



Elizabeth A. Eaton Presiding Bishop Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

#### How to give

Online

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**Phone** 

800-638-3522

#### Mail

Make checks payable to "ELCA World Hunger" or "Lutheran Disaster Response" and mail to:

ELCA P.O. Box 1809 Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

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### View this issue online ELCA.org/hunger/resources

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"[God] has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?"

—Micah 6:8

Dear friend.

During my time as presiding bishop, I have been honored to meet with the people and communities accompanied by ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response and have seen firsthand the impact of your gifts. Your generosity addresses the root causes of hunger and poverty and accompanies people through disaster. Thank you for your steadfast support of these ministries.

As we witness the ongoing impact from changes in foreign aid and migration policy in the United States, I recognize that, as church, we are called to accompany our most vulnerable neighbors. Through ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response, we are taking action to do just that.

In this issue of "LifeLines," you will read about how we're responding to the growing needs of people impacted by hunger, poverty, migration and conflict. We are committed to serving others and addressing injustice through our faithful ministry around the world. Support for this work is more important than ever, and our longstanding relationships with communities give us the ability to address the urgent needs of our siblings in Christ.

These stories will take you from Cairo, Egypt, where you are supporting refugees, to New Jersey, where your generosity is expanding ministries that feed low-income migrant families. You'll read about our church's presence in the Middle East amid conflict, and about sustainable livelihoods in Colombia. Through every story, you'll witness the Holy Spirit at work through accompaniment.

Throughout 2024, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of ELCA World Hunger, highlighting stories from decades of ministry that you have made possible and looking ahead to the future of ELCA World Hunger.

Over this landmark year, you raised over \$37 million for ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response. Your generosity ensures that these ministries can continue walking alongside communities in the United States and around the world for the next 50 years and beyond.

Because our ministry is rooted in Christ's love, we recognize that all people deserve dignity and justice. Through your generosity, you boldly witness to the radical inclusivity of this love that calls us into action. Thank you.

In Christ's service.

Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton

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Presiding Bishop

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



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# Gracing a community with compassion in New Jersey

t. Stephan's Grace Community Lutheran Church is located in a diverse community in Newark, N.J., with many of the congregants coming from low-income immigrant families. The residents were heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and food insecurity, already high, has increased.

Elza and her family migrated from Ecuador to Newark with very few belongings. One day, she attended a community meeting at St. Stephan's Grace and found signs of hope. She learned about a food-sharing program at the church receiving support from your gifts to ELCA World Hunger. It has a community pantry and refrigerator, a garden and a daily breakfast for local day laborers. The garden yields basil, spring onions, tomatoes, green squash, eggplant, figs and collard greens.

As Elza and her husband looked for jobs, they picked up groceries from St. Stephan's Grace each week to feed their family. They also received clothing and used appliances, such as a microwave and an air conditioning unit, from the church programs as they set up their new home.

Addressing food insecurity is just one of the many ways St. Stephan's Grace serves its community. In an area populated primarily by immigrants, advocacy is a key element of the church's ministry. A program at the church offers training in community organizing,



migrant and domestic workers' rights, and justice work. It even hosted a panel with New Jersey's governor to celebrate a raise in the state's minimum wage.

Already a community hub, St. Stephan's Grace is growing its ministries to better serve neighbors such as Elza, thanks to your generosity to ELCA World Hunger. "As a church, we would not be able to make it without our partners," said the Rev. Moacir Weirich, pastor of St. Stephan's Grace. "We would be very limited in terms of resources, both financial and human resources."

St. Stephan's Grace is also a place for celebration. Not long after learning about the church, Elza explained to Pastor Weirich that one of her daughters was turning 16 soon and asked if she could use one of the rooms in the church to host a birthday party. Pastor Weirich said yes,



Your generosity is providing care for our closest neighbors. By supporting programs here at home, such as feeding ministries, you help to meet immediate needs for the most vulnerable and to strengthen communities for years to come.



and family members came together at the church on a Saturday evening. Pastor Weirich shared a blessing, and the group joyfully indulged in a birthday cake.

Elza's involvement with St. Stephan's Grace started with a bag of groceries. Now her family is very active in the

church. They attend services every Sunday, and two of the children are on the church council. In a time of great need for her family, Elza found more than just food assistance—she found a welcoming community, a place of belonging and a way to give back.



# **Empowering** refugees in Cairo

hen war broke out in Sudan, 17-year-old Ala and 15-year-old Ali fled to another part of the country at their mother's encouragement while she stayed home. They hoped to return soon, but as the war escalated, the brothers remained separated from their mother and were forced to flee even further. Traveling with a Sudanese father and his three sons, the boys arrived safely in Egypt.

Initially the father took in Ala and Ali. New to the country himself, he struggled to cover his and his children's basic needs, let alone Ali and Ala's living expenses. The brothers heard about St. Andrew's Refugee Services (StARS) and its work equipping refugees with the resources they need to resettle. StARS, which is supported by your generosity to ELCA World Hunger, has a specific program to support unaccompanied children such as Ali and Ala.

Through initial screenings, Ala and Ali were assigned a case worker who helped them navigate the resources available to them. Due to their ages, the case was considered urgent, and Ala and Ali received emergency food boxes, financial assistance, clothing, blankets, counseling and close follow-up as they established themselves in a new community.

The boys continued to receive food assistance and financial support beyond those initial emergency food boxes. This enabled them to alleviate some of the financial stress of the home they shared with their caregiver and his three sons, contributing to rent payments and sharing their meals. Ali and Ala were eager to return to school, which they did. They also had the opportunity to attend group therapy and process their trauma with peers who had similar experiences. They made new friends and participated in trainings, which strengthened their ability to acclimate to their new country and culture effectively.





Ali has experience repairing electronics, a skill he learned in Sudan. He looks forward to turning 18, which will allow him to enroll in a livelihood program, enhance his skills and open his own business in Cairo. The brothers hope to reconnect with their mother soon, but for now they are focusing on their education and on integrating into the community.

Your generosity transforms the lives of young refugees such as Ala and Ali, providing them with the tools they need to rebuild their lives and pursue their dreams. With your support, the brothers have gained confidence, forged connections and acquired vital skills for a successful future. Together we can continue to empower young refugees to find their place in the world and thrive in their new communities.



Around the world, millions of people have been driven from their homes by hunger, poverty, conflict and human trafficking. Thanks to your generosity, ELCA World Hunger assists people as they find new homes and rebuild their lives.

## Sewing hope in Colombia

artha, a 70-year-old grandmother in Boyacá, Colombia, learned to sew when she was very young, accompanying her mother on various housekeeping jobs. Eventually she began sewing and designing clothing of her own. As a teenager, she provided for her family by traveling on foot to a nearby town to sell her clothing, and she continued to make and sell clothing as a young mother. Like many in Boyacá, Martha and her family lacked access to education, drinking water and hygiene facilities. They lived with food insecurity and limited employment opportunities.

Martha took pride in her skills as a seamstress and designer and her ability to contribute to supporting her family. Still it was tough. The need to stay home and care for her three small children became more demanding, and her clothing work, once a passion, became a means of survival as her already difficult economic reality worsened. Decades passed. "My life had gone by without me realizing it," Martha observes.

Then a neighbor introduced her to a Lutheran church with educational and training opportunities that interested her. This Lutheran church is part of a strong network of Lutheran congregations in Colombia (IELCO) with significant outreach programs, all supported by your gifts to ELCA World Hunger. Through these various, long-standing programs, children learn to support their own educations, strengthen their food security through training and community gardening, and develop professional skills that lead to employment or entrepreneurial endeavors.

A group of young leaders raised in these Lutheran churches recognized this good, impactful work and were inspired to create a new project of their own — also made possible in part by your generosity to ELCA World Hunger. These passionate leaders, deeply affected by the impact of climate change in their region, wanted to do more to educate fellow Lutherans in their communities about the problem.



People in this region of Colombia have been particularly vulnerable to the changing climate and its effect on inequality, poverty and food security. This new program — the one that caught Martha's attention — aims to identify the existing gifts and interests of participants, enhancing their livelihoods while promoting care for creation.

As a woman selling her designs, Martha hadn't thought much about the big swings in weather, from intense heat to heavy rainfall, over the years. She had considered the weather on any given day to be a matter of luck, and she needed to travel on foot to sell her work regardless.

Now Martha was eager to connect her skills and passion for design to what she had learned through participating in the program. She began recycling materials such as old magazines and single-use plastics to develop new products, such as jewelry and home decor items, that she sells at a local market.

She feels confident that she is caring for creation, and she has renewed her passion for design work, all while creating a new income stream for her family, including the children and grandchildren who live with her. "It is never too late to connect with creation." she reflects.

Martha has taken another step and begun teaching others in her program how to make similar products. The women now feel more connected to God's creation and each other and are living fulfilled lives. As a donor to ELCA World Hunger, you are empowering these women, regardless of their age or place in society, to weave God's love into a future filled with hope.



You support programs, including education and vocational training, that help people facing hunger, homelessness and other challenges to access jobs, increase their earning potential and break the cycle of poverty for good.

### Your gifts at work: 2024



#### **ELCA World Hunger**

62 countries | 40 states and territories

Kyrgyzstan

Madagascar

Mozambique

Lebanon

Liberia

Malawi

Mexico

Malaysia

Myanmar

Namibia

Nicaragua

Papua New Guinea

Nepal

Nigeria

Romania

Russia

Rwanda

Senegal

Slovakia

Somalia

Tanzania

Thailand

Uganda

Vietnam

Venezuela

Zimbabwe

Sierra Leone

South Africa

South Sudan

Serbia

Peru

#### INTERNATIONAL

Angola Argentina Bangladesh Bolivia Brazil Burkina Faso Burundi Cambodia Cameroon Central African Republic Colombia Czech Republic

Egypt El Salvador Ethiopia Gambia Ghana Guatemala Guinea Haiti Honduras Hungary India Indonesia Iraa Japan Jerusalem and Palestinian territories

Jordan Kenya

#### UNITED STATES AND CARIBBEAN

Alabama Alaska Arizona Arkansas California Colorado District of Columbia Florida Georgia Illinois Iowa Kansas Kentucky Louisiana

Maine

Maryland

Michigan

Minnesota

Missouri

Massachusetts

Montana Nebraska New Jersey New Mexico New York North Carolina North Dakota Ohio Oklahoma Oregon Pennsylvania Puerto Rico South Carolina South Dakota Tennessee Texas Utah Virginia Washington

Wisconsin

#### **Lutheran Disaster Response**

53 countries | 36 states and territories

#### INTERNATIONAL

Argentina Flood Bangladesh Flood, disaster risk reduction Belarus

Conflict, care for migrants Brazil Flood

Burkina Faso Food emergency

Cameroon Conflict, flood, disaster risk reduction Central African

Republic Conflict, disaster risk reduction, health

Chad Support for refugees, disaster risk reduction

Chile Fire, AMMPARO

Colombia Conflict, AMMPARO

Czech Republic

Democratic Republic of the Congo Conflict

Egypt Conflict, support for refugees

El Salvador Conflict, flood, care for migrants

Ethiopia Conflict, drought, flood

Germany **AMMPARO** 

Ghana Health Haiti

Conflict, earthquake

Honduras Conflict, AMMPARO

Hungary Conflict, support for refugees

Conflict, disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness, flood

Indonesia Earthquake, fire

Iraq Conflict

Jerusalem and Palestinian territories Conflict

Kenya Conflict, drought, flood

Lebanon Conflict, support for refugees

Liberia Conflict, gender justice, gas explosion

Madagascar Gender justice Malawi

Drought Malaysia Care for migrants

Mali Conflict

Mexico Conflict, cyclone/

flood, AMMPARO Moldova

Conflict, support for refugees Mozambique

Drought Namibia

Drought, health Nepal

Earthquake,flood, disaster risk reduction Nigeria

Conflict Peru **AMMPARO** 

Philippines Earthquake

Poland Conflict, flood Romania

Conflict Serbia AMMPARO

Sierra Leone Flood

Slovakia Conflict, support for refugees

South Sudan Conflict, health

Svria Earthquake

Tanzania Disaster risk reduction, flood

Thailand Flood, human trafficking

Timor Leste Drought

Ukraine Conflict, safe education access

Venezuela Conflict, care for migrants Zimbabwe Peacebuilding UNITED STATES AND CARIBBEAN

Alabama Disaster preparedness, tornadoes

Alaska Landslide

Arizona Extreme heat, clean water

Arkansas **Tornadoes** Bahamas

Disaster preparedness

California Wildfires, AMMPARO, capacity building, conflict

Colorado Wildfires

Delaware Flooding

District of Columbia Care for migrants, advocacy

Disaster preparedness, hurricanes, emotional and spiritual care

Georgia Disaster preparedness, hurricanes, school shooting, tornadoes

Hawaii Wildfires, emotional and spiritual care

Illinois AMMPARO, flooding, opioid epidemic

Disaster preparedness, flooding, tornadoes

Louisiana Disaster preparedness. hurricanes

Marvland AMMPARO, flooding, severe storms

Michigan AMMPARO, conflict

Minnesota AMMPARO, care for migrants

Mississippi Disaster preparedness, clean water, tornadoes

New Jersey Hurricane

New York AMMPARO, conflict, lead contamination

North Carolina Disaster preparedness, flooding, hurricanes, tornadoes, severe storms

North Dakota Disaster preparedness

Ohio **Tornadoes** Oklahoma Emotional and spiritual care,

flooding

Oregon Disaster preparedness, climate resilience,

wildfires Pennsylvania

Flooding, hurricane Puerto Rico AMMPARO, disaster preparedness.

hurricanes, tropical storms South Carolina

Disaster preparedness, hurricanes

South Dakota Extreme cold and houselessness, flooding, disaster preparedness

Tennessee Disaster preparedness, hurricane, flooding

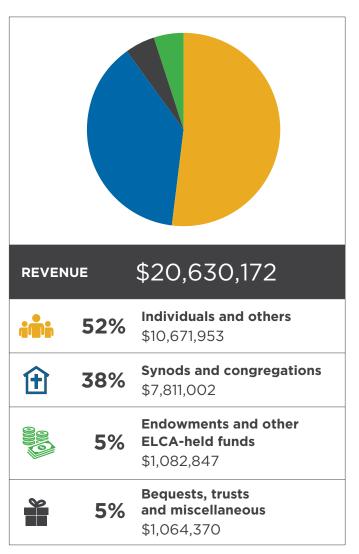
AMMPARO, disaster preparedness

Vermont Flooding Virginia

Hurricane Washington Winter storm,

care for migrants West Virginia Severe storm

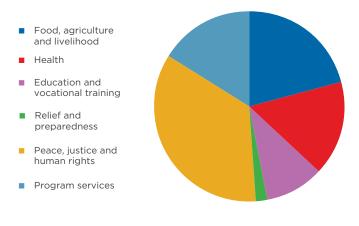
### 2024 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS





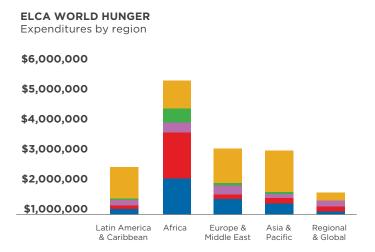
#### **ELCA WORLD HUNGER**

International projects by sector



Note: Expenditures that exceed income are made possible by generosity in previous years.

Unaudited financial highlights for the fiscal year ending Jan. 31, 2025.



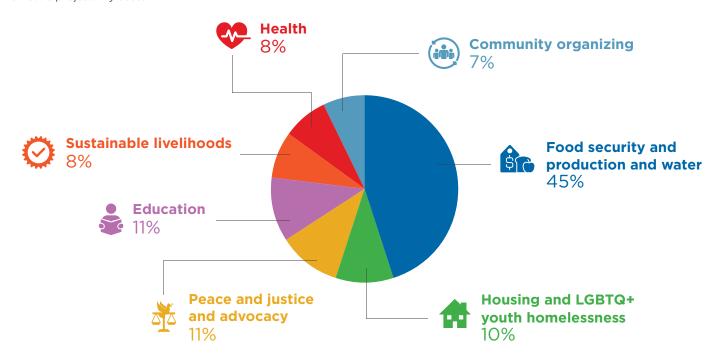
ELCA World Hunger advocates with and on behalf of those who are hungry, working to change systems that perpetuate poverty. As congressional budget talks target programs used in marginalized communities, including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and Medicaid, Lutheran advocates have been engaged through ELCA Witness in Society as well as locally driven efforts. Visits to Capitol Hill are urgent and do matter, as experienced in March 2025 when ELCA staff met with elected officials in Washington, D.C., to discuss ELCA schools, education policy and student needs — including publicprivate school partnerships and the vitality of school lunch programs for low-income students.

Your support for ELCA **World Hunger helps** create a just world where all are fed.



#### **ELCA WORLD HUNGER**

Domestic projects by sector



Single projects may be represented on this chart more than once because domestic partners of ELCA World Hunger work across sectors.



Nilda and her daughter live in Bayamón, Puerto Rico. After Hurricane Fiona struck in 2022, their roof was damaged and leaked every time it rained. Thanks to your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response, Nilda's roof was replaced in 2024. When told the good news, she cried tears of joy and said, "Oh God, thank you! Thank you, God!" Nilda's roof is just one of many being replaced in Puerto Rico by Techos Pa' Mi Gente through Lutheran Disaster Response.



#### **Lutheran Disaster Response**

### **2024 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS**

REVENUE		\$17,494,828		
BY SOURCE				
iŤi	58%	Individuals and others \$10,210,967		
<b>(±)</b>	35%	Synods and congregations \$6,232,369		
	6%	Bequests, trusts and miscellaneous \$980,752		
	1%	Endowments and other ELCA-held funds \$70,740		
BY DESIGNATION				
.0.	57%	General undesignated support \$9,895,587		
O+•	43%	Specific designated support \$7,599,241		

EXPE	NDITURES	\$19,095,324	
BY TYPE			
	58%	International \$11,157,125	
	36%	United States \$6,850,110	
0 1 0 • S	6%	Fundraising and administration \$1,088,089	
BY FUND			
0	57%	Specific designated support \$10,921,894	
.0.	43%	General undesignated support \$8,173,430	

Note: Expenditures exceed income primarily due to disasters for which there is a

HIGHLIGHTED EXPENDITURES					
UNITED STATES					
ø	49%	Hurricanes			
	11%	Tornadoes			
	9%	Flooding			
	9%	Wildfires			
	7%	Clean-water access, severe storms and other disasters			
9	5%	Disaster preparedness and capacity building			
	3%	AMMPARO, care for migrants			
1 2 3	7%	Operations			
INTERNATIONAL					
	27%	<b>Europe</b> (Russia-Ukraine war, access to safe education, AMMPARO, flood)			
3	25%	Africa (Flood, drought, health, support for refugees, disaster risk reduction, food emergency)			

disaster risk reduction, food emergency)



#### **Latin America and Caribbean**

16% (Conflict, health, fire, flood, AMMPARO, disaster risk reduction, cyclone)



#### Middle East and North Africa

13% (Conflict in the Holy Land, earthquake, support for refugees)



(Flood, disaster risk reduction and preparedness, conflict, earthquake, fire)



#### **Global grants**

(Disaster risk reduction, gender justice, global response coordination, care for migrants)



3% Operations

Percentages are approximate.



subsequent invasion of Gaza, the hardships faced by Palestinians in the West Bank, who are already living under Israeli occupation, have only intensified. Travel is even more restricted, and over 90 new checkpoints have been established in the Bethlehem area alone. The tourist economy, on which many Palestinians rely, has become almost nonexistent. Some families now must choose between putting food on their table or paying for their children's school tuition. But thanks to your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response, some families don't have to make that choice anymore.

Lutheran Disaster Response has ensured that schools run by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) can stay open. Your generosity has made this critical funding possible, covering the cost of textbooks, after-school programs and, most important,

tuition for more than 580 students. Schools offer students stability amid the violent upheaval in their communities. Though parents still face great anxiety about the future, they no longer need to worry about whether their child will be able to attend school

The schools, serving kindergarteners to high school students, also offer critical care for students' emotional and physical well-being. School social workers consistently support students by providing counseling, helping them process emotions and looking for signs of hope.

Karimeh (name changed) is a young social worker, someone with whom students can talk and process their experiences. When she counsels students, she relives her own traumatic episodes, such as Israeli forces coming into her home and arresting her father-in-law.



Lutheran Disaster Response shares hope, healing and renewal with people in the United States and around the world whose lives have been disrupted by disasters. Your gifts support disaster survivors as they work to rebuild.



Karimeh remains steadfast in her work out of love and respect for her community, knowing that she makes a difference and provides a pillar of support for the students. She sees hope, even when her students can't. She helps them find that hope.

The school social workers used to work 20-30 cases per week, but now they work as many as 60. The trauma the students are facing is abundant and the workers are overwhelmed, but they carry on because they see how necessary their work is.

The ELCJHL schools, attended by students of different religious backgrounds, serve as a beacon of hope in their communities. In addition to keeping up with regular classes, students as young as kindergarten learn peace mediation skills. They are given space to express themselves through art, music and traditional dance. When there is so much anxiety and difficulty in the rest of their lives, school provides a place of safety for youth in the West Bank.

Your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response help ELCJHL schools to remain open and continue offering high-quality education and care to students. Amid uncertainty in the Middle East, Lutheran Disaster Response maintains support for communities affected by conflict, emphasizing dignity, justice and lasting peace.

Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem is one of the largest hospitals in the area and the only one that provides cancer treatment for Palestinian patients. Since Oct. 7, 2023, many patients from Gaza have been unable to return home, but Lutheran Disaster Response has supported them with housing and supplies, so they were able to stay near the hospital and continue their treatments.

Augusta Victoria is also transporting medical supplies into Gaza, providing lifesaving care through a partnership with al-Ahli Arab Hospital, one of the few hospitals still operating in Gaza. Despite having been damaged by multiple bombings, al-Ahli continues to provide care as much as possible. The medical supplies from Augusta Victoria are critical to that goal, especially as funding from other organizations diminishes. The need for health care in Gaza is extensive and increasingly complicated. Thanks to your generosity, Lutheran Disaster Response can ensure that people get the health services they need.



# LifeLines

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631-4101 ELCA.org/hunger ELCA.org/disaster

Spring 2025

For supporters of

**ELCA WORLD HUNGER AND LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE** 

# Gracing a community with compassion in New Jersey | p. 4

St. Stephan's Grace Community Lutheran Church in Newark, N.J., offers a community pantry and refrigerator, a garden and a daily breakfast for local day laborers, all of which are supported by your gifts to ELCA World Hunger. **Thank you!** 



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ELCA P.O. Box 1809 Merrifield, VA 22116-8009