

[Prayer Ventures for September 2021]

**1** Pray for the relief and resilience of people and communities impacted by wildfires, flooding, severe storms and extreme heat.

**2** Remember in prayer ELCA campus ministry leaders and the Lutheran Campus Ministry Network (LuMin) as they serve students, faculty, staff and others at colleges and universities nationwide. Pray for their ministry of sharing God's grace through worship, study, fellowship, care and service.

**3** Give thanks for the International Women Leaders (IWL) scholarship program and for the accomplishments and new beginnings of the six IWL scholars who graduated in May, embarking on journeys of leadership and service, and of the seven incoming students starting their programs.

**4** Pray for the people of Haiti, who endure poverty, political turmoil and the long, difficult recovery from their 2010 and 2021 earthquakes. Ask God to build up their faith, hope, courage and strength in the face of daunting difficulties, and resolve to support them with prayers, advocacy and generosity.

**5** Ask the Spirit's help in responding to the diverse needs, circumstances and challenges of our neighbors, and in opening our hearts and minds to those who are forgotten, neglected, ignored or unfamiliar to us.

**6** *Labor Day* On this day, we recognize, rejoice in 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 fulfillment in their labor. Pray for the success of all those seeking employment and for the well-being of people unable to work.

**7** Pray that God will equip and energize us as we invite new people to know Jesus, to participate in our communities of faith and to experience being a Lutheran Christian.

**8** "I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long" (Psalm 146:2). Ask the Spirit to inspire us as we praise and thank God in everything we do or experience during our baptismal journey.

**9** Pray for our ELCA missionaries accompanying Lutheran church bodies and companions in Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Serbia, Russia, Slovakia, Austria, Belgium, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.

**10** Pray that we will not act with prejudice, indifference or injustice, or shy away from the complexities of service and ministry, with our neighbors who suffer poverty, hunger or homelessness. Ask God to help us concentrate on our neighbors in need, acting with boldness, generosity, humility and concern for the dignity of those we serve.

**11** Give thanks for the ministry and service of volunteers as they wind up their construction season with ELCA Mission Builders and look forward to future projects that will strengthen ministries and grow the church.

**12** *“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday* In our baptismal journey we serve our neighbors daily, but on this day we celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America — one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor — in partnership with local congregations and ministries, social service organizations and community residents.

**13** Pray for forgiveness when our words, writing and online posts cause hurt or offense or wound the spirits of others. Ask the Spirit to help us think through our intentions and what we want to say so that our words will reflect the love, forgiveness and encouragement that God has shown toward us.

**14** These days are filled with challenges and distractions. Pray that we will not forget the growing number of people victimized by gun violence and the trauma and fear it spreads through families and communities. Ask God to strengthen our resolve and inspire our advocacy to prevent gun violence, care for those who suffer, and bring hope and change to our nation.

**15** *First Day of Hispanic Heritage Month* Thank God for the gifts, history, contributions and rich cultural diversity of our Latino siblings. Pray for the growth and vitality of the 147 ELCA Latino ministries and the Latino Ministries Association (Asociación Luterana de Ministerios Latinos ELCA) as they work to share the good news, encourage unity in Christ, fight racism and promote Christian values that unite Latinos of the ELCA in a “community of communities.”

**16** Pray that we will walk in the presence of God, trusting that God is gracious, righteous and merciful, hearing our every prayer.

**17** Remember in prayer the leaders, voting members and others gathering for the Florida-Bahamas Synod Assembly, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and encourage them in learning, choosing leaders, proclaiming the gospel, growing the church, serving our neighbor and doing God’s work in an ever-changing world.

**18** Pray that the Spirit will stir our compassion and commitment and that God will energize us to empower, support, welcome and advocate for people driven from their homes by conflict, persecution, poverty and climate change.

**19** Give thanks for Jesus’ teaching and example, which inspire us to serve humbly, share the gospel and invite people to experience the blessings of community in our congregations and church.

**20** Thank God for our special relationship with the United Methodist Church, a full communion partner with the ELCA since 2009. Pray for the church, its members and its leaders, and pray that together we will find strength and new resources for the work of sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor, especially in these uncertain and challenging times.

**21** *Matthew, apostle and evangelist* “Follow me” (Matthew 9:9). With this simple invitation Matthew left his work as a tax collector and followed Jesus, not knowing how his life or work would change. Pray that when we sense God’s call, we will answer, trusting that God has something in mind for us — just as we are — and will employ our gifts, skills and passions while cultivating new gifts in us.

**22** Pray that, when we encounter problems in life or when everything seems to be working against us, we will trust in God to uphold our lives and deliver us — sometimes in ways we neither seek nor expect.

**23** Pray that our lives will manifest the wisdom of God, wisdom that “is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy” (James 3:17).

**24** Remember in prayer the leaders, voting members and others gathering for the Northwestern Ohio Synod Assembly, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and encourage them in learning, choosing leaders, proclaiming the gospel, growing the church, serving our neighbor and doing God’s work in an ever-changing world.

**25** Pray for the well-being of health care workers who continue to labor long and hard in responding to the pandemic, preventing the spread of COVID and its variants, and equitably treating the ill and infected.

**26** Give thanks and praise to God that, as siblings in Christ, we have a vast faith community that is caring and supportive, equips and encourages us to serve and to share the good news, and strives to do God’s work in the world together with its ministry companions and partners — locally and globally.

**27** Pray that we will build and nurture communities of faith that engage with us when we are suffering, sick, in need of forgiveness and mercy, or wrestling with our faith and God’s truth.

**28** Pray for dialogues and actions that will unite our church with other Lutheran denominations, permitting us and our siblings in Christ to share pastors, witness, mission and ministries.

**29** Give thanks for the mysteries of creation and the universe that stir our wonder, inspiration, gratitude and desire to explore. Praise God!

**30** Pray for our presiding bishop, secretary and 65 synod bishops as they gather for the Conference of Bishops to worship, study, share insights, conduct church business, provide support for rostered ministers and help identify, invite, equip and support new leaders in the church.