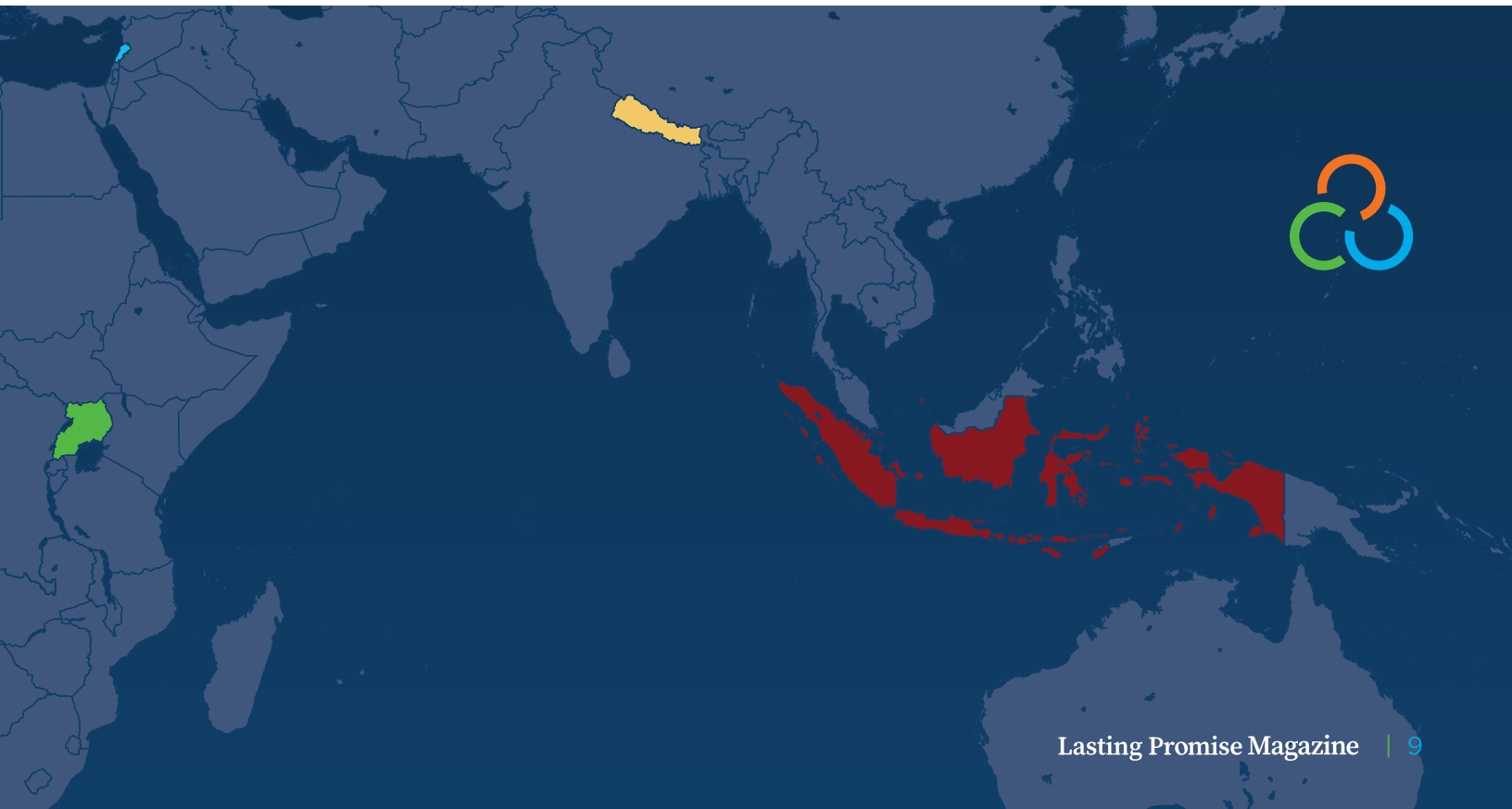
PERU

In the southern highlands of Peru, your generosity is bolstering the resilience of women like Alicia. By growing organic cacao and crafting exceptional chocolate, neighbors like Alice have not only boosted household incomes but also uplifted their families' lives.



NEPAL

Women business owners like Sarmila and Nirmala are making a positive impact in their community. Through their non-profit organization, they have empowered 50 local women farmers to produce, process, package and sell their own products in a dedicated store. The result? Boosted incomes and a sense of community.



A LOVE THAT CONTINUES

CLOSING A CHURCH IS NEVER AN EASY DECISION

Like any grieving process, it can be filled with ups and downs, denial and intense sadness around what is lost. And yet, these congregations live on in their profound impact on others — just as your personal planned gift is paving the way for a brighter future.

During this Easter season, as we reflect on the new life that Christ has given us in his Resurrection, we also gratefully contemplate the journey of one such congregation, Grace Lutheran Church of Needham, Massachusetts.

For some 70 years, **GRACE LUTHERAN** has served as a beacon of hope in its community, led since 2019 by Pastor Elizabeth Nees. But it faced low attendance and other challenges. After a difficult discernment process, the decision was made to close in September 2023.

“We knew if we closed, we could share an incredible amount of resources with organizations that we had supported over the decades,” Pastor Elizabeth said. “People took comfort that even though we were closing, these legacy gifts meant this wasn’t the end of our story.”

WHY LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF?

“A few years back, our youth had led us in an LWR School Kit challenge where we filled 50 backpacks. When we brought it to the local Ingathering, we saw this collective thing we were part of. It was very important to our members that we gave to a global organization that would use the money in line with our values. Trust was a large part of the decision.”



WHAT INSIGHTS WOULD YOU SHARE WITH OTHERS WHO ARE CONSIDERING THEIR FUTURE IMPACT?

“Every congregation should have a legacy plan. Institutions aren’t always around forever and that’s OK. We learned too late that the process took more time than we had, but having a plan allows you to better align your values with your future.

“As Christians we know death is never the end of our story, instead death brings new life. The church itself will never die. It may transform, congregations may close, it might not look like we thought it would. But even if we never see it, our church and the gift we made in closing will make such life-changing impacts for others. It’s living on still.”



*“Our church and the gift we made in closing
will make such life-changing impacts for
others. It’s living on still.”*

HOW FORWARD-LOOKING GIFTS BRING NEW LIFE TO OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED.

Here are a few neighbors whose lives have been transformed
by gifts like yours and Grace Lutheran’s.



Democratic Republic of Congo

Carinne lives in a deeply impoverished neighborhood in eastern Congo. Here, families can rarely afford necessities like food and clothing. Because of your love, her mother Kavira joined a village savings and loan group (see page 12). Kavira used her loan to sell fish and send Carrine to school, whose future now looks much brighter.



Guatemala

For decades, chronic malnutrition and poverty ravaged the San Marcos region of Guatemala. Single mother Guisela struggled to provide for her two daughters, Darriana and Maidy. Now, because of generous supporters, she has learned to farm vegetables, oyster mushrooms and laying hens. And her girls smile again.



Indonesia

Indonesian farmers like Rehmuli and her husband Adit no longer have to spend their hard-earned money on expensive fertilizers. With waste management training, they now produce their own organic fertilizer, saving money to educate their four children.



VILLAGE SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATIONS

Sometimes, the smallest acts of kindness bring the most radical, generational change. Microloans — loans starting as low as \$.50 USD — can transport families on the brink of despair to a future rife with possibility. These Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), enabled by your love, are renewing women's lives around the globe.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:



Every week, VSLA members contribute a small amount (\$.50 to \$2.50 USD) to a common pool of money.



After several weeks, a member can take out a small loan to start a business — such as raising livestock or buying a sewing machine.



When she is able, she pays back the loan with interest.



New business idea? Members can take out another loan. The loans can also be used for needs like home repairs or school fees as long as they are paid back.



Members gain confidence and independence as they increase their income and business savvy. And their families reap the benefits too!

Accountability and financial literacy are also vital components within the VSLAs. Safeguards ensure that funds are accounted for and that members are invested before receiving a loan. And formal literacy training is often offered, with members that can read and write helping those who can't.

For nearly 80 years, Lutherans have been extending their kindness to the farthest reaches of the Earth, embracing our neighbors with heartfelt care. How it's gotten there has evolved but one thing remains unchanged:

**YOUR LOVE
REVITALIZES LIVES!**

THEN

Although camels are not part of our work today, this beautiful friend carried a family to a Lutheran World Relief quilt distribution in Niger in 1986. (The quilts arrived on a truck!)

NOW

In a warehouse in Türkiye, Lutheran World Relief quilts, Personal Care Kits and Baby Care Kits are loaded into a vehicle. These supplies bring comfort and relief to those affected by the 2023 earthquake.



//NEXTDOOR

Meet Irma Morales, your neighbor in the remote and rugged Western Highlands of Peru. Irma faced immense challenges in nourishing her seven children. Due to a lack of essential knowledge in nutrition, hygiene, safety, and agricultural practices, her children often fell ill and struggled to thrive.

Then your love arrived.

Irma and her children now have access to clean drinking water and have acquired vital knowledge to ensure the safety and health of both their food and their bodies. Irma now prioritizes breastfeeding and fully comprehends her infant's nutritional requirements, allowing her to provide the best possible start in life.

Your partnership has not only brought renewed hope to Irma and her family but has also empowered lasting change. Communities are being transformed, and brighter futures are being forged. **THANK YOU!** ○





Nurhayati Sitepu's vibrant home garden thrives on love — and waste. Trained in waste management and gardening, Nurhayati uses organic waste to nourish her garden, and thus, her family. Her village is now adorned with beautiful gardens, all cultivated using recycled materials. "Talk about making something out of nothing," she says. (M Karim Wirasaputra for Lutheran World Relief)

“ *I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”* Isaiah 43:19 ^{NRSV}

THIS TIME OF YEAR is one of hope and new beginnings. The sun shines brighter. The blooms of spring return. And in this season, we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ — the renewal of hope.

Sometimes the world around us can seem harsh and bleak. Between wars, extreme weather, human suffering and personal struggles, the hope of the Resurrection can feel distant. Sometimes the tomb gets sealed with our hope locked inside.

Isaiah 43 speaks to Israelites who were living in a similar sense of hopelessness, unable to envision that a better future was possible. In this chapter, God reminds them of the many hardships they have endured, and the many ways God has already delivered them.

Then something surprising happens: God tells them to forget about all those past experiences, because something better is coming.

Deliverance. Hope. Christ.

In this and every season, Jesus is the way in the wilderness. The stream in the desert. Your faith in a better future for yourself and your neighbors rests firmly in the hands of Christ.

Until your love reaches every neighbor. ○



**LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF**

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