

23 For families and individuals living in shelters this Christmas season, we pray they will experience joy, generosity and the company of people who demonstrate acceptance and care. We also pray that each may find safe, dependable shelter—a home—and the means to satisfy their daily needs.

24 *Christmas Eve* We pray that we never lose the anticipation we have on the eve of Christmas and that all we say and do points to the ultimate proof of God's love and mercy for us—Jesus Christ.

25 *Christmas Day* On this day we give thanks and praise for the birth of Jesus, the incarnation of God among us, the yearned for yet undeserved gift of love and new life for all humanity.

26 On this first day of Kwanzaa, we remember our African American brothers and sisters, and give thanks for the cultural heritage and traditions, family and community values, and concern for creation lifted up during the celebration of Kwanzaa.

27 Knowing and following Jesus can challenge all that seems familiar and important to us as humans. We pray that God will grant us the ability to trust and have faith, especially when we are troubled or uncertain.

28 The refugee crisis in the Middle East and Europe changes day by day, but we remain steadfast in our prayers for peace in the homelands they flee, for acceptance and respect throughout their journeys and for newfound communities that offer refugees stability and new opportunity.

29 With humility, we ask God to help us walk in the light of Jesus and bear faithful witness to the gospel every day and through every aspect of life and human endeavor.

30 As we move farther from the celebration of Christmas, we pray that our expressions of joy and thanksgiving for the gift of Jesus do not fade but gain new energy and life.

31 *New Year's Eve* Remembering the ways in which we have fallen short of our promises and commitments, we come to God in prayer each day trusting in the forgiveness and newness God has promised us in our baptism and through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

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.



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PRAYER VENTURES

DECEMBER 2015

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 *World AIDS Day* We pray that our work in collaboration with our global partners and companion churches will further develop and expand ministries of HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and advocacy where they are needed most.

2 Recalling God's promises to us throughout history, we pray that during Advent we are immersed in the hope, expectation and new life given and fulfilled in the gift of Jesus Christ, son of God.

3 We remember as we watch the glowing light of the Advent wreath to give thanks to God for bringing the light and hope of Christ into the world.

4 Many states continue to recover from flooding and the threat of more floods. We pray for the safety and recovery of those most affected, especially families, people living in poverty, older adults, economically distressed communities and small businesses.

5 We remember times and situations of darkness and despair in the world—in the present and throughout history—and give thanks that God breaks into the darkness with the light of Jesus Christ, bringing healing, hope, new life and the reassurance of God’s presence and love for us.

6 Throughout Advent we pray that our actions, words and relationships help “prepare the way of the Lord” for those who do not know the good news of Jesus Christ or are longing for lasting forgiveness and hope in their lives.

7 As Paul valued the work of the Christians in Philippi, we also give thanks for our many partners and companion churches and pray that we encourage and complement one another in doing God’s work together in the world.

8 We give thanks for the unique perspectives of faith and tradition that come with the diversity of cultures in the world and for observances that remind us of how God called and used Mary to fulfill the prophecies of the promised Messiah—Jesus Christ.

9 For soldiers on active duty, serving in areas of high risk and separated from family and faith communities, we pray that they find comfort and strength in the cloud of faithful witnesses that surround them, even from afar.

10 We remember in our prayers all people, especially women and children, who live with the debilitating and wounding effects of poverty and hunger. We pray they will find relief and self-sufficiency and that we will be generous

in our support and work to end poverty and hunger everywhere.

11 We remember in our prayers our elders and pray they are surrounded by caring and supportive circles of friends, family and care providers, as well as nurturing communities of faith that value their gifts, life experiences and wisdom in the mission and work of the church.

12 On this Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, we give thanks to God for the witness and traditions that come from our Latino sisters and brothers in Christ and for the ways in which they make God’s presence and work in the world known.

13 Our baptism is a sign of repentance, newness and belonging, and a call to a life of service and witness. We pray the Holy Spirit will guide and enliven our service and witness with others, especially when we grow weary or hesitant.

14 As John the Baptist was fearless and persistent in proclaiming the coming Messiah, we pray that we, too, may be eager and bold in our witness of the good news with our family, friends, neighbors and coworkers.

15 The holiday season is often consumed with buying gifts, sending cards, decorating and parties, but we ask God to also put reminders in our days of what it means to prepare our hearts and minds for Christmas—the birth of our Savior.

16 The days grow shorter and colder and more unforgiving for those without shelter and warmth. We ask God to help us be instruments

of compassion and relief and to help us find and create safe shelter for people who are homeless or face the threat of becoming homeless.

17 We remember and give thanks for pastors, youth ministers, teachers and all leaders of the church and pray that they will find time for physical and spiritual rest and renewal during this busy season of the church.

18 We remember in our prayers men, women and youth who are in jail or prison and ask that they not be forgotten or excluded from hearing and celebrating the promises of God’s mercy, forgiveness and salvation.

19 We pray that God will have mercy on us, lead us, restore us, show us steadfast love and be patient with us.

20 May we will always be joyful and filled with the Holy Spirit, as Elizabeth and Mary were, when we learn what God has in mind for us and when we are placed in unexpected opportunities for service and witness.

21 We remember in our prayers all seasonal workers who serve us during the holidays, and pray that we may treat them with respect and gratefulness and invite them to join us in our faith communities, gatherings and celebrations.

22 Even on the darkest of days our lives are illumined and warmed by the light of Christ, the son of God, born into our world and reality—God’s love manifest for all. On this Winter Solstice, we offer prayers of thanks and praise as we again relive the anticipation of Jesus’ birth.