

PRAYER VENTURES FOR AUGUST 2021

1 What do we seek or yearn for when we follow Christ; what proof do we plead for when told of God's presence, activity and infinite power? Pray that the Spirit will stir in us an enduring faith in God's word and promises that does not depend on miracles, signs or personal favors.

2 Pray for people in our country and around the world who are suffering from persistent drought and extreme heat. Ask God to keep them safe, restore life-giving water to their lands and grant us the wisdom to use our water resources with respect, responsibility, restraint and concern for the present and the future.

3 Pray for women of all ages convening digitally for the Eleventh Triennial Convention of the Women of the ELCA. Pray for their time together as they conduct business, elect leaders, grow in faith, support and encourage one another, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, our society and the world.

4 Pray for young-adult, lay and professional religious leaders participating in the interreligious summer school of the World Council of Churches' Bossey Ecumenical Institute in Switzerland. The summer school will examine issues of religious pluralism and intercultural acceptance in a society based on migration and globalization.

5 Though we have different gifts, perspectives, life experiences and passions as siblings in Christ and children of God, pray that we will receive and take to heart God's assurance that our faith and baptism unite us to do God's work in the world, together.

6 Pray for our ELCA missionaries serving alongside companion churches and organizations in Slovakia: Rachel Bossuyt, Megan Freudenberg, Jonathan Kent, Jennifer Norberg, Edward Patricks, Naomi and Nicholas Sveholm, the Rev. Kyle and Anna Svenningsen, John Rogers and Sue Strekal.

7 Remember in prayer victims of gun violence, their families and friends, impacted communities and all who are working to prevent gun violence in our country. Ask God to remind us that when anyone suffers, grieves or experiences trauma, we are all affected.

8 Give thanks that God reveals the true Jesus and what he has accomplished for humankind through Scripture and the work of the Spirit. When gathering for the sacramental meal, give thanks for the clarity of Jesus' words: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh" (John 6:51).

9 Give thanks for the critical work and ministry we accomplish together in the world through Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR). Our generous support and prayers and the work of LDR and its partners bring God's hope, healing, renewal and assistance to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world.

10 Pray for teachers, school staff and administrators who have begun a new school year, and for those who are preparing to open schools. Ask God to sharpen their wisdom and judgment as they make decisions for protecting the health and well-being of students and responding to social, emotional and academic needs that have surfaced because of the pandemic.

11 We are not perfect in our actions, motives or relationships, but we can be imitators of Jesus and follow Paul's urging to "put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:31-32). Give thanks and praise that we live each day in God's grace and forgiveness.

12 *International Youth Day: "Transforming Food Systems"* Pray for youth and adults working together to implement stable and sustainable food production, provide equitable food distribution, address nutrition-related chronic diseases, improve nutrition education and decision-making, and seek new solutions to other complex issues related to food systems, nutrition and the environment.

13 Give thanks and praise to God, for the Lord is good, delivers us from our fears and offers a welcoming refuge.

14 Remember in prayer the leaders, voting members and others gathering for the Eastern North Dakota Synod Assembly, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and encourage them in learning, choosing leaders, proclaiming the gospel, growing the church, serving our neighbor and doing God's work in an ever-changing world.

15 Pray that Mary's song in the Gospel of Luke will remind us of God's power, mercy, loving kindness, concern for the humble and neighbors in need, and great work in the world for our sake.

16 Pray for Lutheran Men in Mission and other congregational ministries for men, that they will flourish, equip new leaders, respond to the needs of men of all ages, inspire men to share their faith, and help men support one another as they witness to the

gospel through their relationships, actions, service and words.

17 Pray that we will trust and honor God's word and ways, and heed the psalmist's urging: "Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it" (Psalm 34:13-14).

18 Give thanks for our church's commitment to lifelong learning and biblical and theological education for laypeople and leaders through the Lay Schools for Ministry network and other programs.

19 Give thanks to God that the Spirit fills us and gathers us as siblings in Christ to worship and praise our Creator, care for one another, serve our neighbor and share the good news of Christ in our daily life.

20 Remember in prayer the leaders, voting members and others gathering online for the Metropolitan New York Synod Assembly, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and encourage them in learning, choosing leaders, proclaiming the gospel, growing the church, serving our neighbor and doing God's work in an ever-changing world.

21 Give thanks for ELCA Racial Justice Ministries, which encourages us to embrace each person and confront barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, class, religion, age, gender, family and sexual orientation that often manifest themselves in unjust treatment, inequality, exclusion and violence.

22 Pray that we will follow Jesus and grow in faith and trust even when we are perplexed by the mysteries of our faith, have questions and doubts, or wonder how to respond to God's call to serve our neighbors and share the gospel.

23 Pray for our ELCA missionaries serving alongside companion churches and organizations in the Middle East and North Africa, including the Rev. Christie Manisto and Steven Saari (Egypt), the Rev. Carrie Ballenger (Israel/Palestine) and the Rev. Gabi and Rev. Meghan Aelabouni (Israel/Palestine).

24 Give thanks and praise that God hears our cries for help, attends to the brokenhearted, saves those whose spirits are crushed and rescues us from our troubles.

25 We pray that God's saving power through Jesus Christ will be known throughout the world, that all may praise God and sing for joy.

26 Thank God for the young adults who have served in Lutheran outdoor ministries this summer, and pray that they will continue to respond to God's call to use their experience, gifts and passion for doing God's

work in other settings and ministries throughout the year.

27 Ask God to equip us spiritually with everything we need to resist darkness, evil and temptation so that we will be bold, living witnesses of God's love, mercy, truth, goodness and power.

28 Pray for volunteers, leaders and staff who are planning fall programs for congregations, that these will enable all ages to deepen their faith and their understanding of Scripture, to serve their neighbor, to share the gospel and to do God's work in the world.

29 What Lutheran traditions are most important and influential in your life? Where did they originate, and what is their significance in your congregation? Ask God to open our hearts and minds to reflect on the purpose and impact of our traditions and practices and whether they help us honor God's will and deepen our faith or distract us from enriching our faith and practicing openness and hospitality.

30 Pray for our ELCA colleges, universities and seminaries, that God will bless and further their work of education, encouraging faith, helping students discern their vocations and equipping leaders for the church and world.

31 Pray that the Spirit will fill us with God's goodness and truth, making us hearers and doers of the word — God's word.