

## Welcome to “Tree of Healing,”

ELCA WORLD HUNGER’S VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR 2022!

The theme for this VBS comes from the rich prophetic description of the new Eden in Revelation 22:1-4. In this vision, the “tree of life” stands astride “the river of the water of life,” and St. John assures us that “the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations” (22:2). Centuries earlier, Ezekiel, too, described this tree with its healing leaves (Ezekiel 47:12). The tree is a symbol of God’s promise and a reminder of God’s will for all the nations to experience healing. As one commentator writes of the city described in Revelation 22, “There is no human need to which the ministry of the golden city will not be adequate” – including the human need for healing.

And yet, these past years have reminded us how far we are from the promise of health and wellness for us and our neighbors. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted in tragic ways our vulnerability to disease and the injustice of unequal access to care, treatment and resources for health. At the same time, we bore witness to God’s promise for health unfolding in manifold ways, including through the work of congregations around the world as they adapted to meet the growing and changing needs of their communities.

“Tree of Healing” VBS is a chance for children and adults to consider what health means and how God invites us to share in the building of a just world where all can enjoy the gifts of God’s creation. The program offers a broad understanding of health and wellness. It dives into topics such as environmental health, mental health, healthy grieving, different abilities and health justice. The stories for each day, drawn from projects supported by your gifts to ELCA World Hunger, highlight the many ways God is at work through ELCA congregations, companion churches and partners.

Each day of “Tree of Healing” has large group and small group activities, including skits, games, crafts and snacks. This year, we’ve also included some suggestions for virtual activities to use with online VBS programs. We encourage you to adapt these to fit your context. As you do, please prayerfully consider encouraging your group to support the work of ELCA World Hunger that helps sustain the ministries you will learn about this week.

Last, we owe many thanks to the leaders who have used ELCA World Hunger’s previous Vacation Bible School programs and shared their stories, photos and feedback. THANK YOU!

May God continue to bless your ministries and the ministries we share together.

*Ryan P. Cumming*

**Ryan P. Cumming**  
Program Director, Hunger Education  
ELCA World Hunger

