

| **[Prayer Ventures for April 2020]**

**1** Give thanks for laughter, smiles, joy and humor today! Praise God for humor that lifts our spirits and provides us an unexpected doorway to reflect on social issues that are difficult to ponder or discuss.

**2** Pray for God's blessings upon the ELCA's Arab and Middle Eastern Ministries, which serve our neighbors and strengthen the church through evangelical outreach, advocacy, social ministry, ecumenical and interfaith relations, leadership development and affirming the dignity and worth of Arab and Middle Eastern people and their cultures.

**3** The season of Lent can seem dark, muted and immersed in thoughts of our human weaknesses and failings. But along the way, remember to give thanks for the good news and hope found in our journey to the cross and in the life-giving miracle of Jesus' resurrection.

**4** Give thanks for bishops, staff, volunteers and leaders who serve in our synods across the country. Pray that the Spirit will strengthen and encourage them for service in the diverse contexts to which God has called them.

**5 *Palm Sunday*** Some people describe our times as post-Christian, an era in which Christ has little meaning, influence or relevance. Pray for the Spirit to be present and diligent in our lives and in the world, rekindling faith in Jesus Christ, the son of God, our Savior, the light and hope for humankind that holds true throughout time and changing cultures.

**6** "How precious is your steadfast love, O God!" Give thanks and praise for God's love and mercy washing over us and providing us refuge.

**7** Pray that we will be guided by the spirit, manner and example of Jesus to be humble and gracious in our faith, service and lives.

**8 *Total Inclusion!*** Widening the Welcome at ELCA Outdoor Ministries is a collaboration between the ELCA churchwide organization and Lutheran Outdoor Ministries, the association of camps and retreat centers affiliated with the ELCA. Pray that this new program will equip and empower outdoor ministry organizations and leaders as they move toward more intentional welcome of people who historically have been marginalized in the church and society — especially people of color, people with disabilities and people who identify as LGBTQIA+.

**9** Remember in prayer all who despair, suffer or long for liberation, love and redemption.

**10 *Good Friday*** As we tell and retell the story of Jesus' life, suffering, death and resurrection, pray that we will see the cross as a vivid symbol and reminder of God's amazing love for us, a life-giving gift given to us in Jesus Christ that is meant to be shared through words, actions and imagery that inspire faith today.

**11** The living word of God in Jesus Christ breaks through every barrier and border, shines light wherever there is darkness and bridges every rift and difference in humankind — real or imagined. Give praise and thanks to God!

**12** *Easter Sunday* This is the day we eagerly anticipated, a day of celebration and joyous mystery — the resurrection of Jesus Christ! Shout praise and glory to God for saving us and setting us free to live as children of God and share the good news with the world.

**13** Give thanks for our church’s long-standing commitment to global mission and faithful service alongside global companions, churches and organizations as they share the good news of Jesus Christ, care for neighbors in need, work for justice and grow the church.

**14** Look up and all around today; notice what is good, life-giving and hope-inspiring. “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

**15** Give thanks for the volunteers of all ages who are vital to our mission and work in the world and who share their diverse gifts, interests and abilities in congregations, volunteer corps, camps and retreat centers, ELCA Global Mission, ELCA Mission Builders, Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran social ministry organizations and however else they feel called to serve.

**16** Having received a new life and identity in Christ, we ask God to help us recognize and focus on what God considers to be important, good and true.

**17** Remember in prayer ELCA missionaries serving alongside the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Slovak Republic in ministries of education, leadership development and parish life.

**18** Give thanks for our church’s history of hospitality and concern for refugees and immigrants. Pray for the 60 million displaced people in the world and ask God to equip and embolden us to advocate on their behalf and welcome them, in partnership with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, the Lutheran World Federation and companion churches in other countries.

**19** *Earth Day Sunday* Praise God for this wondrous creation! Give thanks for how our church embraces our responsibility to care for God’s creation through stewardship, education, advocacy and urging one another to take personal and institutional responsibility. Pray that the partnerships and collaborations of the ELCA will produce far-reaching results through ecoAmerica’s Blessed Tomorrow program, Creation Justice Ministries, Lutherans Restoring Creation and other networks focused on engaging the church and society in the care and stewardship of creation.

**20** Ask for God’s grace and forgiveness when questions and doubts undermine our joy in the good news of Jesus Christ. Give thanks that God meets our uncertainty with the same patience and love shown to the disciple Thomas when he needed reassurance that Jesus was the Son of God, the true Messiah and Savior of the world.

**21** Pray for worship leaders gathering in Valparaiso, Ind., for the Institute of Liturgical Studies seminar “Living Breath of God: How Word Through Music Forms Us.” Ask that the Holy Spirit

strengthen and stir their faith, wisdom and creativity as they reflect on questions around the theology and practice of music in our worshiping communities.

**22** *Earth Day* Rejoice in God's astonishing handiwork of creation; praise God's life-giving power and might revealed in the smallest microbe and the infinite mysteries of the universe. Pray that we will demonstrate wisdom, appreciation and respect for nature and all that God has entrusted to our care and use.

**23** Remember in prayer the leaders, voting members and others gathered for the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod Assembly, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and encourage them in proclaiming the gospel, growing the church, serving our neighbor and doing God's work in an ever-changing world.

**24** Remember in prayer the leaders, voting members and others gathered for the assemblies of the Alaska and Minneapolis Area synods, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and encourage them in proclaiming the gospel, growing the church, serving our neighbor and doing God's work in an ever-changing world.

**25** Give thanks that God is our ever-present refuge, counsel, comfort and joy.

**26** Pray that we will recognize the presence of Jesus in our daily lives — at home, at work, at church, in relationships, during leisure time and in our travels and encounters with strangers.

**27** Give thanks for the witness and work of Alberto (Gustavo) Driau, regional representative for Argentina and Uruguay; Rachel Ringlaben, YAGM country coordinator; and the seven volunteers serving alongside our companions in Argentina and Uruguay as part of the Young Adults in Global Mission program.

**28** Ask God to stir our generosity for supporting the ministries and witness of our congregations, synods and churchwide organization.

**29** Pray that we will find words to share our faith in Jesus Christ and our understanding of Scripture with one another and the world, while also trusting that the Holy Spirit works to deepen our faith and enrich our knowledge of God's word and ways.

**30** Ask God to help us see and attend to people who are unseen, forgotten, underserved or ignored in our congregations, communities and society — elders who are homebound; people who are quiet, incarcerated, homeless or mentally ill; and people living in shelters, care facilities and group homes.