

[Prayer Ventures for September 2023]

1 Pray for God’s protection, reassurance and wisdom as climate change impacts every aspect of our lives including work, economic systems, community resilience, food stability, immigration, and physical and emotional well-being. Remember in prayer those impacted who are particularly vulnerable to poverty, hunger or illness.

2 Give thanks to God for the love and forgiveness we have in Jesus Christ; unshakeable, it endures amid all that seems unstable, temporary and conditional in our world.

3 The suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus may not seem logical to us. Pray for the Spirit to reveal the truth of God’s profound gift to us through Jesus Christ — love, forgiveness, a new identity and eternal life.

4 *Labor Day* On this day we pray for the work people do to sustain themselves and their families and benefit their communities and society. Pray that all will receive fair wages and benefits, work in safe environments, receive respect and gratitude, experience joy and fulfillment in their labor and be renewed through times of sabbath. Remember in prayer also those seeking employment or unable to work.

5 Pray for the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians, an ELCA Worship partner organization, and the “Hearts Hands Voices” workshops offered across the country for church musicians to learn new skills, share best practices and build relationships.

6 Pray for the strength and humility to treat others with love, respect and compassion, especially those whom we find difficult to love or whose politics, personal values, religious beliefs or worldview differ from our own.

7 More than 828 million people in the world — including in the United States — experience hunger, and an estimated 2.3 billion face food insecurity, an increase over previous years. Pray that our concern will move us to action and generosity and that our work together through ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran World Federation and other organizations will bring relief and hope to our neighbors.

8 “Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart” (Jeremiah 15:16). Pray for the word and wisdom of God to become part of our very being as we study Scripture, hear and share the gospel, and converse with our siblings in Christ.

9 Remember in prayer young adult delegates gathering in Wisla, Poland, prior to the Lutheran World Federation Assembly to worship, build community, discuss concerns and priorities, and prepare for the event.

10 *“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday* On the 10th anniversary of our annual day of service, give thanks for the chance to draw closer to our neighbors and embrace them as children of God, listening with respect and empathy and responding to their needs.

11 Ask God to help us understand more fully how our lives and faith express God’s love, compassion and respect for the neighbor. “To be your presence is our mission bold, to feed the poor and shelter homeless cold, to be your hands of justice, right uphold, alleluia!” (ELW 546).

12 “Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the faithful” (Psalm 149:1). Praise God that worship and the sacraments renew, sustain and equip us as children of God living in communities of faith. Give thanks for the resources that guide and enrich our worship, including ELCA Worship and Faith Practices ministries, Augsburg Fortress publishing and our seminaries.

13 Pray for those gathering for the Lutheran World Federation Assembly in Kraków, Poland — “One Body, One Spirit, One Hope.” Ask God to bless and guide our work together as a global Lutheran community for a just, peaceful and reconciled world.

14 Remember in prayer African-descent siblings in Christ as they gather for the ELCA African Descent Ministries’ RECLAIM event in Minneapolis. Ask God to bless their work building community, teaching new ministry skills and approaches, sharing resources and rejuvenating preachers, teachers, professionals, young adults and laity.

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

16 Pray for the leaders, voting members and others gathering for the assembly of the Sierra Pacific Synod, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and inspire them as they reflect on the mission of the church, elect a new bishop and encourage one another to proclaim the gospel, serve our neighbors in need and grow the church.

17 Reflect on what hinders us from exercising forgiveness and patience with others, including those we see as adversaries. Ask the Spirit to recenter our lives and interactions with people in the boundless and undeserved mercy that God demonstrates with us.

18 Pray that students and teachers in our schools will be safe and that students who suffer trauma, anxiety, depression and other mental health concerns will have ready access to counselors, social workers and psychologists.

19 Pray for the congregations, youth and adults registering for the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans and for those who prayerfully consider participating.

20 “The prophet Miriam, Aaron’s sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them: ‘Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea’” (Exodus 15:20-21).

Give thanks for the wonderful variety of instruments and musicians who help us praise God, and recall God's activity in the world throughout history.

21 *International Day of Peace* With our global neighbors and siblings in Christ, pray for peace, reconciliation and unity wherever conflict divides our communities and the world.

22 Ask God for strength and boldness to fight the rising tide of hate crimes motivated by race, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender, gender identity, and social and economic status.

23 What an amazing and reassuring gift it is to know that God is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love for all people, everywhere. Give praise and thanks to God!

24 Pray that we might understand justice, fairness and generosity from the perspective of God, whose creation benefits all humanity.

25 Remember in prayer leaders gathering for the "Stewardship Kaleidoscope" conference in Minneapolis, offered in partnership with the Presbyterian Foundation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the ELCA Stewardship and Generosity team to develop deeper understanding of stewardship and generosity and to share resources for cultivating generosity in congregations.

26 Pray for ELCA Children's Ministry and its partners, who support and encourage the intergenerational faith formation of Christian communities including family households, congregations and child-centered ministry settings.

27 Pray that we will remember the wonderful and miraculous things God has done and revealed to us throughout the history of humankind. Ask the Spirit to help us share — with young and old alike — stories of our faith and of God's presence and activity in the world.

28 Give thanks for our ecumenical and interreligious relations and partnerships, which lead to unity and cooperation, mutual understanding and respect, and shared resources for serving our neighbors in need.

29 "When God saw what [the people of Nineveh] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it. But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry" (Jonah 3:10–4:1). God's love and justice do not always sit well with us. Ask forgiveness for when we wish ill upon others, and ask the Spirit to inspire our patience and love as we strive to do God's work in the world.

30 Pray for God's guidance and wisdom throughout the Future Church: God's Love Made Real initiative as our church tries to discern God's will and navigate the challenges and opportunities of an ever-changing world.