

Temple Talk Notes

June 28, 2026

Lutheran World Relief School Kits

Good morning!

Well, it's that time of year again! Time to kick off the shopping portion of our Lutheran World Relief School Kits project.

For those of you who may be new to this project or who might want a refresher, let me tell you what it's all about. Each year, we work together to create school kits which we donate to Lutheran World Relief. Each kit consists of a backpack filled with school supplies. The School Kits we make will be sent to children around the world who are in need due to poverty, natural disasters, conflict, or other issues that make it difficult to attend school.

The kits are sent to areas experiencing a need and who request aid. They are then distributed through an approved program or center. ***Kits are not handed out randomly. The recipients have verifiable need.*** For many of these children, **these supplies mean the difference between getting an education or not.**

Some of you have asked if any of the kits are sent here in the United States. The answer is YES, often they are. While the primary focus of Lutheran World Relief is to offer aid on a global level, they do also distribute kits in the U.S. to areas that have been affected by natural disasters, ***when those areas request them.*** If you visit the display in the narthex, you can see some of the states in the U.S. who have received the kits because of hardships caused by wildfires, severe flooding, hurricanes, and other extreme weather events, as well as the different countries where they are sent.

But the wonderful thing about this project is that it is a double blessing. It is so much more than just sending children to school. It touches the lives of everyone who is involved in creating the kits. We are building disciples by involving the children who attend Bible School and teaching them to share the love of Christ. They bring in offerings to help buy supplies, help string the backpacks, and come back to help pack the bags in September. Through our sew-a-sack, our knotty party, the pack-a-sack, and the everyone joining together to donate supplies over the summer, it has bonded our church and made us a family. People who watch our service online or read about it in the Messenger have also sent in donations.

As you probably know from reading the Messenger, volunteers have been super busy making the backpacks. So ... what's next?

Well, two things. One is our Knotty Party ... a K N O T T Y party to tie knots to secure the drawstring cords to finish the backpacks. There are a LOT of knots to tie, so we really need your help. And we didn't have as much time in the classroom this year to string the backpacks, so we invited the older Bible School kids to join us and string more packs. If tying knots is not your jam, come anyway. Make friends. The kids can show you how to string a pack, or we can put you to work counting and stacking the backpacks ... or come for the fellowship!

The other task at hand is to gather the supplies to fill the backpacks. Summer is in full swing, school has barely let out, and the back-to-school sales have started already. It's time to shop!!

And now for the question that everyone has been asking ... how many bags are we aiming to fill this year? Wow! That's a tricky question. This project just gets more amazing every year. We have tried setting goals, but each time we do, it seems God has had bigger plans than we did and the response has surpassed our wildest imagination. In 2016, the first year we did this project, we set a goal of 25 backpacks and were amazed to fill 139. The response continued to grow year after year. In 2024, we were blessed to be able to send 606 school kits around the world, and last year we collected enough supplies to fill 825 packs! It was a Spirit-led effort and that's what we will do again ... we will see where the Spirit leads.

The women sewed 927 backpacks. ***Will we fill them all? Only the Spirit knows.*** This we have learned ... if it is God's will, He will provide a way. The offerings from Bible School were enough to start us off with the first 111 backpacks, and donations have already started pouring in this week. By God's grace, we will fill as many packs as we are able. Listen to where your heart is calling and we'll end up exactly where God wants us to be!

If we collect enough to fill them all, hallelujah! If we don't, then we'll have a head start on backpacks for next year, or perhaps we can share some with other churches who may have a use for them. Either way, your gifts will be a blessing to others. Indeed, this entire project is a far-reaching blessing that touches many lives in many ways.

So, sign up for the Knotty Party, and let's put those shopping carts in gear and watch for the back-to-school sales for the best deals!

A full list of what we collect is available in the narthex, in the Messenger, and on our web site.

We were able to order notebooks online in bulk this year, so we have a pretty good head start on those but we could still use some more. What we need focus on most right now are pencils, pens, scissors, crayons, and erasers. Don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

So let's go, Team Messiah ... I can't say it enough ... thanks so much to all of you for your generous hearts and hands.

Please join me in prayer: Lord, you have blessed us to be a blessing. Thank you for the many gifts we have been given. We ask that you pour out your Spirit upon us and bless the gifts we bring as we go forth today to share the light of your love with those in need so that they too may grow to become a blessing to others. Amen.