

Prayer Ventures for February 2020

1 *Black History Month* Give thanks for the gifts, accomplishments, influence and witness of our African descent neighbors and siblings in Christ — we stand together to glorify God as partners in the gospel, doing God's work in the world together. Though we are unified as siblings in Christ, we ask God to guide and help our church as it recommits to the work of racial justice, socioeconomic equity, racial reconciliation and ending racism.

2 Pray that God will soften our hearts and focus our love on our neighbors in poverty and food insecurity, communities grieving for victims of violence, people in regions of conflict and war, refugees and immigrants, and people who are persecuted or disparaged.

3 Ask God to deepen our understanding of the peace that God desires for the world. Pray that the Spirit will inspire us to be bold peacemakers grounded in God's vision of peace, the gospel and love for our neighbor.

4 Pray that when we are embarrassed or hesitant to speak of the crucified and risen Christ, our faith in God's love and the gospel message will encourage and embolden us to be confident yet humble witnesses in the world.

5 We are scattered around the world as siblings in Christ, seeking and affirming our unity in the mystery of the Trinity and the good news of Jesus Christ. Explore the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, which enables us to journey in prayer throughout the world every week of the year, affirming our solidarity with Christians everywhere.

6 Pray for ELCA outdoor ministry leaders who are seeking young adults to serve in summer programs across the country. Ask that the Spirit be at work in young adults and move them to respond to God's call to serve and share their faith, skills, gifts and enthusiasm with children, youth and adults.

7 Pray that our hearts will be open to doing what God asks of us: to hold to what is good, to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with God.

8 Give thanks for pastors and seminary students who respond to God's call to serve as federal chaplains, ministering to inmates and staff at federal prisons and to staff, patients and their family members at Veterans Affairs medical centers.

9 As children of God, we are the salt of the earth and light of the world, bearing witness to God's love and mercy. Pray that we will understand how our good works, words and faith — even when unseen or unappreciated in our lifetime — can have profound, far-reaching impact.

10 ELCA Young Adult Ministry offers inspiration, opportunities and resources to young people aged 18 to 30. Pray for churchwide staff and leaders across the church as they work with young adults to form faith, discover identity and gifts, discern vocation and develop servant leadership.

11 Pray for church leaders as they gather for the Ignite the Church Conference in Orlando, Fla., an annual event that fosters conversation among leaders and inspires the church to live out its tradition of renewal.

12 Give praise and thanks to God for being our light and strength throughout our baptismal journey of following God's ways; for being generous, merciful and compassionate; and for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

13 The light and warmth of God's love is welcome nourishment for our faith and spirit. Pray that God's love will move us to provide both spiritual and physical light, warmth and shelter for people who long for hope and relief during these dark, cold days of winter.

14 Amid our worries and turmoil, we ask for God's help in seeking freedom for the oppressed, sharing our food resources with the hungry, sheltering the homeless and attending to the cries of people in poverty.

15 Pray that we will take to heart Jesus' teachings that love is not weakness and that power does not equal force or superiority. Pray that we will follow Jesus' example by being humble, loving servants in the world and will trust in the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us and through us.

16 Trusting in God's grace and forgiveness, pray that we will be repentant and humble when we consider our daily actions, words and thoughts, as well as what we fail to do. Ask God to redirect our lives so we might follow God's ways and commandments, resist comparing ourselves to others and avoid citing cultural norms to rationalize contrary behavior.

17 Pray for our president, legislators and other public servants, that their decisions and actions will be guided by a spirit of compassion and justice, a commitment to peacemaking and

building relationships globally, and a determination to work across ideologies and political divisions for the well-being of our communities and of people in need.

18 Give thanks for ELCA Global Mission programs, relationships, opportunities and partnerships with global companions that bring us together as the body of Christ for doing God's work in the world.

19 Give thanks for the happiness we experience when we walk in the ways and wisdom of God.

20 Stewardship is more than annual pledge cards, balanced budgets and financial responses to God's love — it's a way of life. Pray that we will recognize and give thanks for the breadth of resources and assets — time, talents, possessions and money — God has entrusted to our care as individuals, families and congregations, and that we will discover ways of using everything we have to live out God's call to love God and our neighbors.

21 We are "God's servants, working together" for the sake of the world, sharing the gospel and growing the church. Pray that we will be of one mind and spirit as God's humble servants, and that we will see accomplishments, growth and change as the result of God's presence and power working through us.

22 Continue to pray for immigrants and refugees, who often experience daunting challenges and loneliness as they pursue sanctuary and a welcoming place to rebuild their lives in this country. Give thanks for the work of congregations, synods, individuals and agencies in welcoming and accompanying immigrants and refugees as part of the ELCA's AMMPARO strategy (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities).

23 Pray that the Spirit will sustain our awe, gratitude and reverence for our savior, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our true source of hope and life.

24 Remember in prayer the thousands of people left homeless after Hurricane Dorian struck the Bahamas this past September. Pray for the long-term relief and recovery of people impacted, and for the extensive rebuilding of their communities and infrastructures by Lutheran Disaster Response in partnership with the Florida-Bahamas Synod, its congregations, and other agencies.

25 Give thanks for the Deaconess Community of the ELCA and for women who have responded to God's call in a variety of roles and settings in the church and world, proclaiming the gospel through ministries of mercy and servant leadership.

26 Pray that we will always be attentive to the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the world and that we will be moved by the Holy Spirit to be bright, shining witnesses, bearing the hope and promises of God.

27 God is great and awesome, forgiving and a lover of justice. Give glory and praise to God!

28 Creation, humanity and nature are knitted together intricately by our Creator in ways that sustain all life and enable the earth to thrive. Pray that we will repent for what we have done to harm or unbalance creation, and that God will grant us wisdom and insight for restoring creation and treating it with care and respect.

29 Give thanks for ELCA missionaries and young people serving in the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission programs in Egypt, Israel, Jerusalem/West Bank and Palestine. Pray that God will bless and further their work with our companions in the Middle East and North Africa, especially in finding nonviolent paths to peace and justice.