

[Prayer Ventures for April 2019]

1 Remember in prayer the eight young people working alongside our companions in Argentina and Uruguay as part of the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program. Remember also Krystle Moraska and Ignacio Madrussan, YAGM country coordinators; Caitlyn Melillo, Horizon intern; and Alberto (Gustavo) Driau, ELCA regional representative for South America.

2 Give thanks for the coming of spring, with its stirring of new life, its blossoms and flowers, and its lengthening days filled with light. Pray for those who are suffering, feeling hopeless or experiencing depression, that their spirits will be lifted and refreshed by the changing season, the care and encouragement of others and the newness we have in Christ.

3 God is our source of strength and forgiveness all day long, every day. Be glad, rejoice and shout for joy!

4 Pray for the churchwide officers, synod bishops and other elected members of the ELCA Church Council as they gather for discussion, discernment and decision-making, that they might guide, support and provide leadership for the churchwide organization and our church.

5 Pray that, as the body of Christ, we are able to perceive Christ in one another, affirm each other as new creations in Christ, and venture together into our communities and the world as bearers of the gospel and as witnesses to what God is doing in the world for our sake.

6 Give thanks for those who help care for our infants and children — grandparents and relatives, nursery attendants, day care workers, preschool teachers and babysitters.

7 Pray that we resist judging the offerings and contributions of our brothers and sisters in Christ and that, instead, the Holy Spirit moves us to encourage and affirm one another in being generous in sharing what we have — time, money, resources, wisdom, skills and spiritual gifts — with our neighbor.

8 Spring and summer bring severe weather and flooding to some regions of our nation. Pray that congregations, neighbors and communities will work together to create disaster-response plans and will gather resources to share in the event of a disaster. Pray for the safety and well-being of those who face the impact of storms, and give thanks for the work of Lutheran Disaster Response, faith-based agencies and other organizations as they bring care, hope and healing to our neighbors in need.

9 Pray that we are energized to continue to work toward the goals and priorities identified in ELCA Future Directions 2025, helping our church to journey faithfully and effectively together in the years ahead to do what God is calling us to do.

10 Pray for congregations, Lutheran Services in America organizations, ecumenical partners and community agencies that support men and women in prison and those reentering society, encouraging their faith and hope and caring for their families. Pray for the development of

resource networks, services and places of grace and acceptance for those seeking to rebuild their lives after prison — spiritually, socially, emotionally and economically.

11 Thank God for our special relationship with the United Church of Christ, a full communion partner with the ELCA since 1997. Pray for the church, its members and its leaders, and pray that together we find strength and new resources for the work of sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor.

12 Remember in prayer the service and witness of the 10 young people serving alongside our companions in Hungary and Serbia as part of the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program, and the Rev. Rachel Eskesen and Zachary Courter, YAGM country coordinators for Central Europe.

13 Pray that the fulfillment of God’s promises and great love for us will permeate our thoughts and replace our sorrow and tears with joy.

14 *Palm Sunday* Pray that, in the telling and retelling of the story of Jesus’ passion, we capture a sense of God’s boundless, sacrificial love for us that renews and deepens our faith.

15 Give praise and glory to God for the humility and sacrifice of Christ Jesus on the cross, that we might know and experience true love and life, now and eternally.

16 Reflect prayerfully on what the cross means to you, what we proclaim when we make the sign of the cross on ourselves or others, and how God turns an instrument of torture and death into a symbol of God’s power and love and our new life in Christ Jesus.

17 Give thanks for our many opportunities to read, hear, study and reflect on the word of God — during worship, in Bible-study groups, at ELCA gatherings and events, in many languages, and using our dog-eared, marked-up Bibles at home.

18 Ask God to inspire and equip us, through the work of the Spirit, to be servants in the world who exemplify and follow the teaching, actions, humility and sacrifice of Jesus, who commanded his disciples and us, “Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.”

19 *Good Friday* Pray that our faith be uplifted and strengthened in the knowledge that God shows us mercy and grace, and that we understand the depths of our weakness and the darkness of humanity through the suffering and death of Jesus, son of God.

20 Pray for the relief of all in the world who suffer, that they might experience healing, hope and God’s presence in their life and circumstances.

21 *Easter Day* There’s good news for everyone — Christ is risen! Alleluia! Through the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus, God has broken every human restraint of sin, hopelessness and death; we are set free to live life anew with joy, gratitude and love. Give thanks and praise to God!

22 Pray that faith in Jesus Christ, the risen son of God, will give us the courage and enthusiasm to share the good news with the world, trusting that all who believe will be transformed by God's gift of love and forgiveness.

23 God has given us this and every day to live with purpose, freedom and boldness in the world as redeemed children of God. Search for new, prayerful words and expressions to celebrate and be glad today!

24 Give thanks for choirs, musicians, rock bands, organists, cantors and handbell choirs that share their creative gifts in praise and glory to God and invite us to express our faith and joy through diverse styles of music.

25 Pray for the work and advocacy of our church, partner organizations and communities that address the root causes of violence and respond to the people and communities it affects. Pray that we remain committed to our convictions expressed in the ELCA social message on "Community Violence" no matter where our pursuit of justice and peace might lead us, or how long it might take to bring about meaningful change.

26 Remember in prayer the leaders, voting members and others gathered for the assemblies of the Alaska and Northern Texas–Northern Louisiana synods, that the Spirit will strengthen, guide and encourage them in doing God's work in the world, proclaiming the gospel and growing the church.

27 Pray for the service and witness of the Revs. Kirsten Fryer and Michael Parker, ELCA missionaries accompanying our companions in Egypt, as they work with the seminary community, refugee advocacy and support, and an international congregation in Cairo.

28 We can all relate to the apostle Thomas, who questioned Jesus and asked for proof that God was alive and well in the world. Pray that the Holy Spirit will fill us with faith in God's loving presence and activity in the world, even when we are doubtful, curious, weak or confused.

29 When we do God's work in the world, we share in the resources, assistance and commitment of many partners, including the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches and the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Thank God for our partners and companions.

30 Consider how our lives manifest God's love and mercy each day; ask God's forgiveness for times when we have fallen silent about our faith or failed to let our witness shine brightly in the world.