



Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

AMMPARO

Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities

Dear new AMMPARO Network member:

We want to formally welcome you to the AMMPARO network. Attached you will find a list of the 197 Welcoming and Sanctuary congregations in the ELCA to date as well both sanctuary, welcoming and AMMPARO synods, 36 with AMMPARO or immigration Task Forces! You are now part of a growing movement of ELCA and ecumenically connected congregations and synods that stand ready to welcome migrants in our communities and can respond with advocacy efforts for a more just and humane US immigration policies!

Now that you have connected to AMMPARO, you might be wondering how and when you will hear the latest reports on what is happening in Central America, Washington, DC and throughout the ELCA regarding Central American migrant children and families. Our next AMMPARO network conference call will be **on July 7**, a Wednesday at **3 central, 4 eastern, 1 pacific. The call may be in Spanish but there will be translation available.** We look forward to your participation! Calls will be scheduled in April, July and October on first Wednesday of the month whenever feasible. These calls are one main way in which we check in with each other to grow our impact and reach. Occasionally, we also convene special webinars.

In addition to these check-ins, we frequently post developments around AMMPARO in our Facebook page. Follow it at: <https://www.facebook.com/ELCAammparo/>

We also maintain an AMMPARO listserv group for regular communication between all of us. You will be added.

As a part of the AMMPARO network, you are the heart and soul of AMMPARO, a movement that actively works to accompany migrant children and families in our communities and in the communities they fled. We know that beginning this process can be complicated so we have come up with 3 things you can do to get you started: 1) Educate your congregation/synod on AMMPARO and share about the important work that AMMPARO supports through companions in Central America and Mexico. There is important information and videos on the AMMPARO resource page, 2) Meet with local congregations or organization already working with migrant children and families in your community to see if your congregation can be of help and 3) Join the ELCA advocacy network or the advocacy network in your church and meet with your members of congress. 4) Be in touch with your synod to see if there is AMMPARO, Sanctuary or Immigration Task Force. Let us provide some details around each of these below:

Congregational/Synodical education – The ELCA AMMPARO Resource and Learn More webpages provide a wealth of resources that could be used to educate members of your congregation about why children and families are fleeing from their communities and what happens to them on the journey and in the US. You can access that information at:

<http://www.elca.org/en/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/AMMPARO/Learn-More>

There are some congregations that have done book studies using Enrique's Journey. Other congregations have done adult forums using the videos. One important step might be to use the 40 Day I was a Stranger Bible and Prayer Challenge together as a congregation. See the AMMPARO resource page under "For Synods and Congregations" for information.

Hands-on involvement with migrant children and families – We know there is already amazing work being done to accompany children and families that fled their communities. This is why we suggest you look at networks in your area that are working with migrant children and families and, if possible, get involved with their work.

You can also join the following ongoing opportunities:

- If your congregation is located near Los Angeles, Chicago, Omaha, Denver, Boston, Atlanta, Detroit, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Hartford, CT, Baltimore or San Francisco, consider involvement in the ELCA Guardian Angel programs, a court accompaniment program through the ELCA. Do you live in another community? You can start your own program! This will give you the opportunity to connect with migrant children and families in your area that are in the court process.
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) also has a couple of other opportunities in some communities. Your congregation (through one of your families) can provide foster care to a migrant youth already in the US. In addition, LIRS has organized 16 detention visitation ministries all over the country. You can find a list of those programs attached with the names of the agencies involved. You should feel free to reach out to them directly. If you are interested in being involved with foster care, please contact Mary Campbell.

We will keep you posted with any new opportunities that surface. Better yet, please keep us posted on the wonderful new ideas you have to accompany your local migrant community. We have Welcome Your Neighbors yard signs to identify your congregation/synod as a welcoming place, let us know if you want us to send you one!

ELCA Advocacy – By being part of the AMMPARO network building awareness in your community you are already doing advocacy. To connect with our broader advocacy network and learn about the latest legislative developments affecting migrant children and families, you should join the ELCA Advocacy network by going to: www.elca.org/advocacy. After you join our network or your

church's network, our ELCA Advocacy office can help you connect with the local offices of your Members of Congress so you can let them know about your work and why you joined AMMPARO.

We feel very blessed to have you in our network! We are here to support you as you take on this important work. Please reach out to us with any questions you might have.

Sincerely,
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