

Prayer Ventures for August 2020

1 Pray for open hearts and minds, that we might reflect prayerfully on our church, society, institutions, laws, traditions and selves, seeking meaningful change and reform to combat racism and white supremacy wherever they exist, perpetuate injustice or influence us.

2 Pray that the story of Jesus feeding the hungry crowd will inspire us to be compassionate and generous, and that, individually and together, we will be able and equipped to respond to the needs of our neighbor.

3 Give thanks for artists and craftspeople who share their creative gifts and perspectives, arousing our joy, wonder, reflection and appreciation of life.

4 Pray that we will not be too inhibited to wrestle with God and God's Word, or to have candid conversations with God, and that the Spirit will deepen our trust in God's love, concern, forgiveness and patience with us.

5 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Young Adults in Global Mission program will not be sending out volunteers this year. Give thanks for young adults who have volunteered for global service over the years, and pray that the Spirit will guide the Young Adults in Global Mission program as it prepares to continue its work and ministry alongside our global companions.

6 Ask the Spirit to help us be bold and articulate in sharing who God is, what God has done and what God is doing in the world for the sake of all people.

7 Pray for the leaders, voting members and others gathered for the Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly and participating in online sessions, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and encourage them in choosing leaders, proclaiming the gospel, growing the church, serving our neighbor and doing God's work in an ever-changing world.

8 Pray for the Spirit to stir within us humility, wisdom, empathy and a commitment to dismantle the barriers between people who live in wealth and people who live in poverty. Pray that all will have sufficient resources for daily life and self-sufficiency but also will develop a deeper commitment to mutual care and will value one another and our interdependence.

9 Just as Jesus calmed and reassured his disciples in a boat crossing a stormy sea, we pray for protection, comfort and renewal of faith in these difficult, uncertain times and in future ordeals.

10 Give thanks to God for leaders — paid and volunteer — who serve in youth, young adult and family ministries in our congregations and synods. Pray for the ELCA Youth, Young Adult and Youth Gathering ministries and the ELCA Youth Ministry Network, that their collective work of supporting, equipping and nurturing faith and of connecting leaders and young people will yield abundant fruit.

11 Pray that we will listen carefully to God and be receptive to the ways God speaks to us each day, especially when we least expect it or are slow to recognize God's voice amid the noise and competing voices in the world.

12 "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" Ask God to help us proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and salvation, that all who hear will believe, be saved and enjoy the blessings of being a sibling in Christ with believers throughout the world.

13 Give thanks for nurses, who care for our physical, emotional and spiritual needs in diverse settings, including hospitals, community clinics, congregations, schools, home care, the military, facilities for older adults, health education programs and global mission. Pray for the Evangelical Lutheran Parish Nurse Association and its work supporting, equipping and encouraging parish nurses across the country.

14 Pray that during this pandemic, which has stretched beyond our expectations and imagination, we will be renewed in our commitment to the patience, sacrifice and awareness of the example we set as we continue personal health measures for the sake of our health and the wellness of our neighbors, community and nation.

15 Pray for the leaders, voting members and others of the Eastern North Dakota Synod who are gathering for their digital assembly, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and encourage them in choosing leaders, proclaiming the gospel, growing the church, serving our neighbor and doing God's work in an ever-changing world.

16 Pray for forgiveness and God's mercy when our actions, words, intentions or thoughts dishonor God's ways and commandments. Ask for the Spirit to help us shine as bright witnesses to God's unbound, unbiased love for humanity and to serve our neighbor without prejudice or reluctance.

17 Remember in prayer the people and communities of India and Bangladesh that were affected by Cyclone Amphan in May. Pray for the response of Lutheran World Service India Trust, supported by Lutheran Disaster Response, as it provides food to families in urban slums, tarps and temporary shelters, and assists families in obtaining aid for housing reconstruction. Pray for God's presence, comfort, hope and healing throughout their recovery.

18 God asks us to do justice and do what is right. Pray that we will be faithful to God's ways and commandments and to Jesus' example of unrestrained love and compassion for people who are needy, suffering or oppressed.

19 Give thanks for nimble, creative teachers and school staff as they adapt to the changing dynamics of the COVID-19 pandemic with concern for the safety, education and personal needs of students and their parents.

20 God is gracious and blesses us; God's face shines on us. Join creation and every nation in praising God and singing for joy!

21 Who can argue with the psalmist who proclaims that it is good and pleasant when we live together in unity? Pray that, amid unrest, conflict and division, we will work for the unity that God desires for us, a unity rooted in love, respect, justice, diversity, reconciliation, mutual understanding and advocacy for neighbors in need.

22 Give thanks for how God sustains us and nurtures our hope through interactions with friends, family, siblings in Christ, strangers and communities of faith — in person and by phone, text, email, online meetings, posted notes and cards, and acts of kindness.

23 How do you respond when someone asks you about your faith, your beliefs, the church or who Jesus is? Pray that the Spirit will inspire our boldness and clarity as we, respecting and welcoming people's questions, talk about our faith, recognize and seek opportunities to bear witness to God's presence and work in the world, and reveal the Jesus we know and follow through our actions and prayerful conversations.

24 Pray for students beginning a new academic year, that they will adjust quickly to new ways of learning, being together and interacting safely. Ask the Spirit to inspire our communities of faith to provide support, encouragement and help for children, youth, young adults and parents, especially during these beginning weeks and months of school.

25 "In one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another." Give thanks and praise to God for the diverse gifts, skills and life experiences we have been given, which we share in the body of Christ to build each other up and do God's work in the world.

26 Remember in prayer our global companions and all nations fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, the resulting economic problems and social and emotional stress, and the lack of accessible health care and adequate medical resources. Pray that we will respond to our global neighbors in need with empathy, hope and generosity, freely sharing our resources, discoveries and technology.

27 Give thanks and praise to God for hearing our words, loving us, sustaining us through times of trouble and strengthening our spirit and faith.

28 Give thanks that, as a church, we listen to the needs of our neighbors, roll up our sleeves and get to work with partners and companions in our communities and the world, helping and serving where the needs are greatest.

29 In this presidential campaign year, pray that our leaders and candidates will serve all people, especially those in the greatest need; work to heal wounds and divisions in society; strive for justice and equality; and seek change for the well-being and prosperity of our communities. Pray that our faith, wisdom and concern for neighbors and global companions will guide our discernment and decisions in upcoming elections.

30 Give thanks that we have been transformed and made new through God’s love for us and our baptism in Jesus Christ. Pray that the living word of Jesus will guide our baptismal journeys so that we extend hospitality to strangers, love and serve our neighbor, overcome evil with good, accompany people who are suffering and in pain, and disavow vengeance and hate.

31 Pray for synod leaders and committees as they carefully plan assemblies rescheduled for this fall or next year. Remember that our strength and unity in Christ transcend traditional places, methods or times of gathering — we are the church, the body of Christ, in every setting and circumstance.