

25 Good Friday Again faced with the story of Jesus' betrayal, judgment, suffering, torture and disgraceful public death, we humble ourselves before God and plead for forgiveness, asking that God reassure us of Jesus' boundless, sacrificial love for all humanity.

26 Vigil of Easter We confess our times of disbelief and uncertain faith in Jesus and ask God to embolden us as witnesses – imperfect as we are – to run and share, as Mary Magdalene did, the good news of Jesus Christ in whom we have forgiveness and new life.

27 Easter Day Christ is risen! We rejoice and ask God's Spirit to dispel our doubts, fears and suspicions and fill us with faith and amazement over God's miraculous love for us.

28 This day and every day, we offer prayers of wonder and praise for the presence of God in our lives, especially when we least expect it or doubt God's power and creativity to effect change in our lives and world.

29 We remember in our prayers and ask God to bless and further the leadership development work of the Rev. Chad and Natalie Rimmer, ELCA missionaries in Senegal.

30 We give thanks for the poets of the church who speak from their heart, spirit and life experiences and inspire our faith and imagination through creative means.

31 We remember on this day when some states celebrate Cesar Chavez Day, the leaders, advocates and activists who are moved to work for the wellbeing and just treatment of all people, especially those who labor under difficult conditions and whose voices are often neglected.

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

PRAYER VENTURES

MARCH 2016

These petitions are offered as guides to prayer for the global, social and outreach ministries of the ELCA. Thank you for your continued prayers for the life and mission of this church.

1 We remember in our prayers, especially during spring, congregations and communities subject to severe weather and flooding, that God will guide their emergency preparations, equip them to care for their neighbors and grant them safety.

2 We give thanks for the more than \$15 million raised during the ELCA Malaria Campaign and ask God to strengthen and bless the continuing successful efforts of our partners and their health-related projects.

3 In our Lenten reflections, we are keenly aware of our many troubles, sins and shortcomings, yet we rejoice in God's forgiveness and love that surrounds and upholds us day and night.

4 We remember in our prayers the Gettysburg and Philadelphia Lutheran seminaries as they begin the process of creating a unified school of theology for preparing Christian leaders for the church and world.

5 We pray for God's blessings on the critical work in HIV and AIDS ministry that Mary Beth and Bayo Oyebade are doing in Nigeria as ELCA missionaries.

6 We remember in our prayers, with thanksgiving and relief, that God seeks us when we are lost or have strayed and celebrates our awkward return as did the father in Jesus' parable of the lost son.

7 We have many brothers and sisters – of all ages – who live with physical and cognitive disabilities. We ask God to broaden our awareness of, and appreciation for, the faith and diverse gifts they bring to our communities and to the body of Christ.

8 We pray on this International Women's Day that God's holy and life-giving Spirit moves every human heart, that the barriers dividing us may crumble and hatreds cease so we might live in justice and peace.

9 As we continue our self-reflection during Lent, we ask God to help us look beyond ourselves and into the lives of people around us and in other nations, guiding us to actions of care and justice in the manner and name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Savior and servant.

10 We remember in our prayers the work and faithful witness of the Rev. Dorcas Wang, an ELCA missionary serving in the Republic of China.

11 We ask God to bless and inspire Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's leadership, especially in helping our church address the issues of racism, racial disparity in the criminal justice system, care for the incarcerated and their families, advocacy for those wrongly convicted, and support and guidance for those who enforce the law and work in the justice system.

12 We remember in our prayers and ask God to bless and guide the work of the seven young adults serving in the Young Adults in Global Mission program in Argentina and Uruguay.

13 In our baptism, we experience the freedom that can only come through the power of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection. For this undeserved gift of love, we give thanks.

14 We give thanks to God for the generous grant the ELCA has received from the Lilly Endowment to help fund an initiative to address the financial and economic struggles that often prevent pastors from leading congregations effectively.

15 We remember in our prayers all those who support and empower international women leaders in the life and development of this church and our communities. We pray to be awakened to the power and capacity our sisters have in transforming the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

16 Whether gathered for a Lenten meal or worship, we pray that our thoughts and reflections will be on Jesus and that we will trust and follow Jesus no matter where he leads or how difficult the journey.

17 On this St. Patrick's Day, we give thanks to God for our brothers and sisters who respond to God's call to serve as missionaries in the world. We ask God to fill them with love and respect for the people and communities they serve and with a tireless enthusiasm to share the gospel.

18 The prayerful words of the psalmist in ancient times still holds meaning for our prayers today – "Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your steadfast love."

19 We remember in our prayers the leaders in our congregations – rostered and lay – who commit themselves to sharing the gospel, deepening our faith, and equipping and sending us to do God's work in the world.

20 *Palm Sunday* Christ defies our images of him as a conquering king, powerful religious leader or just another prophet. We pray that we receive, by faith, Jesus as our Savior, messiah, servant and son of God – the fulfillment of God's loving promises to us.

21 *Monday of Holy Week* Mary of Bethany was extravagant in her love for Jesus and her anointing of him before his death. We pray that we too may not be shy or embarrassed in our witness and worship, especially in telling others of Jesus' life, suffering, death and resurrection for our sake.

22 We remember in our prayers the ELCA International Women Leaders scholarship recipients Abby Lai, Elisa Pérez-Trejo, Lynette Lee, Melissa Neo, Sarah Abendanon and Sthela Hanitrinirina, that God will bless them and guide and inspire their studies.

23 We ask God to grant us daily strength and courage to speak of our faith and act as the gospel urges us and to resist the temptation to stay quiet or hide the light of Jesus Christ.

24 *Maundy Thursday* It's difficult to be humble and serve people in this day and age, especially in a society that belittles such behaviors as signs of weakness. We ask God to remind us of Jesus' example when he washed the feet of his disciples and embolden us to do likewise for our neighbors and those in need.