

synergy

together in mission



Canadian Lutheran
World Relief

Manitoba/Northwestern Ontario Synod | 2024



“So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.”

—Galatians 6:9

Dear friends,

Greetings on behalf of the Board and staff of CLWR on the occasion of the 2024 Manitoba/Northwestern Ontario Synod Convention! 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 MNO 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.

Your action and your support have truly renewed and transformed the lives of many. 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. 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 MNO Synod for your partnership in ministry.

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

Karin Achtelstetter, Chief Executive Officer

Syria & Türkiye | Rebuilding after the earthquakes

When massive earthquakes hit Syria and Türkiye in February 2023, millions were affected. Many in the region had already lost so much due to the war in Syria, and the regions hit hardest by the earthquake were hosting millions displaced by the conflict.

Thanks to the quick response of congregations like yours, our local partners were able to act immediately, delivering emergency food, shelter and other supplies as well as medical care.

The focus then shifted to supporting families who had lost everything and did not have a home to return to. Your generosity enabled our partners to rehabilitate homes, schools, and other vital infrastructure.

They also provided psychosocial services

such as trauma care and employment support to displaced families.

When Cassandra Hay, an animation student and member of Winnipeg’s Grace Lutheran Church, learned about the earthquakes, she wanted to help. Hay used her art skills to create images honouring Türkiye and Syria that could be purchased for use as Zoom backgrounds and donated part of the proceeds towards rehabilitation efforts.

Thanks to all the churches and individuals like Cassandra all across Canada who are using their creativity and talent to make a difference through CLWR!

Cover Image: Team members from Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), our local partners in Syria, distributing emergency supplies to families affected by the earthquakes. PHOTO: MECC



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!

Did you know...

CLWR has resources to help your congregation join together in the work of compassion and justice?

Visit clwr.org/resources for tools and activities for all ages.

Refugee Resettlement | Working together in mission

In 2016, St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Winnipeg partnered with another local church to bring a Syrian family to Canada. "It was a wonderful opportunity for us to welcome some new Canadians," said St. Mark's member Rhonda Lorch of the family.

Through that experience, Lorch met another Syrian family that lived in the same apartment building. She quickly became friends with them, too. "They were also a great success story," she said of the family of five—Ahmad and Khadija and their three children.

The family adapted well to life in Canada and were eventually reunited with Khadija's mother and two sisters when they also came to Canada. But her brother, his wife and their two small children remain stuck in Turkey, where life has become untenable for them. Since he cannot legally work there, it is hard to support the family.

His situation is very distressing for his family members in Canada, especially his mother. "She took my face in her hands and begged me to help," Lorch said. "I said I would see what I could do." She went back to St. Mark's to ask the church to sponsor the brother and his family, in partnership with CLWR. The church council agreed.

The challenge for the congregation now



Khadija's brother Abdulaziz and his family who are in the process of being sponsored by St. Marks. PHOTO: AHMAD ALKHATTAB

is raising the \$30,000 needed to provide for the family during their first year in Canada. That's why St. Marks is inviting other Lutheran churches to join them.

"I know that it's hard for churches these days to sponsor refugees on their own," Lorch said. "By joining with us we can work together to reunite this family."

For Rev. Zsófi Schmiedge, pastor of St. Mark's, sponsoring refugees is "an extension of our mission and theology. Christ tells us whatever we do for those in need we are doing to God. It's what we do as Christians, helping any who are seeking safety and wanting to improve their lives."

Ahmad and Khadija are grateful for St. Mark's willingness to help. "We are hoping and praying they can come and be with us," Ahmad said. "Having them here would bring such peace of mind."



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