



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



We come to this time with some specific gifts and strong relationships:

- The ELCA has long cultivated strong relationships with our Lutheran companions in Central and Eastern Europe. These networks continue to be cultivated through the personal relationships of mission personnel serving in the region, through companion synod relationships, and grant support of local initiatives to respond to the needs of the community.
- We have personal connections to the leadership and ministry of the Lutheran Churches in many of the countries that border Ukraine and are currently receiving refugees.
- In recent years, we have supported the efforts of our partner churches in Europe to respond to the global refugee crisis. ELCA's support of refugee ministries in the region includes collaboration with one of our three Lutheran partner churches in Russia. This recent history of collaboration to care for the most vulnerable population is valuable now more than ever as over 600,000 refugees flee from the violence in Ukraine
- The ELCA has partnered with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary to welcome Young Adults in Global Mission for several years before the Covid-19 pandemic. The ELCA has partnered with the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia to facilitate a teaching program in Lutheran high schools in Central Europe for over 25 years. We have regional staff who represent us in the emergency response structure of the ACT Alliance. This provides opportunities for both firsthand observations on the ground and engagement in the larger regional approach.
- The Europe Desk collaborates with colleagues in the Churchwide office including Lutheran Office for World Community, the Advocacy team, Global Service, the administration of Service and Justice to monitor the situation closely in support of our missionaries in the region. We have missionaries currently serving in Slovakia through the Central Europe Teachers program, and our missionary serving in Russia, GMA Pr. Bradn Buerkle and his family were recently evacuated to a safer location.

In this time we turn these gifts and relationships toward ministry for all people:

- While we have been able to collaborate with Lutheran partners to support humanitarian work within Ukraine, our greatest strength and most valuable assistance is through the supporting church's humanitarian efforts to receive and care for people who are fleeing Ukraine- a population that is overwhelming women and children.

- Our most extensive collaboration is work is through responses on the ground in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and other places where we have supported aid to those in migration in the past. By working with already established capacity and leadership, it has been possible to quickly adapt to a rapidly changing situation. This ability to adapt to the needs of the moment is a crucial element to effective support in this time of crisis in Eastern Europe.
- This is a fluid and rapidly changing situation. It is likely that by the time the media highlights a need, or a gap in assistance, the organizations on the ground (including those with whom we are coordinating) will already be working to acquire material locally or moving to provide expertise. This is the reason that financial support is so critical- to equip the people who are best prepared to respond to the crisis in the context.
- There will be long-term impacts to this violence in Ukraine throughout the region. It will be critical for the ELCA to continue to accompany churches as they address the trauma that comes with violence, dislocation, and family separation. The area of expertise that has been developed over the decades through faithful service by the churches will continue to be critically important and an area of expertise in a number of the programs we are supporting.
- Peoples of the nations neighboring Ukraine have firsthand family experience of a previous time under the Soviet occupation. For some, an underlying trauma has been reawakened, and the solidarity that is being expressed church-to-church can be healing.
- We are called and call others to remember, that the life we have together in Christ and the worldwide connection of churches is something strikingly important in this time of estrangement. For many in Russia, the challenge of this time is unfathomable to us. The prayer for peace and the drive toward fellowship with those in Russia, which were transformative in previous times of conflict are of paramount importance now. We continue to pray for the Lutheran community, all of Christ's followers, all people of faith, and the whole of the nation of Russia.

We call for financial support and for prayer:

- ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response collaborates with local church and ecumenical partners to offer Humanitarian Relief for those impacted by the crisis in Ukraine. What this means is that refugees and internally displaced persons in Ukraine are supported with emergency non-food items such as beds, mattresses, blankets, linens, food, hygiene items, and dignity kits. The churches are coordinating protection and safeguarding of vulnerable individuals and groups, psychosocial care pastoral support. The churches are coordinating to provide transportation for people from the border, temporary housing, food, and water.
- We have already provided financial assistance to those working in Ukraine and in neighboring nations and will continue to do so (with confidence that the generosity of those in support of Lutheran Disaster Response will continue to support the work). For those who wish to support the work, please direct gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response (designation IDG0103, "Eastern Europe Conflict Response").
- Please join the Lutheran Disaster Response feed on Facebook, or subscribe to the blog at elca.org/disaster. We will continue to provide situation updates.
- We thank those who have given general gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response as this has allowed us to act even as we appeal for additional support.

- 100% of funds directed to IDG0103 will be directed to those impacted by this war (both for immediate aid for those on the move and for continued care in the days that lie ahead).
- Please commit to daily prayer for peace and for all who seek to aid those impacted by this war.

ELCA is working most closely with the following partners in the humanitarian response to the crisis in Ukraine:

- German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ukraine (GELCU);
- Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland (ECACP);
- Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Romania (ECACR);
- Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia (ECACS)
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary (ELCH)
- Lutheran World Federation (LWF),
- ACT Alliance,
- Church World Service (CWS),
- Hungarian Interchurch Aid (HIA)
- Phiren Amenca.

For more information, please go to www.elca.org/disaster