

CLWR Sunday 2017

Our Common Humanity



Canadian Lutheran
World Relief



Evangelical Lutheran
Church in Canada
www.elcic.ca

clwr.org/CLWRSunday

Worship Resource for Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada congregations



Berzegen Yimam is the secretary of a watershed conservation committee and surveyor for a project in northern Ethiopia that's helping small-scale farmers increase their food production. Photo: CLWR/M.Mutch

Introduction

Welcome to the 2017 CLWR Sunday resource package. We hope that it will help you and your congregation plan and celebrate your partnership with Canadian Lutheran World Relief at a Sunday morning worship service under the theme “Our Common Humanity.”

CLWR works toward a world where people live in justice, peace and dignity, united in diversity, and empowered to achieve their universal rights to basic needs and quality of life. The theme of Our Common Humanity highlights our commonality as God’s children as we seek out ways we can work towards a world where people live in justice, peace and dignity.

This year we are grateful to the Rev. Patricia L. Giannelia of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kelowna, British Columbia, for creating the CLWR Sunday worship resources for Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada congregations. These include reflections on scripture passages (from the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible* [NRSV]) and music selections. The resources are offered for your use at any time during the year.

To these we’ve added stories about aid and development work that Lutherans like you are supporting and suggestions for activities and further resources for your congregation.

Thank you for supporting the work of CLWR!

Liturgical Suggestions

All references are from Evangelical Lutheran Worship (EvLW)

Prayer of the Day – Nurturing God, you supply our every need. Help us to see the need of others and respond in practical ways, while we continue to strive for systemic justice and peace. Through your Son, Jesus Christ, the lover and giver of all, amen.

Setting – use a setting which is well-known, so the focus can be on the texts and hymns.

Offertory – *Now It Is Evening*, #572 – “Who will be neighbour?”

Eucharistic Prayer X, page 69 – very human, very personable imagery.

Post-Communion/Sending – *Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love*, #708 – “Neighbors are wealthy and poor, varied by color and race, neighbors are nearby and far away. These are the ones we will serve, these are the ones we will love; all these are neighbors to us and you.”

Other Hymns

Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether, #470 – “Touch we now your garment's hem... that by caring, helping, giving, we may be disciples true.”

The Lord Now Sends Us Forth, #5382 – All of it.

To Be Your Presence, #546 – “We are your heart, O Christ, your hands and voice, to serve your people is our call and choice, and in this mission we, the church, rejoice, alleluia!”

The Day You Gave Us Lord Has Ended, #569 – “We thank you that your church, unsleeping while earth rolls onward into light, through all the world its watch is keeping, and never rests by day or night.”

Hymns continued on next page...

...hymns continued

When We Are Living, #639 – “Across the wide world, we shall always find...those who are crying with no peace of mind... and when we help them, or when we feed them, we belong to God, we belong to God.”

Light Dawns on a Weary World, #726 – “Love grows in a weary world when hungry hearts find bread and children’s dreams are fed.”

The Church of Christ, in Every Age, #729 – “Across the world, across the street, the victims of injustice cry for shelter and for bread to eat, and never live before they die.”

Texts

Genesis 3:8-13, 20-23

Adam and Eve are being banished from the garden after eating of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Before they leave, however, we have this loving image that God’s final action to them is to sew them clothing.

⁸They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰He said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was

afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.”

¹¹He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹²The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.” ¹³Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” ...

²⁰The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living. ²¹And the LORD God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them. ²²Then the LORD God said, “See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” — ²³therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken.

Acts of the Apostles 9:31, 36-41

In the many stories of the birth of the church in Acts, this one shows the practicality of many of the early Christians. Dorcas lived out her faith by doing, sewing clothing for the widows. Joppa is a port city, so perhaps they were widows of men lost at sea.

³¹Meanwhile the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria had peace and was built up. Living in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers...

³⁶Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. ³⁷At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. ³⁸Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay." ³⁹So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. ⁴⁰Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive.

Mark 5:25-34

The woman with the hemorrhage knows she need only touch Jesus' clothing to receive healing. All of our actions impact on others. CLWR volunteers touch the quilts and other items that in turn will be touched by their recipients. Metaphorically, it is as if Christ bridges the gap between our worlds.

²⁵Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. ²⁶She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." ²⁹Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" ³¹And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" ³²He looked all around to see who had done it. ³³But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

Reflection: We Are God's Hands – in God's Hands

Knock, knock!
Who's there?
Anita.
Anita who?
Anita sweater for Syria...

Knock, knock!
Who's there?
A sweat...
A sweat who?
A sweater for Syria.

Knock, knock!
Who's there?
A nutter.
A nutter who?
Another sweater for Syria.

Knock, knock!
Who's there?
Stella.

Stella who?
Stella another sweater for
Syria.

Knock, knock!
Who's there?
Consumption.
Consumption who?
Consumption be done
about all these sweaters?!?

Knock, knock!
Who's there?
Cargo.
Cargo who?
Cargo ship take all the
sweaters to Syria....

In 2013, Canadian Lutheran World Relief asked Canadian Lutherans to send sweaters to Winnipeg to fill a container to be sent to the Za'atari refugee camp in Jordan. At the time, there were approximately 80,000 refugees from Syria living in Za'atari. CLWR expected about 10,000 sweaters to be sent—over 120,000 were received in total!

“Consumption be done about all these sweaters...?!?” This is just one example of how Canadian Lutherans have responded to global need, over and over, ever since the inception of CLWR in 1946.

Year after year, Lutherans—and others—have been responding. A humanitarian crisis is mentioned on the nightly news. Immediately donations start arriving at CLWR offices. This in addition to people gathering in church halls and basements throughout the year, making and/or putting together items that are needed in other parts of the world. Quilts are carefully planned and pieced, then tied and stitched together; baby layettes, including mountains of hand-sewn diapers; hygiene and school kits—items collected, then checked off against a list. And when it all arrives at the warehouse in Winnipeg,

or one of the baling stations in British Columbia or Ontario, another group of volunteers is there to fold the quilts identically so they fit into the baler, check each kit for missing items, and then pack everything into the waiting shipping container. All sent with love to people that the volunteers will likely never meet.

This takes time and painstaking effort, is very labour-intensive, and virtually totally volunteer driven—unaffordable and undo-able otherwise.

In the communities across the world where these containers arrive, labour-intensivity is usually the order of the day—water hauled in containers over long distances, gardens planted and maintained with the most basic of tools, food gathered and prepared over limited cooking

facilities—bent-over, backbreaking work. No need for fitness trackers here—10,000 steps in a day the minimum, every meal a “100-mile diet.” Our volunteering choice is their reality.

We do not have the power to heal the world’s ills, no matter how many quilts and layettes we send, but as each one is folded and packed with loving hands, and each other item wrapped and packed, we hope that the hands that receive them feel that love and care. We can only hope that their day’s load is made a little lighter with what we send, and we pray for a day when “all the world...echoes shalom¹.” Until that day, we give thanks that we can be the heart and hands of God in a hurting world.

¹ EvLW #726 – “Light Dawns on a Weary World,” refrain

Faith Focus (Children's Message): We Are God's Hands – in God's Hands

Needed – a globe.

Pass the globe around and point out Canada. Ask if anyone has been to any other countries and help find them on the globe.

Have you ever heard the expression, “being held in God’s hands”? Or perhaps you’ve heard the song, “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands.” Maybe you can sing it with a change-up—how about “*She’s Got the Whole World in Her Hands*”?

Hold the globe in your hands and ask the listeners to imagine that those are the hands of God holding the world, holding us.

Explain a bit about CLWR, and how one of its programs gathers kits and items to send to those in need in other countries. Point out some of those countries where CLWR has sent aid—Haiti, Peru, Mauritania, Tanzania, Zambia, Jordan, Nepal, etc.

Explain that it takes a lot of hands to sew the quilts and the diapers, to gather the kits together, to sort them and package them.

Explain that our hands become like the hands of God, reaching out across the world, so that even though we are never likely to actually meet the people we make the kits for, by doing this work, it is as if our hands are reaching across the world to them.

Finish by placing the globe in the centre, ask everyone to hold hands and close in prayer:

We pray: We give you thanks, loving God, for the work we can do for others through CLWR. Especially today, we give thanks that we can be your hands and your heart, as we touch the lives of children and families all over the world with practical things to help them in their everyday lives—quilts, blankets, layettes, kits and sports equipment. Amen.

Stories from the Field

You may wish to incorporate examples of Lutheran aid and development work in your Sunday homily. Below are three narratives that capture how Canadian Lutherans like you, through your support of CLWR, are supporting people as they work for more secure lives for their families and others.

Working together for a common cause

A desire to support their global neighbours was the inspiration for Glen and Michele Erlandson to help start the River Plains Growing Project. For the past eight years, a group from Outlook, Saskatchewan, has worked together to grow, tend and market a crop to raise funds to help end hunger around the world.

“The biggest inspiration is helping out your neighbour,” says Glen. “At the outset, [the inspiration] was this wealth we have in the ag sector in Canada and being able to share a part of that.”

Through growing projects, groups work together to grow a crop and donate the proceeds from the sale to Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a partnership of Canadian churches and church-based agencies working to end global hunger. The funds are used by the Foodgrains Bank member agencies—including Canadian Lutheran World Relief, to which the River Plains Growing Project designates their donation—for projects that are working towards ending hunger.

The goal of helping one’s neighbours—however near or far—is one that resonates with the local community. The project is grateful to the landowner, Arlo Larson, who offers use of the quarter section free of charge, and for the support



The River Plains Growing Project has been supporting CLWR through Canadian Foodgrains Bank for the past eight years. Photo: Glen Erlandson

it receives from local businesses and the rural municipality. Community members often attend the harvest and the project organizes a fall potluck.

“People appreciate that opportunity to work together and get together for what can be a good common cause,” says Michele.

After reading an article in *Canada Lutheran* about a growing project in Birch Hills, Saskatchewan, Michele was inspired to explore the idea with the Erlandsons’ congregation, Saskatchewan River Lutheran. The group also includes members from Bethlehem Lutheran Church, St. Andrew’s United Church and the local community.

“I appreciate the fact that [the support] is going to organizations that are well-established,” says Michele. “Canadian Lutheran World Relief and Canadian Foodgrains Bank are very well respected. It’s easy to track where the projects are, and you can be fairly confident that it’s going for good purposes.”

Glen had the opportunity to visit several Foodgrains Bank sustainable agriculture and nutrition projects on a recent Foodgrains Bank learning tour to Rwanda. The visit affirmed his commitment to the River Plains Growing Project and he appreciated the opportunity to see projects first-hand.

“[The learning tour] builds my confidence in what’s being done—I’ll continue supporting and helping the project that we’ve got,” he says. “It makes you feel a lot better about what we’re doing—I can see the difference that it’s making for some people’s lives.”

With funding from the Foodgrains Bank, CLWR is working to end hunger in Ethiopia through projects that are supporting small-scale farmers by constructing irrigation systems, providing agricultural and marketing training, and protecting watersheds.

For those who are interested in starting a growing project, Glen suggests gathering a group that will manage the finances and input requirements and organize the work parties. The Foodgrains Bank’s regional representatives are available to offer information about starting a project.

In addition, Glen offers a final piece of advice: “Do the best you can at growing the crop and ask God to bless it!”

Ellen Paulley, Communications Manager for Canadian Lutheran World Relief

Water conservation improves resilience in communities affected by drought

“Before there was only one permanent spring in the area, now there are three,” says Berzegen Yimam. She’s seen first-hand how the Lalibela Food Security Project in Ethiopia has increased ground water levels near her village in the Shumshaha region.

As the secretary of the local watershed conservation committee, Berzegen works with other community members to build soil and water conservation structures on the sloped and eroded hills surrounding the river.

Soil degradation is a significant concern in Shumshaha as the land has been steadily depleted through continuous use and overgrazing. The absence of vegetation means that rainwater does not soak into the soil, but instead rapidly runs downhill, taking layers of fertile soil with it. Erratic weather patterns caused by climate change have decreased the region’s overall amount of rain, while increasing the intensity of rainfall. “Before the project, we just watched the soil walk away,” says Berzegen.

Through the support of CLWR and Lutheran World Federation Ethiopia, community members

have built irrigation structures and planted saplings on the eroded slopes to control the soil and water runoff. They have also protected the area with fences to prevent livestock grazing and give the natural vegetation the chance to regrow.

These activities have had a positive impact on the natural environment and improved the community's resilience to drought and the impact of climate change. The trees and vegetation that now cover the sides of previously bare hills have improved the soil's ability to retain water and nutrients. Groundwater levels have increased, increasing the number of springs that can provide water for household and livestock consumption. The grasses and plants that are grown within the protected area can be harvested and saved for feeding livestock during seasons of drought. Fruit from the planted fruit tree saplings can also be consumed within the household or sold for profit.

Globally, drought ranks as the single most common cause of severe food shortages in developing countries. In Ethiopia alone, more than 57 million people have been affected by drought in the past 30 years. Over the last 10 years, you have supported 17 projects throughout Ethiopia aimed at establishing water conservation and irrigation systems. For more than 60,000 people in vulnerable communities, these projects have improved their access to sustainable food sources and increased their ability to respond to a changing and more extreme climate. Thank you for your support!

“You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide the people with grain, for so you have prepared it.” Psalm 65:9

Maryanne Mutch, Program Analyst for Canadian Lutheran World Relief



Grasses are collected from the watershed to feed livestock. Terracing on the sloped hills is helping the soil retain nutrients and water. Photo: CLWR/M.Mutch

Small things make a big difference for Kenyan farmers

Canadian Lutheran World Relief was pleased to support, in part, Rev. Daryl Solie's trip with Canadian Foodgrains Bank to visit small-holding farm programs in Kenya. While none of the programs were part of CLWR's food security programming, they were similar to the kinds of projects CLWR supports with CFGB and other partners in Ethiopia.



Jane Wanjiku harvests sweet potatoes. Photo: Canadian Foodgrains Bank/E.Cain

We all know there are times when a seemingly small thing can make a significant difference in our lives. For example, small changes like putting wheels on suitcases or a bit of adhesive on sticky notes have improved the way we tote luggage or keep track of our to-do lists. Also, small gestures of kindness and compassion, given at the right time, can serve to encourage us, help us deal with a difficult situation or, at the very least, brighten our day.

On a recent Faith Leaders Study Tour to Kenya, hosted by Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB), I discovered, first-hand, how some seemingly small changes in agricultural practice have made a significant difference in the lives of many small-scale Kenyan farmers who, in some cases, farm parcels of land of one acre or less. Though relatively small, these changes have produced significant results in terms of food security and stability.

Crop diversification

One such change lies in the area of *crop diversification*. In Kenya's Maai Mahiu region, the traditional crops grown have been maize (corn) and beans. However, factors such as the unreliability of rain and poor seed quality have resulted in many small-scale farmers experiencing consecutive crop failures. With the assistance of the African Christian Church and Schools (ACC&S) and funding from CFGB, farmers in this region have benefitted by moving away from planting the traditional crops of maize and beans and moving toward planting more drought-tolerant crops such as pigeon peas, sweet potatoes and cassava, resulting in increased farm yields and household income.

Dam liners

Another seemingly small change that has made a big difference to small-scale Kenyan farmers comes in the form of plastic sheets called *dam liners*. These are used to line the bottom of small ponds, enabling farmers to have a more consistent water source by collecting and storing rainwater for irrigation.

Hiram Thuo, a 42-year-old father of five, has benefitted significantly from both crop diversification and the use of a dam liner on his small-scale farm. Hiram admits that for him farming has had its share of ups and downs over the years. In most cases, his farm was adversely affected by drought due to unreliable rainfall. Prior to joining the ACC&S project, Hiram hardly had adequate food to feed his family and had to seek food relief, which really troubled him. After receiving training on vegetable growing, he started planting watermelon and kale on a small portion of his land, which helped increase his overall income.

However, he continued to face the challenge of having sufficient water, requiring him to make a daily six-kilometre trip with a donkey to get water for his crop. But, thanks to the introduction of a dam liner, which enabled him to harvest rainwater, Hiram has seen his farm flourish. He now grows capsicum, spinach, sweet yellow passion and watermelon on his one-acre farm. He has also become known to local traders, who travel to his farm to buy what is not commonly grown in that area. Whereas before he struggled just to have enough to eat, Hiram now has enough to feed his family and earn about \$70



Dam liners enable small-scale farmers to collect rainwater for irrigation during dry seasons. Photo: D.Solie

extra a month selling to local traders, money which he uses to pay school fees for his children. He also has a goal. “Someday,” he says, “I will be able to buy a truck!”

Plastic crop storage bags

A further small change that has made a big difference for small-scale farmers lies in the use of *plastic crop storage bags*, costing a mere \$2.50 each. Post-harvest losses of crop in developing countries can be extensive, and insufficient on-farm storage solutions to protect crops from spoilage and/or pest infestation often force farmers to have to sell their crops soon after harvest, receiving lower prices when the market is flooded. A company called AgResults has engaged the private sector in the sale of storage

bags to allow farmers to protect and store their maize crops in order that they might be sold in a better condition and at a higher price. Farmers visited on our tour have found a significant difference with the purchase of as few as three or four bags, or, in one case, a single bag.

Mulch

A final small change that has really benefitted small-scale farmers is found in the use of simple dry grass *mulch* spread over the soil to aid in moisture retention. For farmers like Jane Manjiku, the use of dry grass mulch, coupled with the construction of a small ditch between her house and her field to help collect water, has



Small-scale Kenyan farmer, Jane Manjiku, demonstrates applying mulch to help maintain soil moisture. Photo: Canadian Foodgrains Bank/E.Cain

made a big difference in her crop yields. These small changes to her farming practice have enabled her to grow more and better quality crops, allowing her to have enough food to feed her family year-round plus have a little extra to sell in order to pay for her children's school fees and even start a small business.

Small changes, big differences

Small changes making a big difference. That was one of the main “take away” learnings I witnessed repeatedly on the Faith Leaders Study Tour. A change in crops planted, a plastic sheet, a simple bag, or a bit of dry grass mulch—small things that have made a significant difference in the lives of hard-working Kenyan farmers visited on the tour.

There are also small things you can do to help make a difference. One of those is to send a postcard to our Canadian government as part of CFGB's Good Soil campaign. Though traditionally a strong supporter of overseas agricultural development, our government has significantly reduced aid in this area in recent years. A simple postcard requesting that the government increase levels of aid can contribute to the overall goal of reducing hunger by continuing to provide programs that help small-scale farmers like Hiram and Jane remain on the road to self-sustainability.

For more information visit www.foodgrainsbank.ca/campaigns/good-soil. Your efforts, when combined with others, can go a long way in making a difference!

Suggested Activities

- To support your partners like Lutheran World Federation in their work, have a free-will offering for one or more of the health or education gifts in the *Gifts from the Heart* catalogue. Visit www.clwr.org/GFTH to see the gifts.
- Host an international potluck after worship. Invite your members to bring dishes from different countries around the world.
- Embark on a One Community project with your congregation. Learn how your gifts can help build a sustainable future for a community overseas. Visit www.clwr.org/Resources/documents/OneCommunityfinal.pdf to download a One Community resource package.
- Encourage each family in your congregation to assemble a We Care kit for a person in a refugee situation or affected by poverty. Details can be found at www.clwr.org/WeCare.
- Invite a special guest to share their encounters with the work of CLWR and the church's mission work overseas. These people could be participants in CLWR's Global Encounters, refugees who have been supported by your congregation when they arrived in Canada, people who have served with CLWR and church resource people. CLWR may be able to assist in connecting your congregation with a speaker. Contact Carla Blakley at 1.800.661.2597.
- Include CLWR's work in your prayers throughout the year.

CLWR Sunday 2017 *Our Common Humanity*

Other Resources

- Visit www.clwr.org and connect with us on social media to learn more about the ways your support makes a difference in the lives of people around the world. Read the news updates on the home page, or the latest Annual Report and recent issues of the *Partnership* newsletter under the “News and Events” menu. You can also visit CLWR’s blog.
- Visit www.clwr.org and click on the “Resources” menu to see a list of worship resources, activities for children and youth, posters, We Care information and other CLWR publications.
- CLWR pew envelopes are available on request. Please contact us by email at clwr@clwr.mb.ca or phone 1.800.661.2597.
- Connect with CLWR on social media:

Facebook	/CanadianLutheranWorldRelief
Twitter	@CanLWR
Instagram	@canlwr
YouTube	/CLWRvideo

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