

[Prayer Ventures for January 2023]

1 *New Year's Day* Praise God for the grace and eternal life we receive through faith in Jesus Christ — gifts that free us from the dread of death so that we can fearlessly bear the gospel of love and hope into the world.

2 Pray for an end to the war in Ukraine and for peace wherever there is conflict and violence in the world. Pray that the Spirit will sustain the faith, resilience and endurance of people impacted by war and conflict, and that we will persistently advocate for peace and provide relief and support to those suffering.

3 Pray for young adults called to serve in the 2023-2024 ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program with our companion churches and organizations in nine countries. Give thanks for the yearlong opportunities YAGM provides them for service, learning and sharing the good news around the world.

4 “O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” (Psalm 8:1). Thank and acknowledge God, creator of all that exists and source of the grace, forgiveness, hope and new life we experience in Jesus Christ.

5 Pray for those planning the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering, the Multicultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE), the new Young Adult Gathering, and the tAble event for youth living with physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities.

6 *Epiphany* Give thanks that, through Jesus Christ’s ministry, teaching and sacrifice, God reveals the vision, wisdom and values that help us live together as neighbors and children of God.

7 Pray for ELCA missionaries serving with our global companions in Asia and the Pacific the Rev. Chandran Paul Martin (India); Hailey Brenden (Nepal); the Rev. Suk Yeon Lee (South Korea); Samuel and McCall Dubbelman (Hong Kong); and the Rev. Jessica Derise (Thailand).

8 Ask the Spirit to give us the courage and determination to end gun violence in our nation, care for those who suffer its trauma and grief, and comfort and protect the children and youth who live with it in fear and anxiety.

9 Pray for ELCA outdoor ministries as they recruit young adults to serve in outdoor and urban summer camp ministries across the country. Ask the Spirit to stir these young adults to share their faith, energy and diverse gifts with children, youth and adults.

10 Give thanks that God calls us to light the world and bear the good news of Christ’s justice and compassion to our neighbors in need.

11 Pray that pastors, deacons, leaders of youth and family ministries, and others who serve the church and our communities will be restored and find new inspiration through sabbath and the care and encouragement of their congregations.

12 Pray for the wisdom to understand that all living things echo the voice of God, a voice of glory, power and love that blesses humankind.

13 Give thanks for the staff, volunteers and bishops of our 65 synods, who unite congregations, guide the work of rostered ministers and lay leaders, and lift up the mission of the church in a diverse and ever-changing world.

14 Remember in prayer people who are without shelter; pray that they will find safe, dependable housing and that faith communities will respond to neighbors in need through temporary shelters, long-term housing, feeding ministries, and partnerships with social service agencies.

15 Pray for a faith grounded in Jesus Christ, our source of hope, direction and sustenance amid turmoil, uncertainty and suffering.

16 *Martin Luther King Jr. Day* Remember in prayer the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and others who have gone before us in proclaiming all people to be children of God, deserving of freedom, equality, opportunity and respect. Pray that we will draw inspiration and courage from their lives, the word of God and our siblings in Christ as we work to right the injustices that continue in our nation and throughout the world.

17 Give thanks and praise to God for listening to our cries and for leaning into our complicated lives with empathy, comfort, love and the support of our siblings in Christ.

18 *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* Throughout this week, we join our siblings in Christ from diverse cultures, traditions, faith communities, and confessions around the world in praying for the unity of the church, so that, together, we can share the good news of Jesus Christ as we “seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow” (Isaiah 1:17).

19 Give thanks for the generosity and planned gifts of individuals and families and for the work of the ELCA Foundation to ensure that our gifts continue God’s work in the world, today and well into the future.

20 Pray that, when we experience disagreement in our communities of faith, we will turn to the word of God and be reminded of what unites us as siblings in Christ and of the values and behaviors that bring healing and reconciliation.

21 Pray for ELCA missionaries serving with our global companions in the Middle East: the Revs. Gabi and Meghan Aelabouni, the Rev. Jordan and Rev. Adam Miller-Stubbendick, and the seven young adults serving in the Young Adults in Global Mission program in Israel/Palestine.

22 Ask the Spirit to help us respond when we are called to follow Christ into unfamiliar places and situations, attending to the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of our neighbor.

23 Pray that we might press forward with the ELCA Future Church priorities to be a welcoming church that engages new, young and diverse people; a thriving church rooted in tradition but radically relevant; and a connected, sustainable church that shares in a common purpose and direction.

24 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 and resources for the work of sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor.

25 *Conversion of Paul* All things are possible through God, even the transformation of our heart, spirit and identity. Ask God to shape us for participating in God’s work in the world and to make us faith-filled agents of change, healing and renewal for the sake of humanity.

26 Ask God to bless directors for evangelical mission, who coordinate the partnerships between ELCA synods and churchwide ministries to guide “new start” ministries, congregational renewal, Mission Support and stewardship, and missional vision and planning.

27 Pray that the Spirit and our siblings in Christ will embolden us to proclaim, “The Lord is my light and my salvation” (Psalm 27:1). Pray that, through our words and actions, we will invite people to trust in the life-changing good news of Jesus Christ.

28 Ask the Spirit to help us plant seeds of faith, hope and grace in our communities and the world; pray that we will tend those seeds with care and patience and, as the French theologian Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wrote, “trust the slow work of God.”

29 *Reconciling in Christ Sunday* Give thanks for the ongoing work of welcoming, including, celebrating and advocating for LGBTQIA+ people in the life of the church, and pray for ministries and organizations that walk with us as we strive to love and affirm all people.

30 Draw a deep breath and thank God for specific things that give you joy and hope — loving relationships, acts of kindness and generosity, natural beauty, signs of progress and healing in the world, and communion with others to pray, worship and encourage one another’s faith.

31 “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8). Pray that we will take to heart the prophet’s explanation of what God calls us to do in the world.