

*“Dios es nuestro amparo y fortaleza”  
“God is our refuge and strength” – Psalm 46:1*

**Amparo (Spanish) = protection, shelter, refuge**

The ELCA’s strategy of **Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO)** was implemented as a response to the plight of children who are forced to flee their communities. Chronic violence, poverty, environmental displacement, and lack of opportunities in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala force children to migrate to nearby countries in Central America and the United States.

Our connection to churches in the region, including companion synod relationships and existing ministries in the U.S., positions the ELCA to help ensure that these vulnerable children are protected.

**AMMPARO is a holistic, whole church commitment by the ELCA, as a church in the world, to accompany children today and in the future.**

**The strategy is based on these commitments:**

- Uphold and guarantee basic human rights and safety of migrant children and their families;
- Address the root causes of migration in countries from Central America’s Northern Triangle and Mexico and the treatment of migrants in transit;
- Work toward just and humane policies affecting migrants in and outside the US; and
- Engage as a church body with all of its companions, affiliates and partners to respond to the migration situation and its causes and to advocate for migrant children and their families.

### **GET INVOLVED**

**Pray** for the safety of migrant children and families on the journey and for justice as they reach their destinations.

**Become a Welcoming Congregation** to accompany these children and families through their transition to life in the US.

**Advocate** for justice for migrant children and families.

**Accompany** migrant children and families through the Guardian Angel Program as the physical presence of the church in the courtroom.

**Give** to AMMPARO to provide opportunities for children and families in Central America and in the U.S.

For more information, see <https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/AMMPARO>

## **Family Separation and Refugee Resettlement**

In the past six months, the Trump Administration has taken extreme actions against migrant and refugee families seeking entrance and asylum in the United States. In mid-2018, the Administration implemented a new “Zero Tolerance Policy” against immigrants and refugees seeking asylum in the United States. This included automatically jailing adults legally presenting themselves at the border for asylum and, because children are not allowed to be incarcerated in the US, separating children from their parents and holding them in detention centers. Although a federal court later ordered the Administration to reunite more than 2,600 separated children with their parents, as of November 2018, over 200 children still remain separated.

President Trump has also formally lowered the maximum number of refugees the United States will resettle in 2019 to 30,000. This is the lowest cap on refugee resettlement since the resettlement program began in 1980 and down from the limit of 110,000 refugees when President Trump took office in 2017.

In addition, Trump has signed a Presidential Proclamation limiting the eligibility of certain refugees to claim asylum in the United States. The rule bars refugees from seeking asylum if they present themselves outside of an official port of entry.

These policies fly in the face of the Bible’s call to welcome the stranger and are gut-wrenching for our neighbors, community members and congregations. And the consequences these decisions will have for refugees—including women and children—could prove deadly. Nations are judged by how they treat the most vulnerable, including widows, children and refugees. LIRS adamantly opposes the Trump Administration’s decision to separate families who seek asylum in our nation and needlessly prevent refugees and migrants from reaching safety within our borders.

As Americans and people of faith, we are compelled to welcome the stranger, to help those in need and to protect the most vulnerable. Refugees are fleeing the terror we have seen unfolding around the world. At a time when nearly 65 million individuals are displaced globally, we cannot close our doors to those in need.

**For decades, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) has been a champion for migrants and refugees from around the globe. LIRS’s history reflects American Lutherans’ deep immigrant roots and passionate commitment to welcoming newcomers.**

## WRITE A LETTER TO CONGRESS

- 1) Put your **name and address** on your letter **AND** on the **envelope** (Mail to U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510 OR U.S. House of Reps., Washington, D.C. 20515)
- 2) Ask for **specific action**
  - Reduce funding for immigration detention, deportation, and border militarization
  - Stop limiting our ability to receive refugees
  - Fund community-based alternatives to detention, such as the Family Case Management Program
- 3) Give a **reason** or say something about **why you care** (*Share your own or choose 2-3 from below*)
  - As people of faith, we are called to welcome the stranger
  - More than 65 million people are displaced worldwide
  - This is the worst refugee crisis in recorded history
  - Women and children are disproportionately impacted; half of the world's refugees are children
  - Refugees have lost everything – friends, family, business, work, home, community
  - Immigrants and refugees strengthen our nation by starting businesses, contributing to our communities and serving in government
  - US law allows refugees to present themselves for asylum regardless of where or how they cross the border; refugee entry into the US is not unlawful
  - Lutheran agencies and congregations have the resources and commitment to support immigrants and refugees as they begin a new life here

### Example Letter

Date

Dear Sen./Rep. \_\_\_\_\_,

As a Christian I believe we are called to welcome the stranger and care for the most vulnerable! Our world faces the most extreme refugee crisis in recorded history, and we as a country need to step up to do our part.

Please reduce funding for border militarization and family separation; stop limiting our ability to receive asylum seekers; and fund community-based alternatives to detention. Also, support compassion and welcome for families fleeing violence in Central America!

Sincerely,  
Name & Address



**Lutheran Advocacy - Minnesota**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)

## PARTNERS WITH



***Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities***

&



**Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service**

## FOR WELCOME AND PROTECTION OF REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

*We call our Churches to be continually mindful of the global refugee and migration crises, and the injustices and conflicts that have swelled the statistics to a number greater than ever in the history of the world.*

*We acknowledge the good work done by so many of our synods and dioceses and parishes in sponsoring refugees, welcoming them, accompanying them and advocating for them as they settle in our countries.*

*Similarly, we commend the compassionate work of our partner churches in other lands and intergovernmental bodies caring for migrants and refugees.*

***We call on our Churches not to weary of this good work in the name of God***

***The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, Presiding Bishop***  
*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

***The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop***  
*Episcopal Church (United States)*

***The Most Rev. Fred Hiltz, Primate***  
*Anglican Church of Canada*

***The Rev. Susan C. Johnson, National Bishop***  
*Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada*