**What Action did the Churchwide Assembly take?**

The assembly received a memorial from the Metro New York Synod regarding our church’s accompaniment of immigrants and refugees [(the full memorial can be found here)](https://www.rmselca.org/sites/rmselca.org/files/media/cwa_memorial.pdf)

The assembly voting members amended the recommendation of the Memorials Committee by adding the text in bold below

* To reaffirm the long-term and growing commitment of this church to migrants and refugees and to the policy questions involved, as exemplified most recently in the comprehensive strategy “Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities” (AMMPARO);
* To recognize that the ELCA in congregations, synods and the churchwide organization are already taking the actions requested by this memorial; and 2019 Churchwide Assembly:
* To request that appropriate staff on the AMMPARO team, LIRS, and the Domestic Mission, Global Mission, and Mission Advancement units review the existing strategies and practices by the five current sanctuary synods and develop a plan for additional tools that provide for education and discernment around sanctuary;
* **To declare the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America a sanctuary church body; and**
* To request the ELCA Church Council, in consultation with the appropriate churchwide units and offices, provide guidance for the three expressions of this church about what it means to be a sanctuary church body and provide a report to the 2022 Churchwide Assembly

**What does this 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 is about loving our neighbors.
* Being a sanctuary denomination will look different in different contexts. It may mean providing space for people to live; providing financial and legal support to those who are working through the immigration system; or supporting other congregations and service providers. We cannot mandate or direct our congregations and ministries to respond in specific ways. Each must work out what this means for them in their context.
* While we don’t yet know the full scope of the work that this declaration will open for the church, we do know that our faith communities are already doing sanctuary work. Sanctuary for a congregation may mean hosting English as a second Language (ESL) classes, marching as people of faith against the detention of children and families, providing housing for a community member facing deportation, or, in some of our congregations, having thoughtful conversations about what our faith says about immigration. All of these are a step closer to sanctuary in our faith communities and sanctuary in our world for people who must leave their homes.