

[Prayer Ventures for March 2024]

**1** *Women's History Month* Give thanks for women throughout history and in our lives who have shared their gifts and leadership with the church and society, raised and cared for us, inspired us and nurtured our faith, and fought for justice, equity and inclusion. Pray for women everywhere who suffer injustice, demeaning stereotypes, violence and poverty, that they will not lose hope but will be delivered from their suffering and persecution to live freely and boldly.

**2** Pray for our neighbors and siblings in Christ who have been driven from their homes and communities by conflict, persecution, disaster, political turmoil, economic crisis or the effects of climate change.

**3** *Bold Women's Day (Women of the ELCA)* Celebrate and give thanks for Lutheran women who act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ through prayer, service to neighbors in need, advocacy, leadership, hospitality and telling their stories of faith.

**4** Promise that we will never use our faith, our service to neighbors or our identity as followers of Christ to benefit ourselves, enhance our reputations or earn a profit. Ask the Spirit to nurture in us humility, generosity and gratitude for the gift of grace and salvation God has given us through the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**5** Remember in prayer individuals, families and communities as they continue to recover from natural disasters, and ask God to give them strength, resilience and hope. Promise that we will persist in our commitment to support and assist these individuals, families and communities through a process that can be long, difficult and lonely.

**6** There are those who consider our beliefs and faith to be foolish and misguided. Pray for the Spirit to deepen our understanding of God's wisdom and ways, strengthen our faith in Christ and guide our imperfect words and actions to convey God's merciful love for humankind, so that others will be moved to believe and to follow Jesus Christ.

**7** Pray for the children and youth in your congregation, and for young adults involved in long-term volunteer service, careers, military service or study at colleges, universities, trade schools or seminaries.

**8** "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14). Praise God for being attentive to our thoughts, prayers and lamentations — spoken and unspoken.

**9** Thank God for the ELCA's special relationship with The Episcopal Church, a full communion partner since 1999. 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.

**10** Pray that we will clearly see God's relationship with humanity and the implications for our daily life when we reflect on the familiar proclamation Jesus made: "For God so loved the world

that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (John 3:16).

**11** Ask God to bless the Young Adults in Global Mission volunteers working alongside our companion churches and organizations in six countries around the world and in the Cambodia program, which will reopen this year.

**12** Give thanks for the food we receive and for those who grow, manage, harvest and prepare our food resources. Promise to respond to the needs of our neighbors and siblings in Christ who are hungry, and pray that the work we do together through ELCA World Hunger will have a deep and sustained impact.

**13** At the heart of our faith is the belief that, though we are weak and imperfect, we are saved from ourselves and given new life through God’s gift of grace in Jesus Christ. Lift up humble prayers of thanksgiving to God!

**14** Pray for the ELCA Justice for Women program, which helps us work from our faith and Lutheran theology to educate, advocate for change and lead into the future, addressing sexism and encouraging all genders to work together.

**15** Sing for joy and give thanks to God for providing comfort in times of distress, healing us when we are broken and reassuring us that we are valued when we feel insignificant.

**16** Remember in prayer seminarians and international students preparing to serve as leaders in the church and society, including those supported through ELCA Fund for Leaders scholarships, the International Women Leaders program and the International Leaders Program.

**17** Reflect on the people for whom you have concern. Pray for them and commit yourself to expressing your love and care in a personal way — an in-person conversation; a phone call offering help; a note, text or email.

**18** Pray for the work of the Creation Care Network, which connects the ELCA with ecumenical ministries and organizations that equip us to be faithful stewards of God’s creation.

**19** *First day of spring* Praise our Creator and give thanks for the sun and the heavenly bodies of the universe, which impact every aspect of life and reflect the amazing creativity, mystery and power of God.

**20** Let our Lenten prayer for today be: “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin” (Psalm 51:1-2).

**21** Remember in prayer youth, adults and congregations preparing for their faith-stirring experience at the ELCA Youth Gathering and related events in New Orleans this summer.

**22** Rejoice and give thanks for the wonderful variety of songs and musical styles that calm, energize, unite and inspire us.

**23** Pray for God to open our hearts and minds to the needs of our neighbors and to guide our responses of love, support and advocacy. Give thanks for the ways our church encourages and provides opportunities for service and volunteerism, including Young Adults in Global Mission, ELCA World Hunger, Young Adult Ministry, Lutheran Disaster Response and “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday.

**24 *Palm Sunday*** With shouts of “Hosanna!” and the waving of palm branches, we plead for Jesus to save us and welcome him into our lives and the world as our true hope and salvation — the risen Messiah and Savior, who endured betrayal, suffering, public ridicule and death for the sake of all people.

**25** Ask the Spirit to help us when we feel ill-prepared to talk about our faith, that we might tell the story of God’s love and mercy revealed in Jesus and how our faith in Christ shapes our daily lives.

**26** Lift up prayers of confession for the things we have done or failed to do that cause harm to others and grieve God. Plead for forgiveness and redemption, trusting that God is our ever-present hope and merciful Redeemer.

**27** Give thanks for the great cloud of witnesses — our community of faith and our siblings in Christ — who help us persevere when we are tired and discouraged.

**28 *Maundy Thursday*** On this last day of Lent, pray that we will be mindful of the needs and struggles of our neighbors and siblings in Christ and that we will respond as followers of Jesus, reminded by our baptism to serve others with a respect and sincerity that reflect the abundant love and mercy God has shown us.

**29 *Good Friday*** Pray that, when we gather, worship and study as siblings in Christ, we will encourage one another to grow in faith, understanding and gratitude for God’s sacrificial, life-giving love, witnessed in Christ’s suffering and death on the cross.

**30** Much of what we profess to believe may seem like a mystery to us and others. Ask the Spirit to help us live with the mystery and, at the same time, to grow in faith and awe of the triune God, who claims and gathers us close as loved children.

**31 *Easter Sunday*** Praise God that sin, fear and death have no control over us — Jesus Christ has risen for the redemption and healing of humanity! “Christ is living! Gone with sorrow! Tears and terror, be no more” (*All Creation Sings* 934).