

27 Today we remember Lydia, Phoebe and Dorcas, faithful partners in Paul's ministry. We give thanks for women of all ages who respond to God's calling with the use of their skills, experiences and spiritual gifts for ministry in the world.

28 We give thanks and praise to God for the ways in which the gift of the Holy Spirit flows upon people of every nation and background – without discrimination or favoritism.

29 We remember in our prayers the ELCA's response to the ongoing refugee crisis in the Middle East and Europe and our work with The Lutheran World Federation and companion churches in Hungary and Serbia to provide for the basic needs of those who have fled their homes.

30 We give thanks for the hope-filled witness and work of congregations and ministries committed to serving low-income and economically depressed communities.

31 We pray that we will remember and follow the word God revealed in Jesus imploring us to serve people in need, especially when we are tempted to keep God's love and blessings to ourselves and treat others as outsiders, nonmembers, undeserving or beneath us.

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

JANUARY 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 give thanks for the Christ child, our Savior, the son of God named of Jesus, and ask that his name be on the tips of our tongues when we speak of our faith.

2 New Year's resolutions come and go, but we ask God for the strength to realize our hopes and goals, and when we fall short of what we intend, to have faith in God's mercy, forgiveness and the gift of beginning anew.

3 In Jesus Christ we hear and experience God's word of truth, the good news of our salvation. We offer in our prayers thanks and praise to God for this immeasurable blessing.

4 For those who have experienced the sorrow and anguish of losing loved ones and neighbors to acts of violence, terrorism or war, we pray for healing and hope in the midst of despair.

5 We remember in our prayers mission developers and leaders who are helping start and grow new congregations and ministries in diverse community contexts in the United States, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

6 As the long, dark winter nights are filled with the bright light of countless stars, we thank God for the bright light of forgiveness and hope in Jesus Christ that dispels the darkness in our lives.

7 We ask God to bless and equip our bishops during the Bishops Academy and for the Holy Spirit to guide their work with leaders, congregations and ministries in their synods.

8 Jesus feared no adversaries or enemies and persisted in his love for humankind, service, healing, forgiving and reaching out to the unloved and those pushed aside in society. We ask God to grant us faith and courage to follow Jesus' example, especially in our world today.

9 We remember in our prayers college and university students during their winter break or J-terms, that they will experience both renewal and enrichment – in spirit and knowledge.

10 *Baptism of Our Lord* We give thanks to God that in our baptism we are joined with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and welcomed into the community of all believers for a new life of love, service and witness to the good news of the gospel.

11 Work is being done with local partners in the new nation of South Sudan to establish the Evangelical Lutheran Church Africa Mission. We pray that support will grow for this new ethnically and culturally diverse church, its leaders and ministry programs.

12 Our 132 outdoor ministry sites engage 3,500 staff in service every summer. We ask God's blessings on directors as they begin recruiting young adults to be in ministry with people of all ages and abilities.

13 The wounds and divisions between people in our country seem to be deepening. We plead to God that we will learn how to build new, more resilient bridges of understanding and compassion and be reminded that we were created from the beginning to care for one another.

14 We pray that the world may know God's love is steadfast and true, a dependable refuge for all people in every circumstance.

15 We remember in our prayers care providers and companions who attend to the needs of people with cognitive or physical disabilities, older adults and the ill and ask God that they find the strength, rest and encouragement needed to continue in their work.

16 We hold in prayer leaders of nations working together for resolution of conflicts and war, the wellbeing of refugees and immigrants, care for the environment, economic justice and the development of new working partnerships.

17 We give thanks for the miraculous changes that transpire in us as a result of God's loving and merciful attentiveness.

18 On this Martin Luther King Jr. Day in particular, we remember all God's people who have been moved by their faith in God's love for all people to work against injustice and racism in the world, no matter the personal cost.

19 We remember in our prayers the network of Lay Schools for Ministry working creatively to equip and support lay leaders for ministry in their local communities and congregations.

20 For those who have no warm shelter from the cold of winter we pray for safe places to live, eat and sleep and that as faith communities we will work and advocate diligently to end homelessness.

21 The heavens and all creation tell of God's glory and handiwork, and we ask the Holy Spirit to infuse our words and actions with appreciation for God's great blessings.

22 We give thanks in our prayers for the ELCA's work with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service to assist, stand with and advocate for the needs and concerns of migrants and refugees of all ages.

23 The impact youth made in Detroit during the ELCA Youth Gathering continues to ripple through the city. We thank God for this special ministry, Detroit's gracious hospitality and the energetic faith and witness of youth.

24 We ask God to help us stay connected with and immersed in Scripture so that we might be encouraged, guided, challenged and inspired in our faith and life.

25 God chose Paul and turned him from a life of violence to a life of service and proclaiming the gospel. On this Conversion of Paul day, we ask God to remind us that all things are possible through Christ and to not give up on or withhold the good news from people who test our patience or faith.

26 ELCA Global Mission Gathering musicians inspire participants with their diverse, spirited musical gifts. We remember them in our prayers as they gather for their annual training this week.