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## PRAYER VENTURES

→ February 2018 ←

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- 1** Give thanks, especially during Black History Month, for our sisters and brothers of African descent participating in God's work of restoring and reconciling communities in the name of Jesus Christ throughout the world; ask God to bless the work of the African Descent Lutheran Association in developing networks, advocating for congregations, and providing fellowship, learning and sharing opportunities for lay members and rostered ministers of the ELCA.
- 2** This is the time of year when ELCA outdoor ministry leaders are recruiting young adults for a summer of service at our 128 outdoor ministry sites. Pray young adults across the country are moved by the Spirit to serve in this vibrant, diverse ministry and are inspired to share their faith, leadership, skills and enthusiasm with the 175,000 campers of all ages participating in summer programs.
- 3** Pray for the young adults applying for the 2018-19 ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program, a year of service, faith formation, walking alongside global companions and relationship building in 11 programs in 14 countries around the world.
- 4** The world cries out for healing, peace, freedom from oppression and hope. Praise God for the new life, renewal of spirit and relief we have through Jesus Christ, and pray we are humble servants and bold disciples eager to share this good news with everyone.
- 5** We remember in our prayers ELCA missionaries serving in Japan alongside our global church partners that they are sustained by their faith and our encouragement and support for their work of teaching, music, theological education, parish ministry and sharing the gospel.
- 6** We remember, and strive to not forget, in our prayers the many situations, people and places in our nation and the world where suffering, conflict, poverty and hunger, long-term recovery from disasters and injustice persist.
- 7** Pray that, for the sake of the gospel, we are faithful in serving our neighbor, spreading the good news and sharing our blessings with all people in every context and situation of life without expectation of reward, praise or recognition.
- 8** As seasonal jobs and employment wane, we remember in our prayers those in our communities who are unemployed and under-employed, and we pray we are supportive in ways that recognize and value their gifts, help network and connect people, attend to daily needs and respect the dignity of individuals.
- 9** Pray the spirit of God at work in us will motivate us to say "yes" daily to the covenant made in baptism to live among God's faithful people, hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper, proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, serve all people following the example of Jesus, and strive for justice and peace in all the earth.
- 10** "Praise the Lord! How good it is to sing praises to our God" (Psalm 147:1). Give thanks to God for caring for those who live in sadness, suffer injustice, feel powerless or are treated as outcasts; ask God to remind us of our call to be God's caring hands, voice and presence in the world.
- 11** *Transfiguration of Our Lord* When confused about God's purpose for us and the future of the church, we pray God will stir our faith and enlighten our vision, reminding us to not seek refuge in what is familiar and safe but instead venture into our communities, uncomfortable situations and the world to share the good news and serve our neighbor.
- 12** Pray for the ELCA Youth Gathering staff, volunteers, youth and adult participants, congregations and synods preparing for the Youth Gathering, Multicultural Youth Leadership Event and The tAble pre-event for "definitely-abled" youth in Houston this summer.
- 13** Pray that our work, service and ministries are not for our own satisfaction, recognition or legacy but for the proclaiming of the good news of Jesus Christ and the benefit of our neighbor.
- 14** *Ash Wednesday* We pray with humility and repentance as we begin our journey through Lent that, even in our imperfection and weakness, we never lose sight of the good news that God's love and mercy are unwavering and that our lives are made new and whole through our baptism into Christ's life, death and resurrection.

- 15** Give thanks for those who have been called to vocations of writing and editing books for children, youth and adults, theological publications, worship resources, curricula for faith formation, devotional and prayer guides, and resources for congregational leaders.
- 16** God shines brightly in the world and universe and is not silent. Give thanks and praise to God, and ask that our witness be bold and bright in declaring God's boundless power, righteousness and love.
- 17** As our Lenten journey continues, we reflect on our lives and faith with humility and honesty, immersing ourselves in prayers for God's mercy and rejoicing in the gifts of love, forgiveness and salvation we have through our Savior, Jesus Christ.
- 18** Give thanks to God that the Spirit that sustained and protected Jesus in the wilderness against Satan and temptation is the same Spirit with us today, strengthening our faith and courage in the face of difficulties, guiding our daily lives, and inspiring us to act boldly with justice, compassion, mercy and peace.
- 19** Not a day goes by when the life, work and teachings of Martin Luther don't influence the church and our faith journey. We remember in prayer lay leaders and rostered ministers, theologians, teachers and people of faith throughout the history who have challenged, taught and encouraged us that we might mature in faith and be more fully equipped to do God's work in the world.
- 20** We pray to know and trust God's ways and paths, truth and word, mercy and steadfast love, and that we will treasure and demonstrate in our daily life these truths and qualities for the sake of the world.
- 21** The ELCA and The Episcopal Church are committed to prayer, fasting and advocacy that addresses cuts to public programs that are vital to hungry people who are living in poverty. Pray for these concerns, our leaders and people in need on the 21st of each month through December 2018.
- 22** Pray for seafarers and fishermen of all nationalities and faiths who often spend months at sea, isolated from family, friends and home communities. Pray for their safety and care and that the Spirit of God will stir in them faith that gives hope, strength, peace and the knowledge that they are part of the body of Christ – a global community of faith that bridges all oceans, nations, distances and time.
- 23** We ask God to keep us focused on the cross, not as a religious object, work of art or cultural symbol but as a clear reminder of what God has done for us through the life, suffering, death and resurrection of God's son, Jesus Christ – our very real hope and salvation, God's gracious gift for humanity.
- 24** Give thanks for the impact of the 13 Global Mission Projects undertaken at the invitation of our companion churches and supported through *The Campaign for the ELCA*. Pray these projects and partner relationships will flourish as they help build new congregations, reach out to young people, train pastors and evangelists, strengthen existing ministries and grow the church.
- 25** *Bold Women's Day* Today – and every day – we recognize and celebrate Lutheran women who have acted or are acting boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ in diverse contexts everywhere in the world.
- 26** The ELCA Leadership Initiative encourages us to seek out and inspire gifted people in our congregations and communities to consider a call to the ministry of the gospel as pastors, deacons and lay leaders. Ask God to help us be perceptive and assertive in identifying, inviting, encouraging and supporting potential leaders in responding to God's call to ministry.
- 27** We pray that in our Lenten reflections and conversations we are truthful with ourselves and each other, trust in God's love and mercy that frees us to move forward grounded in the gospel to serve our neighbor without bias, encourage and care for one another as sisters and brothers in Christ, and move beyond any hesitations or fears we may have about participating in God's work in the world.
- 28** Thank God for the work of the ELCA Youth Ministry Network as it strives with its ministry partners to renew, educate, support and strengthen leaders – lay and rostered, paid and volunteer – serving in children, youth and family ministry in congregations, synods and outdoor ministries.