

Prayer Ventures for August 2019

1 Give thanks for the 12 young-adult summer interns serving in the ELCA Churchwide office, who are helping our church carry out its mission through sharing generously of their gifts, skills and faith.

2 June 30 marked the successful completion of *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*. Give thanks to God for the generosity of ELCA members and congregations, which makes a difference in the lives of people around the world; pray that we continue to grow and support ministries that serve our neighbor, share the gospel, equip leaders and grow the church.

3 Lift up in prayer farmers, ranchers and agricultural workers who have been adversely impacted by this year's heavy rains, persistent flooding and, in some regions, heat and drought. Pray that they will find the support and assistance they need, be able to maintain their livelihoods, and be encouraged by our gratitude and awareness of how their work helps sustain and feed the world.

4 Ask God to grant us the wisdom and humility to understand that our true identity and value lie not in earthly possessions, property, financial assets or positions of power and influence but in a life and faith centered in God's love, word and ways.

5 *ELCA Churchwide Assembly* Pray for voting members, leaders, pastors and guests gathered in Milwaukee for the 2019 Churchwide Assembly: "We are church." Pray that the Spirit will guide and energize their spiritual discernment, discussions and decisions, on behalf of the entire church, about how we can do God's work in the world — together.

6 Ask the Holy Spirit to dwell in us and to inspire us as people of faith, transformed by the love of God we experience in Jesus Christ; ask that we might rid ourselves of greed, impurity, anger, hatred, lies and abusive language and instead reflect the image of our creator.

7 Pray for all those engaged in the ELCA Churchwide Assembly as they work together, with the Holy Spirit in their midst, to make decisions that will help guide the work and mission of our church now and in the future.

8 Pray that God will energize and sustain our ecumenical and interreligious work, advocacy and prayers to prevent gun violence, and to

respond to people and communities affected by this violence with support, care and concern for as long as they are needed.

9 Pray that, without boasting or fear, we will speak God's wisdom and truth to all people in every place and circumstance.

10 Pray for congregational leaders and volunteers as they prepare for fall Christian education programs serving all ages; give thanks for their commitment, faith, creativity and service.

11 Pray that, with a spirit of generosity and compassion, we will share all we have received from God with our neighbor, especially those in critical need who long for hope, loving care and relief from suffering.

12 Ask God to bless and extend the impact of ELCA members and congregations as they use the ELCA Good Gifts Catalog to donate generously to specific needs, programs and priorities in communities around the world.

13 Give thanks for the work and ministry of nurses who give of themselves without partiality or hesitation as they tend to the well-being, health and healing of people in congregations, clinics, hospitals, schools, the military and community agencies.

14 Remember in prayer the work and witness of our ELCA missionaries and the seven young people serving in the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program in Israel, Jerusalem/West Bank, Jordan and Palestine.

15 Give thanks and praise for God's attentiveness, help and steadfast love for all humankind.

16 Our church is always prayerfully seeking guidance for the mission, work and witness of the ELCA in this rapidly changing world. Pray that the Holy Spirit will equip and energize us to meet the shifting challenges we face in sharing the gospel and in doing God's work of bringing hope, reconciliation and healing to the world.

17 Pray for the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program as it prepares young adults, ages 21-29, for a yearlong journey of service and witness alongside our global companions and churches in nine countries around the world.

18 Pray that our baptism, the work of the Holy Spirit and the teachings and example of our brothers and sisters in Christ might equip us for

the challenges and difficulties we encounter as we follow Jesus, share the gospel, serve our neighbor and strive to live each day according to God's ways and desires for humankind.

19 Give thanks to God for our church and for our ecumenical and interreligious partners as they work for the humane treatment of all who present themselves at our borders seeking asylum. Give thanks for our agencies and faith communities that have welcomed, engaged and served migrant families. And pray for those migrants, who have arrived in the United States seeking safety, justice, reconnection with families and relatives, and the opportunity to build new lives without fear.

20 Ask God to dispel the fear, anxiety and hopelessness that children and youth internalize as a result of gun violence and threats in our communities, schools and public gathering places. Pray that we might become bearers of hope and concern for them, and fearless agents of change and peace in our nation and the world.

21 Pray that students, parents and teachers will be renewed for the coming academic year and that students in need of school supplies or tuition assistance will be provided with what they need to ease their concerns and further their educations.

22 Pray that our hearts will be filled with the biblical stories of people of faith, that we will recognize and give thanks for the "cloud of witnesses" surrounding us today, and that we will look to Jesus' teachings and example to guide and encourage our faith.

23 Pray that the new ELCA resource "A 60-Day Journey Toward Justice in a Culture of Gun Violence" will invite readers to face the painful truth of gun violence and to work for its prevention as people of God who strive for justice and peace.

24 Pray for coaches and student athletes of all abilities as they train for upcoming sports seasons. Pray that they will be safe from injury, experience joy and confidence in their physical activities, and have positive, caring people in their lives to help them cope with the challenges they might face — personal, family, spiritual, social, academic and athletic.

25 Ask God to grant us the wisdom, boldness and compassion to care for our neighbors in need, even when doing so is inconvenient, interrupts our routines or forces us to reconsider traditions, laws, rules and practices of society and the church.

26 Many of our ELCA outdoor ministry staff are ending their summer of service and transitioning back to school, new employment or other service opportunities in the church. As they work to discern their vocations and futures, ask the Holy Spirit to guide, inspire and equip them to share their faith and gifts with the church and society and to respond to God's call to service and ministry.

27 Pray that we will respect and affirm how God calls and equips children and youth to share the gospel, serve as leaders and examples in the church, and do God's work in the world together with people of all ages and abilities.

28 Remember in prayer our ELCA missionaries serving in China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, Nepal, Singapore and South Korea. Give thanks for their service and witness as they accompany our global companions in ministries of theological education, teaching, counseling, communications and parish ministry.

29 Pray for seasonal summer employees and staff across our nation who worry about finding new employment and housing in the months to come, and pray that our congregations will be communities of faith where people in transition are welcomed and supported.

30 Remember in prayer students who are beginning or continuing their seminary education in response to God's call to leadership and service. Pray that God will equip them to share their faith and wisdom, serve their neighbor, manage and guide the work of congregations for the sake of mission, and inspire others to bold witness in an ever-changing world.

31 Give thanks and praise to God, who is "merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love."