

*“You shall...also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:19).*

The global need for loving the stranger through accompaniment of migrants and refugees has never been greater. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports there are now over 100 million people who have been displaced around the world through conflict, famine, climate change, and disasters. With so many lives in danger, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) call Lutherans on this World Refugee Day, June 20, to continue to honor our legacy of generous and compassionate welcome and advocacy for those who seek refuge and safety, including those who have resettled in the United States.

The Lutheran community in the United States is providing hospitality to newcomers from Ukraine, where the war has internally displaced more than 8 million and compelled 6.5 million more to leave their homeland. We continue to welcome the newly arrived from Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central America, and other regions around the world where our neighbors face war, violence, and persecution. Newcomers enrich our communities with kinship, resilience, and abiding hope. Our relationships call us to tirelessly challenge the racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious indifference and intolerance that stems from the failure to see the image of God in each person.

For more than 80 years, Lutherans in the United States have joined together to offer radical hospitality in response to God’s call to love the neighbor who comes to us as stranger. Since 1939, LIRS has led the Lutheran movement to welcome vulnerable migrants and refugees in America as the largest faith-based nonprofit dedicated to serving vulnerable immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees in the U.S. In partnership with the ELCA, LIRS has equipped and supported more than half a million newcomers while advocating boldly for policies that protect those seeking safety. This World Refugee Day, LIRS invites the Lutheran community to visit [their website](#) to watch an interfaith prayer vigil for Ukraine and use a template for hosting a similar event in your own community, as well as join in other opportunities for advocacy and education alongside our immigrant and refugee neighbors.

The ELCA accompanies migrants and refugees around the world through the Lutheran World Federation and other international organizations and, in the United States, through partnership with LIRS. The ELCA’s strategy for Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities (AMMPARO) is animated by relationships with companion churches and other partners. It is enlivened through the many ways this church witnesses with migrants domestically as welcoming and sanctuary congregations, through synods, and as advocates, as well through sponsorship of asylum-seekers and partners in refugee resettlement. Visit [Lutheran Disaster Response](#) for ways to help internally displaced people in Eastern Europe and refugees, and ELCA [AMMPARO](#) for resources to continue to support your congregation’s ministry of welcome.

As we mark World Refugee Day, we encourage renewed prayer, welcome, and action for so many children of God who are forced to flee their homes and embark on often-perilous journeys to strange lands, driven by conflict, persecution, poverty, disaster, and the increasingly adverse effects of climate change.

We pray that you experience grace and joy in radical hospitality.

Together in Hope,

*Krish Vignarajah*

Krish O'Mara Vignarajah  
President and CEO  
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*Elizabeth A. Eaton*

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