

Service and Justice Updates

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

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2023

Dear colleagues in mission,

Choosing a favorite hymn or passage of Scripture is an impossible task – there are too many good ones. However, there are some I keep coming back to, because they capture my heart and soul, guiding my daily life and baptismal vocation. One comes from the letter to the Hebrews: “Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds” (10:23-24).

I am fascinated by the indomitable resiliency and faith of the early church. Our forebears in the faith appropriated the way of Jesus, which pointed to an alternative reality during times of persecution and hardship. They claimed that reality, not only for the participants in the movement but for all nations. In the book of Revelation the community is called never to give up, for, as the hymn goes, “the lamb who was slain has begun his reign.” The tears of the excluded, marginalized and persecuted will be wiped away. There will be a new heaven and new earth, and things done will be for the healing of the nations.

This new heaven and new earth represent a synchronic dance between the ultimate reality of God’s kingdom and the here and now. As a community following Jesus, we are called to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12) and to provoke one another to love and good deeds. Writer Douglas Hare reminds us that love in the way of Jesus is a “stubborn, unwavering commitment” through which we turn ourselves outward in love for the neighbor in need. This love transforms and liberates; it is the dynamis, or power, enabling the synchronic dance of God’s future in our daily lives, “for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7).

This update will give you a glimpse of the work done by the Service and Justice home area. In these pages you will find stories of evangelical defiance from God’s people around the globe with whom we are privileged to serve. These are stories of love, resiliency, hope and justice.

As I complete my call with the churchwide organization, I encourage you to be resolute in your discipleship. “He who has promised is faithful,” and he calls us to continue to provoke one another in love and deed. Through these years I have learned that justice is an all-in proposition. Our world is crying out in pain, yearning for transformation and liberation.

I am writing this note from Thailand on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The civil rights leader reminded us that “any religion that professes to be concerned about the souls of men and is not concerned with the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them, and the social conditions that cripple them, is a spiritually moribund religion in need of new blood.”

So “Rise up, O saints of God! The kingdom’s task embrace; redress sin’s cruel consequence; give justice larger place” (“Rise Up, O Saints of God!,” *ELW* 669).

Pax,



The Rev. Dr. Rafael Malpica Padilla
Executive Director, Service and Justice

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Administration

PROGRAM DIRECTORS FOR RELATIONSHIPS

The Program Directors for Relationships team widely engaged the companion synod program while facilitating the Becoming Conference in August 2022. Through various regional and companion-country-specific network gatherings, attendees participated in conversations around the five core justice areas – migration justice, environmental justice, racial justice, gender justice and economic justice (MERGE) – and learned more about the ways companions are being affected by and strategizing around these issues. Hunger intersects with all these aspects of justice, which is why hosting the annual ELCA World Hunger Leadership Gathering within the Becoming Conference was crucial. Participants in the Becoming Conference, including companion synod members, international companions and ELCA World Hunger leaders, were able to engage in dialogue and learn from one another's work and experiences. To learn more about the work of the Becoming Conference, see the [full report](#).

2023 International Consultations

Companion synod relationships are strengthened through constant communication among companions, participation in joint online events, mutual pastoral and delegation visits, youth exchanges, the hosting of visitors, and praying for each other, but also through international consultations. These strategic gatherings are a wonderful opportunity for leaders of the companion churches and ELCA practitioners of the companion relationship to come together and agree on a specific agenda. Partners involved in these meetings discuss mutual strategic priorities and thematic focuses, and develop commitments to deepen their engagement and to support each other in mission and ministry. International consultations mainly take place in the country of the companion church, where visitors take time afterward to visit communities. In 2023 the Program Directors for Relationships team is supporting companions as they plan the following consultations:

- Sudan Mission Centennial, July 2023 (includes companion churches of Cameroon and the Central African Republic).
- Latin America/Caribbean, November 2023 (includes 32 companion relationships).
- India, January 2024 (includes four companion synod relationships and two independent Lutheran organizations).

Network Meetings

In 2023 the Program Directors for Relationships team will continue to plan and facilitate quarterly virtual network meetings for companion synods and independent Lutheran organizations that have relationships with ELCA and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada companion churches. These network meetings give synods an opportunity to discern the strategic priorities of the area desks, reflect on the health of their companion relationships according to the values of accompaniment, and find common ways of working together to build on their past emphasis of engagement. In the past, network gatherings have predominantly been between ELCA partners; however, as we continue to live into a new modus operandi following the pandemic, more and more international companions are joining in on these network conversations and bringing a new energy, liveliness and insight into the deliberations.

Accompanying Peoples, Communities and Networks

GLOBAL SERVICE

This past August the children’s program at the Becoming Conference implemented ELCA World Hunger’s Vacation Bible School curriculum “Tree of Healing,” which focuses on healing the mind, the body, the spirit and creation. Every family participating in the children’s program went home with the full curriculum. Global Service looks forward to partnering again with ELCA World Hunger to use curricula and resources for the continuing education of missionary families.

Also in August the Global Service team welcomed three Horizon International seminary interns for the 2022-2023 academic year. The Horizon International internship program of the ELCA is an opportunity for seminarians to fulfill their internship requirement internationally with our global companions and partners.

This year we have three Horizon interns. Elizabeth Kuster (Word and Sacrament), an M.Div. seminarian at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, is serving at Bratislava International Church in Bratislava, Slovakia. Julie Gerrish (Word and Sacrament), an M.Div. seminarian at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, is serving at Luther House Chapel in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Jennifer Norberg (Word and Service), an M.A. seminarian at Luther Seminary, is serving at St. Andrew’s Refugee Services and St. Andrew’s United Church of Cairo in Egypt. Global Service is currently placing new candidates for the 2023-2024 internship year.

Global Service is recruiting new mission personnel who will begin service in the summer of 2023. While several open positions are listed on the [ELCA job board](#), we would like to lift up one critical position in the Middle East region. We hope that you, the Conference of Bishops, can help us find a candidate for the position of Chaplain and Director of the Baptismal Site along the Jordan River.

DOMESTIC MINISTRIES

African National Ministries

The Service and Justice African National Ministries Steering Committee, which represents six caucuses, met in person for the first time in three years on Dec. 2, 2022, at the Lutheran Center in Chicago. Almost all ELCA African national ministries have resumed in-person worship services. A special tribute was paid to Domestic Hunger for six grants delivered to African National Ministries congregations.

Recipients completed the ELCA World Hunger Ethnic Specific Ministry Grant survey, providing details about their COVID-19 workshops, challenges and success stories, and the impact of the grant on their congregations and communities.

The second International African Lutheran Conference, hosted by the Lutheran Church in Liberia, will be held April 20-30 in Monrovia, Liberia, under the theme “Preach (Gospel), Teach (Formal Education) and Heal (Wholistic Healing Approach: Spirit, Soul, Body).”



The congregation of Redeemer Oromo Evangelical Church in Minneapolis, Minn. has resumed in-person worship.

Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations

The past year has been a full one for Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations. The ministry has reinitiated leadership-development efforts for Indigenous ministries, enlisting new, young leaders to attend internal and external events and programs, hosting the ELCA Indigenous Pastors Retreat and hosting the Indigenous Leaders Gathering, which drew nearly 40 people from across the church and included new, young participants.

The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery Task Force continues its work. With the passing of the task force's beloved co-chair, the Rev. Marlene Whiterabbit Helgemo (Ho-Chunk), Bishop Eaton appointed the Rev. Manuel Retamoza (Cherokee) to join the Rev. Jessica Crist, former bishop of the ELCA Montana Synod, as co-chair of the task force. The task force, through its sub-task forces, has focused on: addressing the commitments made in "Declaration of the ELCA to American Indian and Alaska Native People"; managing the Indigenous report, education and worship at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly 2022; engaging with a Lutheran settler narrative; promoting the use of land acknowledgements across the church; commencing work on the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (in partnership with Women of the ELCA); and beginning production of an Indigenous edition of Luther's Small Catechism.

Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations is being supported by ELCA World Hunger in new ways, with grants to support food programs at each of the ELCA's Indigenous ministries and \$500,000 to support the Oglala Sioux Tribe's work mitigating the houseless and homeless crisis on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota and Nebraska.



Indigenous leaders tour Chicano Park (left) and tell their stories (center) at the Indigenous Leaders Gathering in San Diego, Calif.

Indigenous leaders at the Holden Village retreat center near Chelan, Wash.

Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries

Through the Association of Lutherans of Arab and Middle Eastern Heritage (ALAMEH), ELCA World Hunger has partnered with the Arab and Middle Eastern Desk in the last few years to strengthen the protection of vulnerable Arab immigrant communities through Arab and Middle East congregations. The grant covered food insecurity and food distribution; providing legal and gender-based-violence (GBV) awareness sessions and information to community members; preparing a map of existing resources (including legal and GBV service providers) in the areas of intervention; and referring specific cases to legal and GBV external services.

The day-before-Thanksgiving meal at St. John's Lutheran church in downtown Sacramento, Calif., in partnership with Salam Arabic Church, was a big success – there were 42 turkeys, 72 pies, pounds and pounds of stuffing and mashed potatoes, and more. With dozens of hands to set up, prepare food, serve guests, etc., approximately 300 meals were served at this event. Leftover food was packaged up and taken over to the Sacramento LGBT Community Center for its Chosen Family Feast.



Day-before-Thanksgiving meal in partnership with Salam Arabic Church in Sacramento, Calif.

This year Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries is looking forward to partnering with ELCA World Hunger to start an online Christian radio station for Arabs. Through this partnership the team hopes to reach and engage different groups in the community, including the most vulnerable. Expanding members' religious and spiritual knowledge, interest and commitment will change their behavior and sustain their spreading of God's Scriptures. They will be better able to grasp Christian and humanitarian values and pass them on to different generations, continuing the effort to align the Arab and Middle Eastern Desk's strategy with the ELCA's

new direction of reaching out to younger and more diverse communities.

▶ Latino Ministries

On Jan. 25, Latino Ministries inaugurated the Young Adult Bakery Coop pilot project. This initiative will help five students, selected from the College of Lake County (CLC) Culinary Arts program, begin a coop enterprise. This project is a collaboration of the ELCA, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), the college of Lake County and the University Center Coop Education program.

A substantial grant will allow Latino Ministries to continue its work with Latino young adults, which began with a series of encounters in Texas, Oklahoma and Puerto Rico. The grant will be used to expand these encounters to New York, California and Florida.

In collaboration with the Argus Foundation, the Latino Diversity Network will have a workshop in Puerto Rico to aid young people in the process of coming out. The workshop theme is "Embrace by Faith."

▶ Peace Not Walls

Since 2005 the ELCA's Peace Not Walls campaign has coordinated accompaniment, awareness-raising and advocacy efforts for ELCA members concerned about peace and justice in Israel/Palestine. Rooted in the ELCA's "Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine" (adopted by the 2005 Churchwide Assembly) and supported by ELCA World Hunger, the work of Peace Not Walls has in recent years included the online Advent Pilgrimage in Palestine resource, accompaniment trips focused on young adults of color, and cooperation with ELCA Witness in Society through synod networks and regular action alerts.



Early in 2022, under the direction of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Desk, a review team composed of ELCA Service and Justice staff and leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (with 50% Palestinian membership) began work on a strategic review of the Peace Not Walls campaign and 2005 strategy. Through surveys of ELCA and ecumenical stakeholders and in-depth interviews with key Palestinian Christian leaders identified by the ELCJHL members, the review team has endeavored to answer the question of how God is calling the ELCA to expand its engagement in Palestine and Israel, address shifting realities on the ground and recommit to strategy centered in accompaniment relationships with the ELCJHL and Palestinian Christian community and guided by their leadership. This expansion will include additional funding from ELCA World Hunger to increase staffing. The Peace Not Walls review team will conclude its work early in 2023, and the findings and recommendations will be shared and implemented by the MENA Desk at that time.

Africa

The Africa Desk celebrates a year of accompanying companion churches across Africa as they faithfully proclaim the gospel, engage in mission outreach and work to mitigate the impact of poverty, HIV and AIDS, climate change, gender-based violence, conflict and COVID-19 in the communities they serve. The list of highlights is too long to post here, but the following are some of the team's favorites:

- The cattle crossbreeding program of the Senegal Lutheran Development Services, supported by ELCA World Hunger, transforms the lives of hundreds of ethnic Fulani families through increased milk production and adding value to dairy products.
- ELCA World Hunger was central to the ELCA's engagement in gender justice in southern Africa. The annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence campaign was marked in Malawi, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Liberia and Namibia, where our gender justice representative, the Rev. Elitha Moyo, facilitated seminars on ending child marriage.
- Since 2007 ELCA World Hunger has supported more than 45,000 youth and adults through the Infohut (computer-based learning) program of the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa, working toward a generation free of HIV and AIDS through an innovative, faith-based approach to living and learning.
- We celebrate our companions' stability (the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi recently marked 40 years since its founding) and growing capacity (in southern Africa church leaders gained skills for disaster response and psychosocial support).
- With ELCA support, the women's organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon carries out activities encouraging women to pursue studies for pastoral ministry. Much remains to be done: fewer than 10% of pastors are women.
- In South Sudan, a nation where senseless violence can make life seem cheap, a Lutheran clinic showed women and girls that their lives have value. "Fistula camps" offered free surgery and post-op care to more than 70 women and girls rendered incontinent and isolated by fistulas. Lutheran clinic staff delivered 757 live babies at no cost to patients, and community leaders in peace-building programs found ways to forgive.
- New missionaries in Africa include the Rev. Kristin Engstrom, who arrived in Zambia in February and supports the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zambia with leadership development and capacity-building; the Rev. Mytch Dorvilier, who became Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) country coordinator for Senegal, and is helping young adults from the ELCA minister to companions there; and the Rev. Elieshi Mungure, who serves as professor of theology at Tanzania's Tumaini University Makumira.



Nyazude's fistula surgery was successful, ending the incontinence she had suffered since giving birth in a South Sudanese camp for internally displaced people. "I thank God that I am healed and this thing will never come back," she said.



More milk means more money, nutrition, options and ultimately dignity for families in Senegal.

Asia and the Pacific

About three hours from Lae, Papua New Guinea, a water project in Sokam village has yielded unexpected and surprising outcomes. The village lacks sufficient water, and though the distance to Lae, the country's second largest town, is not terribly far, rough roads into the mountains make travel and transportation difficult.



Frieda Wangon



Elsie Foyang (left)

Lutheran Development Service (LDS) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea initiated the project, supported by ELCA World Hunger, by first organizing a project committee with local leadership. LDS provided the material and a plumber, whereas the village provided the labor, contributed toward the cost of a vehicle to haul the material and constructed a guesthouse.

Water taps at every home eliminate the need for people (usually children) to haul water from the stream every morning and afternoon for cooking, washing and irrigation. Now children can get to school on time. All this has opened up other new opportunities.

Elsie Foyang is the pastor's daughter and an extension worker in the village. A better source of water offered her the opportunity to start a demonstration greenhouse, which has expanded into a business. She now has 12 farmers working for her, growing vegetable seedlings and producing chicken feed and fish feed. "With bad roads, especially when it rains, it's difficult to get feed materials from town," she says. "So we've created a process here, using some purchased feed, and combine this with ground-up cassava and other materials." These are pressed into small pellets and sun-dried.

Now villagers can grow vegetables to eat and sell at the market. They have a steady stream of feed for chickens and fish. Beyond this, other income-generating crops such as coffee and vanilla (which is labor-intensive) have helped improve life.

Frieda Wangon, one of the farmers, is proud of the certification she received for quality coffee beans. "With the extra cash income, I can pay my children's school fees and can buy various household materials," she said. "I also was able to contribute toward the water supply program." Wangon was able to build her own house and next wants to install solar power. "I used to live in poverty. Now I am more resilient, though I hope to move to more sustainability in income."

Europe

The ELCA World Hunger program has positively impacted the ministry of the ELCA Europe Desk through its focus on intersectional justice work. The program has been able to address issues of hunger and poverty in a holistic way by addressing the root causes of these issues, such as environmental degradation, discrimination against marginalized communities, and lack of access to education and economic opportunities.

Some of ELCA World Hunger's most significant work in the region happens through creative and collaborative partners such as the Asylum Protection Center (APC) in Belgrade, Serbia. ELCA World Hunger funds support the APC in helping asylum-seekers, migrants and refugees – especially minors and youth – enjoy their rights without discrimination, find justice and security, integrate into society, and improve their health and psychosocial well-being.

More than just a workplace, APC's bakery, located in the Vracar district of Old Belgrade, offers job training opportunities, community and connection. The bakery, Refuge Bakery & Catering, offers a welcoming environment for social connection vital to the integration process for asylum-seekers, migrants and refugees.

Rashad and his son, Ahriman, Syrian asylum-seekers supported by APC, live in a “shared-accommodation camp” in Krnjaca, Serbia. In the camp they started meeting with an APC cultural mediator and lawyer to start the process of seeking asylum. APC staff encouraged them to meet with the community at Refuge Bakery. There the father and son made friends with local Serbians as well as migrants, refugees and other asylum-seekers, which helped them to feel welcome and not so alone. While waiting for their paperwork to be processed, they took advantage of the bakery as a gathering place to share their experiences of prejudice, learn about local customs and habits, and begin to dream about their future. When Rashad showed interest in the food industry in Serbia, APC not only continued supporting the father and son's legal process but also helped Rashad get an internship at a local restaurant.

Refuge Bakery is an example of the creative and dynamic work being done by the Asylum Protection Center. It seeks to offer wraparound care for some of the most vulnerable in its community: just-arrived refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants. The project has evolved and adapted through the COVID-19 pandemic but continues to offer community, job training and hope.

Looking ahead to 2023, the Europe Desk is enthusiastic about engaging with regional partners who invite creativity into their process as they address intersecting injustices and the root causes of hunger. In Europe the ELCA has strong relationships with partners addressing migration justice, economic justice, racial justice, gender justice and environmental justice (MERGE). With our regional partners we celebrate the positive impact of ELCA World Hunger on the lives of individuals and communities in the last 50 years and look ahead, with hope, to the next 50.

Latin America and the Caribbean

The Cuban economy is weak, hindered by the global pandemic, problematic national policies and more than 60 years of the U.S. economic embargo. As a result, living conditions for vulnerable populations in Cuba have worsened. Iglesia Evangélica Unida en Cuba–Sínodo Luterano continues to accompany some of the most vulnerable communities in Santiago de Cuba, located in the southeastern area of the island.

As part of that diaconal ministry, funded by ELCA World Hunger, the church developed a livelihoods project alongside the Cristo Vive faith community in El Dajao, a rural community whose people lack steady employment. People in this community make their living by sporadically farming their own plots and by raising barnyard animals in precarious conditions. To better support families, the church set up a community garden and farming scheme, giving pigs to five families in the community. The families were responsible for raising the pigs to produce meat and lard for their own use and to sell at the market.



Rashad and Ahriman consult with an APC lawyer and cultural mediator in Krnjaca asylum camp near Belgrade, Serbia.



Danielle (from Serbia) behind the display case at Refuge Bakery. Workers fill and prepare the cannoli fresh with each order.

The San Miguel Farm provides participants in the livelihoods project with not only livestock but also agricultural training. Owners Mariela Barrera and Alcides Hecheverria have introduced new seeds into the community and experimented with new crops and vegetables that, though not traditional for the community, thrive in that area. Alcides and Mariela shared: “With the support of the church we introduced three types of beans, corn, carrots, yucca and spinach among others; this has sustained us. We have had good harvests, and we have been able to sell them. We give 10% of the profits to the church, eat and share. With God’s help we have seen the bean harvest like never before.”

Community members are organized to tend the garden, collect food and care for each other’s animals. This has brought life and enthusiasm to the community and provided participants with a source of income to improve their homes and feed their families.

Other members in the community have grown in their knowledge of pig farming while offering encouragement and support. When the sows delivered their first litter of piglets, one woman’s pig gave birth to eight while another woman’s had only four. Mariela, owner of the eight piglets, reassured the other farmer, Estela Ferreiro: “We shouldn’t judge our success by how many pigs we have but rather that we are taking chances to try something new, and we can learn from each other in the process. Look at your piglets, they are strong, the sow takes care of them, they are in good condition.” Estela was encouraged to continue learning and strengthening the tools given to her and other members of the community.

Now families of the Cristo Vive community are gardening, raising animals and looking after their own livelihoods. The Latin America and Caribbean Desk rejoices with them, gives thanks for their progress and recognizes their resilience and strength. Despite Cuba’s internal crisis, the church continues to provide the Cuban people with tools, hope and comfort.



Alcides Hecheverria displays his yucca harvest.



Middle East and North Africa

Companion churches and organizations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region have long benefited from the generous support of ELCA World Hunger. One of its key partnerships is with the gender justice program of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) in Palestine, Israel and Jordan. Through an ELCA World Hunger grant, gender justice program staff in Jerusalem plan and implement a wide spectrum of opportunities for the church and community, such as: (1) workshops on gender equality and nonviolent conflict resolution for youth, young adults and young married couples; (2) reformation of the Lutheran ecclesiastical court (religious courts handle all family law in Palestine/Israel) to apply gender equality principles to marriage, divorce, inheritance and custody cases, and to install female judges; and (3) biblical and theological preparation for women’s ordination in the church.

These efforts culminated in a historic celebration for the ELCJHL on Jan. 22, when the Rev. Sally Azar was ordained as the first Palestinian Lutheran woman pastor in the ELCJHL and the MENA region. Pastor Sally will serve in the ELCJHL's Beit Sahour congregation and on a clergy team with the Rev. Meghan Aelabouni (ELCA theologian-in-residence for MENA) in the English-speaking congregation of the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem.

Also in the MENA region, Young Adults in Global Mission welcomed seven new volunteers to the Jerusalem/West Bank program. With support through ELCA World Hunger, good progress has been made on the construction of a farm and guesthouse for the Contact and Resource Center in Lebanon.



When the Rev. Sally Azar was ordained on Jan. 22, she became the first Palestinian Lutheran woman pastor in the ELCJHL and the MENA region. Photo: Cetera Jacobs

Building Resilient Communities

The Building Resilient Communities (BRC) team is full of gratitude and joy! During the past year the team brought in new colleagues with diverse backgrounds, knowledge and experience who share the same values and passion for serving communities and building a just world. The team thanks synods, congregations, ecumenical partners and ministry partners at the churchwide organization for allowing it to reintroduce itself and renew its partnerships. BRC begins the year ready to share knowledge, invest in new ideas and work more efficiently and effectively in support of the communities it accompanies here in the United States and around the world.

AMMPARO

From Dec. 9 through 18, 2022, the ELCA AMMPARO team (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) and executive committee, together with more than 50 other pilgrims, traveled approximately a thousand miles along the southern border of the United States, from El Paso, Texas, to San Diego, Calif., as part of the “Journey for Justice” organized by the group Witness at the Border.

Highlights of the journey included the opportunity to visit ELCA-affiliated migrant ministries in two border synods of the ELCA: Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey in El Paso, which uses practically all its physical space during weekdays to feed and house migrant families just released from immigration detention, and the Border Servant Corps in Las Cruces, N.M., whose hospitality center (the only facility of its kind in the state) can accommodate 200 migrants who have been released from immigration detention and need a brief way station before traveling to their final destinations in the U.S.

Pilgrims also visited La Casa de Misericordia in Nogales, Mexico, whose operator, Cruzando Fronteras, is jointly supported by ELCA AMMPARO, the Grand Canyon Synod, the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona, and the Disciples of Christ. With only three paid staffers and one volunteer, this shelter provides housing and holistic programming for 120 migrants on their way to the United States. The migrants themselves are involved in day-to-day operations and have a voice in the shelter’s decision-making.

Sasabe, Ariz., lies along a 21-mile stretch of the border wall with 23 gaps in it. In this remote location the AMMPARO team heard the inspirational story of a cross-border ministry that accompanies migrants on both sides with food, clothing, temporary shelter and transportation to the nearest Mexican town, 150 miles away. This cross-border ministry was started by a woman who migrated to the U.S. some 20 years ago and survived a vigilante attack a few miles from Sasabe that killed most of her group of 26 migrants.

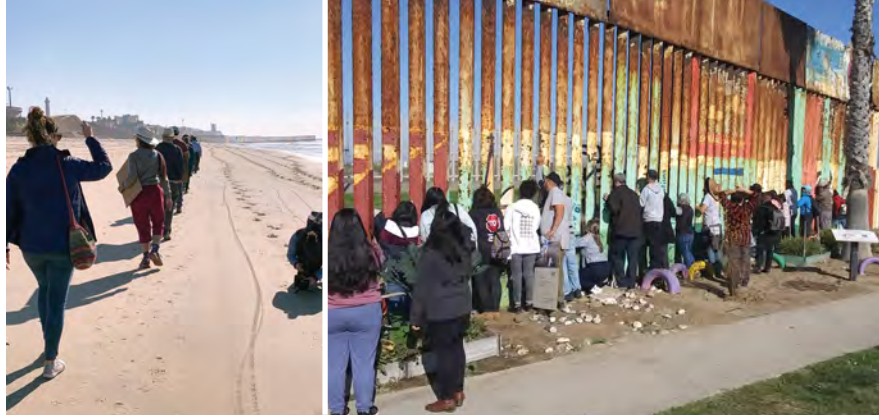
Near Ajo, Ariz., a respected elder of the Hia-Ced O’odham Nation told the tragic story of how Quitobaquito Springs, a sacred Hia-Ced O’odham oasis in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, was almost destroyed by border wall construction, and how tribal members and their non-Native allies are working today to undo the cultural and environmental damage.

In Yuma, Ariz., where an increasing number of migrants are coming to the border, the AMMPARO team arrived at 5 a.m. in total darkness to provide food, water and blankets to new arrivals as they awaited processing by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

In Tijuana, Mexico, the team visited shelters supported by the Haitian Bridge Alliance to house Haitian migrants, who are doubly stigmatized as black migrants in Mexico.

In San Diego, Calif., the AMMPARO group joined members of the Pacifica Synod to celebrate International Migrants Day. Their group split in two to participate in the March of Silence, which takes place on both sides

of the border each week, in Tijuana and San Isidro, Texas. Colleagues were moved to see one another through the border fence without being able to touch one another – a trauma known to families at the border. This pilgrimage was an important opportunity to learn more about conditions along our southern border and inspired AMMPARO staff to work even harder to increase protections for asylum-seekers.



ELCA World Hunger

In 2023, AMMPARO will receive the largest support it has ever received from ELCA World Hunger as the latter program celebrates 50 years. This funding will enable AMMPARO to support companions in the Americas who provide psychosocial trauma counseling and vocational support to deported and returned migrants to enable them to remain in their countries of origin. In South America, the ELCA supports Venezuelan and Haitian migrants in Colombia, Peru, Chile and Argentina.

ELCA WORLD HUNGER

Grants and Initiatives

ELCA World Hunger was established as an ongoing hunger appeal and program to provide financial and programmatic support to ministries for people experiencing hunger and poverty and to educate the church about faithful responses to both. Since the ELCA's inception, the church has committed itself to eradicating hunger and poverty through ELCA World Hunger and its partners.

Amid the global economic crisis of 2022, ending hunger and poverty has been particularly challenging. Global inflation affects millions of people who already face hardship and systemic barriers. In particular, the ripple effect of the war in Ukraine is negatively impacting food systems and hindering people from accessing key services. The ELCA World Hunger team is grateful for the flexibility it enjoys in disbursing funds entrusted by Lutheran constituents and donors; this allows it to adjust its global sustainable development grants immediately and continue accompanying its partners, so communities experience no significant delays in services.

In 2023, ELCA World Hunger begins a new portfolio, Diakonia Initiatives, to provide funding in new, expanded and flexible ways that will better support companions and communities in addressing root causes of injustice and poverty. The goal is to invest in, develop and test the ideas of companion churches, synods, congregations and faith-based partners; to address challenges and create opportunities; and then to share learnings and replicate what works.

Tikkun Farm, Mount Healthy, Ohio

Xavier was a high school junior when he first came to Tikkun Farm in Mount Healthy, Ohio, to participate in a poetry event organized by the local school. When he heard about the farm's Job Training program in Urban Farming, which covers permaculture, beekeeping and more, he decided to sign up.

Big Dream Grant and Domestic Hunger Grant partner Tikkun Farm is a pillar in its community, providing food, job training in urban farming and other meaningful programming to youth, young adults and other community members. Forty percent of the town's families live at or below the poverty line, 80% live in single-parent homes, and 90% of the youth participating in programs come from low-income households.



Since completing the 10-week program and becoming part of its first graduating class, Xavier has gotten a job on the farm and works after school. He plans to participate in Tikkun Farm’s new culinary job training program track this summer. Xavier shops regularly at the farm’s free market and shared that he often cooks meals for himself and his girlfriend. His experience on the farm is shaping his long-term goals: He is applying to become an AmeriCorps worker on the farm as a gap year experience, to help pay for college.

“I want to be a civil engineer,” Xavier said, “so learning more about the environment helps me think how I could design blueprints for structures that help things grow instead of harming the environment. Working at Tikkun Farm with the animals, and around the plants, feels like exactly where I am supposed to be.”

EDUCATION AND NETWORKS

Hunger Education

In 2022, Lutheran constituents continued to utilize ELCA Hunger Education resources to connect their faith to issues of hunger and poverty. Leaders ordered nearly 700 hard copies of “Tree of Healing,” ELCA World Hunger’s Vacation Bible School program for 2022, in addition to online downloads. “Tree of Healing” focuses on health and hunger, highlighting mental wellness, disabilities and healthy grieving. Survey data indicates that 89% of children participating in the program learned more about hunger and poverty while 78% learned more about ELCA World Hunger and how hunger connects with health.

Seasonal resources for Lent and Advent, including a weekly devotional study, calendar and activity guide, also continue to be popular resources. This past year constituents ordered more than 4,200 copies of the Lenten study guide and nearly 17,000 copies of the Advent study guide.

In 2022, ELCA World Hunger also launched a new webinar series, “Hunger at the Crossroads,” in which experts explain how hunger is impacted by such social issues as health, violent conflict and sexuality and gender identity. Survey data from the latest webinar indicates that 100% of participants would recommend the series to a colleague or friend, and 88% strongly agreed that it helped their ministry. Previous episodes can be found at bit.ly/HungerAtTheCrossroads.

The Hunger Education team, in collaboration with the development communications team, successfully made swift and substantial adjustments in planning and resourcing to develop a role-playing card game and youth-focused activity guide for ELCA World Hunger’s “Global Farm Challenge.” Due to the cancellation of the ELCA National Youth Gathering in 2022, the reimagined farm challenge became an alternative way to encourage young people, share the good news of God at work among farming communities through this church, and inspire Lutherans across the ELCA to support ELCA World Hunger.

Hunger Networks

In August 2022, ELCA World Hunger hosted its semiannual ELCA World Hunger Leadership Gathering, welcoming over 100 leaders from synods, congregations and ministry partners to Chicago to learn from and with one another. During the gathering participants built new relationships with other leaders, and conversations increased their excitement about the future of their ministries.

Building upon this renewed energy, BRC will continue to establish stronger relationships with the existing chairs and leaders of ELCA World Hunger Network. It will also establish new partnerships with other networks

such as AMMPARO, Lutheran campus ministries, ELCA young adult programs and the BIPOC communities. The goal is to deepen relationships and foster conversations that focus on the intersections of hunger, poverty and white supremacy, with a focus on including the peoples served by ELCA World Hunger.

Social Ministry Organization Engagement

There are 285 social ministry organizations (SMOs) affiliated with the ELCA. SMO affiliation has historically been the formal expression of vibrant partnerships between SMOs, all three expressions of the ELCA, and Lutheran Services in America (LSA). SMO Engagement seeks to deepen and extend these partnerships.

The SMO affiliation process includes legal and nonlegal components of the relationship between each organization and the ELCA. This process is under review as a committee incorporates feedback and proposed revisions from within the ELCA, LSA and SMOs. Throughout 2022, even while this process was under revision, two organizations applied for affiliation. Several more are engaging with the team and expected to affiliate in 2023.

In January 2022 the ELCA opened Nellie J. Svee Grants, an endowment fund for ELCA-affiliated ministries in North Dakota. In April this fund awarded grants totaling \$42,000 to nine ministries in North Dakota. This grant opens in even-numbered years; the next cycle will be in early 2024.

The ELCA also opened the Lutheran Services for Children and Elderly Endowment Grants (LSCE and LSEE). These grants are designed to fund ELCA-affiliated programs that benefit youth, older adults and their families. Awards were made for the third and final year of the current Lutheran Services for Children and Elderly Endowment Grants: \$20,000 to two SMOs from LSCE and \$103,000 to five SMOs from LSEE. A new cycle of applications for LSCE/LSEE grants was opened in fall 2022, and applications are now under review. The new grants will fund the most innovative, intersectional and impactful programs that align with the Service and Justice home area's MERGE priorities (migration, environmental, racial, gender and economic justice).

LDR Training and Networks

In 2023, LDR will develop and deploy a revamped training and education program to meet the current individualized needs of synods, congregations and partners. Offerings will include in-person and online asynchronous education, mentorship and consultation services. As part of this effort, LDR will work with stakeholders to reevaluate, reengage and reinvigorate the heartbeat of this ministry's humanitarian work – its global network of relationships.

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

Grants

Lutheran Disaster Response's work around the world (Global Mission) and within the ELCA's footprint (Domestic Mission) were united and now operate as one program – Lutheran Disaster Response. In addition to better reflecting the interconnectedness of our world today, this integration gives the domestic and international spheres the chance to connect, share ideas and learn best practices. The staff has also grown, which enables LDR to better accompany its partners and respond to needs more holistically.

Capitalizing on the work of the Midwestern capacity-building project that concluded at the end of 2022, LDR has received an 18-month planning grant to focus on enhancing sustainable, resilient communities – in particular, engaging with BIPOC, Native American and LGBTQIA+ communities in the Midwest. This aligns with LDR's commitment to approach disaster according to the MERGE principles (migration, environmental, racial, gender and economic justice).

In 2023, LDR will clarify and intentionally communicate its identity to the ELCA, partner organizations, companion churches and ecumenical partners. It also will focus on rebuilding and refreshing the LDR Network within the ELCA as a community of practice, to better equip synod, social ministry and community-based partners to collaborate with and support those most vulnerable to the impacts of disaster.

Initiatives

Guided by the MERGE principles, the Initiatives program accompanies the larger LDR network to develop new partnerships and deepen existing ones among communities at the frontline of the climate crisis, particularly grassroots organizations that are BIPOC-led. Within the ELCA's territory, three regional resiliency representatives steward this work under the supervision of the program director. Outside the ELCA's territory, the program director works alongside the area desks and LDR director to identify and strengthen partners and projects. Some existing projects within the Initiatives program are: LDR's response to the Jackson, Miss., water crisis; an award-winning transboundary flood resiliency project in Nepal, India and Bangladesh; and LDR's revamping of its ministry of emotional and spiritual care and accompaniment.

Florida-Bahamas Synod Emotional and Spiritual Care Pilot

After Hurricane Ian hit Florida, LDR staff met with the Florida-Bahamas Synod to check in and offer technical support. This meeting clarified the need to support the well-being of rostered leaders serving amid the disaster. A pilot program emerged whereby LDR, in partnership with the synod, has been able to send trained pastors and deacons to serve for one to two weeks at a congregation impacted by Hurricane Ian. The Rev. Eric Olsen, who served as a chaplain with LDR after 9/11 and is currently serving in southwest Florida as a parish pastor, has volunteered to place chaplains. This project, he said, "fulfills an ongoing need in southwest Florida and is an invaluable source of support."

Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia

When war came to Ukraine and millions of people began streaming across the international borders in late winter and early spring, our partners in Eastern Europe immediately mobilized to support the refugees in any way possible. The Rev. Miroslav Mató, a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia, knew he and the members of his parish would be called upon to help.

Located in Gerlachov, a small village in Slovakia about 200 miles from the Ukrainian border, the church prepared to offer refuge. Rev. Mató's congregation has three buildings that it decided to use as housing for refugees. Some refugees were just passing through whereas others wanted to stay long-term.



The Rev. Miroslav Mató with Ukrainian refugees being hosted by his congregation in Slovakia.

The outpouring of generosity from parishioners has been nothing short of miraculous, Rev. Mató said, with people helping refugees from Ukraine find jobs, enroll children in school and access medical care. "In these two months, I could see more miracles than in all my life," he said. "People were helping, they opened their hearts to help, and I could see more and more love than I ever have before." The chance to offer refuge to neighbors in need, he told his parishioners, was an opportunity to put their faith into practice.

Donors contributed over \$12 million to Lutheran Disaster Response's Eastern Europe Response fund. LDR supports 12 companion churches and ecumenical partners, including ACT Alliance and the Lutheran World Federation, in Ukraine and bordering countries.

NEW COLLEAGUES

The Rev. Dr. Everdith Landrau

Program Director, ELCA World Hunger Networks and Engagement

Rev. Everdith Landrau (she/her), also known as Evie, oversees the hunger leaders' network. She is a native of San Juan, Puerto Rico, by way of Manhattan (Spanish Harlem), New York. She is an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Evie's service to the church has taken different forms including ecumenical leadership, interfaith relations, networking, organizing, youth and young adult ministry, art/healing movements, food justice and advocacy.



Marie Arias

Program Manager, ELCA World Hunger International

Marie (she/her) is responsible for the quality and accountability of active international ELCA World Hunger grants and for ensuring proper grant close-out. She lives in Dayton, Ohio. Marie is excited to work closely with our companions and partners to serve, advocate for justice, develop sustainable projects and accompany communities around the world.



Maryn Olson

Director, Lutheran Disaster Response

Maryn (she/her) oversees LDR's global (international and domestic) grants and programs, collaborating closely with area desks, synods and LDR ministries. In addition to her experience in a variety of disaster-related roles Maryn served through the ELCA in South Africa and Namibia, working with partner churches' HIV/AIDS programs. Maryn's work is informed by her graduate training in public health. She and her wife, Angela, live in St. Louis, Mo.



The Rev. Matthew Zemanick

Program Director, Lutheran Disaster Response Initiatives

Pastor Matthew (he/they) is responsible for developing emerging initiatives related to LDR's resiliency and preparedness programs. Before joining the LDR team, Matthew served for nearly five years on Chicago's southeast side as a parish pastor, community organizer and environmental justice chaplain. They grew up in the Patapsco River Valley in Central Maryland and enjoy swimming (especially in the ocean), cooking, language and adventure.



Sean Coffman

Program Director, Lutheran Disaster Response Training and Network

Sean (he/him) is responsible for coordinating the LDR Network, including its annual events, trainings and webinars, and curating disaster response educational materials. He has a background in community engagement, human rights advocacy and community change through art and education. Sean lives in Fargo, N.D., and is a seventh-generation descendant of German-Irish immigrants who made their homes in New York, Ohio and Virginia.



Subhashis Roy

Program Manager, Lutheran Disaster Response International

Subhashis (he/him) is responsible for the quality and accountability of active international disaster grants and for ensuring proper grant close-out. He brings 19 years of experience and expertise in international disaster response including humanitarian grants management; quality and accountability; core humanitarian standards; and disaster readiness and preparedness. Subhashis lives in Kolkata, India, with his wife and daughter.



Zaya Gilmer

Program Manager, Lutheran Disaster Response–U.S.

Zaya (she/her) is responsible for the quality and accountability of active domestic disaster grants and for ensuring proper grant close-out. She was born and raised in Mongolia and currently resides in Palatine, Ill. Zaya brings experience in community development and in humanitarian relief efforts with international partners on the ground.



Emma Akpan

Resiliency Representative, Lutheran Disaster Response–Southeastern Region

Emma (she/her) works to cultivate and maintain deep relationships and collaborations with ELCA synods, congregations, social ministry organizations and external partners in the southeastern region of the United States. She was inspired to dedicate her career to public service after graduating seminary, and she has organized and advocated for voting access, racial justice and women’s reproductive rights, as well as Planned Parenthood and Hillary for America. She is a graduate of Duke Divinity School.



Grete Oanes

Resiliency Representative, Lutheran Disaster Response–Midwest Region

Grete (she/her) works to cultivate and maintain deep relationships and collaborations with ELCA synods, congregations, social ministry organizations and external partners in the Midwest region of the United States. She lives in Minnesota and has a master’s degree in emergency management and disaster science. Grete is excited to join the ELCA as it accompanies local communities in building disaster resilience.



Dale Peercy

Lutheran Disaster Response National Trainer and Consultant

Dale (he/him) has been with Lutheran Disaster Response for over 26 years. In his earlier years he worked as a construction and volunteer coordinator, on-site supervisor and project estimator, among other operational responsibilities. He is a member of the National VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) Housing Committee and does organizing work with congregations, synods and Long Term Recovery Groups. When he works with his wife, Jean, they are often referred to as “The Peercy’s”.



Jean Peercy

Lutheran Disaster Response National Trainer and Consultant

Jean (she/her) has worked with LDR since January 1997. She has coordinated and worked alongside over 90,000 volunteers in long-term recovery and now trains others to do what she did in the field. She has represented LDR on the National VOAD LTRG (Long Term Recovery Group) Committee since its creation. During that time she has worked with her husband, Dale.



Kristyne Duffy

Lutheran Disaster Response National Trainer and Consultant

Kristyne (she/her) comes from Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota. She began as a volunteer coordinator and trainer in its refugee resettlement program in 2014 before becoming disaster response supervisor in 2018. In her current capacity she will focus on developing online, self-paced e-courses and helping to build a training program.



Witness in Society

Witness in Society encompasses some of the ELCA's work and ministry in the public sphere, advancing justice and shining a light for peace and dignity. This work and ministry take place wherever Lutherans are found, in communities across the 50 states and in the Caribbean region, with focused activity through the Lutheran Office for World Community at the United Nations in New York City; the ELCA's federal hub in Washington, D.C.; and Lutheran state public policy offices (SPPOs) in California, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, as well as more than 17 directly affiliated locations serving even more states. Through the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, the ELCA intersects with the social implications of company practices and affects ELCA investment policy in socially responsible ways. The ELCA community envisions a world experiencing the difference that God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.

INTERSECTIONS WITH ELCA WORLD HUNGER

Though the ELCA's advocacy ministry complements priorities of ELCA World Hunger, collegial collaboration between these areas has expanded ongoing opportunities and output since the rollout of the [Future Church](#). Several recent ELCA World Hunger resources created with Witness in Society input demonstrate this intersection, including the "[Climate and Hunger Toolkit](#)," the "[Health & Hunger Toolkit](#)" and "[Housing: A Practical Guide for Learning, Advocating and Building](#)." ELCA World Hunger and Witness in Society have collaborated on educational opportunities such as the "[Conflict and Hunger](#)" series and developed youth-centered advocacy tips in conjunction with the "Global Farm Challenge," pivoting when the ELCA Youth Gathering went virtual (see "[Farm Bill Advocacy](#)"). ELCA advocacy to advance the profound impact of the child tax credit and related measures (our Action Alert is no longer live, but see [archived messaging](#) from an ELCA-affiliated SPPO) has been strengthened by statistical and narrative input from ELCA World Hunger Networks experience and research.

RECENT ACTIVITY

- This year food insecurity and humanitarian needs were exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. ELCA amplified its federal advocacy on foreign assistance, and among the key food-security bills passed were the Global Malnutrition Prevention and Treatment Act and the Global Food Security Reauthorization Act.
- With ELCA AMMPARO and the Lutheran Office for World Community, Witness in Society continues its participation in the Climate, Migration & Displacement Platform and other initiatives addressing the intersection of climate and related displacement and promoting the voices of frontline responders. In the United States, Witness in Society continues to push bipartisan talks on immigration and oppose Title 42 as a measure to deter migrants from exercising their legal right to asylum.
- In August, President Biden pledged \$100 million in U.S. assistance to the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network, for which Augusta Victoria Hospital will be a main beneficiary over a multiyear period. Advocacy efforts, including through the Lutheran Office for World Community and ELCA Advocacy Network, helped draw attention to this significant effort.
- Advocacy training was advanced by ELCA coordination and facilitation during this year's Women's Human Rights Advocacy Training in Geneva, Switzerland, in October 2022, sponsored by the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches and faith-based humanitarian organizations. Theological foundations for addressing violence against women were explored, and participants were supported through an introduction to local and global advocacy strategies.
- Attended by ELCA staff and network partners, the United Nations Climate Change Conference ("COP27") brought historic change, including creation of a loss and damage fund for those most affected by climate change.
- The final FY23 federal budget invested \$61.8 billion in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and housing programs; this included a 12% increase to homeless programs, a major priority for faith advocates in discussions with lawmakers.
- ELCA advocacy in 2022 had a role in advancing important health, tax, technology and climate provisions in the Inflation Reduction Act, including the largest federal investment ever in clean energy technologies to promote a transition to clean energy. (This was echoed by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly when it set a goal for the church to reach net-zero CO₂ emission by 2050.) ELCA advocacy staff were [invited to the White House](#) to celebrate passage of the law.
- Aligning the priorities of ELCA federal advocacy staff and SPPOs, the Homeless Remembrance Blanket Project in December 2022 was planned by the ELCA Lower Susquehanna Synod along with other Lutheran and secular partners. Many Lutherans contributed blankets and helped prepare. Building on this experience and working through the SPPO network, ELCA advocacy staff will be inviting new federal lawmakers to visit Lutheran-affiliated housing and homeless ministries at their request, telling the stories lawmakers need to hear as they decide on policy.
- Many ELCA synods, congregations and members were civic engagement activators in their communities during the 2022 election season. ELCAvotes social posts and [Advocacy Cafe](#) discussions bolstered civic engagement with informational messages from a nonpartisan, faith-informed perspective. SPPOs such as Kansas Interfaith Action offered opportunities for people to reflect on election results in their communities.
- A new ELCA Corporate Social Responsibility screen was approved in November 2022 by the Church Council. This screen, "Privatized Immigration Detention," recommends no investment in corporations that are involved in the private, for-profit detention of migrants. The council's approval capped a process of updating three issue papers that connect ELCA social teaching to investment: "Domestic Access to Capital," "Genetics" and "Sustainability." Corporate Social Responsibility issue-paper guidelines helped inform Portico's decision to vote for shareholder resolutions holding corporations accountable for their impact on climate and the most vulnerable. This year Portico asked for public reports on racial equity, reproductive health care and climate lobbying, among other topics, from such companies as Meta, Walmart, Humana and Chevron.

NEW COLLEAGUES

The work and ministry of our Witness in Society team has continued to be fortified by great leaders. Though here for only a short time, **Somtoo Ik-Ejiofor** advanced environment advocacy. The work of this position is presently being managed contractually by **Christine Moffett**, who served in summer 2022 as federal policy intern. ... **Silas Kulkarni** has been added to the staff in the position of director for strategy and advocacy, as has **Blake Chastain**, who pivots from his previous work with the ELCA into the position of advocacy engagement manager. ... Very recently **Daniel Pieper** joined the staff of the Lutheran Office for World Community (LOWC) in the position of program director. This shift came as **Christine Mangale** became LOWC director following the long-term, exemplary service of **Dennis Frado**, who has retired yet assists on a contract basis. Also announced is the retirement of **Jackie Maddox**, office and grants manager, whose history of Lutheran advocacy predates the ELCA. ... Further invigorating Witness in Society are the three 2022-2023 ELCA Hunger Advocacy Fellows: **Savannah Jorgensen**, placed with the Lutheran Office for Public Policy–California; **Jillian Russell**, placed with Hunger Network Ohio; and **Kayla Zopfi**, serving with ELCA staff in Washington, D.C.

In the words of Moffet, “While this work of advocacy is by no means finished, these are great steps.” Together we will prayerfully respond to the call to be a public church #untilallarefed.



Bishop Eaton greets the Rev. David Beckmann, former president of ELCA partner Bread for the World, as they prepare to visit the White House.



As blankets are laid on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol, ELCA staff members Andrew Fuller and the Rev. Amy Reumann prepare to be interviewed for a podcast on the Homeless Remembrance Blanket Project, which emphasized housing’s connection to hunger, health care, education and employment outcomes.



ELCA staff member Patricia Kisare was among presenters at the October 2022 [Women’s Human Rights Advocacy Training](#) in Geneva.



Several alums of the ELCA Hunger Advocacy Fellowship joined Service and Justice staff at the Becoming Conference, leading the ELCA World Hunger panel “Faith in Action: On and Off the Clock.”

Addendum

In the Future Church design, the International Leaders Program and Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program reside in the Christian Community and Leadership home area. However, Service and Justice continues to work closely with these programs as they engage with its global and domestic partners to develop leadership across the ecology of the ELCA.

YOUNG ADULTS IN GLOBAL MISSION



The Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) Argentina group

Young Adults in Global Mission was successfully relaunched in 2022. In this season, when COVID still looms, YAGM is grateful for the experiences and stories of the 24 young adults who answered the call to serve in one of its four country programs: Argentina/Uruguay, Jerusalem and the West Bank, Senegal, and the United Kingdom. The YAGM team spent its time during the pause building out COVID protocols, reviewing and restructuring program sessions and recruitment practices, and working to make YAGM accessible to any young adult seeking a year of service and accompaniment.

YAGM is excited to announce that it will reopen two country programs for the 2023-2024 service year: Central Europe and Mexico. Reconnecting with and strengthening relationships with these communities is one beautiful aspect of this program, and YAGM is thrilled at the chance to be welcomed back.

INTERNATIONAL LEADERS PROGRAM

The International Leaders Program accompanies global companion churches and institutions as they equip leaders for mission and ministry in a global context. Through its annual awarding of almost 200 scholarships, its administration of the International Camp Counselor Program and other leadership development efforts, International Leaders is equipping and connecting current and future leaders of the Lutheran communion worldwide.

International Leaders celebrates strong historic links to the work of ELCA World Hunger. Together these programs provide critical leadership development opportunities to companion church leaders who work in ELCA World Hunger priority areas such as medicine, public health, climate change, agriculture, community development and gender justice. Over the past five years more than 100 leaders have received comprehensive scholarship support, funded by ELCA World Hunger, to pursue academic degree programs, from certificates to doctoral degrees. At institutions in their home regions they study such critically needed subject areas as surgery, rural development, pediatrics, gender studies and climate science. They go on to take strategic leadership roles in companion churches, roles that multiply their impact many times over. Current ELCA World Hunger scholarship holders are preparing to lead as women's health physicians, counseling and mediation therapists, HIV and AIDS specialists, climate change program leads, diaconal program managers, community nurses, sustainable finance specialists, and much more. They will join thousands of other leaders around the globe who have been impacted by ELCA scholarships and leadership development over the past 30 years.

These ELCA World Hunger–provided scholarship awards deepen the ELCA's commitment to ministry with new, young and diverse people. Over 70% of scholarship holders identify as women, and over 75% are young adults. All scholarship holders enrich the ELCA by bearing the diverse gifts of the global church through their witness, insights and impact stories.

International Leaders looks forward to continued growth and collaboration alongside ELCA World Hunger to accompanying those who will lead us toward a world where all are fed.

If you have any questions about International Leaders, contact Kaleb Sutherland at Kaleb.Sutherland@elca.org or Ann Hightower at Ann.Hightower@elca.org.



Marie Claire Donn Olene Nana of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon is pursuing a degree in rural development as she prepares to lead diaconal projects of the church. Her training includes local agricultural projects pictured here. (Photo: Marie Claire Donn Olene Nana)

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