[Prayer Ventures for January 2025]

1 *New Year's Day* Ask God to grant us strength, wisdom and patience to accomplish new goals this year. Give thanks for God's forgiveness and for the support of others, which help us to continue when we fail, grow frustrated or are redirected in our pursuits.

2 "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being!" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Our newness in Christ is realized in our present life and in the future, when we enter the kingdom of God. Pray for the Spirit to strengthen our faith and to help us embrace our new selves — every day.

3 Pray for the Spirit to stir our patience, understanding and respect for others when we find ourselves in conflict with our neighbors or siblings in Christ.

4 Pray for our synod bishops attending the Bishop's Academy in Puerto Rico as they study and reflect on the challenge and promise of Lutheran mission and theology in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean.

5 Give thanks to God that Jesus Christ lived among us, that we might believe in God's grace and truth and be filled with joy and relief as children of God who are set free to live as Jesus did in service to our neighbors.

6 *Epiphany* "This star, as bright as day, that will never lead astray with its message so appealing, is the word of God, revealing Christ, the way, the truth, the life" (*ELW* 301). Praise God for the gift of Jesus Christ, who reveals to us the way, truth and life of God's love, forgiveness and promises.

7 Pray for a peaceful transfer of presidential power in the United States and that the Spirit will influence and guide our leaders to serve all people with compassion, wisdom and concern for justice and unity.

8 "In [Christ] we have redemption through [Christ's] blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us" (Ephesians 1:7-8). God's boundless love and forgiveness are lavish indeed. Give thanks and praise to God!

9 Remember in prayer college, university and seminary students taking part in winter J-term classes and service learning, that their experiences will deepen their faith, expand their knowledge and reveal how their gifts and passions can be used to do God's work in the world.

10 Thank God for the ELCA's special relationship with the United Methodist Church, a full communion partner since 2009. Pray for the church, its members and its leaders, that we will respect our differences but embrace our unity in Christ so we can spread the gospel, serve our neighbor, and share leadership and resources for doing God's work in the world — together.

11 Give thanks for God's grace and the work of the Spirit, which equip us with the tools, wisdom and courage needed to face the challenges of everyday life and to bear Christ's love and hope into the world.

12 Pray that we will affirm our baptism by telling others about the triune God, by loving and serving our neighbors, by encouraging the faith of our siblings in Christ and by seeking opportunities for spiritual growth.

13 Pray for those who respond to God's call by working hand in hand with our companion churches and other organizations around the world through ELCA Global Mission. Ask God to sustain and strengthen their faith, their commitment and their diverse gifts.

14 "Who hears the song our sorrows swallow and offers hope to calm our fears? When all our words seem frail and hollow, God heeds the prayers within our tears" (*All Creation Sings* 1050). Give thanks that God hears and responds to our grief and suffering, even when our words fall short of expressing the depth of our sorrow.

15 Pray for the outdoor ministries of our church that are busy recruiting and hiring young-adult staff to share their faith and serve campers of all ages, backgrounds and abilities in summer programs.

16 *National Religious Freedom Day* Give thanks that the U.S. Constitution supports the freedom to embrace religion, to worship and to share our faith according to our personal beliefs. Pray that we will respect the religious beliefs of our neighbors and support their right to practice their faith openly, without constraints or persecution.

17 "You who know our fears and sadness, grace us with your peace and gladness; Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts" (*WOV* 738). Lift up your worries, troubles, insecurities and grief to God, who understands us and grants comfort, strength and endurance in every circumstance of our life.

18 *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* Today begins a week of prayer with our siblings in Christ around the world. Give thanks that we are one in Christ and that, together, we cast a brilliant light in the world.

19 Praise God for the inexhaustible grace shown to us throughout our lives and baptismal journeys.

20 *Martin Luther King Jr. Day* Remember and give thanks for the life, teaching and advocacy of Martin Luther King Jr. for the sake of justice, inclusion and the value of all people, especially those who suffer persecution, racism, disdain or oppression. Pray that we will be inspired by our neighbors and siblings in Christ who are fearless and persistent in their advocacy and compassion for others.

21 Thank God for the gifts given to us through the Spirit, and pray that others might recognize their own unique gifts and see where they are valued and needed.

22 Pray for ELCA directors for evangelical mission, who serve as resources to synods in mission development, congregational renewal and stewardship.

23 Pray for our church's grassroots Life of Faith initiative, meant to help us to live out our baptismal vocation in daily life, serve our neighbors and work for justice in the diverse contexts of family, workplace, school, community and the world.

24 Pray that we will open all our senses to God's glory, power and voice as revealed in nature — the awe-inspiring and dynamic handiwork of our Creator.

25 *Conversion of Paul* Give thanks that, for God, all things are possible, even when we do not envision the possibility of lives being changed, hearts softened or faith awakened.

26 Ask God to help us follow Christ's example, being humble, kind, loving, merciful, attentive to our neighbors and quick to respond to their needs.

27 Remember in prayer youth, adults and families involved in service learning and mission trips throughout the year. Pray that they might share the gospel, serve their neighbors in need, participate in the work of global companions and ecumenical partners, and respond to the unique contexts and needs of communities.

28 Remember in prayer neighbors and siblings in Christ who suffer poverty, homelessness and hunger, that their hope will be sustained, their daily needs met and their human dignity respected.

29 "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart" (Psalm 19:7-8). Give thanks for the word of God, for it is trustworthy and restores us, imparts wisdom, and stirs joy and gratitude in our hearts.

30 Pray for an end to conflicts and violence in the world, including in our own communities. Ask the Spirit to inspire and equip us to be peacemakers and bearers of hope.

31 Give thanks for Women of the ELCA (WELCA) and its ministry with women to encourage bold and active faith in Jesus Christ, promote healing and wholeness, address injustices, discover spiritual gifts, and encourage and equip leaders.