

# CLWR Sunday 2017

## *Our Common Humanity*



Canadian Lutheran  
World Relief



[clwr.org / CLWRSunday](http://clwr.org/CLWRSunday)

*Worship Resource for Lutheran Church–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. Ted Giese, lead pastor of Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Regina, Saskatchewan, for creating the CLWR Sunday worship resources for Lutheran Church–Canada congregations. These include scripture passages (from the *English Standard Version of the Bible* [ESV] unless otherwise indicated) 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!

## *Summary of Theme for Readings*

CLWR is focused primarily on helping meet the physical needs of people who live in challenging conditions around the world. In a very tangible way, CLWR strives to fulfill the Fifth and Seventh Commandments as they work to help and support the neighbour in their every physical need, and help them to improve and protect their possessions and income by lending a hand in their time of greatest need. The faithful members of Lutheran Church–Canada, who generously support CLWR in their work, contribute to this effort out of love for their neighbour. And why would we care and love our neighbour and desire to help them in their physical needs when we have never met them? We do it because we acknowledge and recognize that God has first loved us, providing for our physical needs in this life, and by the gift of His Son, providing for our eternal physical needs. It is the seed of His Word implanted in us that grows into a faith that helps the neighbour.

In these readings, we can see the connection between the physical and the spiritual. This is evidence of God's love for the whole person. All of creation belongs to God and His Holy Word is as much for the soul as food is for the body. His Holy Word is for the whole person. Just as Jesus is for the whole person. The Divine providence of God extends to both the dinner plate and the heart and soul as God loves His creation. His Word doesn't return to Him empty and His hand satisfies the desires of every living thing. CLWR is a way in which we can co-operate in the external act of loving the neighbour and caring primarily for their physical needs. We do this acknowledging Jesus' words when He says, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?"

(Matthew 16:26) Beyond the physical, the church is charged to care for the soul and so we need also endeavour to do just that. However as we do, let us not forget the physical needs of the neighbour who Christ died for, just as He died for you and me.

### **Isaiah 55:10-13**

"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

### **Psalms 65:9-13**

You visit the earth and water it; you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide their grain, for so you have prepared it. You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth. You crown the year with your bounty; Your wagon tracks overflow with abundance. The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy.

## Romans 8:12-17

So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”

## Alternate Epistle: 1 John 4:7-11,19-21

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

## Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

*The Parable of the Sower* That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear.”

“Hear then the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

## *Music and Liturgical Suggestions*

*Lutheran Service Book*

### Hymn suggestions

- 577 Almighty God, Your Word Is Cast
- 586 Preach You the Word
- 641 You Satisfy the Hungry Heart
- 790 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation
- 893 Sing to the Lord of Harvest
- 894 For The Fruits of His Creation
- 921 On What Has Now Been Sown

### A prayer of the day

Collect for The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost.

Blessed Lord, since You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

or

Blessed Lord, in all Your Creation You love what You have created; The body, heart and soul of all peoples for all generations, and You give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing, we thank you for the food we eat, for Your Son who is the very Bread of Heaven, and for Your Holy Word which reveals Him to us. Help us ever to care for the body, heart and soul of our neighbours both near and far and thus show our love to them as You have shown Your love to us, set our eyes and the eyes of all people to look to Your Son who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*Feel free to substitute heart for mind.*



## *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



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

support 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.



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

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 (New Revised Standard Version of the Bible)

*Maryanne Mutch is the Program Analyst for Canadian Lutheran World Relief*

## 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.*

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





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

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



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

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

## 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](http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca/campaigns/good-soil). Your efforts, when combined with others, can go a long way in making a difference!

*Rev. Daryl Solie lives in Regina, Saskatchewan, where he serves as pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. From July 10-24, he travelled to Kenya with a group of denominational leaders to participate in a Faith Leaders Study Tour hosted by Canadian Foodgrains Bank.*

## *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](http://www.clwr.org/GFTH) to view 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](http://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](http://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.



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## Other Resources

- Visit [www.clwr.org](http://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](http://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 [clwr@clwr.mb.ca](mailto:clwr@clwr.mb.ca) or phone 1.800.661.2597.
- Connect with CLWR on social media:

Facebook	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/CanadianLutheranWorldRelief">/CanadianLutheranWorldRelief</a>
Twitter	<a href="https://twitter.com/CanLWR">@CanLWR</a>
Instagram	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/canlwr">@canlwr</a>
YouTube	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...">/CLWRvideo</a>

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