

22 Pray for Lutheran outdoor ministry leaders as they recruit young adult staff for summer ministries. Pray that young adults will respond to these leaders' invitation to share their faith, gifts and leadership abilities with campers of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.

23 There's a bit of Jonah in all of us when we question God's wisdom and mercy and balk at doing what God asks of us. Promise to be attentive and responsive to God's work and to trust that God's boundless love and forgiveness are for all people, including ourselves.

24 Give thanks for the ELCA Foundation, which helps us to fund God's work in the world, now and well into the future.

25 *Conversion of Paul* Give thanks for God's presence in our lives and for the work of the Holy Spirit, which changes our lives and the world.

26 Pray for the Deaconess Community of the ELCA, a diverse group of sisters in Christ who courageously proclaim the gospel, work for justice and healing, and serve all people.

27 *Lydia, Dorcas and Phoebe, witnesses to the faith* Pray that when we share the story of God's love and activity in the world, we will remember women in the Bible who professed their faith in God, served as leaders in the church, shared the good news of Jesus Christ and cared for neighbors in need.

28 Praise God that Jesus was born human and knows what our life entails, and that Jesus is the Son of God, revealing the immeasurable power, love and mercy of our Creator.

29 Remember in prayer those who serve in law enforcement in our communities and nation. Give thanks for the many ways they care for our well-being. Pray for their safety and ask the Spirit to nurture their wisdom, compassion and impartial judgment in the exercise of their responsibilities.

30 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding" (Psalm 111:10). Give thanks that, in this verse, fear isn't something negative, threatening or worrisome but instead means awe and respect for God and God's ways, which enable us to practice wisdom, compassion and justice throughout life.

31 Pray for leaders and organizations gathered at the Lutheran Services in America Disability Network Winter Meeting in Phoenix, that the Spirit will inspire and guide their work as they empower people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to lead their best lives in society, the church and the world.

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.



PRAYER VENTURES

JANUARY 2024

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 Give thanks and praise to God, for we have been redeemed through the undeserved gift and sacrifice of Jesus Christ that liberates us from darkness, hopelessness and bondage to sin.

2 Pray without ceasing for an end to the conflicts and humanitarian crises in the Middle East, Ukraine, South Sudan and other countries. Ask God to make us instruments of peace, reconciliation and justice in the world wherever there is turmoil and suffering. Pray for the vital work we do together through Lutheran Disaster Response, ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Lutheran World Federation, Church World Service and other partners.

3 "Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!" (Psalm 148:7-8). Pray for the Spirit to stir our sense of awe for all that God has created and for God's boundless love for humankind.

4 *Human Trafficking Prevention Month* Pray that we will work together diligently to prevent sexual slavery, forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation, including online forms of trafficking. Pray for our communities of faith to be safe places of refuge, respect, care and support for victims and survivors of human trafficking, especially young people of all genders and gender identities.

5 Give thanks that God leads us to the light and truth of Jesus Christ — God’s Son, the promised Messiah — when we might wander aimlessly in despair, longing and chaos.

6 Last year there were over 40,000 gun deaths in our country, including suicides (gunviolencearchive.org). Pray for an end to these senseless deaths and the resulting trauma, grief and anguish that spread through our communities and nation. Ask God to lead us out of hopelessness and inaction and to renew our commitment to end gun violence.

7 *Baptism of Our Lord* Let us give thanks for our baptisms, which marked us as loved and forgiven children of God and welcomed us to a life revitalized and guided by the Spirit. That same Spirit descended upon Jesus during his baptism and accompanied him throughout his life on earth.

8 Pray for the 340 new-start congregations and communities of faith under development in the United States and the Caribbean region, which welcome all God’s people, share Christ’s love and provide spiritual and physical sustenance.

9 What would happen if we awoke and greeted each day with this prayer and invitation to God: “Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth” (Psalm 25:4-5).

10 Remember and give thanks for our siblings in Christ who have gone before us, and for those living among us today who help reveal the mysteries of God’s grace and the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

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

12 Lift up prayers for our neighbors and siblings in Christ who suffer poverty and hunger, oppression and violence, and who are alone and without advocates. Pray that we will look to God to deepen our understanding of justice and peacemaking and to guide our relationships with our neighbors in need.

13 Pray for the ELCA’s Future Church: God’s Love Made Real initiative, which aspires to a welcoming, thriving, connected, sustainable church and envisions a world experiencing the difference God’s grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.

14 Pray that we will respond daily to Jesus’ invitation to follow him and will learn, serve our neighbors in need, share the gospel and invite others to experience God’s love, forgiveness and truth in community.

15 *Martin Luther King Jr. Day* Give thanks and praise for siblings in Christ, such as Martin Luther King Jr., who risk everything to proclaim God’s love and concern for all, stress the inherent value of our neighbors as children of God and awaken us from indifference, inactivity and hesitation to do God’s difficult work in the world.

16 “I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well” (Psalm 139:14). When we doubt ourselves and question our value, remember and give thanks that God created us and knows us inside out, including our quirks, gifts, needs, questions and complexities.

17 Pray for youth and family ministry leaders and volunteers gathering for the ELCA Youth Ministry Network Extravaganza 2024 in New Orleans, that the Spirit will renew their faith, affirm their gifts and equip them to surround young people with God’s grace and mercy.

18 Ask God to renew and strengthen our resolve to end hunger and poverty and to address their root causes in our communities and the world. Promise to listen carefully to our neighbors in need so that we can work together to find appropriate, effective and sustainable solutions.

19 When we are united with Christ, every aspect of our life and being — spiritual, physical and social — is impacted. Pray for the Spirit to help us stay faithful to the ways of God and the example of Christ and to reclaim us when we give undue value and attention to things that distract us.

20 Remember in prayer individuals and families who are homeless. Pray for congregations, community ministries, social service organizations and local and state governments that are working to develop effective, creative and sustainable housing, shelter and care for our neighbors.

21 Jesus Christ is the good news of God’s grace and mercy at the heart of our baptism and faith. Give thanks and praise God for this amazing promise and gift!