

[Prayer Ventures for July 2019]

1 Give praise and glory to God for the wonders of nature, the diversity and interrelatedness of creation and the intriguing mysteries of the universe that humble and inspire us.

2 Through accompaniment, advocacy and awareness-raising, the Peace Not Walls campaign connects ELCA members to our companions in the Holy Land and promotes dignity, full respect for human rights and reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis. Pray that our advocacy, new relationships and work together will lead to healing and enduring peace.

3 Thank God for the work and bravery of firefighters and fire crews who protect life, communities and creation, especially during the lengthening fire seasons in some regions of our nation. Pray for their safety and their physical and spiritual renewal, and for the care, support and reassurance their families need when these first responders are called away to serve.

4 *Independence Day* As we celebrate the gift of freedom, pray for those in our communities, our nation and our world who still experience oppression, persecution or inequality. Ask for God's forgiveness for the ways in which we deliberately or unconsciously exert or support control over others for our own benefit or advantage; pray that we might exercise our freedom responsibly and compassionately for the well-being of all people.

5 Today marks the centennial of the first documented Lutheran camp in the United States, a summer camp in Pennsylvania that involved youth in healthful outdoor activities and equipped them for leadership in the church. Praise God for the rich history of our camps and for all the ways Lutheran outdoor ministries have grown to serve people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, impacting congregational life and mission, nurturing leaders and sharing the gospel in a changing world.

6 Cyclones Idai and Kenneth hit Mozambique this past spring, affecting 2 million people, killing over 750 and leaving devastation. Pray for the people affected, their recovery and the relief effort being conducted by Lutheran Disaster Response in partnership with the Lutheran World Federation, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mozambique and ACT Alliance.

7 Pray that together we might respond with enthusiasm as God sends us into communities and the wider world to care for the needs of our neighbor and share the good news of Jesus Christ. Ask that the

Spirit sustain and encourage us no matter how we are received or how difficult the work may be.

8 Remember in prayer the work of leaders, volunteers and planning teams preparing for the 2021 ELCA Youth Gathering, a meeting of youth and their adult leaders for learning, worship, Bible study, service and fellowship through which young people grow in faith and are challenged and inspired to live out that faith in daily life.

9 Pray for our church to be determined and tireless in advocating for common-sense gun laws and actions that will help prevent gun violence. Pray that our communities of faith might remember those who have lost their lives to gun violence, attend to grieving families and friends, and bring hope and healing to survivors experiencing fear, anger, anxiety, depression and other lingering symptoms of trauma.

10 Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem is owned and operated by the Lutheran World Federation and supported by the ELCA. Pray for our federal government to release the funding approved for Augusta Victoria Hospital and the other members of the East Jerusalem Hospital Network so they can continue their lifesaving health care ministries in the Holy Land.

11 Praise God, make a joyful noise, sing the glory of God's name and "say to God, 'How awesome are your deeds!'"

12 Remember in prayer the work of the Rev. Janelle Neubauer, YAGM country coordinator, and the seven young people serving in the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program with the Lutheran Church of Rwanda in the areas of parish ministry, vocational training for youth, women's ministry, education and community organizing.

13 Pray that the Spirit will guide us — especially the "family of faith" — in how best to support, encourage and care for one another, that we will be faithful servants and witnesses in the world and "not grow weary in doing what is right."

14 Ask the Holy Spirit to help us understand the meaning and relevance of Jesus' parables. Pray that we hear and put into action Jesus' urging for us to care for our neighbor, especially those who suffer in poverty, hunger and illness, and strangers who are unfamiliar or different from us.

15 Remember in prayer our newly elected synod bishops, that they will be inspired, equipped and

sustained in faith and wisdom for serving the church and its leaders in an ever-changing world.

16 Amid the temptations, distractions and pressures of daily life, ask God to teach us the ways, paths and truths that are pleasing to God, and to guide us to be mindful of our neighbor's well-being and wholeness.

17 Pray for neighboring congregations and churches, that we, united in the one body of Christ, will strengthen and encourage one another for growing the church and, with the help of the Spirit, cultivate love, mercy, justice, hope and peace in the world.

18 Remember in prayer the six young people working alongside our companions in Cambodia as part of the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program. Remember also Stephanie Olson, YAGM country coordinator, and the Rev. Phillip Baker, ELCA regional representative for Cambodia, as they work with our global companions to grow the emerging Lutheran Church in Cambodia and prepare pastors, economic development, health care and disaster response.

19 Give thanks for leaders, teachers and other brothers and sisters in Christ who help us better understand God's will, guide us in studying Scripture, strengthen our faith and wisdom, and encourage us to bear joyful witness to God's love and mercy.

20 Pray for empathy, compassion and wisdom in our conversations and actions addressing gun violence, recognizing that no act of violence occurs in a vacuum and that a variety of social factors and human contexts — including mental illness, poverty, substance abuse, hatred and despair — influence the committing of violent acts.

21 Amid daily busyness and work, pause to pray and recall all that God has done and is doing for the sake of all humanity, and listen for what God is asking us to be and do in the world.

22 *Mary Magdalene, Apostle* Pray that we might emulate Mary Magdalene, a disciple of Jesus who witnessed the empty tomb and followed an angel's instructions to go and tell others of Jesus' resurrection. Ask God to stir our faith, courage and willingness to share the life-changing news of a risen Christ with everyone we encounter.

23 Ask the Spirit to revitalize, embolden and guide synods, their congregations and their leaders as they live into and implement decisions and actions resulting from their synod assemblies.

24 God can do amazing and miraculous things, such as fulfilling a promise to Abraham and Sarah that they would bear a child in their old age. Praise God's creative, boundless power and ask that we might be alert and open to how God stretches our faith, imagination and understanding of what's possible.

25 Give thanks for the work of ELCA Racial Justice Ministries in proclaiming our belief that Christ's church is for all people, and for helping the church confront racism, exclusion and violence and move toward fairness and justice in the church and society.

26 Remember in prayer the 10 young people working alongside our companions in Mexico as part of the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program. Remember also the Rev. Meghan Brown Saavedra, YAGM country coordinator, and the Rev. David and Alicia Brondos, ELCA missionaries teaching at the Seminario Luterano Augsburg in Mexico City.

27 Pray for those involved in planning and preparing the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Milwaukee, and for congregations, synods, voting members and leaders who will share their faith, wisdom, concerns and recommendations for strengthening and furthering our participation in God's reconciling work in the world.

28 Give thanks that God is attentive and responsive to us. Pray that we will never be timid about bringing to God our every matter, need, hope, question, sorrow and joy.

29 Pray that we will be moved by God's love and impartiality to extend hospitality and acceptance to our neighbor, especially those who are in need, are strangers to us or are disregarded by society.

30 Give thanks for the fullness of life we have in Christ through faith, and that the light and truth of the gospel and God's grace dwelling within us will transform us so we can convey hope to the world and love and serve our neighbor.

31 *United Nations World Day Against Trafficking in Persons* Human trafficking for forced labor and sexual exploitation is a global issue affecting every nation. Women and girls account for almost three-quarters of all trafficking victims. Pray that the ELCA, our congregations and communities continue to work to end human trafficking, care for survivors and address root causes of trafficking, such as poverty, hunger and sexism.