

[deportation](#). In response, the ELCA has strengthened its commitment through ministry with its global companion churches in Central America and with churches and agencies in countries of transit and in the U.S. In the ELCA, there are 133 welcoming and sanctuary congregations, and several members across the U.S. are court advocates through the [ELCA's Guardian Angels program](#).

The ELCA continues to honor its immigrant roots by our support of migrant ministries and advocating for laws that focus on love, family and welcoming the stranger.

On May 16, ELCA Advocacy issued an [action alert](#) calling on members to contact their lawmakers and speak out against immigration policies and enforcement that tear families apart and that support immigration deterrence strategies, which when implemented can have misguided and inhumane impact. The AMMPARO strategy calls instead for the U.S. government to keep families together while investing in programs that address the root causes of migration.

Recommended for Assembly Action

To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Greater Milwaukee Synod concerning deportations;

To reaffirm the long-term and growing commitment of this church to migrants and refugees and to the policy questions involved, as exemplified most recently in the comprehensive strategy Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO);

To call congregations, synods and the churchwide organization to speak in opposition to the inhumane policies of harassment, detention and deportation implemented by the U.S. government; and

To request that appropriate staff in AMMPARO and the Domestic Mission, Global Mission, and Mission Advancement units develop a plan for additional tools that provide for education and discernment around deportation.

Category A9: Sanctuary

1. Metropolitan New York Synod (7C) [2019]

RESOLVED that Sanctuary not only means the provision of shelter but is a

- RESPONSE to raids, detentions, deportations, and the criminalization of immigrants and refugees; a
- STRATEGY to fight individual cases of deportation, to advocate for an end of mass detention and amplify immigrant voices; a
- VISION for what our communities and world can be; and a
- MORAL IMPERATIVE to take prophetic action of radical hospitality rooted in the ancient traditions of our faith communities; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Metropolitan New York Synod declare itself one of the first major metropolitan Sanctuary Synods of the ELCA ready to help protect refugees and undocumented people from arrest and deportation by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers (ICE), in partnership with organizations like Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, The New Sanctuary Coalition, The New York Immigration Coalition, New York Legal Aid Society, and the ELCA's AMMPARO program by:

- Developing a network of sanctuary congregations
- Coordinating accompaniment trainings— being silent advocates during check-ins or hearings
- Creating a plan for awareness building around issues of immigration and refugees
- Advocating for just immigration policies, including fairness in admitting and protecting refugees; and be it further

RESOLVED that the Metropolitan New York Synod endorse, fully support, and help train congregations seeking to be sanctuary congregations, creating a network of sanctuary in our synod, whose work would include but not be limited to:

- Help congregations explore why and how to identify themselves as sanctuary congregations,
- Reach out to nearby immigrant congregations or communities,
- Expand or redevelop existing programs with a focus on reaching out to immigrants and refugees,
- Create and distribute “Know Your Rights Cards” to undocumented persons,
- Reach out and network with other sanctuary congregations to share support and information,
- Provide short-term respite sanctuary during immediate crisis,
- Train in and participate in accompaniment program,
- Participate in the ELCA's AAMPARO program for unaccompanied minors,
- Encourage participation in “Jericho Walks” around Federal Plaza, and
- Host Immigration Consultations with legal professionals for immigrants; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metropolitan New York Synod memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to adopt a similar resolution for the whole Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Background

Christians have offered sanctuary for two thousand years, continuing an ancient biblical practice in which cities and houses of worship provided refuge and asylum for people fleeing injustice. Beginning in the 1980s, the Sanctuary Movement was a faith-based initiative to protect Central American refugees fleeing civil war and seeking safety in the U.S. Today, the New Sanctuary Movement is a revived effort to protect undocumented migrants from needless jailing procedures and deportation, and addresses the dire situation within the Department of Health and Human Services that has resulted in the stripping of services to refugees and unaccompanied children. In contrast with the historic Sanctuary Movement, many of the migrants protected under sanctuary have lived in the U.S. for an extended period.

While there is no uniform or legally accepted definition of sanctuary, its overall purpose is to protect people from immigration laws that lead to the deportation of undocumented people who are part of our communities and may have U.S. citizen children. Part of what it means to provide sanctuary to immigrants seeking protection is having lawyers handling their cases. If they are hosted in a congregation, it is a temporary measure.

The ways in which sanctuary is provided varies by congregation, but it can include providing a physical shelter, inviting and welcoming all to worship regardless of immigration status, providing services to migrants such as “Know Your Rights” presentations, and assisting all regardless of immigration status. Moreover, actively advocating for migrants and for a fair and just immigration system is part of sanctuary.

In 2016, the Churchwide Assembly adopted the Strategy to Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO). AMMPARO invites congregations to become “Welcoming Congregations,” which means they commit to spiritually and physically accompanying migrants in their communities, pray for migrant children and families, and advocate for a just and humane immigration system. ELCA sanctuary congregations that host and support immigrants seeking protection do these same activities and have joined AMMPARO.

While these activities are completely legal, other activities such as knowingly concealing, harboring or shielding (or attempting to conceal, harbor or shield) an undocumented immigrant from detection by the authorities are not. Likewise, knowingly transporting or moving (or attempting to transport or move) an undocumented immigrant from one place to another, where the transportation helps the immigrant remain in the United States unlawfully, is illegal. Each congregation has its own theological reasons for taking part in the New Sanctuary Movement, but the call of our faith is universally seen as a way to protect human dignity in a system that not only seems to disrupt family reunification processes but also leans toward unjust immigration enforcement, detention and investigations.

Through the AMMPARO strategy, the ELCA already affirms the spirit of the sanctuary movement by encouraging congregations to serve and support the protection of migrants in their communities. Within AMMPARO, there are already self-determined ELCA sanctuary synods and sanctuary congregations that define and practice sanctuary differently. The ELCA sanctuary synods are Oregon, Sierra Pacific, Southwest California, New England and Metropolitan New York. All of these sanctuary synods, as well as many ELCA sanctuary congregations, already connect with the AMMPARO movement.

As a denomination, through AMMPARO, the churchwide organization provides educational and practical resources and information for congregations as they consider their role in providing sanctuary and joining their local sanctuary movement. As AMMPARO, staff have encouraged welcoming congregations to connect to their local sanctuary movement or other organizations that serve migrant communities. The ELCA Church Council action taken in November 2017 [CC17.11.33w] supported the spirit of the sanctuary movement and requested the churchwide organization to provide guidance and information.

In this memorial, the ELCA is being called to take specifically defined actions through its congregations, synods and churchwide expressions. These are concrete ways the ELCA can support migrants and refugees in our communities. None of the recommended actions by the Memorials Committee breaks U.S. law in any form and all contribute to the protection of vulnerable people in our midst.

Recommended for Assembly Action

**To receive with gratitude the memorial from the Metropolitan New York Synod concerning sanctuary;
To reaffirm the long-term and growing commitment of this church to migrants and refugees and to the policy questions involved, as exemplified most recently in the comprehensive strategy Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO);**

To recognize that the ELCA in congregations, synods and the churchwide organization are already taking the actions requested by this memorial; and

To request that appropriate staff on the AMMPARO team and the Domestic Mission, Global Mission, and Mission Advancement units review the existing strategies and practices by the five current sanctuary synods and develop a plan for additional tools that provide for education and discernment around sanctuary.

Section B

Israel/Palestine

Category B1: Just Peace

1. Southeastern Minnesota Synod (3I) [2017]

WHEREAS, in regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, United States financial support and media coverage have favored Israel; and

WHEREAS, the Israeli government has: since 1948, in violation of international law, subjected Palestinians to human rights abuse and ethnic cleansing; daily intimidated and harassed the Palestinians by setting up check points, road blocks and curfews; demolished homes; confiscated land; and illegally arrested, beat, killed and confined Palestinians; and

WHEREAS, 4.5 million Palestinians remain in refugee camps in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan; and

WHEREAS, the wall built by the Israeli government inhibits the access of Palestinians to medical treatment, employment, and contact with family and friends; and

WHEREAS, many Jewish people and Jewish organizations, in Israel and the United States, defend and support Palestinians; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Southeastern Minnesota Synod, in assembly,

1. encourage its members to learn about all aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;
2. request its bishop to recommend resources for learning about this conflict;
3. support its members in urging their congressional representatives to work for a just and peaceful resolution of this conflict; and
4. memorialize the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to divest any church-related investments that support Israel until this conflict is resolved.

Background

Since its inception, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has taken up the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In 2005, a [Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine](#) (Strategy) was developed that summarized then-current policy and outlined proposed outcomes with respect to accompaniment, awareness-raising and advocacy. Among the Strategy's outcomes were:

- a. Israelis and Palestinians coexisting in justice and peace, as citizens of viable and secure Israeli and Palestinian states.
- b. A reduction in poverty and unemployment among Palestinians and access to basic services (e.g., health care, education).

Mid-range outcomes:

- An end to Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.
- An end to terrorism and violence by individuals, groups and states.
- The establishment of and international support for a viable, contiguous Palestinian state.

Short-range outcomes:

- An end to further expansion of the separation wall on Palestinian territory and the related appropriation of natural resources (e.g., water, farmland).
 - A cessation of all settlement activities and withdrawal from settlements on Palestinian territory to the 1967 boundaries.
- c. A negotiated, final status agreement, which includes a "shared Jerusalem" that can serve as a capital to both Palestine and Israel, with access by and full rights in the city for Jews, Christians and Muslims.

The Strategy also sought "stronger advocacy by the ELCA and its members with the U.S. government that reflects the urgency of the situation in Israel and Palestine and provides a more effective voice for peace with justice in the region. This will be done, wherever possible, in partnership with ecumenical and other partners." ELCA staff participate in several ecumenical coalitions and interreligious dialogues where advocacy about the conflict is taken up.

To these ends, the ELCA established a "Peace Not Walls" campaign to achieve these and all the other desired outcomes in the Strategy.