

24 January is when outdoor ministry leaders begin recruiting staff for our summer camps. Pray that the Spirit will inspire young adults to respond to the call to serve in our outdoor ministries across the country and to share their faith and enthusiasm with campers of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.

25 Ask God to help us understand that force, vengeance, wealth disparity and dominance over others are inconsistent with God's justice and power, and that these are revealed to us through Jesus' life and teaching, which exemplify humility, compassion, generosity, service, love without prejudice and advocacy for neighbors in need.

26 Rejoice and give thanks to God for uniting us in the body of Christ, which welcomes our diverse gifts, experiences, questions, complexities, ethnicities and cultures.

27 Pray for victims of violence and their families, that God will ease their pain, suffering and grief; pray for those who commit murder or other acts of violence, that God's grace will transform their hearts and lives.

28 Pray for our leaders and congregations, which create opportunities for us to study Scripture, share our questions and thoughts in conversation, and affirm one another's gifts for living the gospel, serving our neighbor and growing the church.

29 Pray for the ministry and impact of Lutheran Services in America, a nationwide network of 300 Lutheran social ministry organizations that serve 6 million people each year, using the gifts and skills of 250,000 paid staff and 150,000 volunteers.

30 Pray that our faith and confidence in Christ will embolden us to be public bearers of good news, hope and wholeness for all people, even in the face of intimidating challenges, criticism or skepticism.

31 Pray that the Spirit will help us understand and practice the qualities of love that God has shown us and that the apostle Paul commends to members of the church in Corinth: "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth" (1 Corinthians 13:4-6).

This resource may be copied and shared among members and friends of the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Contact info@elca.org for additional information. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631-4101. Telephone: 800-638-3522, ext. 2458.



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PRAYER VENTURES

JANUARY 2022

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 *New Year's Day* Ask God to ground our aspirational resolutions and ventures in the promise that, through Christ, we will live in grace and freedom, knowing we are not alone in our endeavors.

2 Give thanks that, through Jesus Christ, we perceive God's grace, truth, creative might and will for humankind.

3 *Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month* Throughout this month, pray for those victimized by human trafficking, which disproportionately affects women and girls. Pray for an end to this global tragedy, and pray that all who suffer its abuse, injustice and oppression will find freedom, healing, support and safety, especially in our communities of faith.

4 Ask God to bless the studies, service and travel of college and university students involved in "J-Term" experiences. Pray that they will grow in faith, wisdom, knowledge and understanding of the world, and that their experiences will inspire their vocational discernment.

5 Praise God for attending to the needs of humanity through us, utilizing our diverse gifts and generosity to serve our neighbors in need, everywhere.

6 Ask the Spirit to make us bright lights in our communities and world, sharing the good news of healing and hope in Jesus Christ and demonstrating God's unbiased love through our actions, words and influence.

7 Thank and praise God for restoring our relationships as children of God, so that we can live with faith, hope and freedom as new creations and siblings in Christ.

8 After a two-year pause during the COVID-19 pandemic, the ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission program is getting ready to send volunteers out into the world again. Pray that the Spirit will guide the prayerful reflection of young adults as they discern how to respond to God's call to service and ministry with our global companions and churches.

9 Pray that everything we do during our baptismal journey in this world will point to God, who has redeemed us and redirected our lives through the birth, life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus – our Savior, teacher, guide and friend.

10 Continue to pray for healing and unity in our nation, and ask God to draw us closer to our neighbors, especially those we perceive as different or opposed to our perspectives, beliefs or values. Pray that we will grow in understanding and respect for one another and will work together for the well-being of our communities and neighbors in need.

11 Give thanks to God for our companions and partners in ministry, especially the Lutheran World Federation, World Council of Churches, National

Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, Lutheran Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations Network, and our full communion partners.

12 Give thanks for the daily, life-giving work of the Spirit, which creates, strengthens and sustains our devotion to Jesus Christ. Pray that the Spirit will renew us and empower us to live as people of faith, gathered and equipped to love and serve our neighbor, bear hope into the world and share the gospel with all people.

13 Join our global companion churches in prayers of thanksgiving and hope for the scholarship awardees of ELCA International Women Leaders, which supports the education of women around the world through seminars, south-to-south exchanges, in-country study programs, and degree programs at ELCA colleges and universities.

14 Praise God, who is mighty and eternal, the creator of all that exists and the source of our blessings and strength.

15 Pray for our neighbors who are struggling with or recovering from COVID-19, discovering the long-term effects that will impact their lives or grieving the loss of friends or loved ones. Continue to pray for the well-being and renewal of health care workers dedicated to serving others in times of illness and vulnerability.

16 By turning water into wine during the wedding at Cana, Jesus taught us how deeply God is engaged in every aspect of our human life – our joys, worries, celebrations, problems and sorrows. Praise God for knowing us so well!

17 *Martin Luther King Jr. Day* Remember in prayer the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his bold work, ministry, vision and sacrifice, which revealed

all people to be children of God deserving respect, opportunity, equality and freedom from unjust laws. Ask God's help in righting the injustices that continue in our nation and throughout the world; pray for the wisdom, humility, courage and persistence needed to welcome all people into our church, society and institutions.

18 *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* Throughout this week, pray with our siblings in Christ from diverse cultures, traditions and confessions around the world for the unity of the church, so that, together, we will shine a bright light of hope, healing and good news on our troubled world.

19 Give thanks for the variety of gifts manifest among our siblings in Christ and for the unity we have in Jesus, which enables us to accomplish together much more than we could on our own.

20 Thank God for our special relationship with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a full communion partner with the ELCA since 1997. Pray for the church, its members and its leaders, that together we will find new strength and resources for the work of sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor, especially in these challenging times.

21 "How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings" (Psalm 36:7). Thank God for surrounding us with love and mercy on which we can rely.

22 Pray that the Spirit will inspire and lead people to respond to God's call to service through ELCA Global Mission as it seeks missionaries, volunteers and interns to walk alongside our global companions.

23 Give thanks that Jesus is our true Savior, light and hope – the Son of God, who lived among us and continues to dwell with us through the Spirit.