

# LifeLines

*Connecting God's People*

ELCA World Hunger is a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to end hunger in the United States and around the world.

[www.elca.org/hunger](http://www.elca.org/hunger)

## Caring for God's Creation

Photo: David Creech, ELCA World Hunger

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**ELCA World Hunger**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

# Weathering

## Unpredictable Rains in Nicaragua



In the small community of Las Jolotas, Nicaragua, subsistence farmers like Felicity (pictured above) and her son Ariel feel the impact of climate change. Ever since Hurricane Mitch in 1998, rainfall patterns have grown increasingly unpredictable.

Global climate change is already impacting those who are most vulnerable. According to a recent United Nations report, stronger storms and changing weather patterns seriously impact 325 million people annually. ELCA World Hunger is committed to sustainable development work that takes the reality of climate change seriously and supports those who are affected.

Some years the rains fall late; other years the rains fall too hard. If the rains arrive late, seeds die without producing any harvest. If the rains cause flooding, seeds are swept away. Farmers in Las Jolotas save just enough seeds from the previous harvest to plant during the next rainy season. If those seeds are lost, the results are devastating.

In Felicity's community, rainfall patterns have become so unpredictable that many have stopped planting during the rainy season, choosing instead to migrate to El Salvador, Costa Rica, or even the United States.

To support Felicity and her family as they tried to adapt to the effects of climate change, The Lutheran World Federation—working with the Faith and Hope Lutheran Church of Nicaragua—dug a shallow well. The water from the well is gravity-fed to irrigate crops during the dry season. Thanks to the well and Felicity's hard work, her lush garden—full of beans, corn, squash, tomatoes, and yuca—thrives in the middle of summer. Felicity will use the garden to feed her family and small farm animals. If there are leftover vegetables, she will sell them for added income.

The well protects Felicity and her family from uncertain weather patterns. In turn, the increased food security ensures that they will have enough to eat. They will not have to migrate to faraway places, disrupting and perhaps ending Ariel's schooling. Together, they can confidently face a brighter future.

*Your gifts to ELCA World Hunger support The Lutheran World Federation and Faith and Hope Lutheran Church of Nicaragua, an ELCA companion church. Together, we support sustainable development work in places like Nicaragua to help people adapt to the realities of a changing environment.*

—David Creech is director for hunger education, ELCA World Hunger

### CLIMATE CHANGE RESOURCES



**CLIMATE CHANGE AND HUNGER TOOLKIT**  
[www.elca.org/hunger/toolkits](http://www.elca.org/hunger/toolkits)

This Web-based toolkit from ELCA World Hunger contains several highly engaging and interactive exercises that draw out the impacts of climate change on those who are most vulnerable in the world. You can mix and match activities from this “program in a box” to create an hour-long (or longer) session ideal for a Sunday-morning forum, Sunday-school class, or youth-group meeting.



**LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION REPORT**  
[www.lutheranworld.org](http://www.lutheranworld.org)

A report from The Lutheran World Federation, “Climate Change—Facing Our Vulnerability” (Issue no. 5, 2008), is a good resource for learning more about how climate change impacts fellow Lutherans around the globe.



**ELCA ADVOCACY RESOURCES**  
[www.elca.org/advocacy](http://www.elca.org/advocacy)

To see how the ELCA advocates around environmental issues, learn how you can help, and access “Caring for Creation” resources, visit [www.elca.org/advocacy](http://www.elca.org/advocacy). Click on the “Issues” link in the sidebar, and then select “Environment and Energy.”

# Water Weekend in West Virginia

Jennifer Massey (pictured below on the left) bathes her children in contaminated water. The choice is that or not bathing them at all. In the Appalachian Mountain community of Prenter, West Virginia, where she lives, the water in most households contains elevated levels of lead, arsenic, and manganese. Before the contamination was discovered, Massey and her family drank the same water as her 29-year-old brother, who died from a brain tumor.



Photo: Community Lutheran Partners, Inc.

Many members of the Prenter community cite local mining activity—including the practice of mountaintop removal—for the pollution in their well water. Unusually high amounts of minerals from disposed rock during the mining process filter down into the groundwater

system and pollute community wells.

Globally, one in six people lacks access to safe drinking water. Though not as widespread an issue in the United States as in developing countries, unclean drinking water does affect people in this country.

## WATER WEEKEND

When Sarah Soltow heard about the water situation in Prenter, she wanted to help. Sarah is the former executive director of Community Lutheran Partners, Inc. (CLP), a social ministry organization that is supported by the ELCA Domestic Hunger Grants Program.” CLP’s mission is “to enable and support congregations of the West Virginia–Western Maryland Synod and others in service to their neighbors.”

In the spring, Sarah and Jennifer collaborated to organize “Water Weekend.” CLP provided 2,000 gallons of safe drinking water for Jennifer’s community. In turn, Jennifer coordinated local efforts to assemble two public panel presentations. One panel was made up of local educators who discussed the importance of safe water, and another panel hosted

Given the power of sin and evil in this world, as well as the complexity of environmental problems, we know we can find no ‘quick fix’—whether technological, economic, or spiritual. A sustainable environment requires a sustained effort from everyone.”

—Caring for Creation, ELCA social statement

community members who spoke about personal experiences with water contamination. Groups of CLP volunteers went door-to-door delivering water and educational pamphlets about the importance of safe water. Many people in Prenter did not know they were drinking contaminated water or about the high frequency of brain tumors and other serious illnesses in the community. Jennifer and her husband led one of four groups that altogether visited nearly 200 homes in one day.

“Although the 2,000 gallons of water was a wonderful form of relief,” said Jennifer, “in my opinion the greatest thing that came of... ‘Water Weekend’ was knowledge.”

A portion of your gifts to ELCA World Hunger support anti-hunger ministries in the United States—like Community Lutheran Partners, Inc.—through the Domestic Hunger Grants Program. For more information about this program, visit [www.elca.org/domestichungergrants](http://www.elca.org/domestichungergrants).

—Aaron Cooper is writer-editor for ELCA World Hunger



## Give a ‘Good Gift’

ELCA Good Gifts support agriculture, water projects, and livestock.

- \$50 provides a goat for a family
- \$350 plants a community vegetable garden
- \$2,500 digs and installs a well
- \$10 provides 10 chicks
- \$10 provides a tree
- \$150 adds a hand pump

Give online at [www.elca.org/goodgifts](http://www.elca.org/goodgifts).



A girl in the Belair neighborhood of Port-au-Prince enjoys safe water for the first time after the earthquake.

## The ELCA in Haiti: A Long-Standing Partnership

The ELCA stands with its neighbors in Haiti in the aftermath of an earthquake that shook the land and captured the hearts of people across the world: people like you wanting to help, wanting to make a difference in the lives of strangers who are suddenly homeless and lacking basic necessities.

ELCA World Hunger has been on the ground in Haiti for many years, providing millions of dollars and supporting many programs through local work of The Lutheran World Federation (LWF). It's because of this work on the ground and relationships with the LWF and partner organizations like Action by Churches Together (ACT) that the ELCA is able to take your gifts and translate them quickly into food, water, clothing, and shelter for people who need it now more than ever in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

Your gifts to ELCA World Hunger and ELCA Disaster Response are providing water. A water purification system with pipes, filters, and pumps transported from freezing-cold Norway to scorching-hot Haiti is providing 10,000 Haitians who are homeless with clean drinking water. The ACT Alliance brought in desperately needed special water and sanitation facilities. The "water factory" is based in the Belair neighborhood of Port-au-Prince and provided the first clean water many people had access to after the earthquake.

Thanks to your generous gifts and ELCA World Hunger's long-time work in Haiti, together we have been able to act swiftly in the massive relief effort to support as many survivors and victims of this widespread catastrophe as possible. Together, we have been present in Haiti for many years, are present today, and will continue to work with our brothers and sisters there long after the global spotlight is cast elsewhere.

## WORLD HUNGER TOPS 1 BILLION PEOPLE

World hunger reached a historic high in 2009 with just over 1 billion people going hungry every day, according to estimates published by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

The most recent increase in hunger is not the consequence of poor global harvests but rather the world economic crisis, which has resulted in lower incomes and increased unemployment. This caused reduced access to food by people who are poor, according to the FAO.

"A dangerous mix of the global economic slowdown combined with stubbornly high food prices in many countries has pushed some 100 million more people than last year into chronic hunger and poverty," said FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf. "The silent hunger crisis—affecting one-sixth of all of humanity—poses a serious risk for world peace and security. We urgently need to forge a broad consensus on the total and rapid eradication of hunger in the world and to take the necessary actions."

"The present situation of world food insecurity cannot leave us indifferent," he added.

Poor countries, Diouf stressed, "must be given the development, economic, and policy tools required to boost their agricultural production and productivity. Investment in agriculture must be increased, because for the majority of poor countries a healthy agricultural sector is essential to overcome poverty and hunger and is a prerequisite for overall economic growth."

The Rev. Daniel Rift, director of ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal, said the FAO report is a call to action for those who care for people living in poverty. Lutherans "are well positioned to respond to the call," he said. "Seed banks, water projects, livestock sharing, small loans, and market assistance are hallmarks of our work."

Of the 65 synod bishops of the ELCA, 59 signed a letter calling on members of the U.S. Congress to co-sponsor the Initiating Foreign Assistance Reform Act of 2009 (H.R. 2139). The bishops urged lawmakers to "support robust funding for foreign aid programs in the short-term to help meet the immediate needs of our brothers and sisters around the world, while supporting foreign aid reform in the long-term to ensure the highest possible efficacy of U.S. assistance in the future."

The current FAO hunger report, "The State of Food Insecurity in the World," can be downloaded at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org).