

[Prayer Ventures for September 2024]

1 “It is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, pride, folly” (Mark 7:21-22). Recognizing that evil intentions and actions come from the human heart, confess your weakness to God, who is rich in mercy and loves us even in our imperfection.

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

3 *National Suicide Prevention Month* Pray for those who feel lonely, depressed and hopeless, that they will find compassion and spiritual renewal in times of darkness and suffering. Ask the Spirit how we might best respond to our neighbors and siblings in Christ who are struggling.

4 Ask the Spirit to help us be doers and hearers of the word of God, looking beyond our own needs and attending to the needs of our suffering neighbors.

5 Give thanks for the thousands of young people who attended the ELCA Youth Gathering in July and raised nearly \$100,000 for Generation Zero-Hunger, supporting ELCA World Hunger in its work to end hunger and poverty and to transform lives, families and communities around the world.

6 Pray for communities and congregations vulnerable to the hurricanes, that they will be prepared, resilient and ready to serve their neighbors impacted by severe weather. Give thanks for the many ways — immediate and long term — that Lutheran Disaster Response gathers resources to relieve suffering, support recovery and healing, and stir hope.

7 Pray for ELCA campus ministries across the country as they engage students, faculty, staff and others to experience God’s abundant grace through worship, study, fellowship, service and pastoral care.

8 “*God’s work. Our hands.*” *Sunday* On this annual day of service, give thanks for the opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America — one church, freed in Christ to love and serve our neighbor. Give thanks for our partnerships of compassion, service and advocacy with other congregations and ecumenical partners, Lutheran health and human service agencies, and community organizations.

9 “I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long” (Psalm 146:2). Thank God for all we have and for God’s loving and merciful presence in our lives.

10 Remember those who deliver food, goods and other resources by truck, merchant ship or train, across the country and around the world. Pray for their safety and well-being, especially when they are separated from family, friends and community. Pray that their loneliness might be

eased by the knowledge that we are always connected, as children of God and siblings in Christ, through a faith that has no bounds.

11 Pray for ELCA missionaries and International Women Leaders serving alongside our global companions in the Middle East and North Africa to share the good news of Jesus Christ, advocate for justice and peace, support communities and leaders, and invite all to journey together as children of God.

12 Ask the Spirit to strengthen our faith in God's immeasurable power to heal, renew and create hope where there is tragedy, suffering and despair. Pray that God will equip us to respond to our neighbors in need and to bear hope, healing and love into the world.

13 Remember in prayer young adults using their faith, gifts and passion in the church, the workplace, the military, volunteer organizations and community service agencies.

14 Racism and bias are persistent and perplexing problems that infect our society, church, institutions and systems. Ask God to forgive us when we disparage and separate ourselves from children of God whom we perceive to be different and less valued. Pray for the courage, wisdom and humility to confront our biases and to strive for love, respect, equity and unity.

15 *First Day of Hispanic Heritage Month* Give thanks to God for the gifts, contributions and rich cultural diversity of our Latiné neighbors and siblings in Christ. Pray for the growth and vitality of the ELCA's 147 Latiné ministries as they share the gospel, support rostered and lay leaders, promote inclusivity and diversity, and serve their neighbors. Pray for the Spirit to guide and further the work of the ELCA Latino Ministries Association.

16 "[Jesus] asked [the disciples], 'But who do you say that I am?'" (Mark 8:29). Pray for the Spirit to help us express our faith in Jesus Christ as Son of the living God — our savior, liberator, teacher, healer and true hope for the world.

17 Give thanks for the Christian Education Network of the ELCA, which connects professionals and volunteers and encourages their mutual care and support as they serve in vocations of lifelong faith formation in congregations and other ministries.

18 "[The Lord has] delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling" (Psalm 116:8). Give thanks and praise to God for hearing our pleas, responding, and accompanying us through every difficulty.

19 Pray that we might honor our Creator by treating people with love and mercy, giving thanks for what we have, practicing generosity, managing natural resources responsibly and telling others of God's amazing power and grace.

20 Recognizing that we each have strengths and shortcomings, pray that we will attend to one another's needs, mindful of God's forgiveness and grace that surround us and of our renewal in the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion.

21 Thank God for the ELCA's special relationship with the United Church of Christ, a full communion partner since 1997. 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.

22 Pray for a spirit of humility and attentiveness to the needs of our neighbor, a spirit shaped by the example of Jesus Christ and uninterested in personal recognition, reward or praise.

23 Pray for those gathered in Portland, Ore., for the conference offered by the ELCA Stewardship and Generosity team in partnership with the Presbyterian Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Ask God to bless their time together, to strengthen stewardship leaders, to equip them with tools to encourage congregational generosity, and to cultivate new approaches to supporting Christ's mission in the world.

24 Ask God to bless our synod bishops, presiding bishop and secretary as they gather in Chicago for the Conference of Bishops, that they might support and encourage one another and help identify, invite and equip new leaders in the church.

25 Pray that our actions, words and relationships will reflect the love of God, which stirs humility, joy, kindness and generosity.

26 Pray that God will strengthen and guide us in the essential work of ending poverty, hunger and homelessness, here and around the world, for the sake of humanity and to honor God as our creator and source of life.

27 Give thanks that God is our help and strength in every situation, and that our faith will be sustained through the work of the Spirit and the care we receive from our siblings in Christ.

28 "Could it be that we are called for such a time as this?" (*All Creation Sings* 1003). In this time of unrest and uncertainty we may feel that we have nothing of significance to offer. Pray that we will hear and respond to God's call to use our unique gifts, experiences and wisdom to be an active, compassionate and faithful presence in the world.

29 Rejoice and give thanks to God for empowering us to gather our strength and resources as communities of faith, serving our neighbors in need in ways we could never imagine on our own.

30 Pray for the new members of your congregation, that they will feel included in a faith community that responds to their need for spiritual growth, shares in their joys and sorrows, and welcomes their diverse gifts for doing God's work in the world.