

Lutheran witness, global reach

The ELCA is a church of three expressions: the churchwide organization, synods and congregations. However, Rafael Malpica Padilla, executive director for ELCA Global Mission, maintains there is another relationship that binds us together—the ELCA's connection to the global Lutheran church through its membership in The Lutheran World Federation (LWF).

To help support the ELCA's outreach on global social issues, the church maintains an office at the United Nations in New York City, in partnership with the LWF. **Called the Lutheran Office for World Community (LOWC), it is the voice of the ELCA and the LWF at the United Nations. Its work is funded through Mission Support.**

LOWC's director is Dennis Frado, a member of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Manhattan, who is assisted by Christine Mangale, program director, who is from the Kenya Evangelical Lutheran Church in Africa. They often attend the U.N. General Assembly when it's in session from September to December and Security Council meetings.

"Our main objective is to convey the social policy views of the ELCA and The Lutheran World Federation to the U.N.," Frado said. "On the other hand, we keep ELCA [congregations] informed about what the U.N. is doing on those issues. Beyond that, we bring to their attention emerging global issues."

LOWC works, in large part, on issues related to fundamental human rights, justice, respect for international law and better standards of living for all people. It has focused recently on global migration problems.

Earlier this year, it sponsored a panel discussion on "Perspectives on Migrants: Lived Realities in Different Contexts," which featured three experts from countries dealing with migrant issues.

Photos: Albin Hillert / LWF Communications

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Events like this define
the work of the LOWC.

LOWC monitors issues of concern to the ELCA, LWF and their partners. One of the most gratifying projects, Frado said, has been working with the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, which is dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Formed in 1973, the LOWC is rooted strongly in the ELCA's heart for humanity, working closely in regions where human rights have been violated.

