

SENSING HOPE

February 17, 2021 - March 17, 2021

Lutheran World Relief Series

February 17, 2021
Touching Hope
Session 1

Touching Hope:	February 17, 2021	Preached February 21, 2021
Hearing Hope:	February 24, 2021	Preached February 28, 2021
Seeing Hope:	March 3, 2021	Preached March 7, 2021
Smelling Hope:	March 10, 2021	Preached March 14, 2021
Tasting Hope:	March 17, 2021	Preached March 21, 2021

Touching Hope: Meeting urgent needs during COVID-19
Luke 7:1-10

How your hope touches vulnerable neighbors during the pandemic

For people who live in the world's poorest communities, contracting COVID-19 is only the beginning of the risks they face during a pandemic.

In the Gandak River Basin that separates India and Nepal, communities are not only affected by the pandemic but also the flood season. People are afraid to leave their homes and contract the virus. People can't find work. Food is becoming scarce. Anisha Devi, 40, lives in India and supplies her family the only food they can afford and procure — the bread she makes at home. Vijay Singh, 38, says, "I hope that my children will be healthy and they'll be able to go back to school."

In Nairobi, Kenya, Peline Kemunto was overjoyed when she gave birth to a healthy baby boy. Shortly after, the pandemic swept through Kenya, and Peline was faced with choosing between staying home to avoid COVID-19 or taking her child to the clinic for checkups and vaccines. Fewer mothers are receiving prenatal care or delivering their babies in a safe environment.

Lutheran World Relief adapted its existing projects so implementation can continue safely in the COVID era, ensuring the pandemic's economic impacts on families are mitigated and basic needs are met. Through local partners and community networks, your love is providing personal protective equipment, potable water installations and hygiene kits and distributing emergency food, food vouchers and cash transfers to the world's most vulnerable.

DISCUSS

1. How has your daily life been affected by COVID-19?
2. In what ways has your life continued to be stable even amidst the pandemic?
3. Can you imagine making the choice between staying home or providing medical care for your family?
4. During the pandemic have members of your congregation connected to one another through technology?
5. In what ways has this connection provided hope for you or others?

TOUCH

Find an object in your home/office that is meaningful for you. It could be a small cross, a comforting blanket, your favorite mug, a well-loved book or Bible. Take a few minutes and feel the object. How does it feel in your hands? Take a few deep breaths and feel God's presence. Listen for God's voice of comfort, hope and grace. Listen for God's voice calling you beloved.

BIBLE STUDY Luke 7:1-10

What does hope feel like? Does it feel like water rushing down your face, warm hands to hold, a hot compress on your back or renewed energy? In this week's Bible reading we hear a healing story that doesn't include Jesus physically touching the person he heals. A centurion sends some others to Jesus seeking healing for his servant. Jesus is not even in the same room

as the centurion's slave. Rather, Jesus hears the cries and the faith of the centurion, and in his amazement, offers healing.

Read Luke 7:1-10.

1. For whom in your life have you sought healing?
2. How have you and your congregation been able to connect with one another and the wider community without being together physically?
3. What creative ways of being church have emerged?
4. Who are the healers in your community?
5. How can you support their work?

PRAY

God of endless love, we give thanks for people who come to you seeking healing for others. We give thanks for friends who speak up and bring attention to the cries of our neighbors. Help us to seek out those in need of healing. Teach us to use more than just our hands to offer hope. Lift up our voices, open our hearts, and remind us to see all your people as beloved. We pray all this in the name of Jesus, the One who is our hope.

LWR - Lutheran World Relief

At Lutheran World Relief, we envision a future where all people, in every corner of the world can live full, dignified lives.

Founded by Lutherans in the United States at the end of World War II, grounded in Lutheran theology and building on decades of experience, Lutheran World Relief tackles global poverty by helping people adapt to the challenges that threaten their livelihoods and well-being. We work with people based on need, regardless of race, religion or nationality and we do not evangelize. We provide aid in emergencies and help families restore their lives. We partner with communities to build and grow rural economies. We break the cycle of poverty, so families and communities can thrive. Our goal is to help people build self-sufficiency and create new community-owned approaches to problem-solving that will last long after our projects end.