

# MADAGASCAR RELIEF FUND

## CONGREGATION GUIDE TO GIVING

[SWPASYNOD.ORG/MADAGASCAR](http://SWPASYNOD.ORG/MADAGASCAR)

BENEFITING OUR  
COMPANION SYNOD:

TULEAR, MADAGASCAR



**SOUTHWESTERN  
PENNSYLVANIA  
SYNOD** EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN  
CHURCH IN AMERICA

## OUR FRIENDS IN MADAGASCAR NEED HELP

For years, our synod has been in relationship with the Tulear Synod in Madagascar, even taking several trips to visit our siblings in Christ in that part of the world. We grieve to hear from the leaders of our companion synod about the struggles they have faced in recent years: ongoing drought caused by cyclone damage and consequent famine, a recent fire at a synod social ministry organization, crop fields destroyed by locust, and the Covid-19 pandemic on top of it all.

The Regional Lutheran Theological Seminary (STPL) in Bezaha educates pastors and church leaders for several Lutheran synods; traditionally, the seminarians farm while attending classes to support themselves and their families. The cyclone damage to the seminary's irrigation system has impacted their ability to grow rice and has caused a food shortage for the students.

This is why our synod is raising relief funds for our companions in Tulear. Monies will be sent to the synod under the leadership of Pastor Razafimahatratra Angelos Modeste, President (Bishop) to distribute the funds to those who are most in need, as well as to the Regional Lutheran Theological Seminary (STPL) in Bezaha.

Our synod council has already sent \$5,000 from synod funds to respond as quickly as possible to the pressing needs of both the Tulear Synod and the Seminary in Bezaha. **Now, our synod is asking for your support in this appeal and will match individual and congregation gifts up to another \$5,000.**

## 4 WAYS TO INVOLVE YOUR CONGREGATION

In the process of raising funds for our companion synod, we also hope to strengthen personal relationships between our synod and our friends in Madagascar. Your congregation is invited to participate in the appeal as a community and to learn more about our siblings in Tulear.

In the years to come, we anticipate more trips to visit Madagascar in addition to more opportunities to hear from our friends there. By participating in this appeal as a congregation, you are becoming another connection between our synod and theirs, linked in mutual care and love in Christ.





## 1. PRAY FOR THE TULEAR SYNOD IN MADAGASCAR

Increase your congregation's awareness of our companion synod and the struggles they face by including petitions in your corporate prayer, on prayer lists, and in your personal prayers. You may use this prayer:

*"We pray, O God, for our sisters and brothers in the Tulear Synod in Madagascar, that you would be a source of comfort and encouragement to them in their time of need, as they face a severe drought, Covid-19, and other natural disasters. Open our hearts to share with them as best we can. We pray that together we may follow our teacher Jesus Christ, that together we may serve in Christ's mission to the world, and that together we may witness to your love wherever you will send us; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord."*



## 2. INVITE INDIVIDUALS TO DONATE

Include appeal materials in your congregation's bulletins, newsletters, and social media.

There is an appeal letter to download and videos to share, as well as the link to donate, on our synod's website:

**[swpasynod.org/madagascar](http://swpasynod.org/madagascar)**

Individuals who contribute can indicate on the donation form that they would like to stay informed about forthcoming Madagascar news and, in that way, expand the cohort within our synod invested in our companion synod relationship.



### 3. TAKE A SPECIAL OFFERING

Dedicate a special Sunday to telling the story of our siblings in Madagascar. Videos that can be played during your service, including a message directly from President Modest of the Tulear Synod or a special message from Bishop Kurt Kusserow, can be found on our synod's website:

**[swpasynod.org/madagascar](http://swpasynod.org/madagascar)**

Guest speakers from our synod who have traveled to Madagascar and can speak about our relationship first-hand may also be available to visit your congregation. To check availability and schedule a speaker, please contact Carol Ruckert at [carol.ruckert@swpasynod.org](mailto:carol.ruckert@swpasynod.org) or 412-367-8222.



### 4. HOLD A FUNDRAISER OF YOUR OWN

Gather together your global missions committee, youth group, or any other active groups within your congregation to find creative ways of raising money to donate.

As the rice fields, a staple of their diet, have been severely impacted, one idea may be a rice-based-treat bake sale as an opportunity to share our friends' reliance on farming for sustenance. Other common ingredients in Malagasy desserts are vanilla, honey, banana, and coconut.



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Donations can be made online at [swpasynod.org/madagascar](http://swpasynod.org/madagascar), or checks made payable to "SWPA Synod" can be mailed to: Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, Attn: Madagascar Appeal, 1014 Perry Hwy, Suite 200, Pittsburgh, PA 15237