

Seattle LWR Ingathering Quilters, kit-makers, box-packers, materials buyers, and drivers

***SPRING 2026 Seattle LWR Ingathering - May 1 & May 2 at
Our Redeemers' Lutheran Church, 2500 NW 85th.***

***Please read the next few paragraphs before you print
loading form - some things have changed at LWR.***

1. Where quilts and kits are distributed:

For many years, I have heard complaints or suggestions from the quilters and others I deal with each month that LWR should be supporting American needs – not (just) overseas needs. Some of our churches have sent quilts to homeless shelters in winter; some sent to E Washington when fires disrupted communities a couple of years ago. All of these are worthwhile causes – we all know the total needs exceed the giving/donor capacity out there. LWR has now expanded WHERE they ship our quilts and kits.' In 2025 LWR started the distribution of quilts and kits domestically in response to natural disasters. The numbers distributed through partner organizations here in the U. S. are the bottom three lines of the annual map attached that shows where quilts and kits went. More detailed numbers and locations of US disaster areas receiving quilts and kits in 2025 were:

Hurricanes Helene and Milton disasters

California wildfire victims

Severe weather across south and Midwest

Flooding in central Texas

There were 114,038 quilts, 212,425 kits distributed in those areas ~ 21 shipping containers! Besides the goods listed above, over \$1.2 million was distributed as cash grants to trusted local partner organizations in 12 states for rapid deployment of assistance to neighbors in areas across the U.S. suffering from natural disasters. Even before Hurricanes Helene & Milton hit land, 10 shipping containers with 60,000 quilts and 76,000 kits were enroute to the about-to-be-affected areas.

2. US logistics to receive quilts and kits at warehouses and then move overseas:

Many West Coast churches have always sent their boxes to the New Windsor (Baltimore) warehouse using railcars. After repacking for overseas shipments – in boxes that can be sent on palettes – they are easily loaded at ports of Baltimore, Richmond, Philadelphia, New York. Many Midwest churches sent their boxes to the S St Paul Warehouse using trucks and cars. After repacking for overseas, those boxes for overseas were then trucked to those same ports. In the Fall of 2025, the Church of the Brethren ceased receiving and processing quilts and kits at their New Windsor, MD warehouse. It was the warehouse used by LWR that was capable of accepting train transport where Seattle and Portland have sent their boxes by rail for 45 years. LWR then decided to consolidate its warehouse operations in one central location, the existing S St Paul warehouse. As a result, the West Coast Ingatherings (including Seattle and Portland) and a few Midwest Ingatherings that had been using train to New Windsor, began using trucks to send goods to S St Paul. Seattle's Fall 2025 Ingathering was loaded into containers that were trucked to S St Paul warehouse. Now LWR is reserving, and coordinating with the trucking companies, their dispatchers and drivers for all Ingatherings. Rich Mathes no longer is reserving containers and train transport (called "Intermodal") from Hub Group. I believe this is an easier to use model for churches (most of us church volunteers are not trucking or Intermodal specialists). IF there are some local issues, those trucking companies are more flexible than dealing with rail and Intermodal

3. The new tracking application called "Lydia" is here! (actually, almost here):

(Lydia was a seller of purple cloth in the book of Acts). LWR will be rolling out the use of this new online registration and tracking system during 2026. It will be a simple and easy way to pre-register your boxes before an Ingathering and then track them to their final destination. Before you get nervous about using a new system, don't worry, if you or anyone in your group can manage a computer or smartphone you can do the pre-registration! Remember, you can reach out at church for someone to help. They do not need to be part of the quilting or kit making group. And it's a great way to get other people from your church involved in the Q&K ministry. There will be a downloadable sheet posted on your Ingathering page on the LWR website Ingathering Map with an overview of what to expect and simple directions to use the link and form. It is not yet available on the lwr.org website as of March 5. I will send out email when we are ready to use it. Directions and a link to Lydia will also be posted on the Seattle page of the LWR Ingathering map.

4. While LWR has expanded the reach of your quilts and kits to include emergency response in the United States, the guidelines for making quilts and assembling kits remain the same, although please note that Baby Care Kit items need to be new - please read next paragraph. Please follow the Quilt & Kit Ministry Guide 2026-2027. Quilts and kits must remain standardized in order to be pulled in a timely manner for either domestic or international response.

Seattle “LOADING FORM” CHANGES:

Some of you are aware that the 2nd page (back page) of our Seattle loading form lists the authorized items for kits. **The main change is under Baby Kits. All Baby Care Kit items MUST be NEW or HANDMADE. The ONLY exception is donated and/or thrifted items that are in "pristine" or "like-new" condition. However, socks, towels and soap MUST be brand-new.**

Cost of shipping - the past 6 years have seen inflation plus supply chain disruptions. LWR has requested that we try to pay more, as their costs have really risen. HOWEVER, it is more important for you all to make and donate quilts (and kits) than pay the entire shipping cost. There are non-quilters and other LWR donors who each year help pay for the freight as well. So please continue to contribute what you can. The 27 cents and 68 cents per pound for domestic shipping and overseas shipping, respectively, are goals for what LWR needs, not mandates for the quilters and kitters to provide. The goods you provide are very important.

LWR Videos:

LWR has been around for 80 years; they now have several short, informative videos and articles reminding us of how much LWR, through you and previous generations, have done since WWII. Click on [Going Farther, Staying Longer: Celebrating 80 Years of LWR](#). There are 20 seconds of our Fall 2022 Ingathering towards the end.

Following are two LWR videos that may be of general interest to your quilting or church groups. [How do LWR Quilts & Kits get from the U.S. to the places they're needed?](#) is 13 minutes and covers a lot. The following 3-minute video explains how LWR Quilts helped solve medical issues for children in a cold part of Tanzania. <https://photos.lwr.org/?r=43383&k=621af2c820>

You may Google YouTube, searching for Lutheran World Relief to find more.

Attachments:

1. Seattle SPRING 2026 Loading Form. Print on Legal for largest print format. Reverse has kit instructions.
2. The attachment "LWR 2025 shipments. pdf" shows where shipments went in 2025. Seattle's quilts and kits have always gone from the Maryland warehouse.

Boxing and labeling - LWR is installing "Lydia" - the new tracking system - see article above. Until we are able to use Lydia, continue to label boxes as follows. All boxes going on our Seattle containers need your church name and address (at least city) - there are a lot of First Lutherans or St Pauls' Lutheran Churches. Please write "Quilts" or "School" or "School Kits" or "Personal CK" etc. on each box, so the warehouse personnel know which warehouse room to send the box to, without having to open it first. Please list number of items in that box. I am guessing most of us already hand-write "quilts" and "5" as we pack our five quilts. That is part of our process at my congregation to ensure we count correctly. Prior to bar codes being introduced, many of us created "address labels" for our church mailing label, including type and number of items. That is an option. I will send out a mailing when Lydia is available and check the Ingathering Map for instructions posted there.

Rich's thoughts on buying Personal Care Kit Supplies in 2026:

Our QALC LWR Kit Making effort depends upon help from many of you who purchase items. The following was excerpted from my church newsletter. Some comments may not apply to your community or nearby stores. If you have ideas, or suggestions, please let me know. The prices are from my last order.

Personal Care Kit Supplies: My congregation purchases most Personal Care Kit Supplies online, in bulk. The combs, fingernail clippers and toothbrushes are uniform, toothbrushes individually wrapped. If in doubt, use larger combs (7+ inches with handle, 4+ inches without). **Combs** need to be long enough to control them in your hand. I order combs from Medline At Home; 144 of the 7" combs for around \$82 including shipping (I order MDS137209). Ensure **toothbrushes** are soft, and will hold up for a month or more - I tested mine at home. I order SmartSmile Adult Toothbrushes (72 count, individually wrapped, 144 for \$71) from American Dental Accessories, Inc. I order the 72 pack **nail clippers** from Amazon although I am not excited about the fact that they seem to fall apart

or do not cut some of my nails well. Let me know if you like any mail order clippers 100% of the time.

Bath towels need to be a minimum of 20"x40" (hotel size) up to 27"x 52". They should be dark colored - hard to clean white towels in a refugee camp without washing machines. They do not need to be thick and plush – they will need to air dry in hot, humid climates. Target's bath towels (dark gray) have consistently cost \$2.50 to \$3.00.

Four-ounce bars of soap are best, since each kit must have 8-9 oz of soap. We send two 4oz bars. The 3 or 3.5 oz bars are fine - you just must pack three bars We prefer Ivory. Yes, prices have increased a lot. I am paying around \$1.20 per 4oz bar ordering online from WebRestaurant Store.

Purchasing batting for quilts: The question often comes up, where do you buy your batting? Because of shipping cost, Queen Anne Lutheran has been getting batting from PerfectFit out of Portland. If you carefully read their website, they have a 60" wide batting. It comes in 2 weights. QA uses the lighter weight. It is cheaper if you buy 6 rolls. Shipping is like \$15.00. Sometimes you can go in with another church to buy the 6 rolls for the cheaper price. **To get the cheaper price (not the full price listed online) you need to call and tell them that you are a church making quilts as a mission project. The online price is almost double.**

Fabric Samples: Please email Candy Mathes at lwrmathes@aol.com or call/text her at 206-919-7330 if you want to arrange to pick up fabric and fabric samples either at the Ingathering, or anytime at Queen Anne Lutheran Church.

Reminders from LWR Baltimore:

1. **No more fleece blankets** - they are not biodegradable.
2. Please ensure your boxes **can support the weight inside**, and please limit school kits to eight in a box - which is 30 pounds. When we are stacking boxes 9.5 feet high, heavy boxes are more difficult for the average 6-foot male. My church uses apple boxes - each holds eight school kits.

HANDY LWR VIDEOS FOR ASSEMBLING KITS:

www.lwr.org/kitvideos is a link from LWR that takes you directly to the Melanie Gibbons videos on kit assembly. The videos are quite useful, because we all need to ensure that those who help with assembling quilts twice a year are using similar good practices. If possible, have someone show these videos at your church as an aid to assembling kits. They are great for viewing right before you assemble the kits. Last fall, before my Men's Group assembled Personal Care Kits, one person said, "I had forgotten some of the details from 6 months ago."

You can also just input "LWR Personal Care Kit video," "LWR School Kit video", "LWR Baby Care Kit video" or "LWR Fabric Kit video" in Google search bar. If you pack school kits, please refer to Melanie Gibbons wonderful YouTube video - "LWR School Kits: Tips & Tricks". There are also videos for other kits on YouTube.

Please pass on the above to your groups and friends, even if you will not participate this spring. If you want to get off of this email, please let me know. And if you need to add someone, please let me know. If you notify me, I do mail hard-copy to those without email.

Thank you

-Rich Mathes