

[Prayer Ventures for August 2024]

1 Pray for those recovering in the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl in the Caribbean, the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico and the Texas Gulf Coast region. Pray that their faith and the care and support of neighbors near and far will sustain their hope and reassure them that they are not alone in this time of suffering. Give thanks for the support of congregations, synods and Lutheran Disaster Response.

2 “Elisha said, ‘Give it to the people and let them eat’” (2 Kings 4:42). The food that Elisha intended for the hungry crowd wasn’t scraps or leftovers; it was from the “first fruits” — the first and best of the harvest that was offered to God. Pray that our generosity toward our neighbors in need will come from our first fruits for the sake of their dignity and well-being.

3 Remember our neighbors who are most vulnerable to hot weather, including older adults, children, people who are ill and those without shelter. Pray that they will find public cooling centers and neighbors offering relief.

4 Pray for the Spirit’s presence and work, which enable our words and actions as we stir hope, inspire faith in Jesus Christ and pursue justice and peace for all people.

5 Give thanks for the gift of Christian community, through which the Spirit unites us with siblings offering hospitality, encouragement, wisdom and skills for doing God’s work in the world together.

6 Be persistent in praying for peace, justice and reconciliation in the world, including in Ukraine, Russia, Israel, the Palestinian territories, Sudan, Yemen, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

7 Pray that we will be mindful of our oneness — one body, one baptism, one Spirit, one Lord, one God and one faith — while also valuing our diversity, which strengthens and enriches our life together for bearing public witness to God’s boundless love.

8 Thank God for the ELCA’s special relationship with the Moravian Church in America, a full communion partner since 1999 and one of the oldest Protestant denominations in Christianity. Pray for the church, its members and its leaders, that together we will find strength, resources and encouragement for the work of sharing the gospel, serving our neighbor and growing the church.

9 Praise God, for God provides all that is good and sustains us, imploring us to use these gifts to care for our neighbors in need.

10 Praise God for deacons who are called to serve as ministers of Word and Service in diverse settings and contexts — congregations, special ministries, social services, parish nursing, schools and beyond. Pray that we will identify and encourage siblings in Christ as they discern how they might serve the church, our society and the world.

11 Give thanks to God for the gift of faith in Jesus Christ, the bread of life and son of God, and that this faith brings a new life that stretches beyond human understanding and imagination — eternal life with God.

12 Pray for teachers, school staff and administrators as they prepare to welcome students to a new school year. Ask the Spirit to inspire their energy, creativity, wisdom, compassion for students and enthusiasm for their vocation; promise to affirm those involved in the education and care of our children and youth.

13 “Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:31-32). What could be more relevant than Paul’s letter to the church in Ephesus? Pray that the Spirit will equip us to live by the gospel of Jesus Christ and be imitators of God in all we say and do.

14 Pray for congregational leaders and volunteers who will be launching Christian education opportunities, faith formation programs and community ministries for all ages and abilities this fall.

15 As we discern who should serve as leaders of our nation, ask the Spirit to stir within us civility, wisdom, compassion for our neighbors in need and faith that we are bound together as children of God, with abundant and diverse gifts for uplifting one another and resolving persistent problems and injustices.

16 Pray for high school, college and university athletes, that they will be safe and will embrace the values of teamwork and mutual care and respect.

17 “Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!” (Psalm 130:1-2). Make time today to pray from the depths of your inner being about those things that weigh heavily on you.

18 Give thanks for the sacrament of Holy Communion, in which Jesus Christ comes to us with grace, love and forgiveness, nourishing and strengthening us for doing God’s work in the world.

19 Observe the world around us and give thanks for the multitude of little things that inspire our gratitude, stir our curiosity, make us smile, remind us of someone we need to reach out to, or draw our attention to God’s presence in the world.

20 Remember children and youth who will soon begin a new academic year; pray that they are filled with anticipation and will feel safe, cared for and supported by their parents, teachers and peers.

21 “Beautiful music is the art of the prophets that can calm the agitations of the soul,” wrote Martin Luther. “It is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us.” Praise God for the gift of music in your daily life and when you gather for worship.

22 Remember in prayer pastors and deacons discerning God’s call to service and accepting calls to new places where they are needed. Pray for the Spirit to open their hearts, give them wisdom and strengthen their families during their moves and transitions.

23 Pray for the work of Sumud: For Justice in Palestine and Israel (formerly Peace Not Walls), a new ELCA initiative of accompaniment, advocacy and awareness-raising with our partners in the Holy Land and in the United States, that together we will find the justice required for peace in the Middle East.

24 Pray for youth and adults who experienced the ELCA Youth Gathering and related events, that they will bear spirited witness far and wide to God’s love and presence in the world and that the Spirit will continue to nourish their faith and identity as bold disciples of Christ.

25 “Jesus asked the twelve, ‘Do you also wish to go away?’ Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God’” (John 6:66-69). Ask the Spirit to renew and strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, especially when we grapple with the hard sayings of Jesus and wonder how to live by the gospel.

26 Give thanks for Sunday school teachers, volunteers, Bible study leaders and faith formation coordinators, who share their faith, time and gifts to build up the church and equip all ages for our baptismal journey of witness and service.

27 Give thanks and praise to God for young adults who served at Lutheran summer camps across the country, impacting the lives of children, youth and adults. Pray that they will continue to seek opportunities for ministry in response to God’s call for service and leadership.

28 Pray for understanding that the “whole armor of God” (Ephesians 6:10) is a gift from God to protect our faith in Christ when we are confronted by temptation and things that weaken our faith.

29 Pray for our siblings in Christ around the world who are baptized as children of God, and for our common journey of lifelong growth and learning as we witness to God’s mercy, care for others and celebrate God’s presence in our lives.

30 Give thanks and praise to God for responding to our cries for help — silent and spoken — in times of trouble, when our spirits are crushed.

31 Who or what has drawn your attention and inspired your prayers today? Ask the Spirit to embolden you to move forward and respond.