

Bringing Hope After Hurricanes and Storms

When a hurricane, tornado or flood hits a community, those impacted are often overwhelmed by destruction and despair as they survey the damage and begin to pick through their mangled possessions. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s Lutheran Early Response Teams (LERT) come into these difficult situations, bringing hope while serving in the name of Christ.

LERT members are volunteers who are trained in what to do and what not to do after a disaster. When a call for assistance goes out, these volunteers come from all over the country to help disaster victims muck out flooded houses, clear debris and remove fallen trees. Some LERT members bring special expertise — such as chainsaw skills — but all bring willing hands and feet.

After the Aug. 10 derecho windstorm swept through much of Iowa, LERT volunteers from LCMS Iowa District East (IDE) were on the scene within an hour of the storm. By the next week, volunteers had arrived from multiple states to assist in the recovery efforts.

“If we can get our churches up and running, and our church workers up and running, that’s a key priority. But then there’s finding people who can’t get their power on until they get their trees out of the way,” said Daniel Sanchez, IDE assistant district disaster-response coordinator.

LERT members also are responding in the LCMS Southern District, which was pummeled by Hurricane Laura on Aug. 27 and Hurricane Sally on Sept. 16. The initial assessment



Top left: Tim Hetzner, president and CEO of Lutheran Church Charities, carries LCMS Disaster Response flood buckets into St. John Lutheran Church, Lake Charles, La. **Top right:** Jason Koepnick, Lutheran Early Response Team chainsaw coordinator for LCMS Iowa District East, walks through downed trees and brush next to Concordia Lutheran Church, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. **Left:** Paul Pacey III, a member at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fairhope, Ala., surveys his damaged home alongside the Rev. Dr. Ross Johnson (left), director of LCMS Disaster Response, and the Rev. Michael Meyer (right), director of Disaster Training, following Hurricane Sally.

after Sally revealed that 19 congregations in Alabama and Florida were affected by the hurricane’s torrential rains and severe winds.

The Rev. Dr. Ross Johnson, director of LCMS World Relief and Human Care Disaster Response, noted that chainsaw work is currently underway in six states after a busy year of disasters. The program’s ability to respond swiftly hinges on having trained LERT members spread throughout the Synod. There are

currently about 20,000 LERT volunteers, and new volunteers are always welcome. (Interested in serving? Learn more at lcms.org/disaster.)

“Through this, we share the Gospel and teach that Christ has taken our burdens on Himself,” Johnson said. “This is an example of how mercy work can result in sharing the Gospel with those who aren’t Lutheran or don’t even know what a Lutheran is.”

Give God **Glory...**

... for the teachers, professors and administrators serving our Lutheran schools, seminaries and universities and in our public institutions. We give thanks for those who are working hard to teach both in-person and online.

... for the generosity of donors who’ve sent gifts to support the Soldiers of the Cross—Amplified program to help church workers experiencing financial difficulties due to the pandemic. To date, several hundred ordained, commissioned and lay church workers have received grants to help cover their expenses. Learn more at lcms.org/soldiers-of-the-cross/covid-19.

... for missionary Britt Odemba, who serves the Lord in Kenya. Odemba works with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK)

as an educational consultant. Her main role is to assist the director of the Project 24 children’s boarding program. She also helps facilitate partnerships between U.S. donors and Kenyan children in need through the *Christ’s Care for Children: Kenya* child sponsorship program. Learn more at facebook.com/Project24Kenya.

... for David’s Harp, an LCMS Recognized Service Organization that produces music resources and helps establish centers for musical development. This organization grew out of St. Paul’s Music Conservatory in Council Bluffs, Iowa, which was established to raise up church musicians and proclaim the Gospel through music. To learn more about how David’s Harp supports the Synod’s churches and schools, visit davidsharpmusic.org.

One of the priorities of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is to reach out in mercy and compassion to those in need, motivated by Christ and His Gospel, according to the Lutheran confession of the faith. This is accomplished under the familiar name of LCMS World Relief and Human Care, which the Synod uses to describe the mercy work directed by the policies of the Boards for National and International Mission and implemented through the programs of the Offices of National and International Mission.

“Sharing” is the newsletter of LCMS World Relief and Human Care. Published by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1333 S. Kirkwood Road, St. Louis, MO 63122-7295. Donor care line: 888-930-4438. Website: lcms.org.

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You Make the Difference through LCMS World Relief and Human Care

You make the ministry described in this newsletter possible! Your prayers and contributions to World Relief and Human Care “Where Needed Most” deliver our Savior’s mercy to people in need. You bolster tightly restricted donations from others to help fully fund important mercy projects, allowing us to report here the impact you are making in Christ’s name. The courtesy envelope in this issue allows you to send a future contribution as the Holy Spirit leads, when He leads.



Coming Together to Assist Cambodians Impacted by COVID-19



This summer, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) partnered with the Cambodia Lutheran Church (CLC) and several other Lutheran organizations to assist local Cambodians suffering economic hardship as a result of COVID-19. CLC pastors and church leaders delivered a month’s supply of basic food staples to over 350 families during May, June and July.

In the Asia region, Cambodia has been particularly hard hit by the economic downturn caused by the shutdown. Tourism, which

provides countless jobs in the country, has plummeted. Many factories also are shuttered for now. The CLC recognized these challenges and organized to fill material needs while also connecting people to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Rice, instant noodles, fish sauce, cooking oil, canned fish, soy sauce and soap were collected and sorted. Church members and pastors delivered packages with a month’s worth of these needed staples to families facing significant challenges. They also offered prayers, songs of praise and the preaching of God’s Word.

Concordia Welfare and Education Foundation provided critical training on handwashing and mask usage. In addition, staff members of Lutheran Heritage Foundation and Lutheran Hour Ministries offered Christian literature resources.

The chairman of the CLC, the Rev. Bun Sopheap, expressed his appreciation on behalf of the CLC members, saying, “Thank you to LCMS and the many other Lutheran organizations for sharing love and relief to the Cambodian Lutheran congregations and unemployed Cambodians during this pandemic period. We don’t have anything to offer in return but our praises of thankfulness to God for our Lutheran church brothers and sisters around the world for this assistance.”

Along with the LCMS, Lutheran Church—Canada, the Garuna Foundation and the Lutheran Church of Australia also played vital roles in funding this project.

“This project is an excellent example of God’s people collaborating to demonstrate His love by meeting the needs of community members facing difficult circumstances. Lutheran agencies from all over the globe committed to this worthwhile project, reaching hundreds with bodily and spiritual help,” said the Rev. J.P. Cima, LCMS missionary to Cambodia.



“We don’t have anything to offer in return but our praises of thankfulness to God for our Lutheran church brothers and sisters around the world for this assistance.” — Rev. Bun Sopheap

‘Created in Christ Jesus for Good Works’

There’s an old saying: “Faith alone justifies, but justifying faith is never alone.” St. Paul wrote, “We know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ” (Gal. 2:16). Faith grabs hold of Jesus. Faith is created by the Gospel to receive the Gospel. “The gospel ... is the power of God for salvation” (Rom. 1:16). St. Paul describes coming to faith as a resurrection, a move from death to life, caused by God alone by means of the Gospel (Eph. 2:1–9). It’s like Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. How? “Lazarus, I’ve done all I could for you. Now it’s up to you.” Of course not! Jesus said, “Lazarus, come out.” And the dead man rose. The power was all in Jesus’ word.

When a Christian has been brought from spiritual death to life by the hearing of Jesus, that person is made alive. As he walks along in life, he can’t help but leave footprints (good works) behind. Those footprints don’t precede him into heaven, but they certainly follow him wherever he goes.

Paul says it so marvelously:

But God, being rich in mercy ... even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. ... For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:4–5, 8–10)

You are created for good works. I thank God that He also touches your heart to make you generous in sharing Christ’s Word and love through your Synod.

In Christ,

Pastor Matthew C. Harrison
President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

