

Dear flock:

Several weeks ago, I ran into Dr. Norm Moline at a party. He's on our Northern Illinois Synod Hunger Task Force. He said to me, "Your congregation is the second largest giver in the synod to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. That really says something about your leadership." I was embarrassed to tell him that it's not me. We've had no special emphasis recently on that. But I was proud to tell him, "It's the people, Doctor. The people do it on their own." A few days ago, I received a certificate that says in 2017, you people of First Lutheran gave \$7254 to the ELCA World Hunger. That's outstanding!

The ELCA Hunger Appeal and the ELCA Disaster Response are the best places to send money if you want to be assured that just about 100% of your gift goes to where it is needed. Overhead is covered in our regular giving to the larger Church, allowing for the system to do its work. In 2016, gifts to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal totaled over \$21.9 million. Currently, we are supporting 347 projects in 46 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico and are working in 62 countries, including the United States.

According to the ELCA Hunger website, 815 million people around the world – that's more than 1 in 10 – can't access the food they need to live active, healthy lives. According to the most recent estimates, 766.6 million people live in extreme poverty on less than \$1.90 per day. That's 10.7% of the world's population. In 2016, 40.6 million Americans were living in poverty. For a family of four, this means their annual household income was below \$24,563.

The statistics show that we have a long way to go. But, the goals of ELCA World Hunger are to go after the root causes of poverty and working toward sustainable systems, as well as simply providing food.

Keep up the good work, flock. Your pastor is proud of you. And if you want to start making a contribution to either ELCA World Hunger or ELCA Disaster Response, simply mark it as such and put it in the offering plate.

Yours,

Pastor Dan