

# CLWR Sunday 2011

## *Celebrating Partnerships*

### *Introduction*

On October 16, 2011, Lutheran Church–Canada congregations across the country will join together in celebrating the church’s international humanitarian work among the poor and marginalized that is undertaken by Canadian Lutheran World Relief. The theme for this year, “Celebrating Partnerships,” gives recognition to what has been accomplished through the joint efforts of CLWR and LCC.

Partnerships abound in other ways. Much of CLWR’s international community development work is carried out through partnerships with the Lutheran World Federation. As Christians we acknowledge that we do not undertake this work alone, but rather as human instruments active in God’s divine plan for a redeemed creation.

As a Lutheran in Canada you share in an incredible legacy of caring. For more than 65 years, you have helped communities build capacity for sustainable development by providing access to safe water, basic health care services and education. The impact of your care is far-reaching: from people in refugee camps receiving We Care kits and quilts to young Palestinians receiving vocational training, to farmers in Mozambique reaping the rewards of a newly created irrigation system.

We hope these resources will inspire you in worship, education and further involvement with CLWR’s project work overseas. Your support allows us to do more.

*Note: While congregations throughout the Lutheran Church–Canada are being encouraged to join together on October 16, 2011, to mark this occasion, you may choose any Sunday throughout the year to do so.*

### Music Suggestions

Hymn Suggestions for *Lutheran Service Book*:

- 528 **Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing**
- 817 **Earth and All Stars**
- 818 **In Thee is Gladness**
- 819 **Sing Praise to God, the Highest Good**
- 842 **Son of God, Eternal Saviour**
- 844 **Lord of All Nations Grant Me Grace**
- 848 **Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service**
- 849 **Praise The One Who Breaks the Bread**
- 850 **God of Grace and God of Glory**



Photo: W. Kroeker

Other song resources:

**Above All**—by Lenny LeBlanc/Paul Baloche

**Blessed Be Your Name**—by Matt Redman

**Mighty To Save**—Ben Fielding/Reuben Morgan

### Reflecting on the Word

*Appointed readings from the Revised Common Lectionary for Time after Pentecost—Lectionary 29 (Proper 24), 18th Sunday after Pentecost*

#### Psalm 96:1-13

“The LORD” occurs 11 times in these 13 verses of praise and worship. “He”, “him”, “his,” when referring to the Lord occurs 15 times. This psalm is intensely focused on the Lord and his relationship to all people. His name is to be praised daily. His name is most worthy to be praised because of his utmost holiness, his equitable judgment, his righteousness, his marvellous deeds, his truth and his salvation. In light of everything that is “his,” every other “god” is but a mere idol. It is the Lord who reigns supreme and his reign invites response from all people. The psalmist invites the hearers to respond to the Lord in all his majesty by “ascribing” to the Lord. To ascribe means to give or to provide or to set/place. Through his word working in our lives, we acknowledge him as Lord by giving him the glory, bringing offerings, humbling ourselves before him in trembling, and by proclaiming the salvation he has provided for us. He certainly does reign in the hearts, minds and lives of those who trust in him. The response seems to be so overwhelming that through this saving relationship with the Lord, the whole world is alive with rejoicing, singing and jubilation!

### *Reflecting on the Word (continued)*

#### **Isaiah 45:1-7**

“I, the LORD, do all these things.” (verse 7) That’s bold. Today, we aren’t as bold to say such things. We say a little less emphatically, “The Lord works in mysterious ways.” It might be a mystery to us how the Lord works in this broken world, but the truth is, God is always working. God is always doing. God is not caught off guard by the trouble that exists in this world. God is always working his plan for salvation for the sins of the whole world. The mystery to some is how God chooses to work in order to accomplish his will. Isaiah speaks of God using a “foreign” nation’s leader, Cyrus, to defeat and overcome the Babylonians who were holding God’s people captive. God promises Cyrus success “though you [Cyrus] do not acknowledge me.” (verses 4 and 5). God can work in any way he chooses. That’s a difficult teaching. The Lord says, “I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things.” Left uncomfortable and without explanation, we simply say, “The Lord works in mysterious ways.” Could it be that through both prosperous times and hard times, the Lord is summoning us by name, drawing us into a saving relationship with him in order to live to the fullest for him and for others? Could it be that CLWR is called to bring relief in Jesus’ name to difficult situations that hit various peoples at various times? We should be so mystified by the fact that God employs people like us (we don’t always acknowledge him) as his agents of grace and mercy in the world. May we continue to pray for ourselves, our families, our churches and for the nations that we all will acknowledge the Lord, for there is no other God!

#### **1 Thessalonians 1:1-10**

Why do we do the things we do? Why would someone support the work of CLWR? What motivates us to do the good things of God in this world? Why would we claim to serve our neighbour in Jesus’ name? Motivation is of vital importance it seems in the life of Jesus’ followers. Deep conviction is essential when giving our lives to the work of the Lord, that the Holy Spirit sends us to do. Paul commends Jesus’ followers at Thessalonica for their hard work! Their hard work, Paul says, is inspired by faith and love, rooted in the hope of their Saviour and Lord, Jesus. This Lord is the Son of God who was crucified but God raised from the dead. That first Easter was still making an impact as a result of the “Lord’s message” (verse 8) ringing out in that part of the world. Their dedication to sharing this good news made a far reaching impact. The impact is lives that are forever changed and rescued. The gospel of Jesus, shared around the world, moves people to discard beliefs, ideas and behaviours that used to be of supreme importance to them. People are moved to the realization that the living God chose us in his love and mercy. May CLWR workers and supporters continually draw their strength and courage from the Holy Spirit’s gifts of faith, love and hope.

### *Reflecting on the Word (continued)*

#### **Matthew 22:15-22**

This encounter with Jesus isn't so much a teaching about whether to pay taxes or not. This story is about who Jesus confesses to worship. The Pharisees did have a well thought out plan—either way Jesus answers the question—“Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”—the Pharisees will find some fault with how Jesus responds. As the Concordia Self Study Bible notes indicate: “If he said “no,” the Herodians would report him to the Roman governor and he would be executed for treason. If he said, “Yes,” the Pharisees would denounce him to the people as disloyal to his nation.” (pg. 1481) Do we worship Caesar as Lord or God as Lord? Do we lay down our lives for the “god” Caesar, or do we lay down our lives in humble submission to the one true God? Jesus couldn't be trapped for he is the faithful one who continually and perfectly kept his and our heavenly Father's will. Jesus left his adversaries speechless once again by his sound doctrine. How often are we caught in a trap? How often are we not clear of the answers of life? How often do we try to answer our life problems with our own wisdom and strength, with no thought of God's faithful word of truth and grace? Lord have mercy in Jesus, the one who shed his blood to ensure our forgiveness. Just as the denarius had an inscribed image of Caesar, may we by Jesus' grace and mercy bear his image in the world, living in him and listening faithfully to the heavenly Father for life, forgiveness, strength, guidance and motivation to serve. As the post communion canticle joyfully exclaims, “Let everyone who seeks the Lord rejoice and proudly bear his name.”



Photo: E. Peters

### *Stories from the field*

You may wish to include some examples of the work CLWR is doing overseas in your Sunday homily. A brief description of a project in Zambia is found below. Additional narratives and highlights of CLWR's work are available from the 2009-10 Annual Report. You may also find helpful the archive of feature stories available on the CLWR website, as well as stories found in past issues of *Partnership*. Please visit [www.clwr.org](http://www.clwr.org) to access any of these resources.

### **Improving Food Security in Katete District, Zambia**

For most Canadians, food security is hardly given a second thought. A trip to the supermarket is all it takes to replenish our refrigerators and pantries. Such is not the case for many people in Katete District in Eastern Zambia. Most farms are small-scale operations that barely produce enough food to feed those working the land from one growing season to the next.

A significant underlying cause of food insecurity is land degradation due to unsustainable agriculture practices. CLWR is addressing this issue through its support for the Rural Community Development and Empowerment (RCDE) Project. Initiated by the Lutheran World Federation, the RCDE is bringing knowledge in sustainable agriculture techniques to farmers like Rosemary Phiri, her husband Juvenalisi Sakala and their five children.

Specifically, the project promotes soil and water conservation techniques through training in techniques such as basin making technology, crop rotation, use of organic manure, cover crops, and anti-erosion structures. In addition, the project is helping to foster local production of maize seed, cassava cuttings and sweet potato vines.

In October 2009, Rosemary participated in training sessions in sustainable agriculture offered through the RCDE project. Aside from training, the program provided her with a five-kilo bag of maize seed. She and her family are now applying new-found knowledge about basin making and the benefits of using manure collected from livestock pens (locally known as kraals) as a fertilizer for a small field of 1,250 square meters. The expectation is that yields will increase by more than 50 percent over previous years and that new farming practices will expand to neighbouring fields.

For Rosemary and her family, and others in the district, the RCDE program is providing a means for people to grow enough food to sustain themselves from one growing season to the next.



Photo: E. Oduro

### *Prayers*

Prayers, Intercessions, and Thanksgivings from *Lutheran Service Book*

For the mission of the Church – page 305

Grace to receive the Word – page 308

Faith, hope, and love – page 310

Thanksgiving to God – page 310

Christian Vocation – page 311

Proper Use of Wealth – page 311

### **Specific Prayers for CLWR**

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the work of Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR). We thank you that since 1946, CLWR has grown to include community development, refugee resettlement, emergency relief and donated commodities shipments. May it be all for your glory.

Lord in your mercy! **Hear our prayer!**

Lord God of heaven and earth, you reign because you are the Lord. Continue to use all means necessary to bring relief to the various disaster situations that CLWR responds to. Continue to open doors of opportunities for them and their partners, the Lutheran World Federation, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and the ACT Alliance, as together, they strive for a world where all people live in justice, peace and dignity.

Lord in your mercy! **Hear our prayer!**

Merciful Father, you continue to act and you continue to raise up leaders with a heart for mission and ministry in your world. Continue to lead, guide, direct and strengthen CLWR Executive Director Robert Granke, CLWR's board of directors and its advisory members Rev. Robert Bugbee (LCC President) and Rev. Susan Johnson (ELCIC National Bishop). May each of these servants, by your Spirit, continue to acknowledge you as the Lord God, for there is no other.

Lord in your mercy! **Hear our prayer!**

Almighty and gracious Lord, we thank you for the continual outpouring of support of church members across Canada who desire to make an impact of love and good deeds around the world through CLWR relief efforts. In our giving and in our good deeds, help us not become proud of our efforts, for when one need is met, we know that ultimately another opportunity will come. Motivate CLWR's good work by your Spirit of faith, hope and love. Continue to instill in us all the belief and full trust that you, God, are a faithful God, meeting our needs at the right times and in the right places.

Lord in your mercy! **Hear our prayer!**

### *Suggested Activities*

- Show the new CLWR video prior to, as part of or following a worship service. Copies of the video were distributed to delegates at the LCC Synod Conventions.
- 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 about how your gifts can build a sustainable future for a community overseas. See the Resources section of the CLWR website ([www.clwr.org](http://www.clwr.org)) to download a One Community resource package.
- Encourage each family in your congregation to assemble a We Care kit for a person in need overseas. Details can be downloaded from [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 Volunteers in Mission, or CLWR and church resource people.
- Encourage congregational members to stay informed about the work of CLWR by following CLWR on Facebook or by subscribing to our electronic News Briefs.
- Include CLWR's work in your prayers throughout the year.

### **Other Resources**

- Visit the CLWR website ([www.clwr.org](http://www.clwr.org)) to access the latest Annual Report and copies of past issues of *Partnership* newsletter. Both are excellent ways to learn about the ongoing work of CLWR.
- 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)
- CLWR maintains a channel on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/user/CLWRvideo>) where you can find a library of short videos highlighting the work of CLWR.

### **Acknowledgement**

Music suggestions, scripture reflections and prayers were written by Rev. Lee Loveridge, associate pastor, First Lutheran Church and School, Kelowna, BC.