



THE LUTHERAN  
WORLD FEDERATION  
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

# COME, LET US CELEBRATE TOGETHER

A DEVOTIONAL  
GUIDE BY THE LAC  
YOUTH NETWORK

A photograph of a protest or rally. In the foreground, a person with long brown hair, wearing a grey jacket and a black face mask, holds up a rectangular sign made of cardboard. The sign has the text "I might be SMALL but I can make a DIFFERENCE" written in black marker. Small green hearts are drawn around the words "SMALL", "a", and "DIFFERENCE". The person holding the sign is also wearing a black beaded bracelet and a ring. In the background, other people are visible, some holding up white signs and one person on the right is taking a photo with a smartphone. The background is slightly out of focus, showing a building with a green sign.

I might be SMALL  
but I can make a  
DIFFERENCE



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## CONTENTS

Foreword	02
Preface	04
Introduction	06
1. Let's Talk about Climate Justice	09
2. Let's talk about Gender Justice	25
3. Let's talk about Migration	35
4. A Webinar: Step by Step	45
5. Suggested songs	55
LWF member churches in Latin America	56

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Cover photo:  
Worship during the 2019 Latin  
America and the Caribbean  
& North America Leadership  
Conference in Lima, Peru.

*Photo: LWF/A. Danielsson*

Left photo:  
COP 27, in Sharm el-Sheikh,  
Egypt in 2022. Youth represent  
the LWF at the annual United  
Nations climate conferences.

*Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert*

© The Lutheran World  
Federation, 2023  
Route de Ferney 150  
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1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland  
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ISBN: 978-2-940642-72-4

# Foreword

**In the book of Joel, we read  
"... your old men shall dream dreams,  
and your young men shall see visions"  
(Joel 2:28)!<sup>1</sup>**

The youth of the Latin America and Caribbean region reflect this biblical verse. They have a vision of what it means to be a communion of churches, and they achieve this in practical actions and mobilize the region with their dynamism.

*Come, let us celebrate together* came to light in a time of crisis due to the COVID19 pandemic. It is an example of the way a real negative context can become fertile for the gifts of God, such as creativity, solidarity, and the ability to strengthen each other through different generations to flourish.

Starting from that context, which allowed the development of youth from the Latin American and Caribbean region, experience has been achieved, and there was a deepening of those matters which mobilized the regional youth. The devotional guide reflects just such gained experience.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is a communion of churches. As a communion of churches, we are all interrelated. We share who

we are, our joys and sadness, we create networks that bring us together and we share our resources. *Come, let us celebrate together*, created by the Youth Network of Latin American and Caribbean and now shared with all LWF member churches, is an expression of the global understanding of what it means to be communion. We hope it will become a valuable resource for the seven regions of the LWF.

*Youth in the LWF live and work with passion for our churches and our world.*

They are an inspiration and a source of learning for the whole communion of churches. May God, through the Holy Spirit, who provides a fresh and energizing breeze, allow us to harvest the fruits shared through this devotional guide as a gift for the communion.

**Rev. Sonia Skupch**

LWF Regional Secretary  
Latin America and the  
Caribbean and North America

<sup>1</sup> All Bible citations are from the New Revised Standard Version

"The devotional guide is an expression of the global understanding of what it means to be communion."

**Rev. Sonia Skupch**  
**LWF Regional Secretary**

*Photo: LWF/S. Gallay*



# Preface

**The COVID-19 pandemic took everyone by surprise. This has affected us all in different ways. This situation has generated uncertainties and fears on the one hand, but on the other hand it has shown us that through digital media we can be close to those we love regardless of physical distance.**

In fact, during 2020 The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Youth Network grew closer than ever before. We have been in regular contact, we have accompanied each other, we have prayed for each other, and we have offered our gifts to the service of our local communities at regional and global levels. We have organized ourselves and created a regional coordination team with the goal of further strengthening the links and communication between the existing youth spaces in the churches and LWF.

In our eagerness to show that all of us are community and the church, no matter where we are, we decided to have regular devotionals

with the participation of all the 19 LWF member churches in the LAC region. There were devotionals for the whole LWF communion, and from the beginning we did them jointly, regionally, and considered language barriers. The devotionals were produced by youth from churches in LAC with some participation from youth in North America. There were videos produced in our homes during the pandemic and during the reality of quarantine. We offered a space for reflection and prayer as well as a space to accompany each other.

*It has been a great challenge to produce these devotionals, but we have succeeded because we have all been committed.*

The experience has been so enriching for both our churches and our region that we wanted to go a step further. That is why we have created this Regional Devotional Manual, which was from the beginning a regional LAC project, born and conceived among us. This is an initiative by young people for the whole LWF communion.

*Our intention is that this project reaches the different churches and communities not only in our region, but globally.*

This manual is composed of four chapters and a suggestion of hymns in the appendix. Each chapter addresses a topic of importance for youth and for the whole church in the form of a devotion. The topics are: Climate Justice, Gender Justice, Migration, and How to Create a Webinar. The authors are young people from different churches in the region, offering an overview of our rich diversity.

We would like to thank all the churches and their leaders of all ages who have participated not only in creating this manual but also in the devotionals prepared since 2020. Our gratitude goes to the regional leadership, the regional secretariat and members of the LWF Council who have supported us in different ways. We also acknowledge the support of the LWF Vice-President for LAC Rev.

Dr Nestor Friedrich and the Program Executive for Youth Ms Savanna Sullivan for proofreading this manual, and to all who in one way or another have supported this project.

Without a doubt, it is a blessing to know that our LAC Youth Network is sustained in unity and love and accompanied in different ways inside and outside our region.



**Samuel García**  
Youth member of  
the LWF Council



**Karla Steilmann**  
Youth member of  
the LWF Council

# Introduction

## Youth leadership has been a long-standing priority of the LWF.

This priority is deeply grounded in our sacred texts. In the Bible we read that all members of the body of Christ have important gifts to offer our communities (1 Cor. 12:12-27), that Jesus himself called the young ones to him (Mat 19:14), and that God often speaks to God's people through the leadership of youth like Joseph, David, Esther, Jeremiah and Timothy.

However, we don't only look to the Bible to see examples of young leadership. Our Lutheran communion has been blessed with examples of bold, faithful young leadership for generations – and we again see an example of that in this resource. The youth of the LAC region who have taken the initiative to imagine and create this resource across their many countries, cultures, and LWF member churches show us the power of young leadership. This publication is more than just a devotion resource, it is a glimpse of God's hope for the world. In this project, youth leaders from LAC show us what it means to be One Body in Christ – to dream together, to learn from one another, and to work hard to take action in this time and place for the benefit of all God's people.

I would like to thank the many hardworking youth leaders in the LAC region who have put hours of their time, wisdom, and love into this resource. You have answered the call of the prophet Timothy to “set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity (1 Tim 4:12).” We are lucky to learn from you. I hope that in the days to come, this devotional book will be understood as a gift not only for other young people, but for God's people of all generations.

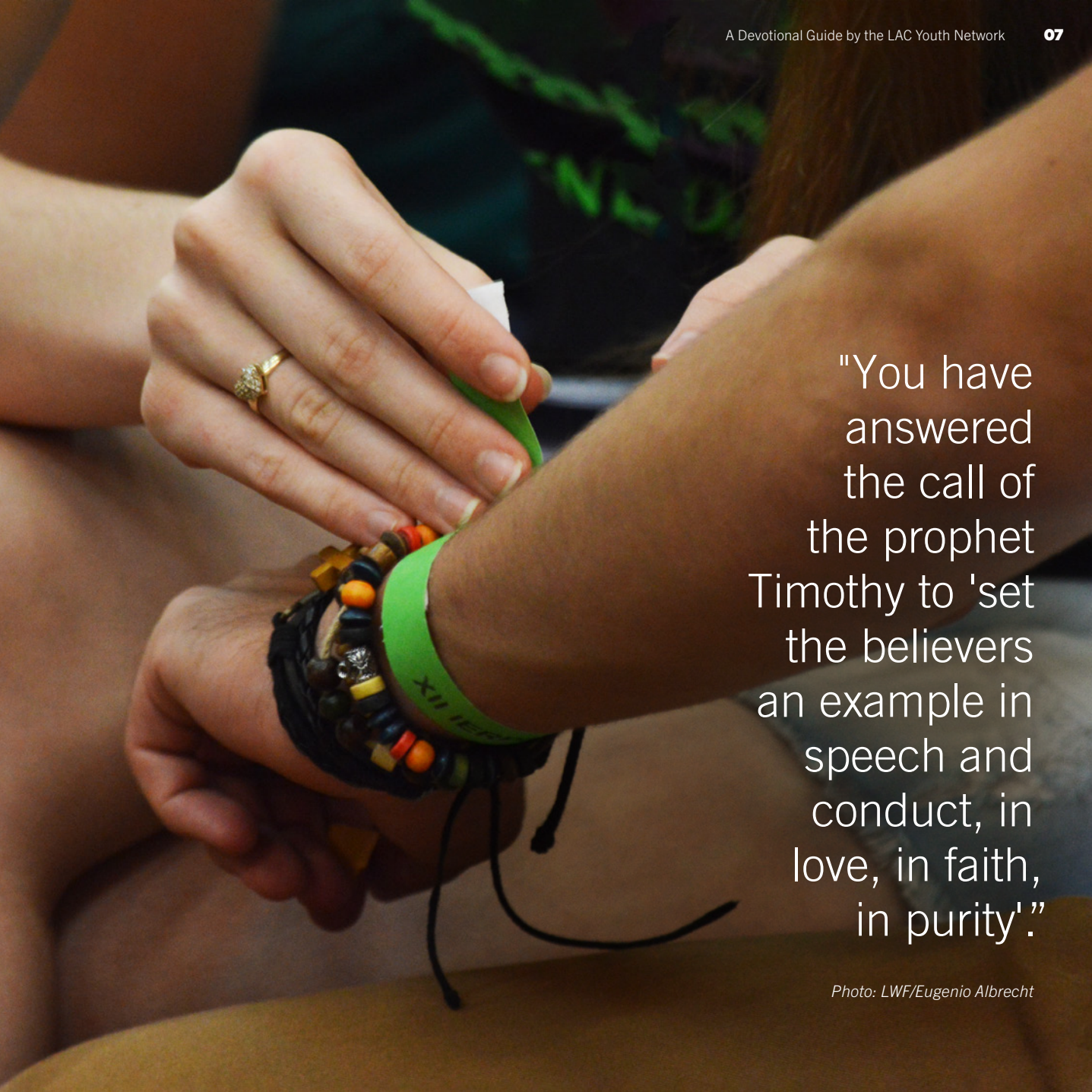
*May we, leaders of every generation across the LWF be wise enough to listen to the Holy Spirit speaking through the reflections gathered here.*

May we be curious enough to let these reflections begin intergenerational conversations in our own contexts. May we be bold enough in Christ to let these words call us to discipleship and faithfulness in new ways.



**Savanna Sullivan**  
LWF Program  
Executive for Youth





"You have answered the call of the prophet Timothy to 'set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity'."

*Photo: LWF/Eugenio Albrecht*



CREATION  
NOT FOR  
SALE!

COP 27 climate  
conference in Sharm  
el-Sheikh, Egypt in 2022.

Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert

## 1. Let's talk about

# Climate Justice

**The issue of climate justice has taken a strong relevance in society in the last decades, becoming a matter of general interest in recent years. The flourishing of social networks and digital media have allowed its spread in a massive way and with more intensity and insistence.**

Within our religious communities the theme has been addressed under the concept of “care for creation,” which not only has a theological connotation, but also allows us to see ourselves as part of God’s work, as parts of and participants in the communities. It leads us to see that by taking care of God’s creation, we also take care of ourselves.

For Youth in the LWF, the theme has played an important role in our ministry. This has enabled us to talk about it in our churches, in our social environment, and even at a global level.

Here we highlight the participation of youth in LWF’s delegations to the annual Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change, which has allowed us to learn, grow, broaden our views and perspectives, and represent our faith and our convictions in an important and diverse global forum.

*What is presented in the following devotionals are the results of our reflections and our work as young leaders in our different contexts in Latin America and the Caribbean:*

- ▶ The Knowledge of Traditional Peoples and Communities in Brazil and the Care for Creation
- ▶ Water That Gives Life
- ▶ Memories of an Old Tree



## The Knowledge of Traditional Peoples and Communities in Brazil and the Care for Creation

*By Gabrielle Ücker Thum, Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB)*

In Latin America there are segments of Traditional Peoples and Communities (International Labor Organization (ILO) 169 and Nagoya Protocol). They are culturally differentiated human groups.

In Brazil we have the Pomerano people, the Quilombolas, the Original Peoples, and all the others who have been caring for biodiversity and conservation for centuries.

For these groups, nature is an integrated whole, it is sacred and a space for divine manifestation as a source of healing and food.

The territories where these peoples live are the areas of greatest biodiversity preservation in Brazil. These cultural groups and their territories, just like all of us, are threatened by the interests of the “green economy.”

*We know that the balance of life conditions on the planet depends on human actions. These groups offer examples of what it means to have a balanced relationship all creation.*

Youth representing the LWF delegation at the COP 27, United Nations climate conference in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt

*Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert*

### Welcome

“We wish a good meeting to all the people present, with many exchanges of experiences, learning and strengthening of faith.”

### Invocation of the Trinitarian God

“We are gathered together under the protection and in the presence of God the Father and Mother, who creates and maintains life, of God the Son our Savior and Brother, of God the Holy Spirit the breath of life and justice! This God who calls you to sow a world of greater care, peace, justice and love!”

### Reading

“Ever since the creation of the world God’s eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been seen and understood through the things God has made. So they are without excuse.” (Rom 1:20)

**Song:** *Canção da chegada* (IECLB Song Book – no. 8)

### Reflection

God is the Creator of the earth, who established the place and life of all that we can see and feel. We must remember in every decision we make that all humans were made from a particle of soil. This means that we are as much a part of God’s creation as all other animals and plants. We are living on earth. God is all around us, in front of us and behind us, we live in the circularity of the sacred.

In Latin America there are segments of Traditional Peoples and Communities (ILO 169 and Nagoya Protocol) and their wisdom must be considered when discussing and acting on climate justice.

These peoples have practiced biodiversity care and conservation for centuries. They produce cultural and social conditions and provide knowledge through the exercise of traditional practices that are transmitted through dialogue and life experience incorporated into daily practices.

*Identity is associated with a way of life, not a social role, but the result of a conscious socio-biodiverse culture.*

For this reason, Traditional Peoples and Communities (which include native people) are culturally differentiated groups: they have a unique identity.

And, precisely for this reason, they need to be strengthened in their relationship with hegemonic identities.

Because the relationship between nature and culture is constitutive of the human condition, promoting the quality of life of these communities strengthens social and biological ecologies. Therefore, the planet's biodiversity is also dependent on human relations, especially those of Traditional Peoples and Communities. These processes are mutually interdependent and take place in the territories of culture and identity of groups differentiated by their social practices with the land.

To understand more about the identities of the Traditional Peoples and Communities of Brazil, more specifically of the Pampa Biome, read the book *Povos e Comunidades Tradicionais do Pampa* ("Traditional Peoples and Communities of the Pampa").

For these diverse groups, people like myself, who are part of the Pomerano People, nature is God's, holy and good, as stated in Genesis 1:31.

*Nature is an integrated whole, a space for experiencing the sacred that materializes and is represented in eating practices and in the processes of sickness and healing.*

Divinity manifests itself in nature, which is a source of healing through roots and leaves for teas, and through fruits that nourish and cure humans from illnesses, from the most routine to the most complex. This also involves rites of "asking God to heal," rites of prayers and songs.

The practices of caring for the land are sacred practices. The rituals are always in search of balance, fertility, and diversity of the planet. The territories where segments of Traditional Peoples and Communities live are the areas of greatest preservation of biodiversity. Living in harmony with the land and respecting biodiversity has produced this conservation condition.

This result was made possible by the practices of caring for life that while seeking to feed themselves and live well, are also concerned about future generations. Food and income through sustainable use is a necessity that is based on the understanding that natural resources are finite. This is an exercise in the practice of caring for creation.

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Participants at the 2022 LWF regional workshop for diaconal practitioners from LAC churches, held in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

*Photo: LWF/Eugenio Albrecht*

Social practices of Traditional Peoples and Communities resist the use of chemically modified products. For us, Ancestral Wisdom and the traditional practices generate abundance and blessings. For life to be maintained, these practices must continue. An example of an important value and practice for our community is the understanding that conservation practices through use and at the limit of one's own consumption are beneficial actions for all. For water sources, free of contamination and pollution, to remain in usable condition we need adequate management practice to guarantee the safety and life of humans and animals.

*These practices are strategic to ensure the sustainability of life: of humans, plants, and seeds.*

The sacred manifests itself in these cultural groups through practices that value what God has created and the items necessary for the common use, subsistence, and development of the community.



We, Traditional Peoples and Communities, which in Latin America are also referred to as original, tribal, or differentiated peoples, admire the divine aesthetics that beautify life: the natural view, the beauty of the flowers, the diversity of the animals.

*Whether with the Pomerano people, the Mapuche, the Guarani, the Quilombolas or the Aymaras, our relationship with the sacred is what connects us to the land. Without territory, without land, we do not exist.*



Belonging to the territory and all the spirituality involved creates cultural ties between these populations that are connected by their principles. Without traditional territory there is no culture, no tradition, and no care for creation.

Unfortunately, these cultural groups and their territories, just like all of us, are threatened by the economic interest of private property and the carbon market. The offsetting of carbon emissions will not solve the problem of the climate crisis. We urgently need to learn from Traditional Peoples and Communities, their way of living and experiencing God, and begin to rethink our understanding of development.

**Song:** *Cada dia o dia inteiro*  
(IECLB Song Book – Nr. 640)

A handcraft from Peru, as Victor Cabanillas Montellanos, a Global Young Reformer, shared about his context during the June 2022 Peace Messengers training in Geneva, Switzerland.

Photo: LWF/S. Gallay

## Questions for discussion

- Where do you find traditional/indigenous knowledge in your country or community?
- Have you heard about Traditional/Indigenous Peoples and their understanding of God? Are there points in common with your religious beliefs?
- What can we learn from Traditional/Indigenous Peoples and Communities to use in practical action for climate justice?

### Prayer

“God, bless us with courage and voice to act for climate justice. Give us the strength to defend and care for creation. Forgive our sins when we fail to defend or consider the world as part of your creation. May You lift up our voice to stop destruction and injustice. Amen.”

### Blessing

“May God bless you and bring energy to each new day. May God’s grace inspire you to fight for the care of Creation.”

**Song:** *New Moment* (IECLB LCI – no. 605)





## Water That Gives Life

*By Fernanda Zúñiga, Lutheran Church in Chile*

The care for creation is composed of several aspects, including taking care of water, green areas and animals. Among these, the care for water is very important. Water is a vital element; it is what allows the Earth to be habitable.

We sometimes believe water to be inexhaustible since it covers most of the Earth's surface. However, we are not aware of its true importance until we begin to experience critical situations, endless droughts, uncontrolled fires due to lack of rainfall, animal deaths, land sterility, and low production to name a few. These are consequences of the lack of water.

### Reading

“Who builds his upper chambers in the heavens and founds his vault upon the earth, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out upon the surface of the earth – the Lord is his name. (Am 9:6).

**Song:** *Éste es mi clamor*

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Youth from across the Lutheran communion gather for a global Peace Messengers training in Geneva, Switzerland, June 2022.

*Photo: LWF/S. Sullivan*



### Reflection

Rivers are of great importance, they are great protectors of biodiversity, but they are also a source of life. Since time immemorial human beings have settled in places near rivers, or places with water, such as the Nile, the Ganges, the Tigris and Euphrates. Water is a vital element, not only for humans, but also for animals and vegetation that require it daily. Water is used as a means of transportation and cleanliness.

*Water also has a spiritual meaning: with water we are baptized, in water we are reborn.*

As people of faith, we give special importance to water, not only because of its spiritual value but also because we know its vital role in keeping creation alive.

Youth playing on the banks of Atrato River, northwestern Colombia.

*Photo: LWF/G. A. Moreno Clavijo*

We know that God separated the waters on the surface of the Earth and that from water everything is blessed. However, as humanity we have polluted the waters, we have dried up rivers and lakes and where there was once green, today there is dust.

Are we aware that God gave us creation to protect it? What kind of world do we want to leave for future generations? We should ask ourselves these questions as Christians, as humans. Water is part of what has been given to us in stewardship and one of the most precious goods. Where there is water, life sprouts, you only need to think that for a plant to grow healthy and strong we must water it enough. On the contrary, if that plant suffers from thirst, it will grow weak and will probably die.

Today I want to invite you to reflect on how we put to use this resource: are you aware of how much water we use? What percentage of it you waste and if there are small actions you could take to avoid wasting it? Sometimes it sounds repetitive to be told to turn off the tap while brushing your teeth or to not leave so much water running while you take a bath.

But along with these, there are other small actions we can take to consciously use this resource. For example, if you boil vegetables, you can let the water cool and water the plants, in the process you will be providing them with vitamins and minerals.

Let us be aware of what we are doing to the care for water, let's be aware of its importance. Water gives life, but at the rate we are moving, water may cause the loss of lives. There are countries and places where water is so scarce that animals die and vegetation no longer exists. Desertification is a reality.

Let us take care of that water that gives life, those rivers and banks where majestic vegetation grows and shelters hundreds of animal species, those lakes that are great water reserves and that day by day decrease due to lack of rainfall.

## Questions for discussion

- What meaning does water have for you?  
How is water a part of your faith?
- What does the Bible passage tell you about God and water?
- How would you contribute to caring for water?
- What small actions in your community could help reduce water waste?

**Song:** *Salmo de la Creación*

### Prayer

"Dear God, give us the strength and wisdom to raise our voices for those who need it most. Accompany us in this journey for a more just world and enlighten our path to take care of your creation, to protect the water that you have given us Father, the water that gives life, but for which others thirst. Hear our cry and bless your creation. Amen."

### "Blessing

May the road rise up to meet you, may the wind be always at your back, may the sun shine warm upon your face, the rain fall soft upon your fields, and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand." (Traditional Irish Blessing)



Photo: LWF/Johanán Celine Valeriano

## Memories of an Old Tree

*By the Youth Coordination Team (Equipo de coordinación Juveni- ECoJ) of the Evangelical Church of the River Plate*

The Evangelical Church of the River Plate (IERP) “aims to practice evangelical worship, Christian formation and fulfillment of its obligation to define the social responsibility inherent in Christianity, especially the defense and promotion of human rights and the preservation of the environment.” (Art 2, IERP statutes.)

*As young people belonging to the IERP we are committed to our environment and motivated by the teachings that Jesus left us, we offer various suggestions in different areas of the church.*

We give talks and trainings about the importance of preserving, caring for, and promoting natural environments and more environmental-friendly production. We also take action: we clean public and green spaces, river and stream banks, and roads. We recycle plastic bottles, cans and batteries, and we create organic orchards and plant native trees.

## Welcome

"Hello everyone, we welcome you to this devotional space. We are very happy for this opportunity to reflect together on the vocation to care for creation that God entrusts to all humans. We thank the Almighty God for allowing us these spaces of communion and we ask God to guide and enlighten our walk, so that as young people we can be light and salt in this time and walk towards a more just, equal, and ecologically healthy world. Amen."

**Song:** *Señor mi Dios. No. 183 in the "Canto y Fe" hymnal*

## Story

*We would like to share with you a story:*

### Memories of an old tree

I remember the past, when I was just a child, nature gave me the food and nutrients to grow strong and live together with my companions. We were many, a community of different species and types, as well as the many birds that perched on our branches, and made their nests to protect themselves, to form a family.

We experienced all seasons. Spring and summer, when we enjoyed our leaves and fruits; autumn, when they fell little by little and made whirlpools flying with the wind. And when the cold also came, don't you believe it, winter really left us bald!

*I liked summer, because we had plenty of water to drink and because we had our human friends, the boys and girls with whom we played some afternoons.*

Sometimes I used to be the hiding place for a boy or girl, so that others would not find him or her, other times I was the finishing line for his or her career. What can I tell you, my friend? Those were happy times.

But, all of a sudden, water began to be a bit scarce, it didn't rain as it used to and the summers were endless. There was also the other extreme: there is a time it rained so much that we suffered a lot. We didn't understand anything, the weather was crazy. Suddenly, everything seemed to be in darkness. Worse times began to come, the children did not come to play anymore, we felt that we would never get those times back.

One day something terrible happened. In the distance we saw a dark fog that did not allow us to admire the usual landscape. My friends, the tallest ones, tried to stretch out to find out what it was, but the closer it got, the less we could see, and we could not breathe either. At that moment we realized: it was smoke.

All of us though filled with terror, had no choice but to stay where we were, supporting each other as comrades. There were many days of fire. Old friends of mine went up in flames, and I felt very helpless because I could do nothing.

The fire came closer and closer, and burned for several days. Do you see everything there? It's ashes, charcoal. Traces left by the fire forever. After what was a long time for me, the flames went out. And still here I am, old and sad, and a little sick.

My greatest wish, my friend, is that the same thing never happens to you. May you live years happily together with your companions, and may more boys and girls come, and may the birds come to roost again. May creation be restored and may we be happy again.

## Questions for discussion

After this short story, we invite you to take a piece of charcoal in your house or wherever you are, or simply imagine it. Feel it, smell it and observe what the charcoal produces when you touch it.

- What do you see in your hand after touching the charcoal?
- What sensation does it give you?

## Activity

Now, we propose to wash our hands in a container with water without soap. From this we ask you:

- Were you able to clean your hands completely?
- How can we relate this to pollution in our environment and to nature?
- As young people, how can we contribute to building a better world to live in?
- How can we be prophets warning about the environmental destruction that surrounds us?

As we reflect, we sing: *Vivir no es solo vivir.*

Youth from Latin America and the Caribbean gather to worship together.

*Photo: FLM/Eugenio Albrecht*

### Reflection

Dear brothers and sisters, just like the story we shared at the beginning, there are many situations that affect us. The pollution of the environment that causes innumerable respiratory illnesses and damages plants; water contaminated by human waste, industries and ships; felled fields, the oppression of so many brothers and sisters who are silently exploited by their bosses, among many other diverse situations that are repeated throughout our common home, the Earth.

### According to the UN:

*Since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas. Burning fossil fuels generates greenhouse gas emissions that act like a blanket wrapped around the Earth, trapping the sun's heat and raising temperatures. Greenhouse gas concentrations are at their highest levels in 2 million years. And emissions continue to rise. As a result, the Earth is now about 1.1°C warmer than it was in the late 1800s.*



*Accumulation, greed, and the drive for profit have taken over human beings to the detriment of natural ecosystems.*

The noise, the crowd, the speeding cars, the routine, the thousands of mixed smells... we run so as not to be late, we live in a hurry, anxious, distressed, anguished, we are like coal that leaves marks in every place. All this violent and disorderly panorama seems so far away from paradise. In the beginning "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good" (Gen 1:31) and our mission as creatures was "to till it and keep it" (Gen 2:15).

**Psalm 148 (1-3; 7-10) says:**

*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights! Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host! Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars! Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command! Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!*

*The book of Genesis tells us about creation, recognizing that the whole universe comes from God, is a manifestation of God, and the human being belongs to this creation and is entrusted to it in its totality, as a promoter of life, of love, for the benefit of universal communion and not in relation to its usefulness. It is a “common house” where everyone has a place and for everyone to praise the Almighty God with one voice.*




*For many people, the experience of communion with the universe starts from the relationship of justice between peoples.*

Creating solidarity and just relationships between humans then extends to just ecological relationships with all creation. The challenge is to ask ourselves: are these relationships just?

We have all been called to transform the reality in which we live, making visible God's project of love, removing the relationships of domination and oppression. Jesus invites us to build a kingdom of justice and peace, where he becomes a reality through our way of living, away from money as the engine and goal.





LWF Youth Delegates from Latin America and the Caribbean at the United Nations Climate COP25 join ecumenical worship in Madrid, Spain.

*Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert*

The climate crisis that is affecting us must push us to reflect on our call to be caretakers and to act in the face of the erosion that we leave to future generations.

*It is up to us to reveal ourselves and act against climate change.*

We cannot remain neutral, we are called to action; to seek the balance of natural and human systems. We have our firm faith in God who tells us: “For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, ‘Do not fear, I will help you’.” (Isa 41:13).

May we feel the help that comes from our God and may we be good stewards of God’s creation, may we take care of our house and continue to be committed to this path of faith, each one of us contributing from our small place so that in unity we may achieve great changes. Amen.

### **Blessing**

May the road rise up to meet you, may the wind be always at your back, may the sun shine warm upon your face, and may the rain fall soft upon your fields.

And until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of his hand, and until we meet again, God keep you, God keep us, in his hands.

**Song:** *Señor que nuestra vida sea.*  
*Nº 295 Song and Faith (see appendix)*



LWF delegates advocate for gender justice at COP 27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.

Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert

## 2. Let's talk about

# Gender Justice

**What is gender justice? It is, among other things, a fair reality for all people, regardless of their gender. Gender justice is a movement that aims to build a just world, answering the call which comes from the gospel. Why do we as young people want to talk about it? Because we want a fairer reality for us and for future generations.**

In recent years, the issue has gained great relevance around the world and has revealed the great injustice that exists and that was hidden. More and more demonstrations and protests are being held to demand justice, through equity and equality at all levels and in all spaces.

The church has also been a space of reflection and action to ensure that the issue of gender justice is also addressed from the perspective of faith. The road is not easy and there are many obstacles, but as young people we want to point out the need to talk about it and to participate in this struggle.

*The devotionals presented here reflect some of the reflections carried out in our different contexts:*

- ▶ God's Love for Hagar
- ▶ Women in the Kingdom of God



## God's Love for Hagar

*By Jazmin Soto Mayta (IELB), Katherine Pico Salcedo (IELCO), and Alejandra Lopez (ILFE)*

*Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELB)  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia (IELCO)  
Nicaraguan Lutheran Church of Faith and Hope (ILFE)*

*For Adam was formed first, then Eve, and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. (1 Tim 2:13-14)*

### Introduction

This devotional was written by young Lutheran women from Latin America, but it is meant to be used by women and men of any sexual identity, language, nationality or creed, to develop, live or feel it. Gender justice is an increasingly important issue in our generation. As young people we feel the responsibility to restore the rights not only of women, but also of migrants and of all creation.

The church has a historical debt with women, and we can start with the stories in the Bible, where given the social context of the time, women were the most disadvantaged and often only recognized and validated according to the husband or other male family members.

Natan Schumann, a Global Young Reformer from Brazil, and LWF delegate to the COP 27 UN climate conference in Glasgow, Scotland, participates in a demonstration calling on negotiators to take action on climate change.

*Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert*

*Change has been happening for generations and continues today, not only in the church but also in society in general.*

For us as Christians of IELCO, IELB and ILFE, it is very refreshing and meaningful to see women pastors in roles of power, to see women's ministries that are so strong and a fundamental part of our churches. When we talk about the importance of youth in equitable leadership, we look to feminist theology and to the ministries that are led by women, ministries that develop projects about sexual rights with women who are traditionally subjugated by their male partners.

### **Welcome**

"We welcome you to this safe space designed for you, may our God giver of life, love and peace, welcome us in God's arms and allow us to live a restorative time for all. By Jesus' example of living the truth, we learn that we are called to defend the rights of women and work for Agender justice, which today has a voice and space in society, thanks to the women who fought for the rights that we all enjoy today.

We pray for women and people of any gender or sexual identity who today are repressed, physically and psychologically violated, for women who are persecuted for defending their rights, and we pray that all gender-based violence is eliminated and that we can finally walk peacefully in the streets and fields of our beautiful countries. Without fear."

**Song:** *Memento nuevo*

**Song:** *Vienen con alegría, Señor*

So she named the Lord who spoke to her, "You are El-roi, for she said, "Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?" (Gen 16:13)

*God Father and Mother calls us to trust in God's unconditional love.*

Every one of us is God's unique and precious creation. As such, we learn to live and contribute to the well-being God offers us. And part of that is to give ourselves to the love that includes, listens, and shares.

God's love for us is expressed, immediate, supportive, and renewing. It is beyond comprehension because it does not oppress. It opens its arms of compassion, opportunities and creates a safe space.

*Together with God we can love in this way, we can embody this purpose in our actions.*

God expresses love, acts, and provides. God hears Hagar's voice and makes a covenant with her. Her cry is heard in the middle of the desert. That desert is not just sand. It is loneliness, hopelessness, anguish, and rejection. And in the midst of this desert we have walked, we now walk, and we will walk in solidarity with Hagar.




God is made manifest with a high degree of inclusiveness. And this is reflected when God considers Hagar, the woman who has not been heard. God transforms her pain into hope. God liberates and generates trust through care.

*This love is not exclusive, it is shared.*

God manifests it to Hagar and her son. God treats them equally in dignity and value. God promotes this love that can give life and hope amid despair. This is God's transforming presence.

Humanity needs this love that liberates in the experience of deserts. We can be those who listen and act even as we are also those who must be heard and helped. God does not lower God's gaze; God is present in both situations.



A moment of prayer  
and reflection.

*Photo: LWF/S. Galloway*

We join our voices to say, like Hagar, that God has seen us! We are committed to spreading this wonderful message by promoting Christ and his gifts and sharing the inclusion God has brought to our lives.

*Let us bring hope, expressing love in other ways. Let us encourage and support each other to listen to the voices of humanity, of God's creation. We are sure that in the desert God accompanies us.*

### **Blessing**

Sung by all:

*God's Blessing,  
of Sarah, Hagar and Abraham,  
the blessing of the Son, who of Mary was born,  
the blessing of the Holy Spirit of love,  
who watches over us,  
as a mother watches over her children,  
descend upon you, Amen.*

Spoken by the one who leads:

*May the God of life and history bless us  
and keep us;  
May the light of Christ illuminate our paths  
and our struggles,  
and fill our hearts with his peace;  
and may the Holy Spirit accompany  
us always and impel us to accompany  
one another, now and always,  
Amen.*



"...they were empowered women, capable of fighting and working for their ideals."

## Women in the Kingdom of God

### Introduction

Just as God, Mother and Father, welcomes us with arms of love, you are welcome to this place. May our time together help us to heal and be restored where necessary.

The interpretations that human beings in their sin and ignorance have given to the Bible, have made us understand and read it in sexist and oppressive ways. Today, gathered here, we will ask for forgiveness from the women that the church has harmed, we will ask our Lord Jesus to help women who are victims of different forms of abuse, and we will reflect on our own interpretation of the Bible.

*Let us pray...*

### Reading

Soon afterward he went on through one town and village after another, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who ministered to them out of their own resources (Lk 8:1-3)





Intergenerational participants from LWF member churches in Latin America and the Caribbean join in conversation during the 2018 regional church leadership conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

*Photo: LWF/Eugenio Albrecht*

This is one of the few biblical texts that names and describes the participation of women in the mission of Jesus, which was to announce the good news of the Kingdom of God.

An interesting fact is that it mentions that these women “helped with their own resources,” a recognition that is not given, much less made visible in a frequent way in the Bible, especially because at that time the value and power of women was little or none. However, helping the mission of Jesus, using their resources, makes us think that they were believing women, firstly, and secondly, they were empowered women, capable of fighting and working for their ideals.

*As Christians we are called to be an inclusive church, to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God without distinction of race, social strata, gender, age, etc.*

But we cannot ignore the fact that we live in a world where differences are often more powerful than similarities, a world where injustices have been suffered for hundreds and hundreds of years.

*As young people in our churches, we feel motivated to talk about gender justice, climate justice, economic justice, and sexual and reproductive rights.*

In some of our churches, we are provided with the necessary leadership spaces where we can develop and serve, but this is not always the reality. In many of our churches and in other spaces in our communities we are not seen or considered, just as it happens to women.

We are made invisible because we are young and “have no experience,” we are marginalized because we are young women who live in macho-societies, where our voices have little weight.



We are minimized because the inherited culture says that young people in the church are only to sing and women are only to read the readings, but not to preach.

This text from Luke is a resounding NO to all those patriarchal, ageist, divisive schemes. We are all – men and women – called to serve in the mission of Christ, and we all have our own resources to “help”; we are different parts of the same body, parts with different functions, but with the same purpose.

*Let us pray that God will guide and bless the efforts that each one of us makes to bring the good news of God to the little ones.*

LWF Youth from Latin America and the Caribbean lead intergenerational worship and reflection at the 2018 regional church leadership conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

*Photo: LWF/Eugenio Albrecht*

### **Blessing**

*God our Father and Mother, look upon us.  
 Make visible those who are marginalized.  
 You take us into account.  
 May your Mercy surround us.  
 We often make others invisible.  
 Teach us of your Love.  
 Grant your goodness to your church.  
 To the whole body that suffers and rejoices.  
 God of life, give us courage and faith  
 all the days of our lives.  
 Amen.*


"All of us are  
community  
and the  
church,  
no matter  
where we are."



---

LWF Youth from Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America join together to build community.

*Photo: LWF/Eugenio Albrecht*



"To see your face  
is like seeing  
the face of God."

Gen 33:10b

### 3. Let's talk about

# Migration

**Migration is a historical constant not only present in human life, but also observed in the fauna of our planet that struggles to live in a world where resources are running out. In the case of human life, the migrant has moved in search of better life opportunities.**

The Bible tells us several stories about migration – for example, the story of the people of Israel whose history begins with the movement to the Promised Land. The Lutheran church is no exception. Since its beginnings, migration has been a part of our story as some Lutherans from Europe arrived in the Americas looking for new opportunities or simply with the idea of bringing the gospel.

Migration sometimes makes visible the racial discrimination that exists toward the person who is a migrant. In the response toward migrants today, we sometimes see the lack of empathy, respect, and love toward the neighbor.

On many occasions people decide to ignore this serious problem of discrimination. On other occasions they simply do not offer help to the migrants because they assume that it is not their responsibility and that it should be the government that provides this help.


Finally, some people think that the migrant only comes to steal the opportunities of the local inhabitants and that the best thing is for them to return to their country.

*The truth is that we must really see people migrating and face these situations. We must take into account that many times these people have no bread to put in their mouths, no shoes to wear, no roof to live under or the right conditions to continue on their way.*

As young Lutherans, as Christians, as members of a church, let us be like the Good Samaritan who had compassion on the man lying on the side of the road and did not hesitate to help him. Let us be compassionate and help the one in need, let us love and accompany our neighbor regardless of the conditions.

*Let us be aware that we must seek to reach out to our brothers and sisters to give them support and help.*

The ILM and the IELCH have a migrant pastoral care ministry (Pastoral del Migrante), Although they cannot totally support the issue of migration in their respective countries, they become a support system for those who migrate, since they take responsibility for accompanying and offering the necessary help to the people who are in transit or who arrive to settle down.



Closing worship of the Latin America and the Caribbean & North America Leadership Conference in Lima, Peru, 2019.

*Photo: LWF/A. Danielsson*

This help becomes vital. Migrants receive food, something to keep them warm, a roof over their heads where they can rest, monetary help, etc. This help is not only material. The most important thing is to accompany them in prayer and to give them the support always from the love of our good God. This is what God calls us to do, because when we see them, when we see that migrant, it is like seeing God.

As churches we must commit to accompany migrant communities, we must continue to respect the dignity of immigrants since our faith and tradition have roots in their experience.

*The devotionals that follow are the result of our reflection taking into account the reality of our countries:*

- ▶ In Migrants We Find God
- ▶ Our Call to Welcome



## In Migrants We Find God

*By the youth group of the Mexican Lutheran Church*

### Welcome

You are all welcome to this devotional, prepared by the youth for people of all ages. It is a pleasure to know that we can share together this devotional space, in which we can reflect and share memories.

May Christ guide us to be able to be one body and may we continue to move forward together as a church. As the hymn says, “We are one, in Christ, we are one.”

Amen.

**Song:** *Somos uno en Cristo*

**Song:** *“To see your face is like seeing the face of God” (Gen 33:10b)*

I would like to share the story of Pablo, a Cuban migrant who at the beginning of 2021 approached the ILM migration ministry. The contact was made thanks to the Lutheran Costa Rican Church that told us about his case and referred him to us.

*Pablo came with the dream of going to the United States to start a new life, and it had been more than two years since he left his country.*

From the moment he entered Mexican territory through the southern border in Tapachula, Chiapas, we contacted him. While he was in transit through our country, we had communication via telephone and WhatsApp. We prayed for him every day, we listened to him, we supported him with a little money, we knew how difficult it is to process the papers for the humanitarian visa in Mexico and we were on the lookout every time he left a city.

In July 2021, when he had already arranged his papers to be able to transit through Mexico, he decided to continue his journey to reach the United States. He passed through Mexico City (where the Pastoral de Migración is located). It was there where we were able to meet, hug and pray with him, it was a short meeting, just a few minutes, while he was waiting for his bus to continue his journey.

*In this small meeting Pablo told us a phrase “to see you, is like seeing God.”*

To this day this phrase continues moving us, it continues challenging us to think that God is in each one of the people we meet on the road no matter where they come from, their skin color, their nationality, or their sex.

The phrase is very similar to the story of the reunion between Esau and Jacob in Genesis 33, and although the meeting between Paul and the Migration Ministry was not a reunion as such, it was a physical meeting with the one we had been accompanying. The passage in Genesis 33 was a meeting of two peoples, because the two characters gave origin to different peoples who were migrating and discovered that in the other, is the face of God.

*No matter where you are from,  
in the encounter, in the embrace,  
in the support, there is God.*

The story of Esau and Jacob shows us that, although they were brothers, as the years went by, they were also complete strangers. Yet, their encounter was with love and respect, and in this meeting, both forgave each other for past grudges. Thus, it should be, our encounter with every person we meet, regardless of their history or the history of their people, as we look at them, we can see not only our sisters and brothers, but God self.



In 2018, churches in Mexico City played a major role in providing food and drink to migrants along the way.

*Photo: LWF/Sean Hawkey*

People have always migrated in search of better opportunities, today it is known that the major causes of migration are hunger, wars, violence and climate change. Situations that are caused by other people, who mistreat human beings, the whole of creation, who have lost the ability to see God in others.

Latin American is one of the world's regions that is most affected by migration, not only because the population decides to migrate, but it also receives people of different nationalities who cross the entire continent to reach the United States. In Mexico alone, thousands of people pass through the country year after year, the majority are Hondurans, Salvadorans, Haitians, Chileans and Brazilians (the latter often offspring of Haitians who were born on the continent).

In the face of these migrations, we can see how xenophobia and structural racism are found not only in the general population, but also in government institutions.



In the case of Mexico, the National Migration Institute treats migrants differently depending on which country they come from. In 2021, when there was a wave of Haitian migrants, structural racism tried to make the migrants invisible, because many of them had already been expelled from Brazil and Chile, but sadly this happens in other countries as well.

In addition to this, being a migrant woman is devastating, since they cannot travel alone because they know all the dangers involved. For example, they know that when they enter Mexico, they must carry a “morning after” pill (for protection against pregnancy) in case they are sexually abused. Even with these extra risks, most of the time, women are the ones who take care of the children and the whole family.

When we are faced with the reality of what it is like to be a migrant, of the mistreatment by the authorities, of the lack of empathy among the population of each country, of the xenophobia experienced, we ask ourselves:

*Why is it so difficult for us to see the face of God in others?*

We close ourselves to the opportunity of encounter. Yet no matter how difficult it may be, Esau and Jacob did it, although they found it difficult to reconnect (their reunion was full of challenges, heartaches, and forgiveness).

Too often we close ourselves off from the opportunity to look at each other face to face and to be sure and certain that God is there. We call on the church to begin to have these uncomfortable, painful encounters with reality and to begin to live with and [re]get to know people in migration.

The church must strengthen its networks with other churches in the region to be able to continue helping migrants to walk, to continue knowing God through people in migration.

*Elisa Perez Trejo*

*Co-coordinator, ILM Migration Ministry*

**Song:** *Noble Sostén*

**Blessing**

(In the background you can hear the hymn Descanso en ti)

May the blessing of God our Mother and Father be always with us, with our migrant brothers and sisters and with all those who suffer hunger, violence, injustice, wars or bad governments. May Christ be the light of hope and rest for all.

Amen.



Photo: LWF/A. Danielsson

## Our Call to Welcome

*By the youth group of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile*

### Introduction

May our loving God fill us with peace and serenity in this meeting.

The theme of migration is central, and it is urgent to deal with it, because God's love urges us to go to meet our migrant brothers and sisters who suffer and whose basic rights are violated.

In recent decades there have been large movements of people in the world, mainly of those whose lives are in danger either because of war, human-made and natural disasters, or lack of work in their countries of origin.

*The important thing is to make visible the great flow of people in constant movement, in search of a better quality of life, both for themselves and for their families.*



In some places it is usual to see people who migrate in a dehumanizing way, as those who are different and strangers, who come to take away from the citizens what is in their countries.

But the great contribution they make to the society they arrive in is not considered. The emigrants-immigrants are people of a strongly rooted faith and carry a cultural baggage; they are people with dreams and hopes like anyone else; they are an expression of God, created in God's image and likeness. In fact, in ancient times the foreigner was considered a divine messenger, who revealed the will of the gods.

Migrants in Huixtla, Mexico in 2018. There are many unaccompanied adolescents on migrant routes.

*Photo: LWF/Sean Hawkey*

*Our task as a church is to welcome, protect and accompany migrants because this is what the Holy Scriptures tell us, so we ask our God to guide us at all times to fulfill God's will. Amen.*

**Song:** *Vienen con alegría*

### **Reflection**

You in your great mercies did not forsake them in the wilderness; the pillar of cloud that led them in the way did not leave them by day nor the pillar of fire by night that gave them light on the way by which they should go. (Neh 9:19)

Migrations have been present in the course of history, not only in human life, but also in the fauna of our planet, which struggles to live in a world where resources are depleted.

Migrations are the displacement of a species to another place due to different types of situations such as war, persecution, hunger, or economics which in one way or another affect the physical and/or emotional safety of people.

Every migrant who exists on earth has to leave their roots, leave the people they love, abandon a dream or a passion; and change their life with the hope of someday having a better future.

*The struggle faced by migrants is something that only those who have lived it fully know and understand.*

God in God's word and with great love, shows that during the hardest parts of our lives, during this migration, God is our pillar that guides our way by day and by night. God is our light, our protection and our hope.

Who else can we ask for mercy in the midst of this great journey, in the midst of this great desert of loneliness, fear and anguish, but the one who never abandons us, the one who, since our birth, has cared for us and protected us?

As citizens, and more than this, as sisters and brothers born with a purpose, we must be supportive of those who migrate in search of a hope and a future. Amen

**Song:** *Un pueblo que camina*

### **Blessing**

Dear God, we are aware that for you no one is a stranger and much less no one is far from your love. That is why Lord, in your goodness and mercy, we ask you to take care of migrants, those who are separated from their loved ones, those who are refugees, those who have been exiled from their homes, and all those who undertake the journey of hope. Accompany them on this journey, bring them to safety, and grant them rescue, healing and strength to start anew, and to have more opportunities elsewhere.

In the same way we ask you Lord, help us to open our eyes and hearts to the cry of our brothers and sisters who need us.

We pray that, in your mercy, you will strengthen our brothers and sisters and fill them with faith and hope. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.



Renato Valenga, Evangelical  
Church of the Lutheran  
Confession in Brazil.

Photo: : LWF/A. Danielsson

## 4. Step by Step:

# A Webinar

*By Renato Valenga – Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil*

## Youth connected

Thinking about the LWF youth networks in a context of growing access to the digital world offers many opportunities for interaction, exchange of experiences, learning, and strengthening of faith.

*We are aware that the lack of access to quality internet and the lack of access to the necessary equipment to keep up with the advances of the digital age is still a very evident facet of social inequality in the world.*

However, we also know that virtual interaction is no longer just a part of our lives it has become an important means of coexistence, intensified from the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting from the assumption that

the expansion of access to the digital world for all people, digital literacy, and the critical use of platforms are fundamental steps toward a just and peaceful world, we will address some basic concepts for the organization of an important instrument of dialogue and learning: Webinars.

Examples like that of the Evangelical Youth (Juventude Evangélica – JE) of the IECLB which used webinars as the main tool to promote the national campaign “Youth and Environmental Justice,” show that: The format is increasingly being used in youth activities.

In a scenario of movement restrictions and considering the geographical distances in a country like Brazil, the seminars promoted in a virtual way have become an opportunity to talk about God’s creation and the commitment to protect our common home, the Earth, besides continuing to develop activities of national reach when it is impossible to hold face-to-face meetings.

Like JE IECLB, youth from other churches in LAC , as well as the LAC regional youth network and the global LWF youth network have used the webinar format as a meeting point for Lutheran youth in recent years. Knowing the potential of this format, this contribution proposes the main possibilities of a webinar for youth activities of LWF churches.

## What is a webinar?

*The word webinar stands for “web-based-seminar,” which is nothing more than a seminar held on the internet.*

The main intention of this format is to offer a space for presentation and exchange of ideas, usually with invited people who address a certain topic in a specific way, with the possibility for the audience to interact through comments and questions.

A webinar is usually conducted on videoconference platforms (Zoom, Google Meet, etc.) and can be simultaneously broadcast on other platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, etc. As the goal is to give a more comprehensive overview of the possibilities of a webinar, in this presentation we will not delve into details about specific functions of each videoconferencing platform, but we will share some possibilities of structure and tools

that are applied. The use and adaptation of such examples will depend on the tools and platforms available for use in each context.

The main reason why the virtual format is appealing is precisely the possibilities it offers for interactivity with audiences in different places. Unlike recording a video interview or lecture, webinars enable real-time interaction, making the content more interesting and dynamic for those watching.

There are several tools that make this experience more interactive. Besides slides with visual aids, polls, breakout rooms, and the use of onscreen drawings help keep the audience's concentration and ensure a more active participation. However, it is important to plan in advance how the use of such tools affects the interactivity of a webinar by reflecting on the following:

- What questions will I ask in the poll?
- How many small group rooms do I plan to do?
- How many people could moderate the small groups and what questions can be discussed there?
- What will I ask the audience to write or draw on the screen?



LWF Assembly Stewards join an online training ahead of the Thirteenth Assembly.

*Photo: LWF/S. Sullivan/  
Kari Shea on Unsplash*

Simultaneous interpretation is another important tool when there are participants who speak other languages. On platforms such as Zoom, for example, it is possible to hold webinars with simultaneous interpretation for different languages.

From the experience of webinars promoted by the LAC Youth Network in 2021, for example, it was possible to host meetings in English, Portuguese and Spanish, with simultaneous interpretation provided on a voluntary basis by the young people themselves.

## Preparation

### Key roles in organizing a webinar

For a webinar to function successfully, planning is necessary. This involves, among other things, determining some important roles in running the meeting. While the webinar is ongoing, several issues need special attention, and therefore organizing a coordination team and delegating people to take care of different functions makes the virtual event run smoothly.



In the section that follows, we will look at the main roles and tasks and what is needed for each of them.

### Speakers and moderators

Besides the person or persons invited, a webinar needs a person who starts the seminar, guides each part of the webinar and conducts the moments of speaking and interaction.

In this role you need to think about how to welcome the audience joining at the beginning of the webinar, how to open at the right time, how to introduce the topic and guest or guests, and how to move on to the presentation, interaction with the audience, and so on. This function can be performed by one or even two people, which can also bring more dynamics during the webinar.



When structuring a script, a task we will also discuss later, it is important to introduce to the audience the webinar coordinating team, the invited persons, as well as conveying instructions and information in a simple and objective way. For this, it is fundamental to prepare a good script with a clear outline.

### Technical setup

As with all events, unexpected things can happen. In webinars, issues such as transmission failure, noise, microphone failure, and slide presentation problems are recurrent.

*That is why it is important to have someone responsible for monitoring and solving such situations, since the presentation and moderation require exclusive attention.*

Presenting youth concerns at the 2022 LWF regional diaconal workshop in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

*Photo: LWF/Eugenio Albrecht*

The person who performs this function can also help in organizing the audience in small-group rooms or group questions and comments for discussion; monitor the time; send messages to the other people involved in the webinar, and so on.

### Interpretation

If the webinar is international, the translation function is an important part of making the event accessible. The people responsible for simultaneous interpretation, in the case of the Zoom platform, for example, need to be registered in advance with their respective email addresses. Then, they will receive a specific link that will give them access to the interpretation channel. It is also recommended that these people are online in advance so that the sound levels and transmission can be tested to ensure that everything works perfectly.

In addition, a headset with a good microphone and a quiet room are important factors for those performing this task. A common misconception with multi-lingual webinars is to start in one language and not offer initial instructions in the other languages used in the event right at the beginning.

It should be considered that there are people who do not know how to activate the interpretation function in the platform and such instructions should be done as soon as the webinar starts, in all the languages that will be used in the occasion, either orally by the presenter or in text format in the chat.

### **A webinar script**

A webinar needs a specific length of time and consists of different schedules. Developing a script is essential for everything to go as planned and for good time management. In a text document you can define each part of the webinar and determine how many minutes will be used for each part.

*Spontaneity is an important feature to make your webinar interesting, but writing down what you intend to say in the script helps to avoid repetition, long and tiring speech, and ensures clear and objective communication with the audience.*

Here we will suggest an example of the structure of a script and briefly state what is expected from each part. As we have different contexts and possibilities, it is recommended to adapt the script to specific needs.

### **Defining the topic and title, date and time**

This information is essential for organizing the webinar. Right at the top of the script we suggest adding basic information like the webinar's title, date and time, name of the person(s) invited, name of the people who will present, moderate, take care of the technical part and interpretation.

### **Welcome and introduction**

Every webinar needs to start with an introduction. In this part, the host is expected to welcome the people who are attending, mention the name and topic of the webinar and give the initial instructions for the smooth running of the event, e.g., remember to keep your microphone muted, activate the simultaneous interpretation option (if any), explain how the interaction between the audience and the guests will take place, and so on.

At this moment people receive the information they need to participate in the webinar, so self-explanatory and objective phrases help a lot.

### **Introducing the theme and guests**

After the initial information, it is time to introduce the invited persons to the audience and give more details about the topic being addressed. The best way to introduce the guest is to ask for a brief biography in advance, emphasizing information that is relevant to the webinar topic.

*It is also a good idea to summarize the topics the guest will cover in order to prepare the audience for what comes next.*

### **Opening question/Transition to the guest(s)**

Before inviting the guest(s) to speak, it is important to transition from one moment to the next with an opening question that indicates where the presentation will start. The presentation can be done in one block or in several thematic blocks. All this can be defined by the organizing team, and in the case of thematic blocks, the questions that will guide each block must also be planned and sent to the speaker(s) in advance.

### **End of presentation/Return to discussion time**

After the guest has presented their topic, the moderator returns to the webinar conductor, who at this moment should thank the guest for the presentation and eventually make a few comments about what was presented. This is a good technique to summarize the content and to awaken and prepare the audience for the moment of debate and interaction. For this to be done in a way that contributes to the webinar, it is important that the people responsible for conducting the webinar take notes on the speech of the guest(s).

The discussion and interaction phase with the audience can be done in two ways: with spontaneous questions and comments from the audience to the guest(s) in an open way in the plenary group; or through a script of questions moderated in small groups or breakout rooms.

*Both options offer different opportunities, and it is up to the coordinating team to decide what applies best to the respective context.*

Members of the LAC Youth Network prepare to lead evening devotion at the 2023 Pre-Assembly of the Americas.

*Photo: Eugenio Albrecht*

## Engaging the audience – Comments and questions with the whole audience

The space for comments and questions is an important moment in the webinar. Here people can bring contributions and points of view to the topic under discussion. However, this does not always happen spontaneously, so it is important to encourage comments and questions during the presentation itself. This can be done orally by the presenters or moderators while conducting the webinar, or in text format via chat.

Ideally, the audience should ask questions while the presentation is in progress, so that when the time for interaction and questions begins, there are already contributions ready for feedback. If this does not happen, a good solution is for the webinar organizers to prepare possible questions and comments in advance.



### Small groups

If the number of participants is large and there is the possibility for several discussions, small groups can be an alternative to optimize participation, by using the “breakout rooms” function.

*By dividing the audience into several rooms, the webinar enables more active participation and contribution, with more time for each participant to interact and talk more directly with the others.*

For this, it is necessary to prepare a script of questions to guide the small-group discussion and, if possible, to organize moderators for each group, who share the questions assigned and help with time management, ensuring that everyone in the group has a chance to contribute.



Finally, if small groups are the chosen alternative, it might be worthwhile to go back to the plenary group and ask the facilitators or someone from each group to summarize briefly the points discussed, obviously managing time and avoiding long speeches that do not contribute to the webinar interaction, since the goal was to discuss in small groups.

### Acknowledgement and closing

After the discussion phase, the webinar is already moving toward the final stages. In this part it is important to once again thank the person who was invited and also the audience that participated. If there are announcements, upcoming events, or any other relevant information, this is the time to announce them. Then a prayer, song, or video are good ways to close the webinar.

A group discussion.

Photo: LWF/Eugenio Albrecht

### Example of script:

<b>TITLE:</b>	How to organize a Webinar
<b>DATE:</b>	28/02/2022
<b>TIME:</b>	3pm EST
<b>GUEST:</b>	Renato
<b>PRESENTATION AND MODERATION:</b>	Karla and Samuel
<b>TECHNICAL:</b>	Alejandra and David
<b>INTERPRETATION:</b>	Jazmin
[KARLA]	Introduction (5 min)
[SAMUEL]	Presentation of guest and topic (5 min)
[RENATO]	Explanation about the theme (25 min)
[ALEJANDRA]	Questions and comments/ small group discussion (15 min)
[DAVID]	Acknowledgements/small group discussion/closing (15 min)

### **Behind the scenes – organizing, routing, and executing**

To run the webinar, it is important to organize a coordination team. This team can deliberate and decide on the necessary tasks for running the virtual event. After deciding on a theme for the webinar, the person or persons invited, the date and time of the event, it is necessary to divide tasks among the team to optimize time and avoid task overload. At this point the different responsibilities for the webinar are also decided.

The main tasks include:

- Contacting the person or persons invited by making a formal invitation and checking their availability on a given date and time;
- Preparing the texts of each part of the webinar in order to organize what will be said in the presentation and moderation parts;
- Preparing and sending to the guests what is expected of them on the topic(s) to be presented;
- Requesting a short biography and photos of the invited person to use for publicizing the event;
- Preparation of questions for moderation role including in small groups;
- Planning and execution of online publicity (social media network posts, invitations, etc.)

Finally, the team needs to be aware of possible changes and adaptations that may be necessary.

Prior to the webinar it is also advisable to schedule a rehearsal with everyone involved in organizing the event. This way it is possible to test the structure and, if necessary, make changes to the script. The rehearsal also serves as an opportunity to check the sound, connection, transmission and simultaneous interpretation, if the latter is necessary.

It is important to note that during the webinar itself communication between the organizing team also ensures the smooth running of the event. In addition to the “private message” tool available on Zoom, a group on WhatsApp, Messenger or other chat applications can help circumvent possible unexpected situations and exchange important information about what is happening at the time of the webinar.

As mentioned earlier, there are many possibilities for organizing and executing a webinar. The intention of this presentation is to offer an overview of some possibilities in order to inspire the elaboration of this virtual event format, adapting it to each context and need. With this, the network of young Lutherans around the world has one more tool of approach and exchange of experiences.

*Take advantage of it!*

Youth from Latin America and the Caribbean gather at the LWF Pre-Assembly of the Americas in Bogotá, Colombia, April 2023.

*Photo: LWF/ Eugenio Albrecht*





# Suggested songs


**Song:** *Canção da chegada*  
(Livro de Canto da IECLB – n° 8)

**Song:** *Cada dia o dia inteiro*  
(Livro de Canto da IECLB – n° 640)


**Song:** *Momento Novo*  
(LCI da IECLB – n° 605)

**Song:** *Éste es mi clamor*


**Song:** *Señor mi Dios.*  
(N° 183 en el Canto y Fe)

 **no hay partitura**

**Song:** *“Vivir no es solo vivir”*

 **no hay partitura**

**Song:** *Señor que nuestra vida sea*  
(N° 295 Canto y Fe)

 **no hay partitura**

**Song:** *Momento nuevo*

**Song:** *Vienen con alegría, Señor*

**Song:** *Yo tengo fe*

**Song:** *Somos uno en Cristo*  
(Celebremos su Gloria, No. 461)

**Song:** *Noble Sostén*  
(Celebremos su Gloria, No. 378)

**Song:** *Descanso en ti*  
(Celebremos su Gloria, No. 377)

**Song:** *Vienen con alegría*

**Song:** *Un pueblo que camina*



# LWF member churches

## Latin America and the Caribbean

Evangelical Church of the River Plate

United Evangelical Lutheran Church

Bolivian Evangelical Lutheran Church

Evangelical Church of the Lutheran  
Confession in Brazil

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile

Lutheran Church in Chile

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia

Lutheran Costa Rican Church

United Evangelical Church in  
Cuba Lutheran Synod

Salvadoran Lutheran Church

Augustinian Lutheran Church of Guatemala

Guatemala Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana

Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras

Mexican Lutheran Church

The Nicaraguan Lutheran Church  
of Faith and Hope

Lutheran Church of Peru

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Suriname

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Venezuela

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Saint Lucas Church,  
Bogotá, Colombia.

*Photo: LWF/Albin Hillert*



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