**AMMPARO—Addressing Immigration *Landing Page for Synod Websites***

The word “amparo” in Spanish means the protection of a living creature from suffering or damage, and in 2016, the Evangelical Church in America (ELCA) approved the AMMPARO strategy, to Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities. Learn more about this churchwide initiative at [www.elca.org/ammparo](http://www.elca.org/ammparo), and by reading a [summary of the initiative](https://www.elca.org/Resources/AMMPARO?_ga=2.110718149.1305932048.1606753094-1878377679.1520013904#Strategy).

Immigrants in our community and church continue to face inequity and oppression - and the majority of Lutheran Christians are not engaged in addressing this. Locally, AMMPARO’s main task is awakening, engaging, and equipping increasing numbers of Lutherans for their baptismal task of solidarity with oppressed immigrants. The AMMPARO Leadership Team works especially in the following areas:

* Education--provide educational opportunities and resources to congregations, committees, and individuals about AMMPARO, and immigration more broadly
* Advocacy--bringing Lutherans to the table to support immigrant-led campaigns
* Partnership--promote partnership between immigrant and anglo congregations and connections with other groups supporting immigrants on the ground.
* Guardian Angels--provide a court observation program in the Twin Cities to support juveniles in immigration proceedings.

**Sanctuary Denomination and the Saint Paul Area Synod’s Resolution to Stand with Immigrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers:**

At the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in 2019, the assembly voted on and passed a memorial to become a [sanctuary denomination](https://elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/AMMPARO/sanctuarychurch) . So what does being a sanctuary denomination mean? In its simplest form, becoming a sanctuary denomination means that the ELCA is publicly declaring that walking alongside immigrants and refugees is a matter of faith. Being a sanctuary denomination means that we, as church together, want to be public and vocal about this work. It will look different for everyone, but welcoming people is not a political issue for us—it is a matter of faith. The ELCA has provided [many resources](https://elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/AMMPARO/sanctuarychurch) including talking points, FAQs, Bible studies, videos, and much more to help congregations have conversations about what sanctuary means in their own context, and to discern future action and direction.

**Guardian Angels:**

Guardian Angels is a national AMMPARO program through which individuals volunteer to serve as observers in juvenile immigration court and help connect minors with needed services.

. [Watch a video about how this program works.](https://vimeo.com/157458987)

With a federal courthouse right in our community (The Whipple Federal Building at Fort Snelling, St. Paul), the Twin Cities has developed a strong Guardian Angel program, coordinated by co-chairs Lenore Franzen ([lfranzen18@gmail.com](mailto:lfranzen18@gmail.com)) and Claire Hoyum ([clairehoyum@comcast.net](mailto:clairehoyum@comcast.net)). Please contact Claire or Lenore to learn about how you can get involved with the Twin Cities Guardian Angels.

**Get involved:**

Each congregation and Christian is being called by God to use their own unique gifts in solidarity with oppressed immigrants, so each journey will look different. Wherever you or your congregation is on this journey, we invite you to take the next step in community.

**Awaken:**

* Educate: Let us connect you with resources like speakers, youth activities, and discussion series to learn more about immigration realities.
* Inspire: Contact us for resources for prayer, Bible studies, preaching and liturgy.

**Engage:**

* Welcome: Join the [Welcoming Congregations](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/AMMPARO_WelcomingCongregations.pdf?_ga=2.115083719.1305932048.1606753094-1878377679.1520013904) network. We’re better together!
* Accompany: Build a strong and supportive relationship with an immigrant congregation
* Protect: Join the Guardian Angels program to support children in immigration court
* Advocate: Raise your voice to advocate for fair and generous immigration policies

**Equip:**

* Follow: Listen to the voices of immigrant leaders.
* Lead: Develop faithful leaders through ongoing connection and growth
* Connect: Let us introduce you to organizations and networks that can help you go deeper in the direction God calls you.

The local AMMPARO Leadership Team is here to help you take the next step. Connect with us to learn about and receive resources for you and your congregation, or to simply tell us about the work you or your congregation is doing! Do you have questions or are you interested in joining the AMMPARO Leadership Team? We can help with that too.

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