

# Advent Newsletter

"My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great and my spirit sings of the Wonderous things that you bring to the ones who wait."

-Canticle of the Turning By Rory Cooney; ELW #723



## Humanitarian Crisis in Europe

Learn more about how the Lutheran Church is supporting displaced persons in Europe. (Page 2)



## The Magnificat: Turning the World Upside Down

Sign up for a 3-part webinar this Advent to explore the world-shaking power of the Magnificat through a Lutheran lens! (Page 4)



## A World Hunger Project in Hungary

Pastor Rachel visits a community building project here in Hungary. (Page 3)



## Digital Reformation

Explore how Bitcoin and Non Fungible Tokens (NFTs) could be used by the church in the future. (Page 5)

# Global Ministry Focus: Belarus

Pastor Rachel reflects on the work of our church partners supporting the humanitarian crisis on the Polish/Belorussian border.



Part of my work as Area Director for Europe is to be in conversation with companions around the region as they respond to the urgent needs of communities with whom they serve. In recent weeks, we've been working closely with the Lutheran Church in Poland and the Lutheran Church in Belarus to facilitate ELCA support for ministry in response to the refugee crisis. You might have read about the situation in the news, but you might not have heard of the ways that our Lutheran siblings in Christ are looking to make a tangible difference in the lives of the refugees. The latest of many examples of how the smaller in size Lutheran Churches in Central and Eastern Europe show themselves to be large in their capacity for living out the Gospel and responding to the needs of the most vulnerable among them. - Pastor Rachel



These pictures are of a recent visit to a refugee center by members of the Lutheran Church in Belarus. They coordinated with the centers to bring needed supplies- clothes, food, sanitary items, for the refugees.

# World Hunger Projects in Hungary

The continental area desks in the ELCA's Service and Justice unit collaborate closely with ELCA's World Hunger International in their support of ministries across the globe.

As Area Desk Director, Rachel connects with the leaders of World Hunger projects on the ground. For much of her time, this has meant arranging video calls online for check-ins and updates on various projects. However, the last week of November, she was able to visit a World Hunger Project in person! What a joy to connect with the community in Kotche and hear more about their work to empower the surrounding villages through the arts. Creating a space and training for pottery, basket weaving, and loom weaving has offered not only a source of income, but a source of joy for the community members as they connect through their creations!

-Pr. Rachel



Project Leader Orsi and Szabolcs Végh in the handicraft workshop in Kötcsé.



Photo taken in Kötcsé, Hungary. The site of the World Hunger Grant Project. Director of the Andorka Rudolf Lutheran Conference and Mission Home, Szabolcs Végh (Left), Foreign Affairs Officer of Lutheran Church in Hungary, Balicza Klára (Center), ELCA Europe Director, Pr. Rachel Eskesen (right).

# Turning the World Upside Down: The Magnificat

Join us for this 3-part webinar hosted by the ELCA's Wittenberg Center on December 15th, 16th & 17th! Click the button to the right to register today!



## Magnificat

El Centro Wittenberg de la ELCA le invita a una serie de webinarios de tres sesiones para celebrar el 500 aniversario del comentario de Martín Lutero sobre "Magnificat" y el continuo significado de la voz de María. Cada webinar será una hora y comenzará a las 12 del mediodía hora de Chicago.

DE DICIEMBRE  
15  
DE DICIEMBRE  
16  
DE DICIEMBRE  
17

Mi alma glorifica al Señor:  
El don de la voz de María  
Derribó de sus tronos a los poderosos:  
La fuerza de la voz de María  
De generación a generación:  
El futuro de la voz de María



## The Magnificat

The ELCA Wittenberg Center invites you to a three-part webinar series to mark the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's commentary on the Magnificat and the continued significance of Mary's voice. Each hour-long session will take place at 12 pm Central time.

DECEMBER  
15  
DECEMBER  
16  
DECEMBER  
17

My Soul Magnifies the Lord:  
The Gift of Mary's Voice  
Brought Down the Mighty From Their Thrones:  
The Strength of Mary's Voice  
From Generation to Generation:  
The Future of Mary's Voice





# The Digital Reformation

On Bitcoin and NFTs in the Church. Check out Pastor Zach's blogs on possibilities for the church and new technology.



## The Church & Bitcoin

Zach is actively exploring how the church might use Bitcoin in different ministry settings. Some of the topics he's exploring include: Care for Creation, Financial Wellness of Families and Congregations, Ministry Support/Fundraising. If you are interested in learning more about how these topics may overlap with Bitcoin, or wish to learn more about Bitcoin in general--please be in touch!



## NFT & G-O-D

Non Fungible Tokens (NFTs) are digitally scarce images, videos, or other digital data/property that are recorded on the blockchain to show ownership. There are so many potential applications for the church to be using NFTs as a part of it's ministries. Following the link to the article, I'll explore three of these applications.

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