

who live, learn and grow in their faith in a variety of settings around the world, many times away from their parents and siblings.

25 Nativity of Our Lord

On this anniversary of the birth of our Lord Jesus, give thanks for Myranda Strickland who, as foster care and Unaccompanied Minor Program supervisor, works to provide overseas adoption services for families in the United States through Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area in Washington, D.C.

26 Ask God to bless Iglesia San Esteban Martir (St. Stephen the Martyr Lutheran Church), committed to the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people in the Carpentersville, Ill., area, as they enter a partnership with Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Elgin, Ill., to establish a new site for worship in Elgin.

27 Pray for the ministry of Paula Powell, who serves with the Lutheran Communion in South Africa (LUCSA), a regional group with member churches in Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. LUCSA's office is located in Johannesburg, South Africa.

28 1st Sunday of Christmas

Almighty God, give to all your people the love of peace, and guide the leaders of all nations so that your kingdom will go forth in peace and the earth will be filled with your love.

29 Pray for new campus pastors and ministers who are beginning their service on college campuses across the country, that they be faithful witnesses to the Gospel, so that young adults, faculty and staff are invited into the community that bears Christ's name.

30 Pray for Pastor Philip and Lou-Marie Knutson and family, who serve with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa. Philip works as a resource person, advisor and trainer for the church's Christian education program and serves ELCA Global Mission as regional program assistant for Southern Africa.

31 Give thanks for the leadership of Lutheran Student Movement as members meet in Chicago for the National Gathering of College and University Students and the Lutheran Student Movement. The theme is *Transformed to Reach Out!* Students will be in conversation with Lutheran Volunteer Corps and Lutheran World Federation.

This resource may be copied and shared among members and friends of the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Prayer Ventures is produced by ELCA Communication Services in cooperation with other units of the ELCA. Contact info@elca.org for additional information: Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Communication Services, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631. Telephone 800/638-3522, ext. 2957.

PRAYER VENTURES

DECEMBER 2008



Prayer petitions for Sundays follow the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Prayer Cycle and can be incorporated into the prayers at weekly worship. Weekday entries are offered as guides to prayer for the global, social, and outreach ministries of the church. Thank you for your continued prayers for the life and mission of this church.

1 World AIDS Day

On this World AIDS Day, pray for all people affected by HIV/AIDS, and for Dr. Mamy Ranaivoson, coordinating Lutheran AIDS ministries on the continent of Africa. Pray that his family will be sustained during his long absences from home and that the ministries he supports will continue to be successful.

2 Abolition of Slavery

Today we pray for all leaders in the church, both lay and ordained -- those serving in local congregations, synods, and at the churchwide offices -- that they will continue to be prophetic voices for justice in their communities and in the world.

3 Day of Disabled Persons

Give thanks for the Rev. Lisa T. Cleaver and her caring service as director for Disability and Deaf Ministries in the ELCA. She also works with the Definitely Abled Advisory Committee (DAC), a group that represents youth with physical and mental disabilities in the ELCA.

4 Give thanks for the witness of Anne and Willie Langdji in rural Linguere, Senegal, as they assist people in growing income-generating crops to feed cattle. The feed helps improve the stock, which increases milk production, producing income for women and providing nutrition during the dry season.

5 Pray for the members of the ELCA Task Force on Criminal Justice as they meet December 5 and 6 for the first time to begin the journey toward an ELCA social statement on criminal justice. Pray for guidance by the Holy Spirit, understanding of the needs of society, and collegiality among the members.

6 Ask the Holy Spirit to guide the participants in the December 7 meeting of the Amherst Cluster of congregations in New York. The cluster, Amherst, Ascension, Cleveland Hill, and St. James congregations, will hold their first vote on consolidating to share the love of Christ in their community more effectively.

7 2nd Sunday of Advent

God of the nations, we entrust to you the countries of Cape Verde, the Gambia,

Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Senegal. Give hope where hope is lacking, strength where there is weakness, and faith where it is sought.

8 Ask God's blessing on Armenian Evangelical Church of Las Vegas. Samuel Aguilian is the developer of this ministry, reaching out to the growing unchurched Armenian population.

9 Give thanks for the 28 ELCA members who volunteered for three to 11 months through the ELCA Global Mission Volunteer program in 2008. Thank God for the generosity of these teachers, medical trainers, financial consultants and pastors.

10 International Human Rights Day

Please pray that the Church may champion the rights of the powerless, and pray for Louise Arbour, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, her staff in Geneva, New York City and around the world, and for all who are committed to the inherent dignity of all members of the human family.

11 Pray for Pastor Stephen Deal, who assists the ELCA in its accompaniment of churches throughout Central America. Pray for Martha Giron, Steve's spouse, as she helps the Costa Rican Lutheran Church teach women arts and crafts and sewing so they can generate income for their families.

12 Thank God for the energy, passion for the gospel, and commitment to outreach of mission developer Bradley Highum and the dedicated group growing New Life Lutheran Mission, Dripping Springs, Texas. This congregation under development just south of Austin is an "offspring" of Church of the Resurrection, Wimberley.

13 Thank God for Bob Kasworm, serving the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center in Moshi, Tanzania. He is strengthening health care delivery by creating strategic alliances between Tanzanian and U.S.-based health providers.

14 3rd Sunday of Advent

We pray, O God, for the people of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Togo. Give strength especially to the churches as they witness to your peace and joy in the midst of great challenges and changes in their countries.

15 Pray for the African immigrants who have found a home at New African Lutheran Community Church in Tampa, Florida. Led by developer Michael Birra, himself a refugee from Ethiopia, this ELCA congregation under development seeks to welcome, train, equip, and then send each other into the world with the saying *Nagaadhaan Dhaqi*: Go in peace.

16 As a people of God, we pray for all of the children in the world, that they may be fed and nourished in body and soul through us. Today, remember

congregational food pantries, such as the one at Peace Lutheran Church, Rogers, Ark., which serves 300 families every month, and has done so for 10 years.

17 Thank God for Elizabeth McHan, seminarian from Wartburg Theological Seminary, as she serves with the American Lutheran Congregation in Oslo, Norway, during her internship year, finding opportunities to engage another culture and receive the gifts of our partners in ministry.

18 International Migrants Day

Lift up in prayer the new Asian studies program in Monterey Park, Calif., and the 12 Asian leaders in this program who gather at Faith Lutheran Church to responded joyfully to God's call to serve in mission work through the ELCA.

19 Praise God for the ministry of presence that Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) provide throughout the world. Today, ask God to bless Meredith Harber, Paul Kacynski, Kendra Kintzi, Chelsea Mathis, Nicole Schmidt, and Marta Spangler, young adults serving in Israel/Palestine.

20 Thank God for the Lutheran Church of Framingham, Mass., and its 50 years of ministry, and for its generosity in celebrating its anniversary by sharing resources with the New England Synod's newest congregation, Immanuel Indonesian Lutheran Church of Newington, N.H.

21 4th Sunday of Advent

Gracious God, look with favor upon the churches in Ghana and Nigeria, that, in the midst of great challenges of witnessing to your mercy, they may find strength and nourishment in your Word.

22 Lift up Lutheran ethicists who teach at Lutheran and other colleges, universities, and seminaries as they hold their annual meeting in January in Chicago. Pray that God may grant them insight, wisdom, and a sense of renewal to their calling, and for Professor Ted Peters of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, one of the presenters.

23 Pray for all of the young men and women who are away from home, family and friends, for our brothers and sisters who are serving in the military in distant lands, for college and seminary students not able to be home, and for missionaries overseas, that during this season filled with hope, anticipation, and joy they may hear and feel God's loving embrace. Pray also for forgotten brothers and sisters -- the homeless and hungry and those in prisons -- that they be filled with the hope that God offers to all and that their lives be transformed by the loving Christ.

24 Christmas Eve

As we give thanks for the gift of God's Son, the children of missionary families