

Spokane LWR Ingathering Quilters, kit-makers, box-packers, materials buyers, drivers  
***Spring 2026 Spokane LWR Ingathering - May 1st & 2nd at St. Luke  
Lutheran Church, 9706 N Division, Spokane***

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

1. **Where LWR quilts and kits are distributed - overseas:** 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 of course 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. in 2025 are shown on the bottom three lines of the annual map that shows where quilts and kits went. More detailed locations and numbers of items for 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. LWR US logistics to receive quilts and kits at US warehouses before moving goods overseas:**

Many West Coast churches have always sent their boxes to the New Windsor (Baltimore) warehouse using railcars; other areas have also done this. 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 one warehouse used by LWR that was capable of accepting train transport. This is where Seattle and Portland sent their boxes by rail for 45 years. Spokane had also used rail to New Windsor, until a couple of years ago when they started sending by truck to S St Paul.

After the New Windsor warehouse closed in 2025, 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 sending to New Windsor (including Seattle and Portland) and some 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 trucking companies, their dispatchers and drivers for all Ingatherings. I believe this might help many locations plan their trucks more easily, as now the entire country is using the same trucking companies for all Ingatherings.

## **3. The new tracking application called “Lydia” is here! (actually, almost here).** (Lydia was 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 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. **It will not involve pre-printing bar code pages like the previous system.**

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 Kit items** need to be **new - read next couple of paragraphs**. 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.

### **Spokane "LOADING FORM" CHANGES:**

Some of you are aware that the 2nd page (back page) of the Spokane loading form lists the authorized items for kits. **The main changes are 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) if the higher suggested donation is too onerous. There are non-quilters and other LWR donors who each year help pay the freight as well, but they do not contribute quilts and kits. So please continue to contribute what you can for shipping. 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 immediately. The goods you provide are very important.

**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 Spokane 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 mailing when Lydia is available.

## **Attachments:**

1. Spokane Spring 2026 Loading Form. *Print on Legal* for largest print format. Reverse side has kit instructions.
2. The attachment "LWR 2025 shipments. pdf" shows where shipments went in 2025. Spokane's quilts and kits used to be shipped from the Maryland warehouse; in recent years they have shipped from "Minnesota"

## **Rich's thoughts on buying Personal Care Kit Supplies in 2025:**

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 - or you may have stores I do not have in my area. If you have ideas, or suggestions, please let me know.

***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 \$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 72 pack nail clippers from Amazon (diane brand)

**Bath towels** need to be a minimum of 20"x40" (hotel size) up to 27"x 52". They should be dark colored – it's 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 \$1.30 per 4oz bar, ordering online from WebRestaurantStore.

**Purchasing batting for quilts:** The question often comes up, where do you buy your batting? Because of shipping cost, our church has been buying batting from PerfectFit out of Portland. If you carefully read their website, they have a 60" wide batting. It comes in 2 weights. We use 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.**

### **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](http://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 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.

**LWR has been around for 80-years.** LWR has several short, interesting 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](#).

If you can show videos to your quilting groups or church members, I listed two LWR videos that may be of interest. You may Google YouTube, searching for Lutheran World Relief to find more. [How do LWR Quilts & Kits get from the U.S. to the places they're needed?](#) is 13 minutes and covers a lot. The next 3-minute video explains how LRW Quilts helped solve medical issues for children in a cold part of Tanzania. [ResourceSpace | Lutheran World Relief - View Resource](#)

Please pass on the above to your groups and friends, even if you will not participate this spring. If you do not want to receive this email, please let us know. And if you need to add someone, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Karen & Ron Ovnicek