

27 We give thanks for farmers and ranchers who carefully tend their crops, animals, orchards and resources and ask they be blessed with abundant harvests and wisdom in their planning and planting for the sake of feeding and sustaining the world.

28 Thank God for anointing us as forgiven, renewed children of God, marked and chosen to be disciples devoted to witness and service in the world.

29 Pray the Holy Spirit will guide and equip us to live in the light of Christ, to live differently than when we lived in darkness and hopelessness, that our lives be pleasing to God and a sure sign to others of God's love and ways.

30 Pray for the members of the ELCA Church Council who are gathered to guide and further the work and mission of our church, that the Spirit permeates their conversations, deliberations, decisions and work together.

31 Offer prayers of thanks for the many farm laborers and agricultural workers here and in other countries who are instrumental in placing food on our tables and feeding the world. We ask that their work environments are safe, they are paid fair wages to support their families and that we respect their work and treat them with dignity as brothers and sisters in Christ.

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*This resource may be copied and shared among members and friends of the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Contact [info@elca.org](mailto:info@elca.org) for additional information. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631. Telephone: 800-638-3522, ext. 2458.*



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

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## PRAYER VENTURES

MARCH 2017

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*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 *Ash Wednesday* On this special day, we approach God in prayer with humility and repentance, marking ourselves with the messy ashes of our frail, human life, yet doing so with the sign of the cross—the mark of Jesus Christ, our source of forgiveness, salvation, hope and new life.

2 Give thanks for leaders of revival, renewal and reformation in the church—in the past and today—who are driven by God's Word, the gospel, a desire for sharing the good news and concern for the world.

3 We remember in our prayers the 65 synod bishops gathered for the Conference of Bishops and give thanks for their faith, leadership, service, example and commitment to the mission of the church.

4 Living farther into the new year, we pray our anticipation, joy, hope and openness to change and daily renewal of our faith and spirit do not diminish but grow and prove infectious in our relationships and encounters with others.

5 *First Sunday in Lent* Jesus, tempted repeatedly in the wilderness by the devil, stood strong and did not surrender. Pray for the same strength of faith and conviction to resist the enticements and distractions we face daily, and give thanks for God's unfailing love, mercy and presence that guides and sustains us in every circumstance.

6 Pray for the care and recovery of families, individuals and communities impacted by recent flooding, mudslides and severe weather along the West Coast and Pacific Northwest.

7 Pray for the thousands of young adults considering commitments to work in our outdoor ministry summer programs, that they see their faith, life experiences, skills, interests and knowledge as God-given assets to share in ministry with children, youth and adults.

**8** Pray for the care and recovery of families, individuals and communities impacted by recent tornadoes, severe weather and flooding, especially in areas of the South and Southeast.

**9** We bring to God our uncomfortable prayers of confession for what we have done and failed to do, for offenses committed against our neighbor, including neglect and rejection, and ask for God's forgiveness, mercy and redirection of our lives, attitudes and behavior.

**10** Pray God will grant us the wisdom and compassion to welcome and accompany strangers, immigrants and refugees who seek safety, freedom or new beginnings and that we not forget we, too, in our life or family histories have been strangers, immigrants and refugees hoping to be met with acceptance, respect and kindness.

**11** We remember in our prayers the nine young adults and their coordinator, the Rev. Tessa Moon Leiseth, serving in the Young Adults in Global Mission program in South Africa and Swaziland.

**12** As Nicodemus approached Jesus under cover of night with his questions, we, too, often come to God when we feel safe and concealed from others with our questions, confessions and thoughts. Thank God for listening to our every prayer and plea, and for friends, people of faith and communities that engender trust and offer refuge when needed.

**13** Pray for the growth and effectiveness of programs, colleges, universities, seminaries and lay schools for ministry equipping women and men for ministry and further developing their skills and enthusiasm for sharing the gospel in diverse contexts and communities.

**14** During Lent, as we reflect on our lives and faith, we pray that we are honest with ourselves and not defensive about our faults and weaknesses and are always drawn to the cross where we find forgiveness and new life through Jesus Christ.

**15** We direct our confidence and prayers to God when we wonder who will help us, who is paying attention to our lives and who will deliver us from darkness and evil.

**16** Give thanks to God that our church encourages and provides opportunities for scientists, pastors, science teachers and others to explore the intersections of faith and science.

**17** Ask God for inspiration and insight for reforming and renewing the church and congregations today for the sake of spreading and teaching the gospel and serving our neighbor.

**18** Pray the journey through Lent renews our awareness of our baptismal covenant and vocation, that being washed clean by water and the Word marks us as children of God sent into the world on a lifelong journey of faith, service and declaring the good news of Jesus Christ.

**19** Jesus did not hesitate to be in conversation with, share the good news with and invite to faith the Samaritan woman at the well—a stranger and outsider. We pray our faith shines brightly everywhere, remembering that God's Word and the good news of Jesus Christ is a gift intended for all people.

**20** *First day of spring* Pray for a spirit that shines with the joy of a child, appreciation and thanksgiving for the first day of spring and the wonders of God's creation revealed in every season.

**21** We remember in our prayers the Moravian Church in North America, a full communion partner with the ELCA, and ask God to enrich our partnership and bless our work together sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor.

**22** Give thanks to God for our American Indian and Alaska Native brothers and sisters in Christ and the 30 native congregations committed to reconciliation and the mutual building up of the saints—people of all backgrounds, tribes, regions, communities, congregations and needs.

**23** Pray for God's patience and forgiveness when we quarrel and complain against each other that we remember God's love and mercy toward us, that our faith be restored and we rediscover the joy and blessings of treating one another with respect, compassion and empathy.

**24** Pray for the people of El Salvador and their church leaders who have been bold, courageous public witnesses of the Christian faith, justice and reconciliation in the face of persecution, war, injustice and economic struggle. Ask the Spirit to stir in us compassion that we not forget their plight and ongoing struggles and that we seek ways to encourage hope and work for the renewal and well-being of their communities and society.

**25** Pray for the 12 ELCA missionaries serving in Japan that their work with local partners and congregations, particularly in teaching English, music and theological education, will equip and inspire others as leaders in the church and followers of Christ.

**26** Praise God that there is no sin, illness or difficulty in life that exceeds the ability of Jesus Christ—the one who reveals God's power and works to us—to forgive, heal or resolve.