

# on location

SPRING – SUMMER 2022



The border of Ukraine and Hungary, where Global Servant Larry Stanton is serving refugees

## HOW ARE WE RESPONDING TO the war in Ukraine?

*Learn more about both our regional response and the experience of our global servants in Hungary. For the most current information, please check our website and social media.*

### Our regional response

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine at the end of February, IM's World Relief Officer Lisa Rothenberger says she has seen an unprecedented response.

“What we are witnessing, and have the privilege to support financially, can only be described as a Christ-led grassroots movement. Across six countries, our Baptist partners spontaneously opened their churches and homes to shelter some of the millions who have been forced to flee. Within days, more than 1,000 places were made ready—600 within

Ukraine—for all who are migrating to sleep, eat, shower, and receive a word of hope. In the first month alone, our partners have served more than 1,000,000 displaced people. Now the challenge is that there is a large cost to providing these services.”

As of early April, you have generously given more than \$531,000 in Ukraine relief to support the work of our partners and global servants in the region. “We are coordinating our regional response with the global Baptist family, supporting the European Baptist Federation and its member Baptist Unions in Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia,

*Continued on page 3*





**My prayer for you, and for all of us in the International Ministries family, is that we will know the power of Christ's peace and live as people who share that peace.** In the Old Testament, the phrase *ish shelomi* means "friend of my peace." This is someone with whom we have "shared our bread" and enjoy good relationship.

It is at the heart of our ministry to cross cultural lines for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ, to bring the gospel of reconciliation and abundant life. Rather than responding to the world around us with fear, may we by God's grace share the peace of Christ everywhere we go. May we be to many others their *ish shelomi*.

Dear IM Family,

In these early months of 2022, the world is facing a lot. We are watching the violence and tremendous loss taking place in Ukraine. Lack of access to resources in many parts of the world is making people feel desperate. Some of us are facing natural disasters. We are trying to avoid the COVID-19 virus. Racial tensions are high. For many, very little feels "safe" anymore.

As I reflect on this, my mind keeps going back to the scene between the disciples and Jesus that begins in John 20:19.

After Jesus' horrific death and before fully understanding the resurrection, the disciples huddle together in a room with the doors locked, overcome with fear. So much of our thinking today can parallel that version of being "locked down."

But Jesus appears, suddenly standing among them in the room, and tells them, "Peace be with you!"

Out of curiosity, I looked up "peace" (or *shalom*) to see if I could get a better understanding of what Jesus was offering his disciples and us.

According to *Strong's Concordance*, *shalom* means "peace, completeness, welfare, health." It seems to me that, in that moment, Christ was aware of so much more going on in the spiritual realm than what was immediately in front of his disciples' eyes.

Jesus meets them in their fear with his peace. With a bigger, eternal picture that knows who God is and what God has done. As the psalmist writes, "I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety" (Psalm 4:8).

Together with you in mission,

Rev. Sharon Koh  
Executive Director / CEO



Inspired by what you read in this issue? If you would like to equip IM global servants to share the gospel, please use the enclosed reply envelope to send your gift of support or donate online: [www.internationalministries.org](http://www.internationalministries.org). You can help us reduce costs when you receive an electronic instead of print version of this newsletter; to do that, create (or log into) your account at [portal.internationalministries.org](http://portal.internationalministries.org) or email us at [imdonservices@internationalministries.org](mailto:imdonservices@internationalministries.org) with your name and address.

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## HOW ARE WE RESPONDING TO the war in Ukraine?

Hungary, Romania, and Moldova; and locally through the work of our global servants in Hungary,” says IM Area Director for Europe, the Middle East and Liberia Charles Jones. “We are consulting with our partners on how best to use these funds, as we begin to address longer-term relief and resettlement needs.”

“Our funds follow our relationships—foundations of trust, support, and mutual accountability established in times of security,” says Lisa. “It’s one of the many distinctives of how IM engages in ministry. I have known Helle Liht, Assistant General Secretary of the European Baptist Federation, for sixteen years. She has been working with Ukrainian Baptists since 2014 to understand their needs. While I don’t know that anyone could be prepared for the rapid onset of what we’ve seen happen, Helle and the Baptist leaders have worked together seamlessly since the escalation of the crisis.”

### Thoughts from our global servants

In addition to this large-scale response, our global servants in Hungary are directly engaged in relief efforts.

Global Servant Carmella Jones describes how her English-speaking church in Budapest opened its doors to African students fleeing Ukraine with nowhere to go. Carmella, who is trained as both a nurse and pastor, listened as the students shared from their experiences: “I lost my brother—they separated us at the border, and I lost him.” “We walked for days. I was so cold and scared.” “They pointed a gun in my face. I am not okay.” “I could hear explosions and gunfire. I just ran. This little bag is all I have.” Carmella says her best and only response is, “Do you believe in prayer? Let’s pray.”

As Carmella changed the linens on an air mattress one afternoon, one guest asked her, “What do you get out of doing all this?” She responded, “Joy and peace in knowing we provided you a safe space and hope in a very difficult situation. But also knowing that I have pleased the God I serve in showing his love towards you.”

Carmella asks for prayer for the church to be able to sustain this ministry, even as they experience a COVID outbreak among guests and volunteers. “We desperately need your prayers,” she says. “Pray for our strength as we seek to welcome the stranger.”



*The welcome center at the border of Ukraine and Hungary, where Global Servant Larry Stanton is serving refugees.*

In Debrecen, Global Servants Amanda and Jon Good’s partner church, Szappanos Baptist Church, is hosting as many refugees as they can. The Goods have also opened their own home.

“One of the families traveled through the night in a minivan that somehow managed to hold eight people,” Amanda says. “They drove through Ukraine on prayer and coffee, and used cooking oil for power steering fluid. The hardest part of the conversation came later when we discovered that they were actually a family of nine. As they were crossing the border, they were told that their 18-year-old son was not allowed to leave Ukraine. We all cried when we heard this. Ukrainian men between the ages of 18 and 60 are not generally allowed to leave. Yet, the family believed without a doubt that God would take care of him. This is the kind of hope only Jesus can bring.”

Global Servant Larry Stanton is traveling to the Ukrainian border weekly with IM partner Hungarian Baptist Aid. Larry greets the refugees as they arrive at the welcome center set up in Tiszabecs, where they are offered food, hygiene items, toys, and other supplies for their ongoing journey. These donations have been funded in part through your generosity.

Larry’s previous work with Syrian refugees has taught him that refugee work isn’t a sprint—it’s a marathon. He explains, “People will keep coming long after the welcome has worn off, and the more affluent come first—those who can afford to drive or travel, and those who have established families greeting them in Western Europe. The true marathon of helping will start in the months and the years to come.”

**For updates or to give to Ukraine relief, please visit [internationalministries.org/ukraine-relief-update](https://internationalministries.org/ukraine-relief-update).**

# when God calls

**YOU TO GIVE**

*For every IM global servant in ministry, there's a network of support from individuals and churches whom God has called to take a step of faith.*

Global Servants Lee Ann and Gordon Hwang were facing a large funding gap. That gap increased when the part-time teaching jobs they counted on in Japan fell through. On US/Puerto Rico assignment in the US, Gordon and Lee Ann had to delay their return. After months of hard work but still short the necessary funding, the Hwangs faced another hurdle when tests revealed that Lee Ann had a brain tumor.

“We had exhausted our supporter list,” Lee Ann says. “Our Mission Partnership Team, our family, our close friends, the International Ministries home staff, and so many others continued to pull together for us. They called upon the Lord to provide that which we could not do for ourselves and to pray for my health. Then we found out that the Lord touched the heart of an amazing anonymous donor. They generously pledged the amount to IM that would fill our gap in funding for four years. It was unbelievable. We are humbled that God would answer our need in this way.”

“God has provided again and again,” says Gordon. “And God’s timing is perfect. We had expected to return to Japan early 2021 but were delayed due to the funding deficit. The tumor was discovered in July 2021; surgery was September 2021. Lee Ann was medically cleared to return to Japan last November, right after the donor committed to support us.”

In December 2021, the Hwangs arrived in Rifu, where they will minister to families through Oasis Chapel.

For each of IM's global servants at work around the world, there is a network of support coming from churches and individuals that makes these transformational ministries possible. God is constantly at work—calling global servants to go and trust God for what's needed, and calling individuals and churches to give the gifts that supply those needs.

“I have a donor who first gave to my ministry at the age of twelve,” says Global Consultant Kristy Engel, who provides health assessments, medical training, and crisis relief around the world. “He started giving before he even met me! His father, Brian, and I went to Judson University together, and Brian often told his children about the work I do. His son, Benjamin, felt so compelled to support the work that when he found out I would be visiting a local church, he asked his father if he could give me some money from his savings. The first time I met him, he shook my hand and passed me an envelope saying, ‘Here, this is for you.’ I was stunned! It shows that anyone, young or old, can make a difference in missions.”



A surprise gift from an anonymous donor enabled Global Servants Gordon and Lee Ann Hwang to return to ministry in Japan in December 2021.



Central Baptist Church in Kansas prays for Global Servants Deliris and Moise Carrión-Joseph after providing them with a place to live and rest for eighteen months.

Sometimes, God invites people to give of themselves in unexpected ways.

As Rev. John Parsley and his wife Susie, prepared for retirement, they decided to move back to the family farm in Indiana and build a house—not just for themselves but to offer a retreat for IM global servants.

“When I have gone to the World Mission Conference and seen the commissioning service, I weep when I think of the sacrifice these families are making,” John says. “They leave and often come back with no place to call home.”

In Augusta, Kansas, Pastor Norman Tillotson and his wife, Jan, had a similar thought to develop a “Mission House Ministry” using Central Baptist Church’s parsonage, since they already owned a home. At around that same time, early 2020, the pandemic made it impossible for Global Servants Deliris and Moise Carrión-Joseph to travel to Puerto Rico for home assignment.

“We were not able to go home to Puerto Rico, and we didn’t have a place we could call home in the US,” Deliris explains. “IM’s CEO Sharon Koh told our area director about an opportunity through a church in Kansas. While

we were helping migrants in Tijuana, Central Baptist Church was preparing a parsonage for us to go and stay there for the time we needed. What an amazing plan of God!”

The Kansas church rallied around this new ministry and worked to clean and repair the house for its first couple.

“Only God knows how much we needed a place like this,” Deliris explains. “After four emotionally, physically, and mentally rough years in Tijuana, we were in need of a place to rest, pray, heal, and find ourselves again. God prepared that time to renew our strength. We felt welcomed, loved, accepted. They gave us what we needed, and we shared what we had.”

For eighteen months until restrictions eased, Deliris and Moise participated in the life of the church before returning to minister in Tijuana.

“We took a step of faith and tried something radically different than our church had ever done before,” says Norman. “It paid off big time! By taking a chance and trying this new ministry, we grew by leaps and bounds. We are a small church with a big heart, and we are excited to see what God is going to do next!”



IN-PERSON EVENT **JULY 4 – 8**

# World Mission Conference

RENEWAL | RECONNECTION | RESTORATION | RESILIENCE

*Karen Mason, Director of Special Events*

We're looking forward to welcoming you to reconnect in person with our global servants and with each other at the World Mission Conference, July 4-8, at the Green Lake Conference Center in Wisconsin!

## WHAT'S NEW?

**Rapid Connections** provide the opportunity to connect face-to-face with more than forty IM global servants. How much can you learn about someone during these fast-paced conversations?

**Mission Encounters** will immerse you in a virtual mission tour with the ministries of SAT-7 in the Middle East and AMOS in Nicaragua. Discover how God's good news is shared in other cultures.

**Diving Deeper Into Connection** with God and each other as you explore the possibilities of applying Rev. Zina Jacque's Bible study to your life and your church.

**Scripture Under the Stars** and **Fireside Chats** combine a campfire and s'mores with the chance to sit back and let the conversation flow around a topic or question.

## THE WORLD MISSION CONFERENCE HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE.

**Morning Devotions** will be led by future IM global servants beside the lake, in the garden, or inside the chapel railcar.

**Children and Youth Programs** will introduce global mission through games, activities, and visits with our global servants for students entering kindergarten through grade 12 in the fall.

**Recreation and Relaxation** are missionary-led activities that could be energetic or low-key, for families and individuals. Try a game of pickleball or hike a trail, join a hymn-sing or enter the golf scramble, visit the Hopevale Memorial, go paddleboarding on the lake and more.

**Evening Programs** are the heart and soul of the conference with vibrant international music and inspiring stories from our global servants that will renew your passion for mission.

## PRE-REGISTER BY JUNE 30 TODAY!

[www.internationalministries.org/world-mission-conference](http://www.internationalministries.org/world-mission-conference)



Worship in Zongozotla, Mexico, where Global Servants Deb and Keith Myers serve.



LUTHER RICE  
SOCIETY

We will be hosting a **LUTHER RICE SOCIETY (LRS) APPRECIATION EVENT** at this year's World Mission

Conference on **July 5**, if you are a LRS member.

IM recognizes donors and donor churches whose gifts to IM total \$5,000 or more in the last calendar year as LRS members. Please watch for your invitation in the mail or call 610-768-2208 with questions.

# project

## SPOTLIGHTS



### HAITI: KIDS FOR KIDS

Through this project managed by Global Servants Kihomi Ngwemi and Nzunga Mabudiga, you can help combat poverty in northern Haiti through education by giving children goats to raise. The family can then sell the goats' offspring to help purchase school uniforms, books, shoes, and pay tuition. In partnership with the Haitian Baptist Convention, you can help equip families to pay for their children's education. A gift of \$50 provides one baby goat (kid) for a child. Please join us in praying for these children to know Christ's love.



### THAILAND: CASKET EMPTY BIBLE CURRICULUM

Through this project managed by Global Servants Kit Ripley and Kyle Witmer, you can help fund the translation of a Bible curriculum that will improve biblical literacy among Thai-speaking Christian leaders and empower them to teach others. The Thai church has insufficient access to theologically mature, historically contextualized Bible teaching materials. This project supplies materials for the training of seminary professors, pastors, missionaries, evangelists, and church leaders. Please join us in praying that the leaders who use the curriculum will greatly multiply the impact of it in Thailand.



### DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO: PSYCHOSOCIAL CARE FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Your gift can provide care, training, discipleship, and social reintegration for vulnerable children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In this new project managed by Global Servant Ann Clemmer, funds will help support vulnerable children living on the streets in Goma. Children will receive short-term relief (food, clothing, and medical care) alongside trauma counseling, education, and life-skills training. The long-term goal is to help the children return to, and be accepted by, their families, extended families, or foster families. Please join us and Ann in praying that God will be at work through this project.



### LEBANON: STEP FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES

Among the 1.5 million Syrian refugees who have sought refuge in Lebanon, 70 percent of the refugee children have no access to formal education. The Student Tuition Expense Program (STEP) will give the chance for a more stable future through education and improve their sense of wellbeing. This project is managed by the Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD) and IM Area Director Charles Jones. Please join us in praying that God will empower the church in Lebanon to care for Syrian refugees.

**To partner in these or other projects, visit [portal.internationalministries.org/find-a-project](http://portal.internationalministries.org/find-a-project).**

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