

[Prayer Ventures for August 2023]

1 “I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:38-39). What a powerful message of love and hope for us to embrace throughout life and proclaim far and wide. Praise God!

2 Pray for ELCA Justice for Women and its partners as they help our church and society address sexism, work for gender justice, advocate for change and encourage people of all genders to work together.

3 Pray for an end to the wildfires across Canada and for the relief of all people and communities affected. Give thanks for the selfless service of firefighters in Canada and from more than 10 other nations, including the United States, as they work together to protect life and respond to this widespread natural disaster.

4 Pray for the elected leaders of our nation, that they will discern what is right and good and serve all people, without prejudice.

5 Pray for an end to the Russia-Ukraine War, the conflict in Sudan and political unrest in other nations. Ask God to help us value and respect one another, exercise compassion and generosity, and find ways to work together to address common problems and challenges.

6 How can we balance our needs against those of our neighbors? Pray that we will learn to care for ourselves without compromising our compassion and generosity toward those in need.

7 Pray for teachers, school staff and administrators in public and faith-based schools as they prepare for a new academic year. Give thanks that they have chosen a vocation of service, education and care for children and youth of all backgrounds and abilities.

8 Pray for refugees around the world displaced and unsettled — sometimes for years — as a result of war and violence, natural disaster, economic crisis, changing climate and ethnic or political persecution.

9 Remember in prayer children, youth and adults impacted by outdoor ministry experiences; pray that they will return to their homes, congregations, schools and communities with rekindled faith, confidence and enthusiasm to serve their neighbors in need.

10 Ask the Spirit to prompt us, throughout our busy days, to pause and behold God’s presence and attentive love.

11 Pray for church leaders and volunteers who prepare fall programs and community ministries in congregations across the country, that their efforts will bear abundant fruit, spread the good news of Jesus Christ, strengthen the faith of people of all ages and serve the diverse needs of our neighbors.

12 *International Youth Day* Join siblings in Christ around the world in praying for young people, giving thanks for their gifts and contributions, and lifting up their concerns and suffering.

13 “Jesus spoke to them and said, ‘Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid’” (Matthew 14:27). Amid fear, loneliness and shaken faith, turn to God in prayer and trust that God is present and attentive to whatever is going on in our lives and the world.

14 Give thanks for nurses, who care for the needs of body, mind and spirit. Lift up the names of nurses in your congregation, in other Lutheran congregations and in other faith communities. Pray for the Lutheran Faith Community Nurse Association and its work to equip faith-community nurses and to foster health and wellness ministries in congregations.

15 Remember in prayer and give thanks for ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) volunteers serving with our companion churches in Senegal, the United Kingdom, Argentina/Uruguay and Jerusalem/West Bank.

16 Give thanks for God’s amazing ways of getting our attention, from the earth-shaking to the silence Elijah experienced on a mountaintop.

17 Pray that, through Scripture and the example of Jesus, we will learn to be generous with our time, money, resources and lives for the sake of our neighbors in need, supporting special ministries and the growth of our church.

18 Pray for strength and faith to proclaim boldly our redemption through faith alone, independent of our work, saying the right words or living a good life.

19 Ask the Spirit to give us wisdom and discipline to care for wildlife and natural resources, for the well-being of creation and humankind.

20 Pray that our Lutheran theology, traditions and practices will not present obstacles for our neighbors and people from other faith traditions. Ask the Spirit to guide what we do and say so that we communicate our faith clearly and simply, reflecting God’s boundless love and forgiveness and demonstrating respect for our neighbor.

21 Pray for companion synod relationships, which connect ELCA synods and congregations with international companions, enabling them to nurture and strengthen one another for life and ministry through prayer, study, communication, exchange of visitors and sharing of resources.

22 Pray for people of all ages and backgrounds who struggle with addiction, recovery and sobriety; pray that they will find effective immediate and long-term assistance and that they will have supportive and nonjudgmental people and communities to turn to — including us.

23 “How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1). It is human nature to notice how we are different from one another. Pray for the courage to trust in

the new selves we receive in Christ and for the wisdom to recognize the blessings of living in unity.

24 Pray for the work of synod bishops, staff and volunteers as they equip and encourage church leaders and congregations in diverse contexts to share the good news of Christ, invite others to believe and follow, and respond with compassion and empathy to neighbors in need — no matter how complex those needs might be.

25 Pray that we will be wise, just and responsible in developing and using technology and will recognize that our faith, curiosity, intellect and creativity are gifts from God, to be used for the well-being of all people and for God’s glory.

26 Give thanks for the six Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service welcome centers across the country, which provide asylum-seekers with case management, health care and counseling, legal assistance, school enrollment for children and youth, and emergency food, housing and financial assistance.

27 “[Jesus] asked his disciples, ‘Who do people say that the Son of Man is?’” (Matthew 16:13). Who do you say that Jesus is? Ask the Spirit to further reveal to us, through Scripture and personal witness, who Jesus is, especially when we are unsure or are reaching for words to express our faith.

28 Many seasonal workers are heading home, back to school or toward new employment. Give thanks for their work and service throughout the summer; pray that they will find employment, housing and benefits that sustain them and their families; and pray that their spirits will be renewed and sustained in welcoming communities of faith.

29 Praise God for the diverse gifts of our siblings in Christ. Give thanks that our unique gifts and abilities intersect to spread the gospel, serve our neighbors in need, and grow and strengthen our communities of faith.

30 Remember in prayer students who live with a range of physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities. Pray that they will receive caring and skilled support, affirmation of their gifts and abilities, and inclusion and encouragement in our congregations.

31 Give thanks for our church’s history of affirming the value of lifelong education. Give thanks for teachers who nurture faith, teach life skills and help people of all ages use their gifts and passions to serve neighbors in need and do God’s work in the world.