The ELCA as a Sanctuary Church Body
ELCA Structure

**Churchwide Expression**
- Churchwide Assembly
- ELCA Church Council
- ELCA Staff

**Synods**
- Synod Assembly
- Synod Council
- Bishop/Staff

**Congregations**
- Congregation meeting
- Congregation Council
- Pastors/Staff
Brief History of ELCA Sanctuary Vote

- A memorial was proposed at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in August of 2019 by the Metropolitan New York Synod and adopted.
- The memorial included language that the ELCA declare itself a “Sanctuary church body”
- Language was added to request the ELCA Church Council to clarify what it means to be a “Sanctuary Church Body,” reporting to the 2022 CWA.
The 3 Dimensions of Sanctuary

Physical

Legal

Political

At the center of it all is the person/family seeking sanctuary.
Physical Dimensions of Sanctuary

• Purpose: to provide a safe place for those fearing deportation
• Place to live
• Food
• Medical care
• Relationships
• Spiritual care
• Place to wash clothes, and more
Legal Dimensions of Sanctuary

- It’s complicated!
- Lawyer for individual/family seeking sanctuary
- Lawyer for congregation/ministry providing sanctuary
- Finances to pay for lawyers, applications, bond, etc.
- Accompanying people to court
- More
Political Dimensions of Sanctuary

• It’s complicated!
• Proposing new laws
• Communicating with legislators
• Public attention (social media, TV, press)
• Petitions requesting leniency
• More
Sanctuary is:

• A public declaration that “walking alongside immigrants and refugees is a matter of faith”
• A broad and complicated response to a broken immigration system
• A way to protect those most vulnerable to the sharp edges of our broken immigration system
• A strategy for individuals and congregations to love their immigrant neighbors with concrete, specific actions
Sanctuary is not:

• Widely or well-understood
• Agreed to by all ELCA congregations, pastors, and members
• A way to immunize undocumented immigrants from immigration law
• A permanent solution to a complex and broken system
For More information:

[www.elca.org/sanctuarychurch](www.elca.org/sanctuarychurch)

- Talking points
- Videos
- AMMPARO Resources
“The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”

Leviticus 19:34