

synergy

together in mission



Canadian Lutheran
World Relief

Synod of Alberta and the Territories | 2024



“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling.”

—Ephesians 4:4

Dear friends,

Greetings on behalf of the Board and staff of CLWR on the occasion of the 2024 Convention of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories! We are proud to be partners in ministry with the ELCIC in mission for others, as together we respond to God’s love in Christ by serving others.

We are continually inspired by all of you throughout the ABT Synod for your commitment to the work of justice and peace. As the world has faced disaster, growing conflict, and continued food insecurity, you have responded with urgency, generosity, and faithfulness. I wanted to share with you just a few of the many good news stories happening in our world as a result of your kindness.

We are uplifted by the creative ways in which your congregations have been working together in the life-saving mission of resettling refugees in Canada and creatively using CLWR resources to support our work around the world. We are continuing to add to our growing list of resources, including new Bible studies every month and activities

for Vacation Bible School. And, inspired by your generosity, we recently launched the Apple Tree Fund, a long-term impact fund that will ensure sustained and significant impact of major gifts from churches and individuals while creating a lasting legacy of compassion and hope.

I hope that during this gathering, you will visit our display to learn more about these initiatives and to hear more stories of the impact your generosity has made.

Our thanks to the individuals from your Synod who have served on our board in recent years, and to all the pastors, deacons, lay leaders and congregations of the ABT Synod for your partnership in ministry and faithful response to live out God’s call to be one body, one spirit and one hope.

May God bless this gathering, and may God bless your ministry.

Karin Achtelstetter, Chief Executive Officer

West Bank | Expanding education and career opportunities

Last Christmas, the Sunday School kids at Messiah Lutheran Church in Camrose, AB, started a Tiny Hearts fundraiser to help change the lives of women in the West Bank. The online fundraiser raised support for CLWR’s GRIT project, which helps give women and those with disabilities in the West Bank access to training, a career, and a new future.

The kids had fun keeping track of what was being donated by adding stickers to the Tiny Hearts classroom poster, which depicted some of the different fields of vocational training offered through the project, including in traditionally male-dominated industries such as auto-mechanics and carpentry.

The GRIT project has been working in partnership with local training institutes, communities and employers to reduce barriers for women by expanding and improving training programs, providing scholarships, arranging apprenticeship opportunities, and much more.

Thanks to the support of the Canadian government, Messiah Lutheran’s inspiring kids and teachers, and congregations like yours across the country, thousands of women like Mariam (cover) are making their career dreams come true!

Cover Image: Mariam Sabra had the confidence to pursue training in a male-dominated industry, knowing many women would prefer a female mechanic. PHOTO: LWF/NOOR SAID ODA



Euphemie, who lives in the Cankuzo province of Burundi with her children, is a leader in her community. PHOTO: CLWR/ARNAUD MUGISHA

Burundi | Ensuring long-term food security

In Burundi, conflict and a changing climate have left thousands of families facing hunger, and single mothers like Euphemie are facing the worst of it. Thanks to your congregation's generosity, our partners are providing both immediate food assistance and longer-term livelihood support to vulnerable families like hers. Training, equipment, supplies, livestock, and seeds are helping them grow their own food, develop new income sources and improve their family's nutrition.

Emergency food rations helped Euphemie feed her children while she worked. Then, our partnership with Canadian Foodgrains Bank supported her to start her own farm. She received training on modern farming techniques and tools to increase her yield.

Euphemie has big plans. She says with your support, "I can continue on my journey of becoming a great farmer." Your gifts are making a sustainable future possible!

Ukraine | Helping children cope with trauma

The conflict in Ukraine, ongoing for over two years, has been particularly traumatic for children, many of whom lost their sense of control over their surroundings.

Barbara Körozsi is a therapy dog trainer whose dog Doxa works with children at a shelter for the displaced in Berehove, Ukraine. The children play with Doxa, who brings them comfort, builds self confidence and teaches them to trust again. Deciding what Doxa will do and directing her with commands provides children with a sense of control in a safe space.

Barbara recalls one family with two children: "When they arrived, [they] were afraid of any noise that sounded like the war... They wouldn't go anywhere without their mother. But when they started to interact with Doxa, they began to open up... They now come without their mom. They don't cry but play and have fun."

Thank you for helping children in Ukraine reclaim their childhood!

Just as a single apple seed can
one day become an orchard,
a legacy gift to our
APPLE TREE FUND
will turn into life-saving
hope & help across regions
for decades to come.



Find out how you
can plant hope
clwr.org/appletree

Your Stories | CLWR's first visit to Whitehorse, YT

In November, the congregation of Trinity Lutheran in Whitehorse, YT hosted CLWR's Executive Director, Karin Achtelstetter. Since the closure of Holy Family Lutheran Church in Yellowknife back in 2022, Trinity Lutheran, led by Rev. Kevin Powell, is the only ELCIC congregation in the Territories. It was not only Achtelstetter's first visit to the territory, but also a significant moment in the organization's 75-year history as it was the first time a representative had travelled to Whitehorse to visit the community there.

"It was a positive vibe all around," Rev. Powell remarked, sharing the congregation's excitement surrounding the visit. The congregation is a longtime supporter of CLWR's mission and is spiritedly involved in the movement. They are especially responsive to calls for support during humanitarian crises, such as CLWR's Ukraine appeal. "It's an issue that very close to my congregation as we have a lot of Ukrainian members," said Rev. Powell.

"Trinity is one of those congregations that really responded, but I hadn't had a chance to tell them the full story of what happened with their funds, and this gave me that opportunity," Achtelstetter said. "Meeting the congregation, talking to people about what was achieved through their participation, for me, is a very important blessing. It's a gift that we have the ability to connect with those that support us."

Achselstetter spent the weekend of November 3-5, 2023 in Whitehorse. Though short, it was a visit filled with excitement, community, and learning—and bison burgers, a popular dish in Yukon. Achtelstetter enjoyed trying one for the first time while doing some sightseeing with Rev. Powell.

On the Saturday of her visit, Trinity Lutheran hosted a town hall event with its ecumenical partners in the Anglican and United churches. Attendees engaged in an animated two-hour discussion with Achtelstetter about the crises in Gaza and Ukraine and the work that CLWR is doing in those regions. "Folks were really appreciative of her perspective and hearing what CLWR does, because a lot of them have just a



Rev. Powell with Karin Achtelstetter as she accepts a cheque from Trinity Lutheran's treasurer Stuart Dawson. PHOTO: REV. POWELL

general sense," Pastor Powell said. "People wanted to hear a way to talk about the crises and [learn] how one does humanitarian work."

The town hall format allowed Achtelstetter to respond to questions from the community. "I really enjoyed that," Achtelstetter said, "because I could respond to the interests of the community instead of just giving a PowerPoint presentation and then not being sure if it was what the congregation was interested in. I saw how well-connected the congregation was, along with their ecumenical partners, who were also interested in the same issues. It was a great experience to see how Trinity Lutheran is such an important part of the Whitehorse community."

Achselstetter considers her visit to Whitehorse an important learning experience. Climate change and reconciliation with indigenous peoples in Canada are two issues that are extremely relevant in Yukon, and issues that she wants to continue learning more about. "I really hope to continue listening and learning. Whitehorse is a good place to explore those questions, especially with a congregation that is also thinking about these issues. The work that we do at CLWR is on behalf of Lutherans, the ELCIC, and all Lutheran communities that give us mandate. So, it's very important to stay closely connected to the communities of our congregations and supporters."

Rev. Powell was delighted that so many come out to listen to Achtelstetter. For him, it is significant that the three Lutheran, Anglican, and United Church communities are continuously trying to find new ways of working together.



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