

[Prayer Ventures for September 2019]

1 Pray that we learn humility, respect and hospitality from the example and teachings of Jesus and the Spirit at work in the lives of people around us, and that we exercise in daily life this regard for others without bias, reluctance or feeling that we deserve something in return.

2 *Labor Day* On this day we recognize and pray for the work and service people do to sustain their families and benefit their communities and society. Pray that all receive fair wages, work in safe environments, are renewed through times of sabbath, and experience joy and fulfillment in their labor; pray that all those who seek employment will find work and for the well-being, care and support of people unable to work.

3 Give thanks to God for our early-learning centers, K-12 schools, lay schools for ministry, colleges and universities, and seminaries, and for the significant role they serve in faith formation, education and equipping leaders throughout life.

4 Praise God for filling us with mercy, compassion, joy, a sense of justice, and a bold, confident faith that spills over into the world.

5 Give thanks and praise to God as we celebrate with the 2019 graduates of the ELCA International Women Leaders initiative: Sthela Gun Holly Hanitrinirina (Malagasy Lutheran Church); Yuen Ching Lee, Abby Lai and Melissa Neo (Lutheran Church in Malaysia); and Elisa Pérez-Trejo (Mexican Lutheran Church). Give thanks for all who have supported them throughout the program, and ask God to bless their service and ministry as they move forward.

6 Pray that our actions, words, work, service and concern for our neighbors in need — be they strangers, friends or forgotten — bear witness to the word and ways of God made known to us through Jesus Christ and instilled in us by the Holy Spirit.

7 Give thanks for the ministry and witness of ELCA missionaries serving alongside our global companions in Senegal, South Africa and Eswatini, as well as the six young people serving in Senegal and the four serving in Southern Africa as part of the ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission program.

8 *"God's work. Our hands."* *Sunday* Pray for children, youth and adults involved in volunteer community service across the country in partnership with neighboring congregations, Lutheran agencies and community organizations. Give thanks for the living, daring confidence in God's grace from which our every act of service throughout life flows!

9 Continue to pray for peace, justice, reconciliation and economic opportunity for the people and countries of Central America, and pray that the United States and other nations will respond to their needs with humanitarian and economic assistance, collaborative efforts to find effective, lasting solutions to the crises they are experiencing, and prayerful, enduring support.

10 Praise God for knowing us better than we know ourselves and assuring us that we are loved and are never forgotten or alone in the world.

11 Pray that the peace, confidence and grace of God given to us in Jesus Christ will prevail and calm our every fear and anxiety in these turbulent and uncertain times.

12 As members of the body of Christ we are like “trees planted by streams of water,” sustained in all that we do, nurtured to bear fruits of the Spirit and strengthened to follow the word and ways of God. Pray that we are not shy about inviting others to have faith in God’s redeeming love through Christ and enjoying the life-enriching blessings of being in a community of faith.

13 Approximately 1 in 10 people around the world can’t access the food he or she needs to live an active, healthy life; more than 40 million people in the United States are unsure where their next meal will come from; and 10% of the world’s population lives in extreme poverty on less than \$1.90 per day. Remember in prayer those who suffer with poverty and hunger, and give thanks for the work of ELCA World Hunger, our congregations and other partners as they respond to communities in need, striving for sustainable solutions that get at the root causes of hunger and poverty.

14 *Holy Cross Day* Today, give thanks and lift up words of celebration for Jesus’ self-sacrificing, redemptive, life-giving offering on the cross for the sake of all humanity.

15 *National Hispanic Heritage Month* Give thanks for the gifts, contributions and rich cultural diversity of our Latino brothers and sisters and pray for the work and growth of the 147 ELCA Latino ministries in the United States as they share the gospel, encourage our unity in Christ, support pastors and lay leaders, and serve their neighbors in many community contexts.

16 Pray for God’s mercy, forgiveness and guidance when we stray from God’s ways or find ourselves worshipping wealth, earthly possessions, power or status more than we worship God.

17 Pray that our church in all its expressions — congregations, synods and the churchwide organization — are guided by the wisdom and enthusiasm stirred by the Holy Spirit to implement and live into decisions made during synod assemblies and the ELCA Churchwide Assembly for the sake of doing God’s work in the world, sharing the gospel, growing the church and serving our neighbor.

18 Pray that we might be persistent and caring in seeking, inviting and welcoming people who have left our congregations, feel unwelcome because of who they are or what they’ve done, have been hurt by conflict or feel they have no place in the church, the body of Christ.

19 Pray for relief and access to clean water where people are suffering from extreme heat and drought in the world; ask God to help us work with one another to care for our environment and precious water resources, find ways to ease and prevent the impact of climate change, and share generously our resources to provide for the essential needs of people everywhere.

20 With grateful hearts, thank God for the mercy and grace we receive through Jesus Christ, who embraces who we are in all our humanness and shortcomings and transforms us for service and faithful leadership in the world.

21 *Matthew, apostle and evangelist* Pray that we will serve as willing, faithful and bold followers of Christ even though our backgrounds, life experiences, professions and gifts are diverse and may seem incongruent with what we imagine God desires in a disciple or evangelist.

22 Pray that the Holy Spirit will work in us and guide us to be faithful, trustworthy and responsible with all God has entrusted to us in this life, that we may serve our neighbors in need, care for creation and honor God.

23 Remember in prayer ministry candidates who have responded to God's call to ministry and leadership through the church and are involved in the process of preparation, discernment and waiting for assignment. Pray for candidates and their families during this time that can be both joyful and anxious; and pray that leaders and ELCA staff involved in the assignment process will be guided by the Holy Spirit in their discernment and decision-making.

24 Pray for the 15 ELCA missionaries serving in parish ministry and education as they work alongside our companions in Slovakia and Russia.

25 Praise God who exists throughout the universe and all time yet has compassion and concern for people who are poor and in great need; pray that we will be moved by God's ways, examples and commands to show attentiveness, mercy, compassion and love for our neighbors in need.

26 Pray for the ministry of ELCA Advocacy, its Washington office and its state public policy offices as they work with ELCA members to develop and advance legislation that will overcome poverty, defend God's creation and promote peace, dignity and justice.

27 Give thanks that God is slow to anger and inclined to forgive our sins, shortcomings, mistreatment of our neighbors and deliberate wrongdoings, and to treat us with mercy and compassion for the sake of restoring our relationship with God and setting us back on track in our daily lives.

28 Pray for Bible study leaders, teachers and volunteers serving in our congregations who share their faith, help us study and explore Scripture, join us in prayerfully and thoughtfully wrestling with spiritual questions, and help us connect the word of God with everyday life.

29 Reflect on the gifts, abilities and courage of faith we have received from the Holy Spirit, and on the joy and confidence we have in the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ; give thanks for who we have become in Christ for the sake of mission and service in the world.

30 Give praise and glory to God that through our worship and liturgy we will be reminded of the promises spoken at our baptisms, the forgiveness and new life we receive through the washing with water and the word of God, and the call we receive to pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness — as individuals and communities of faith.