

[Prayer Ventures for May 2023]

1 Praise God that we are never alone or forgotten and that God is our comfort, courage and guide in every circumstance of life. “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me” (Psalm 23:4).

2 *Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month* Give thanks for the rich heritage, gifts, cultures and contributions to our nation and church of our Asian and Pacific Islander neighbors and siblings in Christ. Ask God to bless the work and witness of ELCA Asian and Pacific Islander Ministries and the ELCA’s Association of Asians and Pacific Islanders.

3 Pray for an end to the invasion of Ukraine and for a lasting peace that will lead to rebuilding, renewal and hope-filled visions of the future for the people and communities of Ukraine and its neighboring countries.

4 Ask God to help us face hardships, perplexing problems and worries with faith that produces confidence, courage, wisdom and a resilient spirit.

5 Pray for the leaders, voting members and others gathering for the assemblies of the Pacifica, Southwestern Washington, Metropolitan New York and Southeastern Pennsylvania synods, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and inspire them as they reflect on the mission of the church, choose leaders and encourage one another to proclaim the gospel and serve our neighbors in need.

6 Pray for the leaders, voting members and others gathering for the assemblies of the Southeastern Minnesota and Arkansas-Oklahoma synods, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and inspire them as they reflect on the mission of the church, choose leaders and encourage one another to proclaim the gospel and serve our neighbors in need.

7 Pray for the leaders, voting members and others gathering for the assembly of the North/West Lower Michigan Synod, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and inspire them as they reflect on the mission of the church, choose leaders and encourage one another to proclaim the gospel and serve our neighbors in need.

8 Pray that our baptismal journey and the work we do as children of God will be inspired and informed by the generous and compassionate example of Jesus, who reveals God’s amazing love for humankind.

9 Give thanks for the work we do together through ELCA Mission Support and the funding it provides for the Lutheran Church of Rwanda’s Bible school, which trains lay leaders, and for construction of a seminary in Rwanda to train and equip pastors and evangelists.

10 Lift up prayers of praise and thanksgiving to God for Jesus Christ, our Savior and the enduring cornerstone upon which our faith, life and church are built.

11 Remember in prayer college and university students preparing for finals, discerning their futures and wondering how God will use their particular skills, knowledge and passion for the sake of the world and serving our neighbors in need.

12 Pray for the leaders, voting members and others gathering for the assemblies of the Saint Paul Area and Northeastern Ohio synods, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and inspire them as they reflect on the mission of the church, choose leaders and encourage one another to proclaim the gospel and serve our neighbors in need.

13 Pray for the leaders, voting members and others gathering for the assembly of the New Jersey Synod, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and inspire them as they reflect on the mission of the church, choose leaders and encourage one another to proclaim the gospel and serve our neighbors in need.

14 On Mother's Day thank God for mothers, stepmothers, foster mothers and expectant mothers, and pray for women struggling with parenting, women trying to conceive and women who cannot bear children of their own but serve as loving, caring and faithful adults in the lives of children and youth.

15 Pray for the leaders, voting members and others gathering for the assemblies of the Southeastern Iowa (online) and Rocky Mountain synods, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and inspire them as they reflect on the mission of the church, choose leaders and encourage one another to proclaim the gospel and serve our neighbors in need.

16 Ask the Spirit to strengthen our faith that Jesus Christ lives in us and continues to shape us throughout life until the day when he returns for us.

17 "Holy Spirit, truth divine, dawn upon this soul of mine; breath of God and inward light, wake my spirit, clear my sight" (*ELW* 398). Praise God for the gift of the Spirit, which awakens us to each day and sheds light on how we can live as children of God and followers of Christ, eager to share the gospel, serve our neighbors and radiate hope in the world.

18 Pray for the leaders, voting members and others gathering for the assemblies of the Northern Great Lakes and Southeast Michigan synods, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and inspire them as they reflect on the mission of the church, choose leaders and encourage one another to proclaim the gospel and serve our neighbors in need.

19 Pray for the leaders, voting members and others gathering for the assembly of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and inspire them as they reflect on the mission of the church, choose leaders and encourage one another to proclaim the gospel and serve our neighbors in need.

20 Pray for the leaders, voting members and others gathering for the assemblies of the Southeastern Iowa (in-person), Oregon, East-Central Wisconsin, South-Central Wisconsin and West Virginia-Western Maryland synods, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and inspire them as they reflect on the mission of the church, choose leaders and encourage one another to proclaim the gospel and serve our neighbors in need.

21 Our faith is centered in the good news of Jesus Christ and inspires gratitude, joy and a spirit of love and mercy. "Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth; sing praises to the Lord" (Psalm 68:32).

22 Pray for those recently diagnosed with cancer, who experience fear, hope, disbelief and difficult decisions; give thanks for health care professionals, chaplains, congregational ministries and cancer support groups that surround them and their families with care, encouragement and prayer.

23 What a life we live as disciples of Christ! We encounter temptations, humbling situations and conflict, yet we are emboldened by our faith and prodded forward by the Spirit in our baptismal journey. Give praise and thanks to God!

24 Pray for young people celebrating their graduations from high school and for parents and teachers who have equipped and encouraged them along the way; remember students who struggle with school, that they might have people in their lives who encourage and support them.

25 Remember in prayer candidates who serve in congregations and are involved in the ELCA Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) program; give thanks for the scholarship assistance provided by ELCA Fund for Leaders.

26 Give thanks and praise to God for the gift of the Holy Spirit, which enriches our faith and gives us the ability to witness to God's love and mercy and serve our neighbors everywhere.

27 Give thanks for the work of ELCA World Hunger and Lutheran Disaster Response, ministries of our church that gather our resources and combine them with those of domestic and global partners and companion churches to respond to our neighbors who have been impacted by hunger, poverty, injustice, and natural and human-caused disasters.

28 *Day of Pentecost* Praise God for the variety of gifts we have been given and how they complement the gifts of our siblings in Christ for spreading the gospel, growing the church, serving the needs of our neighbors and bringing hope to our communities and the world.

29 *Memorial Day* Remember, honor and give thanks for those in the armed forces who have given their lives for the sake of peace, justice and freedom. Pray for those who serve in harm's way today, that they will be safe and that their faith, courage and commitment to the well-being of others will be strengthened and sustained.

30 Pray for people engaged in seasonal work, that they will have adequate housing, fair wages, safe work environments and supportive communities and congregations; promise to express recognition and gratitude for their hospitality, gifts and service.

31 Ask God to help us discern our spiritual gifts — as individuals and as communities of faith — and where they are most needed in the church and the world.