[Prayer Ventures for March 2025]

1 Give thanks for God's compassion, forgiveness and concern for humanity, which extend far beyond rules, borders, ideologies and bias. Pray that we are inspired to do likewise!

2 Thank God for the example of Jesus Christ, focusing not on his crucifixion but on what God reveals to us through his journey of life, suffering, death and resurrection.

3 Pray for lasting and resilient peace in the Holy Land and Middle East, that those who have suffered and lost much will experience justice, hope and healing as they rebuild their lives and communities.

4 Praise God for young people who serve our neighbors through ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM), working alongside global companion churches and organizations. Pray that their yearlong journeys will be blessings to the communities they serve and will strengthen their faith, clarity of vocation and understanding of people in diverse contexts.

5 *Ash Wednesday* Pray that we will wear the mark of the cross on our foreheads with humility and repentance and will remember why we are baptized into Christ: to proclaim the gospel, bear love and mercy into the world, serve our neighbors, strive for justice, grow in faith and glorify God in all we do and say.

6 Ask the Spirit to guide us through the season of Lent, that it might strengthen our faith in God's sacrificial love through Jesus Christ. Give thanks for the knowledge that we live in God's all-encompassing grace, given despite our weakness, uncertainty and arrogance.

7 Lift up praise and thanksgiving that God is perfect, impartial and ever present, defending those who suffer.

8 Remember in prayer our national leaders, that they will exercise wisdom, compassion, justice, mercy, respect for the diversity of humankind and attentiveness to those who are neglected and excluded. Pray that our leaders will foster well-being in our communities, nation and world.

9 Pray that the Spirit will give us strength whenever we are tempted to stray from the ways of God, revealed to us in human terms through the life of Jesus Christ.

10 Give thanks for moments of joy and celebration in your life and the lives of your neighbors and siblings in Christ.

11 Who is our neighbor? Pray that we might recognize people everywhere in the world as our neighbors, created by and beloved of God and sharing with us a common lineage.

12 Ask God to bless our congregations' community meals during Lent, that we might build relationships, reflect in prayer and feel renewed in our enthusiasm for doing God's work in the world.

13 "When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble; I will rescue them and honor them" (Psalm 91:15). Lift up prayers of gratitude to God, who hears our pleading and lamentations and does not ignore or abandon us.

14 Give thanks for the ELCA Fund for Leaders scholarship program, which supports students attending ELCA seminaries so that they can graduate with less debt and respond to God's call as the church needs and the Spirit leads.

15 Pray for the ELCA AMMPARO Migrant Ministry, ELCA Witness in Society, ELCA World Hunger, Global Refuge, Lutheran Services in America and other partner ministries and organizations that uphold basic human rights, address causes of migration and help immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees rebuild their lives in our country.

16 "O God, you know all that we think or do, you know the pain we put each other through. Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord, grant us peace" (*WOV* 739). Praise God for the boundless love and forgiveness that create a new spirit within us and enable us to change how we behave toward our neighbors.

17 Remember in prayer the 240 ELCA missionaries who serve alongside global church partners in more than 40 countries, doing God's work in the world and supporting the growth of new congregations, urban and youth outreach, theological education, pursuit of justice and peace, and leadership training.

18 Remember in prayer congregations that are working through leadership transitions, assessing their missions and resources, and searching for pastors, deacons or others to become teachers and leaders.

19 "The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me" (Martin Luther, *Table Talk*). Pray that the word of God in Scripture will lay hold of us and reveal something new to us each time we read the Bible, hear it read aloud or reflect on its implications for our daily lives.

20 *First Day of Spring* Sing praises and lift up prayers of joy and thanksgiving for the new life, light and hope that emerge with spring — awesome gifts from God, the Creator.

21 Thank God for the ELCA's special relationship with The Episcopal Church, a full communion partner since 1999. Pray for the church, its members and its leaders, that together we will find strength and resources for the work of sharing the gospel and serving our neighbor.

22 Water is a gift from God and a vital resource that sustains all living things. Pray for wisdom and discipline that we might preserve, manage and restore water resources essential to food production and life itself for people around the world.

23 Let us repent our sins to God, just as we are, asking God's forgiveness, guidance and transformation.

24 Pray that our Lenten reflections and conversations will lead us to a clearer sense of our identity, our mission and our calling to proclaim the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ.

25 Give thanks for godparents and baptismal sponsors who encourage our faith, teaching us to live as children of God and followers of Christ throughout our baptismal journeys.

26 "O God, you are my God; I seek you; my soul thirsts for you" (Psalm 63:1). Reflect on the longings of your soul and give thanks that the Spirit moves with us through Lent, leading us to the foot of the cross.

27 Give thanks for ELCA Ministries of Diverse Cultures and Communities, which works with ELCA congregations, synods, agencies and institutions to make the church more culturally diverse, anti-racist and inclusive of all God's children.

28 God's pardon of our human shortcomings and sin can never be earned or bought. Pray that, forgiven and freed in Jesus Christ, we will respond with gratitude, compassion and mercy for others.

29 Give thanks for the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (ELEA), which supports, equips and encourages Lutheran educators, and for our congregations' faith-based day care centers and preschools, which provide safe and nurturing environments for faith formation.

30 Hallelujah! God's loving embrace surpasses our wildest hopes, restoring us as God's children through the life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

31 Ask the Spirit to equip, inspire and guide us as ambassadors of Christ in the world, children of God who love our neighbors in need and share the good news with everyone.