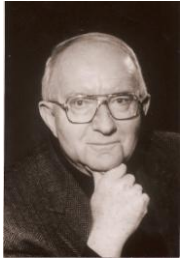


# Anglican Fellowship OF **PRAYER** Canada



AFP-C NEWSLETTER - Vol. 20, No. 3

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS 2012



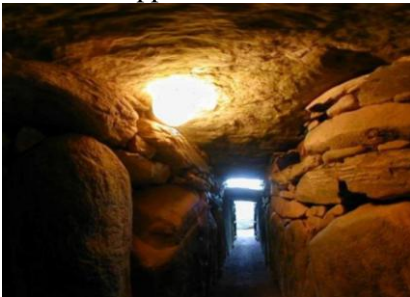
## *Seasons of Prayer*

**HERBERT O'DRISCOLL**

Newgrange is about half an hour's drive north-west of Dublin. As you approach it along the valley of the Boyne you are moving across what is probably the most ancient occupied and cultivated stretch of land in the country. Cradled in the sweeping bend of the river, Newgrange is one of the oldest stone-age structures in the world. It crowns a low hill, massive and mysterious, defying all our efforts to be entirely sure of its true purpose and significance to the Neolithic people who painstakingly built it over many lifetimes.



We know that it was a passage tomb, cradling the bones of the dead in the heart of the great circular mound. Amazingly, it also captures and celebrates the glory of the sun at the times of solstice and equinox. As I stood with others in the pitch-darkness of the tomb, I thought of another sun clock, one I have known all my life as a Christian but had never compared with the significance of this monument. I was thinking of the succession of seasons we call the church year, which I began to understand as a series of opportunities for meditative prayer.



Standing in that darkness, I realized what it might have meant for an ancient man or woman to stand there. As a twenty-first-century person I assume the sun is going to rise.

- continued on page 2 -



## **MESSAGE FROM OUR NATIONAL DIRECTOR**

**THE RT. REV. GARY WOOLSEY**

Dear Friends,

Many of us may have joined the millions around the world to share in the summer Olympics in London. I found myself starting to watch the evening re-cap of events that had already taken place that day. Then I started to sneak more TV watching during the day to see the live events taking place. What an amazing world of technology!! You know that you are sharing both joy and disappointment 'as it happens'.

As I started to look at the games from a faith perspective, I let my mind recall how Paul used a couple of examples from sports events to think about faith.

**1 Cor 9:24-27 (NRSV)**

**24** Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. **25** Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. **26** So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; **27** but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.

Running and Boxing - two events that Paul chose to think about athletes, the goal, and discipline and relate these to faith.

What contests would I choose to reflect on? The two that I thought about were synchronized diving and the 8's rowing. We see that an individual is selected because of his/her skill level but also because the athlete has a personality that will make him/her an effective team member. The athlete must be disciplined to train individually and as a team. And when everything comes together, it is amazing to watch!! And when the men's 8's rowing team were interviewed after their medal win, they all were of one voice in praising their coach 'in the boat' for having a plan and vision for the race, for executing the plan, and encouraging each member to 'dig deep' and strive for the prize, in spite of physical and mental anguish.

- continued on page 2 -

*- Continued from page 1-***Seasons of Prayer**

After all, I am post-Newtonian, as are we all. The sun sets, the sun rises. We have known how and when since we were children. But five thousand years ago this was not so. There was always the doubt, always the question. Would the sun come again? This religious observance of my ancestors must have been almost inexpressibly experiential and intense, full of desperate anxiety followed by euphoric celebration.

As their descendant I observe the passing seasons with something approaching nonchalance—though I am also uncomfortably aware of the changeableness of weather in recent years. Will I in my lifetime know too the anxiety of wondering whether the seasons will come and go as they have for so long?

The seasons of my Christian faith have become little more than liturgical concepts, their names familiar and one-dimensional. Do I thrill to Advent as expectation, weep on Good Friday as I contemplate the horror, close my ears to the thunder of a great stone rolling away at Easter? Alas, no. Marking these events has become predictable, devoid of wonder—a change of colour on an altar frontal, a change in music selected for worship, a change of collect and psalm.

But suppose I reach out for these seasons again, not as religious information, not as utterly familiar tradition, but as personal experience, thus making them food for prayerful meditation. What then? To do this I must hear myself being addressed by the changing seasons, and being questioned and challenged by them. Then they may become a spiritual experience.

And so to Advent and its call to expectation. But what am I to expect? The cyclical birth of Mary's child? Yes, indeed, and God be thanked for that birth. But am I called to some other level of expectation, something that pierces deeply into my personal world and cannot be ignored? What question does the season address to me personally? The Advent season asks of me, "What degree of expectation is there in your life at this point? What is the quality of your hope?"

Now the colour of the altar changes again, this time from purple to gold and white. The voices of carollers are heard. The child of Bethlehem is again born. What question does this birth raise for me? If I could stand beside the child's manger, what might he ask of me? Perhaps he would say, "What is being born within you? With what are you pregnant?"

The year itself turns from old to new. The magi come and the hymns of Epiphany sound. And again, I am questioned by all this. The ancient travellers ask me, "Do you wish to travel with us to search for him who will be king in your life? Are you prepared when you find him to kneel and give your best gifts to him?"

As the weeks go by, the shadowed time comes, the Lenten time, the time of the desert. I sing of forty days and forty nights, when Jesus fasted in the wilderness. So many questions this season has for me! To what am I enslaved? What can I lay aside, if only for a while? Probing even more

**Seasons of Prayer**

deeply is the question, "What inner resources do you have for the desert times of life? The desert tracts of loneliness or failure, or depression, or simply sheer weariness. Do you have him as companion?"

The shadows darken even more. The day comes when all colour is removed from the church. No candle flickers to dispel gloom, no woven tapestry draws the eye, no gold or brass or copper shines rich with reflection. This removing of beauty is but a small enactment of a greater truth—that there are times when all joy and beauty are taken from life, when life itself is taken by death. The question is asked of me, "Who will then be my Light, my Beauty, my Life?"

And within hours my question is answered in the white and gold of Easter beauty, the high notes of Easter music, the joy of the story with its stone rolled away, of those robed in white asking their own question of us all: "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" (Luke 24:5).

Each inquiry raised by the changing seasons of the church year is more than a simple question demanding some short, simple answer. These questions are—or can be if we choose—an invitation to pray our response, to pray "the season," if you will. And when we are prepared to do this, the seasons of the church become the seasons of the human heart.

*- Continued from page 1-***MESSAGE FROM OUR NATIONAL DIRECTOR**

What does this tell us about our Christian journey? We are individual disciples of Jesus Christ and we need to take our training seriously. Do we continue to learn and grow in the exercise of our faith? Do we see ourselves as part of the Christian team and exercising our gifts for the vision of Kingdom as shown to us by our Lord? Do we meet regularly with our brothers and sisters in Christ to encourage each other and to be encouraged in our mission to one another and the world?

**Romans 12:4-8 (NRSV)**

**4** For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, **5** so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. **6** We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; **7** ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; **8** the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

May God continue to give us wisdom and strength to be ever growing disciples of Christ both individually and as a community of believers.

Peace.

+Gary

Bishop Gary Woolsey

AFP (Canada) National Director



## A Note from the Chair

Esther Jackson

National Executive Chairperson

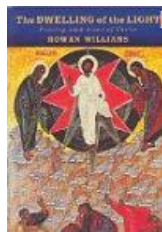
Icon of the Old Testament Trinity  
by Andrei Rublev

For Orthodox theologians, the hospitality of Abraham, and the appearance of the three strangers under the oak of Mamre, to bring news that Sarah will conceive and bear a son, anticipated the future Last Supper, at which the Eucharist Sacrament would be established. The Icon is often referred to as The Old Testament Trinity. The Traditional Eastern name is "The Hospitality of Abraham". The icon is 142 x 114 cm. It was created by Andrei Rublev, about 1425 to 1427. He was a monk of the Trinity Monastery of St. Sergius near Moscow.



This summer, my husband Gordon, and I visited the monastery, no longer an active community, but the site of a gallery of beautiful icons.

As Archbishop Rowan Williams explains in his book *The Dwelling of Light* "To look patiently and pray in front of an icon, is to allow yourself to be worked on, to allow yourself to be looked at by God, rather than just looking at something yourself. God is working on you by his grace, as he does in the lives of holy people, supremely in the words of scripture, and in the person of Jesus.



The figure on the left represents God the Father. The blue under garment depicts the divine nature, the purple outer garment the royal dignity, God, the master of Creation. The second angel is

placed in the middle of the icon, representing Christ the Saviour. The dark crimson symbolizes the incarnation, the blue outer robe signifies divinity, and the head is inclined toward the angel on the left as though in deep conversation with the Father. The angel on the right is the Holy Spirit. The Blue and green garments represent heaven and earth, signifying the life giving force of the Holy Spirit. The three angels are depicted in equal dignity, symbolizing the trinity, and equality of the three Persons of the Trinity.

On leaving the monastery, Gordon and I needed to find the Metro Station. Three other visitors at the monastery, understood where we needed to go, but could not explain the route in English, so they drove us there in their truck. This generous gift of welcome, and hospitality by the Russian people, was characteristic of our time in Russia, as it was for Abraham and Sarah, receiving the three visitors under the oak of Mamre.

### **PLEASE NOTE - IMPORTANT**

Our AFP-C address has changed. It is now

**The Anglican Fellowship of Prayer**  
**P.O. Box 78084**  
**Nepean, Ontario K2E 1B1**

Please send all donations and requests for resources to this new address.

We are now sending some newsletters to **email addresses**. If you would prefer this please send your current email address to our editor, Win Mizon at **winken@worldline.ca**

**O, Eternal God, help us faithfully  
to fulfill our duties to thee.  
Put far from us unkind thoughts,  
anger and evil speaking.  
Give us tender hearts full of affection  
and sympathy towards each other.  
Preserve us from selfishness and  
grant that day by day, walking in love  
we may grow into the likeness  
of thy blessed Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
Amen**

*(Thank you Dorothy Hamlyn for this prayer)*

**Children's Ministry**  
**Elizabeth Short**



As I write this article, the snow is falling and it looks like a Christmas card out my window. It's not even mid-November, but Christmas trees, lights and music are cropping up all over and plans for Christmas are being made. It's inevitable!

There are many Advent activities that you can take part in with your children, and I encourage you to do so, particularly ones that remind the children of "the reason for the season".

What is starting to be overlooked more and more is Christmas itself. When "Christmas" begins in November, we're kind of tired of it before it actually begins. Christmas begins December 25 and lasts for twelve days, despite advertisements and the like that confuse the twelve days *of* Christmas with the twelve days *before* Christmas. Consider this a gift. The running around has stopped, the kids are home from school and you may actually have some family time to celebrate the season of Jesus' birth.

Here are some suggestions. Have 12 votive candles, and light one more each evening, perhaps praying with thanks for the gift of Jesus. Plan special things to do each day. It could be as simple as watching

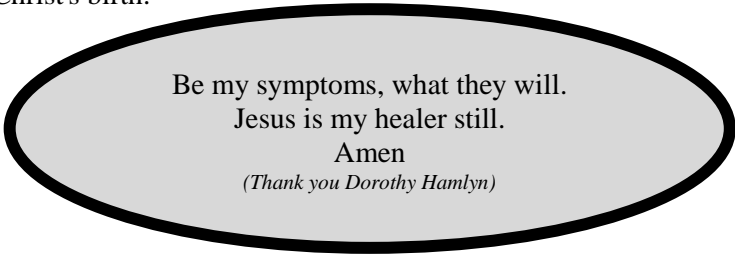


a movie together or reading a special Christmas book. You could also have some outings, some act of kindness for others, and plan a party, go tobogganing. Perhaps you go through the Christmas cards together, reading them and then perhaps making a collage with them. January 6, the final day of Christmas is the time we celebrate the Wise Men coming to Jesus. Some people have 12th night parties where they sing their favourite Christmas carols and, for the last time, share Christmas goodies. A game you can play is **"Where is the Light?"** One person hides a battery operated light while the others cover eyes or wait in another room. Then whoever finds it has a turn hiding it. Remind the children the story of the Wise Men looking for the star.

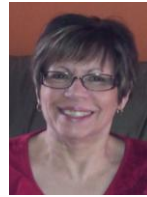


Our friend, "Google" has many suggestions for Christmas activities and I've found a couple of interpretations of the song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas". And I'm sure you can come up with your own ideas.

Wishing you blessings. May you wait with joyful anticipation through Advent and celebrate with deep gladness the season of Christ's birth.



Be my symptoms, what they will.  
 Jesus is my healer still.  
 Amen  
 (Thank you Dorothy Hamlyn)



**Introducing Susan Jansson**  
**New Diocesan Representative**  
**For Moosonee**

Susan is married, a mother to two daughters and a son, and a grandmother to one grand-daughter and three grandsons. She is a cook at a fly in fishing resort in the summers and in the winter she baby sits her grand children. Susan loves cooking and baking and does a lot for sales at Christmas time.

Susan has been involved with her church council for about 30 years and has been a lay reader for eleven years. As she says, "I really don't have too much spare time." Susan organizes church bake sales and fund raisers and leads services on a regular basis. She also plays the organ (one finger only, she admits) when their church is in a pinch.

**AFP-C website Survey**  
**Mark Perrin**



During January 2012, we surveyed 62 AFP members about the AFP website. We received 24 responses for 39% participation, which is better than expected survey participation.

The respondents were visiting the AFP website mostly looking for prayer resources. They were mostly clergy or involved with pastoral care in their parishes.

Existing web site received good reviews:

- it is easy to navigate
- it is easy to find content
- the site has a professional look and feel
- content is generally current with a couple issues noted

The respondents found the site useful.

There were additional features requested for the site:

- the current week's lectionary
- links to other Anglican prayer resources
- prayers for special occasions
- guidance from the primate on what currently needs to be prayed for

The AFP web coordinator will be working on these items in the coming months.

On behalf of the AFP executive, I would like to thank those members who took the time to respond and help us with the evolution of the web site.

**Management of Change Processes**

The web coordinator has developed process documentation for changing content and links that are part of the AFP web site. These processes have been reviewed with the AFP executive and will be continually upgraded. The processes provide controls over how content and links are reviewed before being added to or removed from the site and will provide a level of assurance that the site content appropriately reflects the mission of AFP.

## *The Bishop of Huron's Prayer Conference 2012: The Transformative Power of Prayer*

*Submitted by The Rev'd Andreas Thiel*



The Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (AFP) Executive of the Diocese of Huron is deeply appreciative of the interest, support and encouragement of Bishop Bennett and the Diocesan family in Huron. The Rev'd Val Kenyon (Diocesan Representative) points out the importance of this reality as the AFP strives to fulfill its very basic mandate of providing resources of all kinds to those in Huron to support our ongoing growth, development and experience in prayer: It is in fact dedication to the ministry of prayer that drew people from the four corners of our diocese to attend the annual Bishop's Conference on Prayer, so generously hosted this year by the clergy and people of St. John the Evangelist, London. And so, on Saturday, November 3, we gathered as parish representatives and guests for this annual conference to consider the Transformative Power of Prayer.

We were pleased that the Dean of Huron, the Very Rev'd Kevin Dixon, could bring greetings on behalf of the bishop. Dixon spoke about some of his personal recollections of transformative prayer, and remarked that "sometimes the experiences are so amazing that we are reluctant to speak about them." And yet, this year's conference invited people to go beyond their reluctance, and to speak about and reflect upon how various types of prayer change us, as we grow in our understanding of our relationship with God.

The person who was entrusted with the exercise of leading us in conversation was the Rev'd Canon Anne Moore. The group was put at ease immediately as Moore opened her keynote address by informing us that she was going to "love us with her eyes." As she scanned the room, taking in all 85 participants, she set a tone of gentleness and leisure, and these were the qualities that would prevail for the remainder of the day. Moore spoke eloquently about



her own life story, and was quick to let us know that she was "just a simple country pastor... who has had wonderful experiences with prayer."

One of her more vivid experiences, as a newly-energized young Christian, was the gift of praying aloud. Anne said that she was fortunate in having had a group of friends who felt this to be a most natural way of praying. We were assured that we would

all have the opportunity of trying this kind of prayer, and we would learn how to eliminate or lower some of the stress which many people associate with praying aloud. Later, Canon Moore would lead us in an exercise of speaking our "one word prayers." It was indeed comfortable, and stress-free. Moore also spoke about the practice of prayerful journaling, as well as the ministry of healing prayer. These three forms of transformative prayer were explored later in the day, as we broke into smaller group discussions, led by Canon Moore, Matt Martin (AFP diocesan executive) and Val Kenyon.

One of the interesting aspects of these prayer conferences is that those in attendance are more than happy to share their personal experiences, as well as their questions and observations. This is exactly what happened as the small groups convened. There was a steady exchange of information as people contributed some of their own learnings regarding praying aloud, journaling, or healing prayer. We learned about one person's experience with keeping a "gratitude journal" and heard a suggestion of making a gift of a blank journal to someone who is facing life challenges. Our diocese is blessed to have so many people who are interested both in learning and sharing what they have learned.

A day of fellowship, food, worship and prayer ended by extending are thanks to Canon Anne Moore. She was generous in sharing her passion and humour with us, giving us much to think about, and much to be thankful for!

## *New AFP Parish Representative*

Diocese of Calgary



On Sunday, September 16th, Dorothy Olson was installed as the AFP Parish Representative for the Highwood Parish at St. Benedict's, High River, Alberta, in the Diocese of Calgary. Our AFP National Director, Bishop Gary Woolsey, was invited by the Rector, The Reverend Diane Beaman, to celebrate and preach as well as conduct the Installation of Dorothy. Members of all the congregations in this multi-point parish joined together for this special service which was followed by a wonderful pot luck lunch.

## Toronto Prayer Conference

*“Lord, teach us to pray” –  
Living the prayer that Jesus taught.*

*Submitted by Canon Anne Moore*

This event was held on October 20<sup>th</sup> at St. John’s Church, York Mills, with 90 people in attendance.

Our theme speaker was the Rev. Dr. Michael Knowles, an Anglican priest, who has been in a variety of ministries. Although his doctorate degree is in the New Testament from Wycliffe College, he has also taught Greek and published many articles and books in the fields of Old Testament, pastoral theology and evangelism. He was Assistant Director of the Wycliffe College Institute of Evangelism from 1991-97 and since then has been the preaching professor at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton.



Michael titled his talks: “Our Father in Heaven,” “Hallowed Be Your Name,” and “May Your Kingdom Come.” He reminded us at the beginning: “Jesus didn’t teach His disciples how to preach but how to pray.” Another memorable quotation was: “None of us is able to teach people to pray because none of us is master – Jesus is the Master.”

This year there was a different format from other conferences. After Michael’s talks, the participants went into discussion groups to answer some probing questions based on the previous talk. It was also decided to go to a one day conference instead of starting on Friday night. The participant evaluations have not yet been assessed to see if this was helpful.

The conference was undergirded by many prayer warriors keeping vigil either in their own homes or in the prayer room at St. John’s.



## Prayers of the people Sept 9/12

Tony Day

(Note: These prayers require that each person have a copy.)

**Leader:** Let us pray:

Jesus, we come here this morning, some of us are tired, heads buzzing with so many things to do. Some of us are worried about our families and others are concerned about health. Some of us are sad. You said to blind Bartimaeus, “What do you want me to do for you?” Imagine Jesus saying to you, “What do you want me to do for you.” Take a few moments of quiet and tell Him what you want him to do for you. (Pause)

Responding to the Lord who said: “Come unto me all you who are weary and heavy Laden”.

We say to you Lord Jesus:

**All: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in my life.**

Jesus, we see the news, the newspapers. We see conflict, cruelty, racism. Forgive us for any part we play in encouraging violence. We give you permission to transform us so that the Holy Spirit can shed abroad in our hearts, your love.

Responding to the God who can do more than we can ask or imagine; we say to you Lord Jesus:

**All: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in my life.**

Lord more than \_\_ years ago you started this congregation and now we are looking for a new direction. You know what you have in mind. Open our hearts and minds to you. Give us the gift of surrendering our will to your will.

Responding to the one who is head of the church; we say to you Lord Jesus:

**All: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in the life of (your church).**

Take a few moments of silence to think of someone in this congregation who needs your prayers. (Pause) Lord, we pray for these members of our congregation about whom we have thought.

Give them the spirit of wisdom, revelation and obedience so that they may know you better.

Responding to the one who said, “I am the way the truth and the life,” we say to you Lord Jesus:

**All: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in the life of the people we have thought about.**

Lord we pray for the financial needs of our congregation. We ask you to meet these needs out of your abundance.

Responding to Jesus who said, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you,” we say to you Lord Jesus.

**All: “Let us behold; your marvellous works”. Amen**



**Diocese of Calgary**

**A Post-Election Thanksgiving**

Jane Jenson, DR for Calgary



AFP- Calgary was fortunate to be invited to submit occasional prayers for the diocesan Bishop Search website which we did from January to June 2012. After Bishop Greg's election, I realized we hadn't submitted a prayer of thanksgiving! I felt like one of the ten lepers who was healed and waltzed off to celebrate with family and friends without stopping to thank Jesus first. So I wrote the following prayer.

*Loving God, we praise you for calling the Rt. Rev Gregory Kerr-Wilson to be the ninth bishop of the diocese of Calgary. We thank you for his ability to see different sides of a situation and for his encouragement of youth. We ask you to be with him and his family as they move from Qu'Appelle to Calgary. Bless Bishop Greg, who was installed as our bishop on September 20, 2012. We look forward to an outpouring of your Spirit that inspires a contagious JOY in spreading the Good News in our communities. We pray in the name of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit, Amen*



I've had my first meeting as DR with Bishop Greg. My report was a summary of AFP-Calgary activities since my appointment July '08. It included changes in committee membership, what's worked (raising AFP's profile in the diocese, selling AFP material and Esther's artwork, hosting the Prayer Conference in 2009 and the national consultation in 2011) and what hasn't worked so well

(workshops, meaningful but low attendance, getting new members onto the committee with the time to meet!). I ended with our hopes for the future – praying for the bishop and the diocese, finding a new DR and Secretary, commissioning more parish reps in their churches, updating and making better use of the prayer resources survey we did at synod in Oct. 2009, and working with Bishop Greg to encourage people in each parish to meet regularly to pray for their church and the world. "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them," MT 18:20. In other words, we hope to put AFP's Noontime Prayer into Action!



**'Hunger for Healing'  
Retreat Day  
Diocese of Calgary**

On Tuesday, Sept 25th, AFP National Director, Bishop Gary Woolsey, conducted a Day Retreat at Mount St. Francis Retreat Centre in Cochrane, Alberta. The original study group was



formed by Gwen Smith and used the book by Keith Miller, "A Hunger For Healing - The Twelve Steps as a Classic Model for Christian Spiritual Growth". The first Retreat Day began in 2009 which has now become an annual event for the group. It is open to other parishioners to attend and some are taking advantage of going on a Day Retreat which includes meditations, silence, group sharing and a Eucharist. This year the theme was 'Faith and Grace'. A special 'thank you' to Joan Siddall of St. Peter's, Calgary, for organizing the Retreat.



The 2013 General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada will be held together with the National Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in Ottawa, July 3 to 7, 2013. Almost a thousand people will attend this exciting gathering, which is being called the Joint Assembly. While each church will carry out its usual and important business separately they will, worship, learn, celebrate, listen, act, and commit to the mission of God's church together as God's people. Please pray for the preparations that are being made for this historic event.

*Prayer for Joint Assembly*

*Loving God, we gather in the name of Jesus for an historic Canadian joint Anglican/Lutheran assembly in Ottawa. We ask your continued blessing on Fred, Anglican Primate, and Sue, Lutheran National Bishop, and on all who work together to make this assembly a spirit filled gathering. Give us the gift of your Spirit, to inspire and lead us, so that we may worship and praise you together for a new future. We ask in the name of Jesus, our chief Shepherd. AMEN*



**Anglican Church of Canada**



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada**

## General Prayers for Vestry

*Paul Dumbrille*



Gracious and loving God, we pray that our Annual Vestry will truly be a time when our congregation comes together to be united and inspired in our shared work of Continuing the Work of Jesus. AMEN

Holy God, the navigator of our souls, hear us as we hold up before you our annual Vestry. Be with us in our yearning to chart a course together, inspired by the presence of your Spirit. Give courage to our clergy, all of our leaders, and each of us, as we move forward with your blessing. For all we do, we do to your glory, in Jesus' name. AMEN

Lord, make our congregation a community that beholds your marvellous works. AMEN

Heavenly Father, give to our leaders, a daily renewal in your presence, uphold them with your peace, a peace that passes all understanding, enlighten them with your word, and strengthen them with your grace. AMEN

Almighty God, give us a new vision of you, of your love, of your grace and power; and then, give us a new vision of what you would have us do as your church in this congregation at this time. Give us an awareness that in the strength of your Spirit we can do it to your glory. In Jesus' Name we pray. AMEN

Lord, remind us when we forget that you talked of our being in the world not of the world. AMEN

Remind us when we conform to this world that you want us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we will be the witnesses You asked us to be. AMEN

God of all, may our congregation be aware of our part in your larger church. Draw us all together into one great company of disciples, together following our Lord Jesus Christ into every walk of life, together serving Him in His mission to the world, and together witnessing to His love in our city and particularly in our local community. AMEN

Almighty and everliving God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with those who take counsel (in the weeks leading to *name of church's* annual Vestry) for the renewal and mission of your Church. Teach us in all things to seek first your honour and glory. Guide us to perceive what is right, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN (page 676 BAS).

### *Prayers for the Opening of a Vestry*

Lord, we are meeting today to conduct matters of business. Guide our hearts and our minds in the spirit of fairness, right thought and speech. Impart your supreme wisdom upon our activities so that our affairs may reach a successful conclusion. Thank you for being our source of guidance today. AMEN

God of the seasons, another year has come and gone and once again we gather for the Annual Meeting of this Congregation. To this place we bring all the celebrations and hardships, the joys and the sorrows of the past 12 months. We remember with thanksgiving the highlights of the year: (*Insert highlights if desired*) (pause)

We gather to look forward to what the coming years have in store. We know that they will not always be easy, that life will always have a mixture of easy and difficult. As we meet and discuss the life and work of this part of your family we pray that you would be a part of our discussion.

May your Spirit move in our hearts, opening them to hear what each of us has to offer, bringing light to both possibilities and realities, drawing us always to consider what you would have us be and do in this time and place.

Remind us that we are called to be bearers of Christ's life, light, and love to all we meet.

Help us to live in such a way that we draw closer to your vision for us and journey faithfully in your Way.

In this time together we celebrate the many gifts we all have to offer. Help us offer what we can to your service and your glory, mindful of the great gifts we have been given in so many ways throughout our lives.

These things we pray in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, the one we call Christ, in whose name and hope we gather together as a community. AMEN

We know that they will not always be easy, that life will always have a mixture of easy and difficult. As we meet and discuss the life and work of this part of your family we pray that you would be a part of our discussion.

May your Spirit move in our hearts, opening them to hear what each of us has to offer, bringing light to both possibilities and realities, drawing us always to consider what you would have us be and do in this time and place.

Remind us that we are called to be bearers of Christ's life, light, and love to all we meet.

Help us to live in such a way that we draw closer to your vision for us and journey faithfully in your Way.

In this time together we celebrate the many gifts we all have to offer. Help us offer what we can to your service and your glory, mindful of the great gifts we have been given in so many ways throughout our lives.

These things we pray in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, the one we call Christ, in whose name and hope we gather together as a community. AMEN

### *Prayer for the Closing of a Vestry*

God of our coming and going, God of our past, our present, and our future, we have met, we have celebrated, we have remembered. We have visioned, shared hopes, and dreamed dreams, and now we go out into the world in which we do most of our living and our ministering. As we go out, remind us that we do not go alone. As we go out, remind us that we go with a mission. As we go out, fill us with love, hope, and peace to share with the world. May our lives and our ministry be signs of your love and promises and possibility for the world. AMEN

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