



Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

“Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?”

He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

(Luke 10:36-37)

March 7, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

One of the key tenets of our faith is to welcome the sojourner and show love and care for the vulnerable. The parable of the Good Samaritan speaks powerfully to us at a critical and challenging period in our nation’s rich history of welcoming refugees and affirming the human dignity of immigrants and asylum seekers. The world is facing the greatest global refugee crisis since the end of World War II. Indeed, we have witnessed a spike in hate crimes in recent months, which has led to increased anxiety and fear within migrant and refugee communities across the country.

In the face of such anxiety, we must, more than ever, boldly live into our Lutheran faith tradition and our shared legacy of courageous and compassionate welcome for those who are seeking refuge in our communities. For more than 70 years, Lutheran congregations have opened their hearts to those in need. Together, we have resettled and walked alongside more than 500,000 refugees as they rebuild their lives and are recognized as productive and contributing members in their adopted communities.

With the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), we invite your congregation, your school, and your community to join us in celebrating the power of God’s love to transform the lives of those fleeing horrifying danger. By setting aside one Sunday this year to consider the courageous and often perilous journey made by millions of refugees, we can prepare our hearts to welcome each newcomer in Christ’s name.

The ELCA, through the AMMPARO strategy adopted by the Churchwide Assembly last August, commits our church to accompany migrant minors with protection, advocacy, representation and opportunities as a significant holistic whole church response to this global refugee crisis. Our church works with companions in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Europe as well.

Join us in observing Refugee Sunday and continuing this transformative journey of courage and renewal. Resources, information and materials for this observance are available on the Refugee Sunday website. Additional ELCA materials may be found on the AMMPARO website. Setting aside one Sunday this year for Refugee Sunday will provide your congregation with a powerful experience of how the grace of God turns journeys of loss and pain into new beginnings filled with peace and hope.

Yours in faith,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Linda Hartke".

Linda Hartke
President and CEO
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth A. Eaton".

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