

# *pour justice to the brim!*



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## **coffee: a bitter cup?**

Coffee is big business—it's one of the most heavily traded commodities in the world. But for the majority of small-scale coffee farmers, the benefits are few.

Conventionally traded coffee involves a lengthy cast of middlemen between the coffee farmer and the consumer, each taking their share—or more—of the coffee price. What's left for the farmers may not even cover their production costs or basic living expenses.

## **a simple solution: fair trade**

Fair trade shares the bounty of the coffee trade with those who grow the crop, helping them build a better future for themselves and their communities.

By working together and pooling their resources to form a cooperative, farmers can sell their coffee directly to international buyers without relying on middlemen. Through fair trade, farmers receive a fair price that covers their cost of production and guarantees them a living wage for their labors.

Fair trade far surpasses the temporary assistance provided to farmers through charity. Instead, the ongoing business of fair trade consistently contributes to the living conditions of farmers, their families and their communities. Cooperatives use profits from fair trade coffee sales in establishing community improvement programs such as training in organic farming, leadership development, schools and health clinics.

## **the LWR Coffee Project: your role in fair trade.**

Micah 6:8 calls us, as Christians, to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly. The LWR Coffee Project helps Lutherans answer that call by righting the injustices faced by small-scale farmers around the world.

The LWR Coffee Project closes the gap between our parish and the kind of communities in which LWR works. By using fair trade coffee and other products in our parish and homes, we guarantee that farmers will earn the income they need to feed their families, educate their children, seek medical care and improve their communities.

What difference can a simple cup of coffee make? Jose Luis Castillo Vasquez, a member of a cooperative in El Salvador put it simply: "I want to thank all of the congregations that purchase our coffee," he said. "It is thanks to you that we have a seed of hope in our lives."



The LWR Coffee Project is a partnership of Lutheran World Relief and Equal Exchange, a worker-owned cooperative dedicated to fair trade.



Tell all the members of your parish about the LWR Coffee Project! Use this reproducible bulletin insert to inform your parish about how fair trade and the LWR Coffee Project are helping farmers improve their incomes, lives and communities.

Use the blank area on the insert to add your parish's personalized information.

Consider the following ideas:

- when coffee is being served (fellowship hour, Bible study, adult forum, etc.)
- how to get coffee for home and office use through your parish (coffee sales, special orders, etc.)
- date and time of study sessions or adult forums on fair trade, economic justice, LWR
- promotion of a coffee sale fundraiser and the project the funds will support
- how to get more information about fair trade

**Lutheran World Relief**  
**1-800-LWR-LWR-2**  
**[lwr.org/coffee](http://lwr.org/coffee)**