

[Prayer Ventures for October 2024]

1 *International Day of Older Persons* Remember in prayer older adults, who bring vitality and diverse gifts to communities and congregations; give thanks for their faith, wisdom, generosity and life experiences. Pray for those who live in nursing homes, facilities for memory care and assisted living, and continuing care retirement communities, that they will be valued and respected and will receive skilled care.

2 “Yours the soil that holds the seed, you give warmth and moisture, too. Sprouting blossoms, crops and buds, trees and plants: the season’s signs that you make all things new” (*With One Voice* 727). Greet this new day with gratitude to God for the blessings of autumn — fall harvests, the beauty of changing seasons and other signs of God’s ceaseless creativity.

3 Give thanks for the 13 new ELCA missionaries who have begun their work alongside global partners in eight countries, serving as teachers, pastors, pastoral interns, program coordinators and more.

4 *Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, renewer of the church (1181-1226)* Give thanks and praise to God for saints who have gone before us and saints still in our midst, who teach and inspire us to be humble, generous, grateful and attentive children of God.

5 We are nourished and sustained by countless resources in creation — all gifts from God, entrusted to our care. Give thanks for the gift of water, without which life cannot exist or flourish. Pray that we will exercise discipline, responsibility and generosity in how we use water, and that we will work to assure the availability of clean water for all people, everywhere.

6 Pray for the children of your congregation and give thanks that God has entrusted to us the opportunity and responsibility to nurture their faith and gifts and to surround them with care and grace.

7 Remember in prayer girls, women and people of other gender identities and expressions who suffer domestic violence. Pray that they will find care and safe shelter that support their recovery from physical, emotional and spiritual trauma. Give thanks for the work and resources available to us through the ELCA Gender Justice and Women’s Empowerment program.

8 Ask the Spirit for guidance, wisdom and creativity as we work to grow the church, not for the sake of numbers but to spread the message of God’s love and mercy for humanity and to draw upon the gifts of the many to love and serve our neighbors, here and around the world.

9 Pray for national leaders, diplomats, mediators and organizations working to achieve ceasefires, peace and recovery in Ukraine, Russia, Israel, the Palestinian territories, Sudan and other regions. Ask God to make us diligent bearers of hope, peace and justice in the world.

10 Remember in prayer refugees, immigrants and asylum-seekers who are displaced by economic and climate crises and by conflict and persecution. Ask God to protect them as they seek safe, welcoming places where they can settle and rebuild their lives.

11 “When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are humans that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?” (Psalm 8:3-4). Give thanks and praise to God, who showers love and attention on us no matter how complicated our lives are or how insignificant we feel.

12 Pray that we might discern and avoid the false teaching of Christian nationalism, which divides us and uses Christ’s name to place us above others, claiming privilege and God’s favor. Ask the Spirit to stir in us a desire and commitment to love, uplift and serve our neighbors — without bias.

13 Ask God to help us keep our priorities straight, that we might share the good news of Jesus Christ and trust in the promise of eternal life.

14 *Indigenous Peoples’ Day* “We join states, cities and towns across the country to celebrate Indigenous Peoples Day in place of Columbus Day and honor the people whose lands we walk, whose Indigenous voices have always been spoken here and who share their gifts and contributions throughout our society” (Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Indigenous Peoples’ Day statement). Pray that, in our relations with Indigenous neighbors and children of God, we will not waver in our commitment to repentance, reconciliation, healing and unity.

15 “Christ has no body now but mine. He prays in me, works in me, looks through my eyes, speaks through my words, works through my hands, walks with my feet and loves with my heart” (St. Teresa of Avila, 1515-1582). Pray for God to work through every aspect of our life that we might give witness to God’s boundless love and mercy.

16 *World Food Day* The theme for World Food Day 2024 is “Right to Foods for a Better Life and a Better Future.” Pray that all people will have adequate access to food that is safe and healthy. Give thanks for the work and advocacy of ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response and partner organizations to address the causes of hunger and improve food security.

17 “The Bible is a remarkable fountain: The more one draws and drinks of it, the more it stimulates thirst” (Martin Luther, 1483-1546). Let us resolve to spend more time studying and discussing Scripture so that we might grow in our understanding of God and connect our faith and the gospel with daily life.

18 The message of the Old Testament prophet Micah is crucial for our world today: “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 humble ourselves and serve our neighbors who suffer poverty, hunger and exclusion.

19 Lift up in prayer youth and family ministry leaders who nurture the faith of young people, reassure them of God’s presence and grace, and affirm their value as members of our faith communities. Give thanks for the work, resources and support of ELCA Youth Ministry, the ELCA Youth Gathering and the ELCA Youth Ministry Network.

20 Ask the Spirit to deepen our understanding of our identity and purpose as baptized children of God, called and equipped to live with gratitude and joy, to share the life-giving news of Jesus Christ and to work for justice and peace.

21 Give thanks and praise to our Creator, who is the source of bountiful fall harvests and sustains us in body and spirit.

22 Pray for an end to gun-related deaths and injuries and to the trauma, grief, anxiety and anguish they spread through our communities and nation. Ask God to help us honor the gift of life and the well-being of all people through bold advocacy to reduce gun violence.

23 Pray for ministries and organizations that help us welcome, resettle and accompany immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees with dignity and hope, including Lutheran Disaster Response, ELCA World Hunger, AMMPARO Migrant Ministry, Global Refuge and Lutheran Services in America.

24 “When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble; I will rescue them and honor them” (Psalm 91:15). God is our ever-present refuge and fortress. Let our prayers and songs proclaim unceasing thanks and praise to God!

25 Pray for the ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association, which supports the 1,300 ELCA congregations and 17,000 staff offering weekday schools and early childhood education programs.

26 Reflect on the people around you who might hunger for a friendly word or some indication that they are loved and not forgotten. Include them in your prayers and reach out to them.

27 *Reformation Sunday* Praise God for being patient with us through the challenges and changes of being the church and discerning God’s truth.

28 Pray that the Spirit will work through the traditions, rites and practices of the church, which, evolving over time and from generation to generation, affirm God’s saving grace and inspire us to share it.

29 Lament that we sin and fall short of the glory and expectations of God, then shout prayers of thanksgiving and joy that we are forgiven, freed and saved by the gift of God’s grace.

30 Throughout history God has acted with steadfast love, forgiveness and concern for humankind. Alleluia, thanks be to God!

31 *Reformation Day* Give thanks for the legacy of Martin Luther and other reformers who demanded that the theology and practices of the church be faithful to God’s word and the good news of Jesus Christ. Pray that we will never stop reflecting on Scripture or the gospel message, and that our ministries and faith communities might best respond to their call to do God’s work in the world.