

[Prayer Ventures for July 2024]

1 *Disability Pride Month* Give thanks for the gifts, leadership and abilities of our neighbors and siblings in Christ who live with disabilities — about 42.5 million in our nation. Pray for the work of congregations, synods, ELCA Disability Ministry, the Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Association, Lutheran Services in America Disability Network, Lutheran Outdoor Ministries' Total Inclusion! initiative, and community organizations to address the inclusion, active participation and full involvement of people with disabilities in the life and leadership of the church and society.

2 Pray for the needs and ministries of congregations, synods, the churchwide organization and the community organizations that serve with us as we do God's work in the world. Pray for the Spirit to help us support each other through prayer, shared resources, volunteerism and Mission Support.

3 *Thomas, the Apostle* Give thanks and praise to God for the grace embodied in Jesus Christ, which brings purpose to our lives and assures us that God loves us — questions, complexities and all.

4 *Independence Day* Promise God to cherish and not abuse the blessings of liberty, to work for change wherever there is injustice and inequity, and to accompany our global neighbors and companion churches in striving for freedom, justice and voice.

5 “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). Lift up your worries and fears to God, trusting that God listens and responds to our lamentations.

6 Ask God to guide and bless the ELCA's AMMPARO strategy to accompany migrants as the church expands it to respond to humanitarian crises that drive migration and displacement in other areas of the world.

7 “[Jesus] called the twelve and began to send them out two by two” (Mark 6:7). Give thanks for the companionship, support, encouragement and wisdom we receive from our faith communities and siblings in Christ, which strengthen our ability to share the good news, care for our neighbors in need and inspire hope and peace in the world — together.

8 Pray that the Spirit will stir enthusiasm, creativity and wisdom in the leaders, volunteers and staff of the churchwide organization as they serve youth and adults from congregations across the country during the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans.

9 Ask God how we can best provide care, comfort and support to our neighbors and siblings in Christ who grieve and suffer. Pray that, in our words and actions, we might consider how situations and needs differ from person to person.

10 Thank God for the ELCA's special relationship with the United Methodist Church, a full communion partner since 2009. 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, especially as the denomination moves forward following its vote in favor of LGBTQ inclusion.

11 There have been over 13,000 gun-related injuries and deaths in our country this year (gunviolencearchive.org), and firearm injuries are now the leading cause of death among children and youth. Pray for an end to the senseless deaths and the trauma, grief, anxiety and anguish that spread through our communities and nation. Ask God to lead us out of hopelessness and inaction so that we will be bold and unwavering in our work and advocacy to end gun violence.

12 Thank God for 35 years of the ELCA International Leaders Program, which provides leadership development experiences to current and future leaders through scholarships, the International Camp Counselor Program, leadership development programs and building equitable access to education for systemically excluded groups.

13 Pray for young people of color and those whose primary language is other than English as they gather for the Multicultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE) and for youth living with disabilities as they attend the tAble event, both of which precede the ELCA Youth Gathering. Pray that these young people — with their adult companions — will grow as wise, faithful and courageous followers of Christ.

14 Pray that we will listen carefully to God and seek to understand God's ways and commands, which provide guidance for our life and faith and show us how to love and serve our neighbors.

15 Remember in prayer the residents of New Orleans and give thanks as they open their community and extend their enthusiasm, assistance and hospitality to youth, adults and leaders during the ELCA Youth Gathering and related events. Give thanks for ELCA congregations and ministries in New Orleans that help make the Gathering a faith-strengthening, life-changing experience for everyone.

16 Pray for youth and young adults participating in the ELCA Youth Gathering and Young Adult Gathering as they explore what it means to be created by God as free, brave, authentic, disruptive disciples — all invaluable parts of our faith and identity in a world of ongoing challenge, crisis and suffering.

17 Generation Zero-Hunger is a youth-driven fundraising challenge to support the programs of ELCA World Hunger, our church's ministry to end hunger and poverty. Pray for the Spirit to inspire our generosity and compassion for our neighbors as we respond to this challenge to usher in a world without hunger and futures filled with hope.

18 Pray for our neighbors who suffer and long for peace in places of conflict and war. Pray that we will not grow weary in our concern, support and prayer and that we will not rest until there is peace and healing.

19 Give thanks for everything that God has revealed and given to us through Jesus Christ that stirs our hope and joy: God’s abundant grace and mercy, God’s will for our present life and future, and the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God.

20 Pray that youth, young adults and adults attending the ELCA Youth Gathering will return home safely, bringing with them enthusiasm for sharing the impact of their faith-building experience and a renewed understanding of the task we share in common — doing God’s work in the world.

21 We are called to do God’s work in the world, both individually and with siblings in Christ who encourage, support and inspire us. Give thanks that we are not alone in our baptismal journey of service and that the Spirit gives us diverse gifts that complement one another.

22 Pray for musicians and leaders gathering for the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians conference at Valparaiso University, Ind., an annual continuing education event to nurture and equip church musicians, pastors and worship leaders.

23 Praise God and give thanks for the leaders and volunteers who planned and implemented the ELCA Youth Gathering, Multicultural Youth Leadership Event (MYLE), the tAble event and the Young Adult Gathering. Give thanks for congregations, community organizations, residents and community leaders in New Orleans who demonstrated hospitality and shared their wisdom and resources to help make the ELCA Youth Gathering experience safe, relevant and impactful.

24 “The Lord is my shepherd” (Psalm 23:1). We may not be familiar with the work of shepherds anymore, but we do know the joy and relief of having God in our lives to guide us, comfort us, restore us and walk with us through darkness and evil. Give thanks and praise to God, our ever-present shepherd!

25 Remember in prayer young adults nearing the end of their yearlong volunteer service in the Young Adults in Global Mission program. Give thanks for their faith, gifts, witness and commitment to ministry, and pray that the Spirit will prepare them to pursue new opportunities for service and ministry in the church, our communities and the world.

26 Pray for peace and civility in our nation, for the mending of rifts and ideologies that isolate us and for the diverse gifts, perspectives and life experiences that enrich and inform our life together.

27 Pray that the companion synod relationships connecting ELCA synods and congregations with Lutheran churches around the world will flourish and will nurture and strengthen these congregations for life and ministry through prayer, study, communication, exchange of visitors and sharing of resources.

28 Do you see God doing great work with things that may seem small or insignificant to us? Lift up in prayer the things we witness that restore our faith, stir hope and reassure us that God is present and active in our lives, communities and world.

29 Pray for the Spirit to sustain the faith and energy of staff serving in summer camps and community ministries. Pray that their service experiences will enrich their lives and faith and will equip and inspire them to pursue other service opportunities and vocations.

30 Ask God to stir within us an enduring spirit of generosity toward others, including generosity toward ministries that touch the lives of our neighbors in need.

31 Remember in prayer teachers in public and faith-based schools as they experience the rest and renewal of summer break, and pray for those who teach year-round. Ask the Spirit to give them strength, creativity and hope as they educate and inspire children and youth.