

2025 Annual Report

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Forrest, IL



ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OPENING LITURGY

Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

And also with you.

Teach us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Descend on our hearts, that we may love others in the ways Jesus loves us.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Empower us to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Move us to engage issues in our community in Christlike ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those with whom we serve and partner.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Strengthen us to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others amid disagreement.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Give us the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Guide us to be a healthy congregation that learns from its failures as well as its successes and offers wisdom to others.

Receive our prayer, O God.

As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, raise up leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Renew us daily in our baptism, that we may discover vitality in our relationships with you, each other and those we serve in the world.

Amen.

Founded on Faith



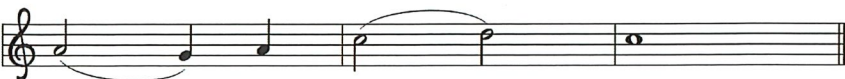
1 Found - ed on faith, the church— a - live by grace—
2 Your cross, O Christ, re - news our life each day.
3 E - quipped by prayer, we live the Spir - it's call.
4 Grow - ing in grace for God's cre - at - ed earth,
5 Found - ed on faith, called forth, em - pow'ed to serve,



pro - claims the gos - pel here and ev - 'ry place.
Bap - tized in you, we learn and teach and pray.
Em - pow'ed to serve with gifts, both great and small,
we yearn for jus - tice, peace, and hu - man worth;
we share God's end - less love with - out re - serve.



The word of God re - sounds through time and space:
Fed by your love, with thank - ful hearts, we say:
we bring the liv - ing hope of God to all.
a world re - stored; a faith - ful, car - ing church.
Then let us shout a - loud the liv - ing Word!



Al - le - lu - ia!

All Creation Sings, 1048

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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Forrest, Illinois
Annual Meeting February 1, 2026

Agenda

1. Opening

- a. Call to Order – *Neal Harms, President*
- b. Prayer – *Pastor Dave Castner*
- c. Motion to Accept the Agenda – *Neal Harms, President*

2. Reports

- a. 2025 Annual Meeting Minutes – *Monica Markley, Council Secretary*
- b. Treasurer's Report – *Tom Kilgus*
- c. Statistical Parish Report – *Beverly Koerner*
- d. Pastor's Reflections – *Pastor Dave Castner*
- e. Memorial Fund - *Tom Kilgus*
- f. Evangelism/Stewardship - *Jerry & Peg Austman and Gene & Carolyn Riha*
- g. Second Century – *Art Lehmann*
- h. Vision Fund - *Jerry Austman*
- i. Lady's Bible Study Group – *Judy Bachtold*
- j. Paul's Place – *Paula Crane*
- k. Piecemakers – *Carolyn Riha*

3. Old Business

4. New Business

- a. Elections Church Council - 3-year term 2026, 2027 & 2028
 - i. Church Council – Carolyn Riha – Trustee, Randy Doran – Deacon, Tom Kilgus – Treasurer
 - ii. Synod Delegates – Gene & Carolyn Riha (meeting will be by ZOOM this year)
 - iii. Prairieview Delegates –
 - iv. Committee Chairs
 1. Memorial - *Tom Kilgus*
 2. Evangelism - *Jerry & Peg Austman and Gene & Carolyn Riha*
 3. Second Century – *Art Lehmann*
 4. Vision - *Jerry Austman*
 5. Property - *Trustees*
 6. Christian Education – *Julie Harms*
 7. Worship – *Pam Kilgus*
 8. Paul's Place – *Paula Crane*
- b. Staff Compensation
 - i. Pastor
 - ii. Secretary
 - iii. Organist/Pianist
 - iv. Cleaning staff
- c. Financial Support
 - i. Madagascar Seminarians
 - ii. Prairieview
 - iii. Fairview Haven
 - iv. Matt and Janelle Steidinger – Amazon
 - v. Dan and Dawn Hall – Albania
 - vi. Evan Bachtold Family – Ireland

5. Adjourn

- a. Motion to Adjourn
- b. Close with Lord's Prayer

St. Paul's Lutheran Church Annual Meeting
February 2, 2025

The meeting was called to order by President Neal Harms at 11:17 am.

Pastor Dave Castner led in prayer.

Jerry Austman made a motion to accept the agenda. Lisa Heiser 2nd. MC

Reports:

*A motion to accept the 2024 Annual Meeting minutes as printed was made by Hannah Austman, 2nd by Jim Gerber. MC.

*A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as printed was made by Jerry Austman, 2nd by Lisa Heiser. MC.

*Sandy Schrof made a motion to accept the remaining agenda reports as printed. Ed Harms 2nd. MC.

Old Business: none

New Business:

A: Tom Kilgus made the motion to approve Jerry Austman (trustee), Monica Markley (secretary), and Samantha Stork (elder) to the church council, 2nd by Ryan Stork. MC

B: Kate made the motion to approve synod delegates, Prairieview delegates, and committee chairs as printed. Tom Kilgus 2nd. MC

C: Kate Austman made the motion to increase Pastor Dave salary \$1500 (following synod guidelines). Lisa Heiser 2nd.

MC

D: Paul Harms made a motion to leave salaries of secretary (\$18), Organist (\$84), and cleaning staff (\$26) at the current level. Sandy Schrof 2nd. MC

E: Kate Austman made a motion to eliminate the support Madagasascar Seminarians. Rich Stork 2nd MC

F: Jerry Austman made a motion to retain the same level of support to Prairieview and Fairview Haven \$1500 each (from local benevolence). Paul Harms seconded. MC

G: Paul Harms made a motion to retain the same level of support to our missionary families-the Steidinger Family in the Amazon, the Bachtold Family in Ireland, and Hope Albania (Hall family) \$2500 each (from the Vision Fund). 2nd by Pam Kilgus. MC

Neal Harms thanked Rich Stork, Gene Riha, and Peg Austman for their dedicated service to the church council. Peg Austman thanked Neal Harms for his service as our 2024 Church President.

Ryan Stork made a motion to adjourn. Lisa Heiser 2nd. MC.

Meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.



Peg Austman, Secretary

YEAR END CASH SUMMARY REPORT

(Bank account and credit transactions)

	<u>Units</u>	<u>TOTAL THRU DEC</u>
<u>ASSETS (non-cash) Net Chg</u>		<u>0.00</u>
<u>LIABILITIES Net Change</u>		<u>0.00</u>

***** INCOME AND EXPENSE *****

CHURCH INCOME

300 Current	0	124,140.02
301 Local Benevolence	0	2,250.00
302 Memorial	0	4,083.46
303 Capital	0	1,135.00
304 Piecemakers	0	16.00
305 Vision	0	10,870.92
306 2nd Century	0	537.00
307 Synod	0	3,035.00
308 Paul's Place	0	1,850.00
309 Fellowship	0	1,147.01
310 Lent	0	734.00
311 Cleaning	0	827.00
313 Shoebox	0	962.00
314 Fat Tuesday	0	1,379.00
327 Transfers In	0	25.00
351 Check Acct Interest	0	8,262.54
353 Miscellaneous Income	0	370.00
<u>CHURCH INCOME Total</u>		<u>161,623.95</u>

CHURCH EXPENSE

401 Local Benevolence	0	6,415.35
402 Memorial	0	2,853.08
404 Piecemakers	0	176.56
405 Vision	0	8,160.00
407 Synod	0	3,130.00
408 Paul's Place	0	887.58
409 Fellowship	0	2,406.56
413 Shoebox	0	887.69
414 Fat Tuesday	0	500.00
420 Church Telephone	0	592.39

	<u>Units</u>	<u>TOTAL THRU DEC</u>
CHURCH EXPENSE (continued)		
421 Church Electric	0	7,199.33
422 Church Water	0	572.00
423 Church Natural Gas	0	3,675.36
424 Parsonage Natural Gas	0	1,410.62
425 Parsonage Water	0	764.93
426 Parsonage Electric	0	784.46
428 Insurance	0	13,185.00
429 Bldg & Improvement	0	6,840.00
431 Worship supplies	0	614.99
433 Cleaning	0	3,086.22
434 Church Internet	0	328.00
435 Exterminating	0	720.00
436 Miscellaneous Expense	0	6,754.35
437 Copier expenses	0	6,699.11
444 Organist	0	3,444.00
450 Membership Support	0	952.88
463 Portico	0	15,830.60
464 Pastor Mileage	0	6,954.34
471 Worship Materials	0	99.36
473 Lay Pastor	0	450.00
478 Continuing Education	0	740.00
480 health insurance reimburs	0	8,466.00
481 Housing Allowance	0	39,999.84
482 Pastor Base pay	0	13,874.94
483 Employee share Portico	0	(10,054.38)
491 Miscellaneous Expense	0	993.25
510 Federal Labor Deposits	0	2,355.36
511 State Labor Deposits	0	697.19
541 Secretary Salary	855.25	13,454.80
578 Transfers Out	0	500.00
597 Real Estate Taxes	0	15.00
<u>CHURCH EXPENSE Total</u>		<u>177,416.76</u>
<u>INCOME MINUS EXPENSE</u>		<u>(15,792.81)</u>
<u>CHUR CASH NET</u>		<u>(15,792.81)</u>

BANK AND LOAN BALANCE REPORT

<u>Chur Banking Accounts</u>	<u>Beg. Yr. Bal.</u>	<u>Inflows</u>	<u>Outflows</u>	<u>End Mon. Bal.</u>
100 Operating Account	35,397.91	134,522.48	151,777.48	18,142.91
101 Local Benevolence	9,406.81	2,250.00	6,438.16	5,218.65
102 Mermorial	29,266.72	4,083.46	3,524.56	29,825.62
103 Capital Fund	15,752.98	1,170.00	6,840.00	10,082.98
104 Piecemakers	1,538.58	16.00	176.56	1,378.02
105 Vision	4,608.20	10,887.47	8,660.00	6,835.67
106 2nd Century	7,072.44	554.98	0.00	7,627.42
 Total Chur Bank Accts	 103,043.64	 153,484.39	 177,416.76	 79,111.27
 <u>Chur Asset Accounts</u>	 <u>Beg. Yr. Bal.</u>	 <u>Inflows</u>	 <u>Outflows</u>	 <u>End Mon. Bal.</u>
110 CD at FSB	154,529.00	8,113.19	0.00	162,642.19
 Total Chur Bank & Assets	 257,572.64	 161,597.58	 177,416.76	 241,753.46
 <u>Non-Chur Accounts</u>	 <u>Beg. Yr. Bal.</u>	 <u>Inflows</u>	 <u>Outflows</u>	 <u>End Mon. Bal.</u>
700 LYO Account	10,473.62	26.37	0.00	10,499.99
 Total All Bank & Assets	 268,046.26	 161,623.95	 177,416.76	 252,253.45

Giving Units---37

Above - \$8,0003

\$6,000 - \$7,999.....6

\$4,000 - \$5,999.....4

\$3,000 - \$3,999.....1

\$2,000 - \$2,999.....3

\$1,000 - \$1,9995

\$ 500 ---- \$ 9999

\$ 1 ----- \$ 4996

2025 Statistical Parish Report

Baptized members as of December 31, 2024	242
Baptized during 2025	0
By Transfer	0
Members removed in 2025	
By death	-4
By transfer	0
2023 Members removed adjustment	-62
Total baptized members December 31, 2025	176

Total number of confirmed members as of December 31, 2024	242
Members received in 2025	
By Affirmation of Faith (Confirmation)	2
By Transfer (Affirmation of Baptism)	0
Members removed in 2025	
By death	-4
By transfer	0
2023 Members removed adjustment	-98
Total number of confirmed members as of December 31, 2025	142

Total number of people actively participating	50

	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Communion</u>
Average weekly attendance	43	42
<i>Special Services</i>		
Ash Wednesday	21	21
Lent Midweek Average	28	
Maunday Thursday	31	28
Good Friday	29	
Easter Sunday	61	54
Advent Midweek Average	22	
Christmas Eve	52	50

2025 Church Member Activity

Members: *The reports should have stated at the end of 2024 –
180 baptized members, 144 confirmed members.*

Baptized: 0

Confirmed: 2

June 29, 2025 -- McKynlee Ann Stork
Raylan James Stork

Affirmation of Baptism: 0

Deaths: 4

April 15, 2025 – Glen Schrof
August 23, 2025 – Ryan Stork
October 23, 2025 – Maxine Yoder
December 31, 2025 – Dennis Evelsizer

Weddings: 0

Transferred In: 0

Transferred Out: 0

Prepared by Beverly Koerner, secretary

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

What an amazing year we have had. I have been your pastor for over two years now and I feel we are just getting started. I just can't help but be excited for this upcoming year.

There was an ask to explore more contemporary music for those who are looking for more variety. We have begun planning for options to incorporate this into our worship opportunities. It is a fledgling program, but at this point it will be happening before church for those who wish to attend. Be watching for more information as it becomes available.

I have been networking with the other pastors in our area. They are of a similar mind as me and want to plan more opportunities for combined worship opportunities. As a community of Christ, I only see this as opportunities to gather with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ for worship. Christians love to divide ourselves by denomination and churches. I would love to see our communities move beyond these divisions as one family of Christ.

On a personal level I would like to find an opportunity for some continuing education to improve my preaching. I want very much to provide meaningful and interesting worship and that means I must continue to push myself to improve and not stagnate.

I continue to be excited as we have more people who are preparing to join the church. St Paul's is a truly wonderful place, and I have never heard a cross word about it. The best pastor is nothing if they don't have a congregation that is welcoming and loving. People are drawn to our church because you are a welcoming and loving group of people. People come and quickly realize they want to be a part of our church family. Continue doing what you are doing, just being yourselves, and making folks feel welcome and loved.

As I said, we have had an amazing year, and I feel we are just building momentum. Good things are happening at St Paul's, and I pray that everyone reading this is as excited as I am for the coming year.

Blessings,
Pastor Dave

2025 Memorial fund report

Balance on hand, January 1, 2025-----\$ 29,266.72

Memorial Income -----\$ 4,083.46

Leonard Roth, Glen Schrof, Rowe Blissard, Ryan Stork, Maxine Yoder

Expenses

Funeral Expense-----\$ 1925.79

Pastor office bookcase, Secretary's new computer, study bibles

Paul's place new door, used fridge for furnace room-----\$ 1,598.77

Total-----\$ 3,524.56

Balance on Hand, December 31, 2025-----\$ 29,825.62

Respectively Submitted

Tom Kilgus

Evangelism/Stewardship Annual Report 2025

The Evangelism/Stewardship Committee looks for ways to engage our church family in activities to help others and to strengthen our ties with each other. Some of the things that we do are:

*Comfort meals are taken to a person/family that is in need during an illness, etc. Judy Bachtold is the contact person 815 848 3898.

*Sunshine Bags/Holiday Bags are given to persons in a nursing home/sick. Julie Harms is the contact person. 815 867 7569.

*Helping Hands are persons who are willing to help with a specific need, such as a wheelchair ramp, etc. Jerry Austman is the contact 815 848 8491.

ALL OF THE ABOVE THINGS CAN ONLY BE DONE IF THE NEED IS KNOWN.

If you know someone who would benefit from any of the above things, please contact the appropriate person.

Events that happened in 2025:

*2/25 Five Valentine Boxes were packed and shipped to college students. (no military this year)

*3/4/25 Fat Tuesday Pancake and Sausage Supper raised \$1,379 for the Shoebox Program and Forrest Food Pantry. THRIVENT sponsored.

*3/08/25 Presentation by Evan Bachtold, missionary to Ireland.

*March 12, 19, 26 and March 2 Lenten soup suppers with devotion following.

*3/29/25 Presentation by Albanian Missionaries.

*4/20/25 Easter Breakfast hosted by the Ladies Bible Study Group.

- *5/11/25 Carnation given to women in honor of Mother's Day.
 - * 5/24/25 Yard Work at the home of a member.
 - *6/08/25 Outside cleanup at the parsonage/church.
 - *6/15/25 Card/candy given to men in honor of Father's Day.
 - * 6/10/25 Midwest Food Bank Volunteer Evening with 25 helping.
 - *7/25 Christmas in July to raise money for Shoebox shipping. THRIVENT sponsored.
 - *8/17/25 Praise at the Pavilion. (Rainy day so at the church). Invited Lutherans from Fairbury/Chatsworth. Potluck following worship.
 - *9/07/25 God's Work Our Hands. We worked at the Food Pantry, got items ready for Shoebox packing, and did yard work for a member.
 - *11/16/25 Operation Christmas Child/Shoebox packing. A total of 70 boxes were packed.
 - *11/23/25 Hanging of Greens.
 - *12/01/25 Rang the bell for the Salvation Army at Dave's.
 - *12/07/25 Advent Dinner following worship.
 - *December 3,10,17 Advent Soup Supper/Worship.
 - *12/14/25 Cookie exchange after worship
 - *12/25 Six Holiday Gift Bags were given. Julie Harms headed this project.
- A heartfelt THANK YOU to all who helped with these projects. This committee is open to anyone who wants to join us. Your presence would be a blessing!

*Submitted by - Jerry + Peg Austman
Gene + Carolyn Riha*

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
SECOND CENTURY COMMITTEE
2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Purpose of the Fund

Primary: To encourage members of St. Paul's to prepare for becoming Lutheran pastors and to provide funds and support to help make this a reality.

Secondary: To encourage members of St. Paul's to be open to any full time Christian Ministry and to provide funds and support for helping prepare for such calls.

If there are funds and no candidates from St. Paul's in need, income will be used to fund training or materials for others who are preparing for Ministry.

Please contact a member of the committee with the name, address and reason for the request.

We continue to pray that other members of our congregation will respond to a call to serve in Ministry.

Balance on Hand 1/1/2025	\$ 7,072.44
Contributions by St. Paul's members	\$ 537.00
Interest earned	\$ <u>17.72</u>
 Balance on Hand 12/31/2025	 \$ 7,627.16

Respectfully submitted,

Committee members:

Art Lehmann,

Neal Harms, Terry Bachtold,

Jim Gerber

St. Paul's Lutheran Vision Fund

Checking Account	1/1/25	4,108.20
Interest on Checking	2025	16.34
Money Received from Cambridge account		10,000.00

Funds available for Mission Work. 1/1/2025	1,541.97
Donations designated for Mission work	0
Funds spent on Mission Work	0
Funds available for Mission Work 12/31/2025	1,541.97

Money Available in General Fund 1/1/2025	2,565.11
Donations Designated to General Fund	10888.38
Money Disbursed From General Fund	
Hope Albania	2,500.00
Amazon Salt and Light	2,500.00
AWBE	2,500.00
Mission trip	500.00
Fat Tuesday	160.00
Funds available in General Fund 12/31/25	5,293.49

Checking account balance. 12/31/2025	6835.46
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Cambridge Investment Account. 11/30/2024	235,940.02
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Cambridge Investment Account. 11/30/2025	242,565.33
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Respectfully Submitted,

Jerry P. Austman

Gather and Grow Bible Study

The Lady's Bible Study met faithfully from March to October. We started our year with Lenten services and then served Easter breakfast for St. Paul's congregation. After Easter, once again, Lisa Heiser opened her home for us on Wednesday evenings. Her dog, Sam, keeps us entertained. On the few times when Lisa cannot host, other group members offer their homes

First, we studied Psalms using a Max Lucado study guide. That was refreshing after going through Revelation last year. We took a break with a summertime meal out at The Humming Bird in Piper City. For our next study, we chose to read, "The Power of Thank You," by Joyce Meyers. Paula Crane led us through a study of that book along with some of Joyce's videos. After completing that, we celebrated with a meal at El Jarocho for the end of our year.

Looking forward to another year as we gather to grow in our knowledge of the Bible and our friendships with each other. Our plan is to start in January through March, meeting on Tuesdays from 1:00 to 2:30 at the church. Then as the days get longer in spring, we will once again meet in the evenings at Lisa Heiser's home.

Our group size ranges from four to twelve and we are open to having others join us. We try to live out Hebrews 10:24-25 *"Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, but encouraging one another."*

Submitted by Judy Bachtold

Paul's Place 2025 Report:

During the past year, Paul's Place has continued to serve missionary families. The mission of Paul's Place is to provide accommodations for missionary families while they are on furlough here in the US. This year, two missionary families were welcomed to Paul's Place, a service offered at no cost to them. In total, Paul's Place was occupied by missionary families 120 days throughout the year. It is the goal of the church to continue this service and increase the number of missionary families served.

Respectfully Submitted by Paula Crane

PIECEMAKERS 2026

2025 was a busy year for us. We made quilts for four graduating seniors: Liam Castner, Jack Austman, Josie Harms, and Cole Harms. Since we don't have students graduating in 2026, we are looking for other projects.

Piecemakers meet every Tuesday from 2:00 to approximately 4:30. Our group is small, and we'd be happy to increase our numbers. All are welcome to join us. Quilting or sewing skills are not necessary. Come visit with us, and share the fellowship. You may discover a new hobby.

The Piecemakers: Judy Gerber, Norma Harms, Deb Sanders, Sandy Schrof, and Carolyn Riha

Submitted by Carolyn Riha

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP YEHIEL CURRY

Dear friends in Christ,

As Lutherans, we are set free to love our neighbors and seek justice. In Colossians 2, we read: “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving” (6-7).

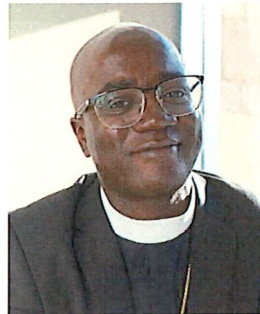
I am abounding in thankfulness for you, church. You are an integral part of this mission as we envision a world experiencing the difference God’s grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation. The ministries of congregations including yours, our synods and the ELCA churchwide organization are all working together today and every day so more people may know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love. From providing food to people experiencing hunger, to helping train the next generation of leaders that will lead this church, your support is at work here at home and around the world.

Your generosity to each of the three expressions of the church — your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — has made it possible for us to do this work

together. Your financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices are so valued.

As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to continue to walk in Christ, remembering you are rooted and established in faith, and free to love and serve your neighbors. Thank you, church, for the ways you connect with and support our siblings across the ELCA and in our communities.

In Christ,



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yehiel Curry'.

The Rev. Yehiel Curry
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America

“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”

—Colossians 2:6-7

THROUGH YOUR GENEROSITY, GOD IS AT WORK ACROSS THE ELCA.

MISSION SUPPORT

A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice.

ELCA WORLD HUNGER

Part of our church's long tradition of meeting human needs, ELCA World Hunger testifies to our hope for and commitment to God's promise of a time when we will hunger and thirst no more. ELCA World Hunger walks alongside communities in more than 60 countries — including the United States — to create unique solutions to hunger and poverty.

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

Lutheran Disaster Response shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.

WHERE NEEDED MOST

Where Needed Most supports the powerful ways we work together around the world — supporting leaders, inspiring young people, fueling ministries and championing global mission. Gifts to Where Needed Most support and sustain the people, congregations, synods and ministries working around the world to realize the hope-filled future God promises.



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

Sign up to hear more stories of impact from the ELCA churchwide organization at [ELCA.org/subscribe](https://elca.org/subscribe).

Read about Mission Support and learn more at LivingLutheran.org/SOFIA.

