



## Service and Justice

“...justice and the love of God, it is these you ought to have practiced.”

Jesus of Nazareth, Luke 11:42 NRSV

In this rapidly changing, complex, broken, and beloved world, we renew our call to service and justice and imagine new ways of being church together. The Service and Justice home area is called to foster and facilitate ELCA engagement in service with and among communities, globally and locally, and to promote efforts to call and act for justice. Rooted in accompaniment, the home area seeks to listen, welcome, advocate, witness, and work for peace, reconciliation, and justice with global and local neighbors. Through this this home area cultivates strong, just, and equitable responses to the many “-isms” affecting communities in which people live and serve. In our relationships with communities, coalitions, companions, networks, congregations, synods, independent Lutheran organizations, and ecumenical partners, Service and Justice provides vital opportunities to connect with transformative, community-rooted, justice-seeking ministries. Together, this church boldly commits to being a church that welcomes new, young, and diverse members while being rooted and relevant in the way of Jesus—a deep, passionate, and extravagant love that leads to restored relationships and transformed communities—so that all may experience God’s radical, transformational, and liberating grace.

Throughout the pandemic, Service and Justice offered virtual webinars, advocacy schools, online courses on gender and racial justice, the [Peace Not Walls Advent Pilgrimage](#), new missionary orientations and summer missionary conferences, companion synod gatherings, worship and prayer services, and [Hunger at the Crossroads](#) seminars that engaged and activated thousands of people to live their faith in community, justice, and love.

Four teams support the Service and Justice mandate to love and serve our neighbors: **Accompanying Peoples, Communities, and Networks (APCN)**; **Building Resilient Communities (BRC)**; **Witness in Society (WiS)**; and **Administration**. The home area has five core commitments that guide the strategies and program priorities of the four teams: migration, gender justice, racial justice, environmental justice, and economic justice. This report features these teams and highlights program priorities that support the core commitments.

### Accompanying Peoples, Communities, and Networks (APCN)

This team deepens and maintains relationships between the ELCA and global companion churches with whom the ELCA relates as a member of the Lutheran World Federation. Five global regional desks (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa) are responsible for maintaining healthy relationships with global companions, engaging in the exchange of mission personnel, and the disbursement of international grants and global gifts. The six Ethnic Specific Ministries desks (African Descent, African Nationals, Arab and Middle Eastern, Asian and Pacific Islander, Latino, and the newly established Indigenous Ministries and Tribal Relations) advance the ministry of diverse communities and nurture a vibrant and healthy racial diversity in the ELCA. Each of the Ethnic Specific Ministries is now led by persons in full-time positions with increased program budgets to advance their work. The global service desk oversees the deployment process for all mission personnel and, with the regional desks, provides in-country support for personnel. The Middle East-North Africa desk leads and organizes the ELCA’s Peace Not Walls work for justice and peace in Palestine and Israel. For over 20 years, through advocacy and awareness-raising, the ELCA has worked for a viable, contiguous Palestinian state; a secure Israeli state at peace with its Arab neighbors; and a shared Jerusalem with equal access and rights for Jews, Muslims, and Christians. For more see [Peace not Walls](#).

The APCN Team represents a new opportunity to develop strategies that intersect with new, young, and diverse populations, while carrying out God’s mission of service and justice within the ELCA and around the world.

### Building Resilient Communities (BRC)

This team brings together two core program ministries of the ELCA: ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response. Through the work of these programs, BRC accompanies Lutheran ministry organizations, ELCA synods and congregations, global companion churches, and ecumenical partners in order to strengthen diaconal ministries that meet human needs, enhance human dignity, overturn oppression and injustice, and support the flourishing of human community. ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response now coordinate and collaborate to identify

programmatic synergies and learnings, create efficient processes, and make connections across international and domestic work both creatively and effectively.

**Network building** has strengthened and integrated the network of ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) leaders. A 2019 Minneapolis World Hunger Leadership Gathering (150 attendees) and a 2021 electronic ELCA-wide event (370 participants) raised awareness of how the ELCA, with partners and companions, is addressing hunger and poverty around the world. Leaders learned from partners how to understand and take action on hunger in their own communities and set goals for their ministries in their synods. World Hunger leaders in 63 synods have worked with ELCA coaches and each other to strengthen their network and build support for this church's shared work toward a just world where all are fed. A January 2021 electronic LDR-US network consultation equipped 75 leaders from ELCA synods, LDR-affiliated social ministry organizations, and churchwide staff to serve more effectively in the face of climate change, COVID-19, and social and economic vulnerability and injustice.

The ELCA's 285 affiliated **social ministry organizations** (SMOs), including Lutheran Services in America (LSA), also relate to BRC. Through grants and programs, BRC supports the work of SMOs in health and human care, substance use treatment, counseling, employment assistance, housing, adoption and foster care, developmental disability services, pregnancy counseling, senior adult care, and child abuse prevention.

**Sustainable development** encompasses the critical, long-term work of ELCA World Hunger in restoring dignity and wholeness to communities that have been historically marginalized by injustice, conflict, and climate challenges. Domestically, between 2019 and 2021, 165 ministries across 64 synods received over \$2.065 million in ELCA World Hunger Domestic Hunger grants that will impact 900,000 people. In 2022, 12 Big Dream grants totaling \$1,432,144 were invested in transformative, integrated, and holistic hunger ministries. These grants were awarded to ministries such as Church on the Street, a church community of unsheltered people living with poverty that offers physical and spiritual food in Sioux Falls, S. D., and MOSES, a Black-led community organizing group that works to end water shut-offs in marginalized neighborhoods in southeastern Michigan. In 2020 and 2021, 396 Daily Bread matching grants were awarded. Participating congregations raised a total of \$581,750 to provide daily bread to neighbors in need, tripling the impact of ELCA World Hunger investment. Within the past three years, ELCA World Hunger educational materials, networking, and engagement have reached thousands of people of all ages within faith communities through seasonal resources, Vacation Bible School curricula, resources on climate justice and gender justice, and more, equipping leaders and advocates who raise awareness and encourage support in congregations and synods.

ELCA World Hunger support for international relief and development projects exceeded \$41 million during the pandemic. A health clinic in South Sudan is one example of significant work that was supported. In 2021, almost 32,000 people were served by the Reconciliation Lutheran Primary Health Care Unit and the Evangelical Lutheran Church Africa Mission in South Sudan. With a grant of \$618,000, the health clinic in South Sudan was upgraded and new livelihood and literacy initiatives were launched.

Between 2019 and 2021, Lutheran Disaster Response-International provided more than \$14.4 million in humanitarian assistance to support responses to hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes, flooding, drought, and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as responses to conflict and other humanitarian crises.

Through the Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities program (AMMPARO), nearly \$2.3 million has been invested in four migrant initiatives in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, as well as new work in Mexico, Colombia, and Argentina. These initiatives support migrants along the journey and help provide livelihoods and psychosocial support for those who have returned to their home countries.



*MOSES Public Health Advocacy Training*



*In October 2021, 27 young women suffering from fistula underwent treatment, surgery, and post-operation care at the Reconciliation Lutheran Healthcare Unit. Women were brought in from different areas of South Sudan and received free treatment through the partnership between the ELCA, the Fistula Foundation and the Barbara May Foundation.*

Lutheran Disaster Response-U.S. provided over \$20.3 million to support responses to hurricanes, wildfires, tornadoes, flooding, and other disasters. More than 40 homes were rebuilt in California after wildfires ravaged Ventura and Los Angeles counties in 2018. More than 280 U.S. congregations and social ministry organizations responded to COVID-19 through provision of food, protective gear, and psychosocial care. Learn more in [Lifelines Spring 2022](#) and the LDR annual report, [Thrive](#).

### Witness in Society (WiS)

This team encompasses the advocacy and public policy work the ELCA does in the public sphere to advance the cause of justice and shine a light on ministries fostering equity, peace, and dignity. Advocacy takes place wherever Lutherans are found, with focused activity through the Lutheran Office for World Community at the United Nations in New York City; the ELCA's federal hub in Washington, D.C.; Lutheran state public policy offices (SPPOs) in California, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin; and more than fifteen directly affiliated locations serving other states. Through the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, the ELCA assesses the social implications of company practices and adjusts ELCA investment policy in socially responsible ways.

The longing for a world of justice and peace is tangible both inside and outside of church life. To shape this church's priorities from a faith foundation, ELCA Witness in Society listens to church members in communities across the United States and to partners around the world. Being rooted in the Service and Justice home area gives the WiS team more opportunities to collaborate with the Ethnic Specific Ministries and passionate, questioning, and inspired young people whose leadership bears witness to God's prompting in our world today. WiS encourages engagement through programs like the ELCA Hunger Advocacy Fellowship, which inspires the vocations of young people and enhances their leadership for years to come. Every public policy decision has an effect on us and on our neighbors, nearby or across the world. The ELCA discerns [federal policy priorities annually](#). Recent actions include:

- Advocating for Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit expansion in response to COVID-19 repercussions to dramatically reduce child hunger.
- Representing Lutherans at the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference through young adults from the U.S., Indigenous communities, and global companions who shared impressions in a WiS [webinar](#) with the Lutheran World Federation.
- Confronting public health challenges by advocating for a waiver of the World Trade Organization's Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement to allow more companies to manufacture COVID-19 vaccines and increase access to therapeutics and diagnostic tools to fight the pandemic globally.
- Responding to the influx of Afghan neighbors in communities by offering congregations an [informational webinar](#) and an Action Alert to facilitate messages to members of Congress in support of the Afghan Adjustment Act.
- Connecting Lutheran women with the United Nations Conference on the Status of Women on the theme "Climate change, environment, disaster risk reduction: Gender equality at the center of solutions."
- Addressing human trafficking by filling a state capitol hearing on the Safe Harbor for Trafficked Youth bill, one of many actions encouraged through ELCA-affiliated state public policy offices like the Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin.
- Responding to the invasion of Ukraine by acting with the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility to issue investor guidance through "ALERT: Human Rights Risks Related to the Russian Invasion of Ukraine."

To stay connected with the ELCA Advocacy Network and the guidance and expertise it provides to help members fulfill the advocacy mandate, visit [ELCA.org/advocacy/signup](https://elca.org/advocacy/signup), and to learn more visit [the advocacy on ramp](#).

### Administration

This team oversees and coordinates the work of the Service and Justice home area, developing its vision, structure, strategic priorities, personnel, and finance. The team also maintains relationships with independent Lutheran organizations (including Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, and Lutheran Services

### COVID-19 UPDATES

For the past three years, **LDR International supported over 105 COVID-19 responses in over 50 countries totaling more than \$3 million** to supply personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical equipment and provide food and health supplies, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and awareness education.

In the U.S., **ELCA World Hunger provided \$390,000 to 40 partners of the ELCA's Indigenous and Ethnic Specific Associations and Ministries** in response to the COVID-19 pandemic across the U.S. by providing additional food in feeding ministries, promoting vaccine awareness, and addressing issues of domestic violence.

of America) and ecumenical partners that engage in efforts related to service, justice, and global mission. Apart from senior leadership, the Administration team is home to AMMPARO and program directors for relationships.

Adopted at the Churchwide Assembly in 2016, the **AMMPARO: Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities** program accompanies migrant families and children with protection, advocacy, representation, and opportunities to make new lives in their countries of origin or destination. AMMPARO's international engagement protects migrant children, youth, and families in their countries of origin, through their transit, and upon return to their home country with 12 programs in nine countries within the Americas. A U.S. network of 210 welcoming and sanctuary congregations are in 55 synods and all nine ELCA regions. The Guardian Angel program accompanies people in peril in immigration court in 10 locations. National advocacy is coordinated with the Interfaith Immigration Coalition and other strategic U.S. and international networks. Integrating the AMMPARO strategy and the ELCA Global Migration strategy ensures migration work throughout Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East will be a priority. For sanctuary guidelines refer to Section VI: Other-Assembly related documents. For more information on sanctuary discernment visit the [AMMPARO resource page](#).

The **program director for relationships (PDR)** guides a portfolio of relationships that includes the Companion Synod program. By connecting a multiplicity of relationships in the ELCA ecology, the PDR opens new pathways to inform and strengthen communities to share passions and talents in service and justice.

### **Eastern Europe: Humanitarian response update**

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the ELCA has been responding to the humanitarian and refugee crisis in Ukraine and Eastern Europe, where ELCA companions are contributing to the support of four million civilians. As of June 2022, Lutheran Disaster Response raised over \$10 million, \$4.36 million of which has been contributed to the Lutheran World Federation, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary, and other partners such as International Orthodox Christian Charities to provide immediate and long-term assistance to Ukrainian refugees arriving in Poland, Slovakia, Moldova, Hungary, Romania, and the Czech Republic. Implementing partners provide food, temporary shelter, cash assistance, hygiene kits, medical care, and pastoral counseling to recent arrivals, some of whom are African Nationals and people of Roma descent. The ELCA supports L'Arche in Poland, Ukraine, and Lithuania in assisting 370 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities by providing critical medical needs, transportation to communities where they seek refuge, and access to phones and internet.

In the Future Church reorganization, a significant focus of the work in the Service and Justice home area has been to integrate and effectively coordinate domestic and international ministries. While important differences exist across contexts, communities, and programs, there are shared challenges related to justice and equity. We learn as we accompany one another and steward the gifts of the ELCA toward the fullness of God's restoration for all creation. Much of this work happens as we support the free course of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the world and the freedom of Christians to love and serve our neighbors.

The Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla, *executive director*