

25 *Mark, the evangelist* Through our baptism, God calls and equips us to be daily witnesses to the gospel and God's promises. We pray for courage and empathy in our witness, eager for everyone to know and experience God's healing love.

26 We ask God to bless, strengthen and further the work of the ELCA pastors serving as missionaries in Jerusalem, Israel – Colin and Jennifer Grangaard, and Carrie and Robert Smith.

27 In our prayers we express the depth of our love for God with our heart, our soul, our strength, our mind and by loving our neighbor.

28 We remember in our prayers the many people making preparations for this summer's Churchwide Assembly and Grace Gathering in New Orleans. May these gatherings guide our church and inspire our lives together as Lutheran Christians in the world.

29 From the creation story in Genesis, we learn of the importance of trees and life. We give thanks to God on this Arbor Day for the essential life-giving functions trees play in nature – for humans, wildlife and ecosystems – and pray that we take seriously our responsibility to plant and tend these gifts from God.

30 We remember in our prayers college and university students preparing for finals, graduation or making plans for summer that God will bless their endeavors and guide their continuing growth, education and service.

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 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.

PRAYER VENTURES

— APRIL 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 thank God for people whose humor and unique observations of life give us the gifts of laughter, joy and thoughtful pause, even if for only a moment.

2 We remember in our prayers the diverse gifts, life stories and challenges of our Arab-American brothers and sisters, especially during Arab-American Heritage Month, and ask God's blessings on the members and leaders of our Arab and Middle Eastern Lutheran congregations in the ELCA.

3 In all we do, with all our being and in all our prayers, we praise God's greatness and mighty deeds in our world and throughout the universe.

4 We remember in our prayers, especially during Parkinson's Awareness Month, people who live with Parkinson's disease and pray that God will also grant their care providers, companions and families patience and strength.

5 We ask God's Spirit to be at work in our congregations, that we be welcoming faith communities of worship, equipping people for ministry in daily life.

6 Some artists in Martin Luther's time sought to reveal the mystery of salvation and wonder of creation through their paintings. We remember in our prayers artists throughout history and today who inspire faith, stir imagination and witness to Scripture through their craft and creativity.

7 On this observance of World Health Day, we pray for people's participation in, and support of, diabetes prevention, that as a global community we build stronger health systems for more effective management of this disease.

8 As the angels in Isaiah proclaimed, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory," we too give thanks and praise for God's greatness and magnificence.

9 *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, theologian* (1945) For pastors and leaders who are driven by faith and God's word to confront evil, oppression, injustice and violence in the world, we give thanks and pray that we will be encouraged to bold actions by their example and sacrifice.

10 Simon Peter vowed his love for Jesus repeatedly and was repeatedly told by Jesus to direct his love in service to others. We ask God to remind us that we have been set free to direct our faith and love outward in service to our neighbor – in the name of Jesus Christ.

11 We remember in our prayers the 13 Young Adults in Global Mission serving in the United Kingdom. We ask God to bless and encourage their service in parish ministry, work with homeless people, youth ministry and education.

12 God was able to transform and use Paul for good, in spite of his violent, judgmental unbelieving past. Confessing our own shortcomings, sins and doubts, we give thanks that God forgives us and uses us as we are – new in spirit, new in purpose to proclaim the love of God.

13 We pray that God's Spirit will stir in us generous support for the emergency response and relief work underway to save lives and livelihoods in Ethiopia during their second year of a devastating draught.

14 We are a church together. We remember in our prayers the synod assemblies convening during April, that the Spirit will guide their members and leaders in God's work and service in the world.

15 As congregations, leaders and friends, we ask God to help us encourage people to consider serving the church as pastors or rostered leaders and to help them discern their gifts and calling to do God's work in the world.

16 We give thanks to God for delivering us from our fears and insecurities and refocusing our attention on the new life we have received in Jesus Christ.

17 Trusting and believing doesn't come easily to us. We ask God's Spirit to help us accept and believe in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus – the one, true son of God – for our salvation and healing.

18 We continue to pray for the welcoming, resettlement and wellbeing of refugees in Europe and the Middle East. We pray for compassion and wisdom to guide government leaders and relief workers as they continue to seek solutions for this complex human crisis.

19 We pray for farmers and agricultural workers that the spring weather will be favorable for planting and growing crops that nourish God's people and creatures.

20 Our triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is a mystery and difficult truth for us to grasp. We ask God to open our hearts and minds to receive this wonderful mystery in faith and to forgive our doubts and need to fully understand and define that which we fail to grasp.

21 We ask God to bless the final preparations of outdoor ministries across the country for their summer of stirring and strengthening the faith of people of all ages, life experiences and abilities.

22 *Earth Day* The gift of creation sustains all life and enriches our experience of life. In our prayers we give thanks and respect to God, our creator, and ask for wisdom and foresight to cherish and tend what God has entrusted to our care, use and enjoyment.

23 The Rev. Lindsay Mack and Omar Turcios Mixco, ELCA missionaries in Tlalpan, Mexico, serve as coordinators for the Young Adults in Global Mission program in Mexico. We thank God for their gifts and faithful work with young adults.

24 We remember in our prayers the divisions, suspicions and prejudices that divide us and keep us from loving and serving our neighbor, and we pray the Spirit will move us to have humble hearts, sharing and living the gospel without judgment or hesitation.