

WHEREAS care and equal justice for “the stranger, the alien and the resident alien” is consistently taught in Holy Scripture:

Exodus 12:49 - “There shall be one law for the native and for the alien who resides among you.”;

Exodus 22:21 - You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien; for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.”;

Leviticus 19:33-34 - “When the alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.”;

Numbers 9:14 & 15:15-16 - “... you shall have one statute for both the resident alien and the native.”;

Deuteronomy 10:18-19 - “For the Lord your God...loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”;

Deuteronomy 24:17-18 - “You shall not deprive a resident alien...of justice.”;

Deuteronomy 27:19 - “Cursed be anyone who deprives the alien...of justice.”;

Jeremiah 7:5-7 - “If you do not oppress the alien...then I will dwell with you in this place....”;

Jeremiah 22:3-5 - “Do no wrong or violence to the alien.”;

Ezekiel 47:21-22 - “The aliens shall be to you as citizens, and shall also be allotted an inheritance.”;

Malachi 3:5 - “The messenger will bear witness against those who thrust aside the alien.”;

Matthew 25:31-46 - “... I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”;

Luke 4:16-21 - “Bring good news to the poor...release to the captives...sight to the blind...let the oppressed go free.”;

Romans 12:13 - “Mark of the true Christian: “...Extend hospitality to strangers....”;

Ephesians 2:11-22 - “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God.”;

Hebrews 13:1-2 - “... show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels....”;

WHEREAS Mary, Joseph and Jesus were refugees in Egypt to avoid Herod’s violence;

Matthew 2: 13-15 - “Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.’ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, ‘Out of Egypt I have called my son.’”; and

WHEREAS, the people of God are consistently labeled “aliens and transients” in the Holy Scriptures:

Genesis 12:1 - The call of Abram: “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.”

Genesis 12:10 - "Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to reside there as an alien, for the famine was severe in the land."

Genesis 23 - Abraham is a stranger and an alien in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 46:1-7 - Jacob moves his family to Egypt to escape the famine and reunite with Joseph.

Genesis 47:1-6 - Joseph brings his brothers to Pharaoh and they are welcomed and given jobs.

Psalms 137:1-6 - "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept ... How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?"

Hebrews 13:14 - "For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come."; and

WHEREAS the Lutheran Church over the last 75 years has been a leader in refugee resettlement through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and thousands of congregations; and

WHEREAS, as a result of World War II one in every six Lutherans in the world was a refugee or a displaced person, Lutherans and the Lutheran Church in this country with the participation of 6,000 congregations resettled 57,000 refugees in the United States; and after the fall of Saigon in 1975, Lutheran congregations sponsored over 50,000 refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos; and

WHEREAS the 1998 ELCA Social Message on Immigration proclaims: "We draw on the best of our nation's traditions as a refuge and haven for the persecuted and destitute when we affirm that we support a generous policy of welcome for refugees and immigrants, and that we will advocate for just immigration policies including fairness in visa regulations and in admitting and protecting refugees."; and

WHEREAS, in the social policy resolution "Toward Compassionate, Just and Wise Immigration Reform," the 2009 ELCA Churchwide Assembly of the "ELCA and all its expressions" has expressed support for immigrants; and

WHEREAS we are living in dangerous times in this nation, as immigrants from Central and South America and those fleeing warfare in the Middle East are being persecuted; and

WHEREAS today about 12 million sisters and brothers from Central and South America are living in the shadows, while contributing many gifts and talents to the wonderful diversity of this nation; and

WHEREAS the 2016 Churchwide Assembly overwhelmingly approved the AMMPARO (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunity) strategy for the ELCA to pray, accompany, and create awareness around unaccompanied minors and immigrant families; and

WHEREAS the declaration of Sanctuary is an ancient custom by which the church declares itself to be a safe place for those escaping persecution; and

## THEREFORE, BE IT

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.

RESOLVED that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America declare itself a Sanctuary church body, 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 Services, The New Sanctuary Coalition, and the ELCA's own AMMPARO program by:

- Developing a network of sanctuary ministry sites
- 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 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America endorse, fully support, & help train congregations seeking to declaring sanctuary, creating a network of sanctuary across our synods, whose work would include but not be limited to:

- Reaching out to nearby immigrant 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 programs
- Participate in the ELCA's AAMPARO program for unaccompanied minors
- Host Immigration Consultations with legal professionals for immigrants;