

Grant Name

Listen! Listen God Is Calling...in Tanzania

Mission/Project Summary

In Tanzania, East Africa where lions, giraffes and zebra roam the Serengeti Plains, the Holy Spirit is working among the people who live also there. Faithful Lutheran church bodies numbering more than 6 million people – that’s right, 6 MILLION Lutherans! – have taken root and continue to grow at an astonishing rate, assisted by LCMS missionaries who dedicate their time to teaching the pastors and people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT).

But there is an important resource these missionaries and church leaders lack: our good Lutheran books, translated into the languages of the Tanzanian people. From evangelism tracts and children’s Bibles that introduce new believers to Christ, to God’s Word faithfully taught through books like Luther’s Small Catechism, the Lutheran Heritage Foundation (LHF, a recognized service organization of the LCMS) has nearly 35 years’ experience in translating and publishing the books of our Lutheran faith in the languages of East Africa.

This project answers the call from LCMS missionaries and partner churches to translate and publish 1,300 - 2,100 books of our Lutheran faith (including Luther’s Small and Large Catechisms and children’s Bible storybooks) into the languages of people in Tanzania, East Africa. For many Tanzanians, this will be the first book in their language that they own — and it’s a book about Jesus. (see attached document for more info)

Project Description and Details

The challenge is that as more and more Tanzanian people want to learn what the Lutheran Church teaches, the demand for books like Luther’s Small Catechism, children’s Bibles like A Child’s Garden of Bible Stories, and faith-sustaining devotions like “Jesus Never Fails” keeps growing too. And as churches grow, the need for worship books – hymnals and liturgies – also increase.

“Just as soon as LHF translates and prints 3,000 copies of the Small Catechism in a certain language, they are gone in a flash,” explained Rev. Dr. Matthew Heise, executive director of LHF. “Compared to the ELCT’s 6 million people, printing three or even 5,000 books is a drop in the bucket. And yet – those are 5,000 more people who are now learning every day who the one true God is and what His Word teaches. What a blessing to the family of God!”

And so, with the help of the LWML Rocky Mountain District, LHF is taking on several more projects to provide thousands more Tanzanian Lutherans – pastors, children, men and women – with the good books of our Lutheran faith, written in their own languages.

Over the past 3 decades, LHF has expanded translation work in Tanzania to now encompass over a dozen languages. While that may sound like a lot, more than 120 languages are spoken in the country! Additionally, as Americans are well aware, many East African people – about 800,000 – have immigrated to the United States (including the more than 20,000 East Africans in Colorado and Utah), and LCMS pastors and evangelism teams are desperate for materials they can use to overcome the language barrier to share the love of Christ. As new believers grow in their faith, additional books like Luther’s Large Catechism and worship books (liturgies and hymns) are also needed.

The recipient must be affiliated with one of the following. Please select the one that applies to this request:

Registered Service Organization (RSO)

Amount requested:

\$6,500

Project Goals and Objectives

The Lutheran Heritage Foundation requests the LWML Rocky Mountain District to prayerfully consider becoming a partner in the "Listen, God Is Calling in Tanzania" project by approving the sum of \$6,500 at their 2026 Convention.

Amazingly, a beautiful full-color Bible storybook or Large Catechism costs \$5 or less per copy, so this funding would cover the costs of printing at least 1,300 books not only for Lutherans in Tanzania, but also for East African immigrants here in the United States. In the coming years, LHF is translating and printing a wide variety of our good Lutheran books such as Luther's Small Catechism, Augsburg Confession, Large Catechism, Liturgy Book, A Child's Garden of Bible Stories and Bible Stories in Pictures in languages like Swahili, Maasai, Dholuo and Bemba.

If this mission grant is awarded to the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, the funds will be applied toward the next Tanzanian book (or books) ready for the press. Any remaining project expenses for that particular book will be covered through contributions from individuals, congregations, church organizations and foundations (LHF's general fund).

Budget Outline and Financial Plan

A sample budget for two of these projects is as follows:

Luther's Small Catechism in the Tumbuka language:

Copyright fee from original publisher \$300

Translation, editing and layout \$1,000

Printing (2,000 copies at \$3/book) \$6,000

TOTAL PROJECT COST \$7,300

A Child's Garden of Bible Stories in the Maasai language:

Copyright fee from original publisher \$500

Translation, editing and layout \$1,200

Printing (2,000 copies at \$5/book) \$10,000

TOTAL PROJECT COST \$11,700

Additional Comments or Information

6 million Lutherans!



LCMS missionary
Rev. Jonathan Clausing using
LHF books to teach in Tanzania



Catechism class in Tanzania



Sunday school Bible books

