

to service and witness in the world and that we are willing to reorder our priorities, tasks and lives to follow Jesus.

27 We remember in our prayers pastors and seminary students serving in Federal Chaplaincy Ministries in unique settings of the U.S. military, Veterans Affairs hospitals and federal correctional institutions.

28 Ask God to open our eyes to the ways – intentional and unintentional – in which we isolate our neighbor, cause others to stumble in their faith or stir division and conflict; ask for forgiveness and for the Spirit to redirect and inform our thoughts, words and actions for the well-being of our neighbor and the church.

29 Give thanks for the impact of the International Women Leaders initiative in partnership between ELCA Global Mission, global companion churches and the colleges and universities of the ELCA, launched as part of *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*.

30 Pray God continues to influence our lives and guide us through the teaching and example of prophets, teachers, leaders and Scripture and that we have the wisdom to discern what is true and flows from the word of God.

31 Give thanks for leaders who help us understand stewardship and how to use what God has entrusted to each of us and our communities – gifts from God to be used with generosity, compassion and responsibility in service to our neighbor and for the growth of the church.

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

PRAYER VENTURES

JANUARY 2018

These petitions are offered as guides to prayer for the global, social and outreach ministries of the ELCA, as well as for the needs and circumstances of our neighbors, communities and world. Thank you for your continued prayers for the life and mission of this church.

1 *Name of Jesus* Baptized into Christ, we bear the name of Jesus and are prepared for serving our neighbor and spreading the good news of what God has done. Give thanks for the gift of new life we have in Jesus Christ, and pray that we are bold, eager witnesses in the world – never shrinking from the work to which God calls us.

2 A new year often brings new hopes, resolutions, goals and beginnings. Ask God for strength and perseverance to meet the challenges of new and unfamiliar endeavors, and shout praise for God's forgiveness and love that renews us and frees us to get up, learn and begin again when we stumble or fail.

3 Give thanks for the bishops of the ELCA, and pray they find mutual support, grow in wisdom and skill for their ministry, and that their faith is strengthened through time together at the Bishops' Academy.

4 Seasonal workers in our communities often go unnoticed during the busyness of the holidays. Pray that workers now searching for new jobs find steady, fair employment to sustain their families and that our faith communities embrace them with support, concern and welcome.

5 During Human Trafficking Prevention Month, we lift up prayers for victims and survivors of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation around the world and ask God to stir our resolve and actions to care for survivors, end these crimes and address the causes of trafficking, such as poverty, hunger and sexism.

6 *Epiphany of Our Lord* God's purpose and redemptive work are revealed in the light of Jesus Christ to all humankind. Pray our hearts and minds are receptive to better understanding – through faith in Christ – the mystery of God's boundless grace, wisdom and power.

7 *Baptism of our Lord* We remember our baptism and pray for the Spirit to remind us daily that we are children of God, forgiven and called to lives of service and witness in the world.

8 Ask God to help us recognize, confess, confront and correct sexist attitudes, behaviors and systems in ourselves, our workplaces, the church and society, knowing that the injustice and pain inflicted on women and girls hurts everyone. Pray that our Christian witness in the world is marked by respect for all people and the courage to learn and change as the spirit of God works in us.

9 We remember in our prayers those who continue to recover and rebuild after the devastation left in the wake of storms and fires, that individuals, families and communities will find new ways forward with the support and encouragement of the church, relief agencies and one another.

10 Sometimes God's word and voice can be loud and majestic and shake all of creation. Pray we recognize God's voice in daily life and give thanks for how it strengthens us and gives us peace.

11 We remember in our prayers companion-synod relationships with global-church partners, and ask God to bless and nourish these partnerships for mutual learning and encouragement, sharing our gifts and resources, building up the church and serving our neighbor.

12 Give thanks and praise to God for the comfort, order and hope God brings to our lives, especially in times of uncertainty, conflict, discouragement and what may seem like chaos.

13 Pray for those who have responded to God's call to serve as ELCA Missionaries and in the Young Adults in Global Mission program that their faith and service are a bright and lively witness to the good news of Jesus Christ and to God's presence and work in the world.

14 We pray that when Jesus invites us to "Come and see," we are moved by faith to follow and invite our neighbors – friends and strangers alike – to hear the good news of Jesus Christ, believe and also follow.

15 *Martin Luther King Jr. Day* We remember in our prayers saints who have gone before us, like Martin Luther King Jr., and courageous people in our midst today who endure criticism and suffering for the sake of standing with, advocating for and serving God's children who suffer injustice, neglect or oppression.

16 Recalling how God spoke through the boy Samuel, we pray we are attentive to the presence of God's spirit and word in children and youth and

that we help young people grow as faithful followers, leaders and servants in the body of Christ.

17 Give thanks to God for people who mentor us in our faith, daily life and work and have helped us grow and mature through the sharing of their gifts, wisdom, life experiences and faith.

18 *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* We are one in the body of Christ. Pray for our ecumenical partners, global church partners and our brothers and sisters in Christ everywhere, that God will bless and further our work together for the purpose of building up Christ's church in the world.

19 The spirit of God is always at work in the church. We pray God will renew the church and our faith communities, especially when we grow weary, have questions about serving in changing communities, find ourselves in conflict or need to refresh our sense of mission.

20 We remember in prayer people of all ages and stages of life who are discovering and preparing for new vocations or studying for new professions and pray they and their families find the faith, strength and encouragement needed to move through times of anticipation, uncertainty and personal change.

21 The ELCA and The Episcopal Church are committed to prayer, fasting and advocacy addressing cuts to public programs that are vital to hungry people living in poverty. Pray for these concerns, our leaders and people in need on the 21st of each month through December 2018.

22 We ask God to bless the ongoing work of reconciliation and healing among Christians and other faiths and to stay focused in our striving for unity for the sake of the world.

23 With humility and awe, we praise God for knowing our innermost thoughts and ways and for always seeking us out and embracing us like a loving parent.

24 We pray that everyone in need of warmth and shelter through the winter months has safe, dependable housing, especially elders and those who are homeless, and that we are unceasing in our work to care for and respect the dignity of people in need.

25 *Conversion of Paul* Praise God for the miraculous ways our faith and lives are changed as the Spirit works in us and among us.

26 Just as the disciples put down their fishing nets in response to Jesus' invitation to follow, we pray we are alert and receptive to God's calling us