

Anglican Fellowship OF **PRAAYER** Canada



AFP-C NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2009



SYMPHONIES AND SONGS

HERBERT O'DRISCOLL

Just as sex is most wonderful in the context of human love, so prayer is most rich in the context of the presence of God. By this I mean that, just as a richly sexual relationship is more than sexual acts, so a wonderful prayer life

is more than saying specific prayers.

There are, of course, times for specific prayers, but usually our prayer life is a quiet acknowledgement of an ongoing relationship with God, just as most loving relationships are a joyful acknowledgement that we love and are loved.

Perhaps one of the least realized truths is that prayer is much more than merely saying words. It is even more than saying the most beautifully crafted prayers, of which there are many. I am not for a moment denying the worth of such prayers. Some prayers composed in the same golden age of English as the *Authorized Version of the Bible* are treasured as we would any great work of art. To leave them in the storage room of history would be a deep betrayal of some of God's sublime gifts to the ongoing Christian journey. I am eternally grateful that in childhood I was made—yes, made—to learn by heart a kind of golden chain of great prayers, most but not all from *The Book of Common Prayer*. Others I have since learned from other sources.

The cadences of these prayers will always be with me, and I often savour their language, as I would the words of a great sonnet or Yeats poem. Such great prayers—the General Thanksgiving, the Prayer for All Sorts and Conditions of Men—beautiful in expression and lyrical in language, are what we might call the symphonies of prayer. Continuing this analogy, some of the collects may be thought of as the motets of prayer. And just as much of the vast world of music is made up of short, simple songs, so a vast part of our world of prayers is made up of short, simple expressions of prayer, usually unrehearsed and quite spontaneous.

These simple expressions of prayer are uttered by everyone—

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MESSAGE FROM OUR NATIONAL DIRECTOR

RT. REV. GARY WOOLSEY

This past November I had the privilege of leading an evening Advent Retreat for the Stillpoint Pastoral Centre. As I prayed about a theme, I was led to reflect on the

images of 'darkness and light'. These are very prominent images in our Christian tradition. In John 1:1-5 the Word comes into being and this life was the light for all people. "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it." Jesus speaks of the light that has come into the world so that our deeds may be exposed to the light but some wish to remain in the darkness so that their deeds will not get exposed. (John 3:19-21). Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, reminds the followers of Christ that "once you were in darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light – for the fruit of the light are found in all that is good and right and true." (Ephesians 5:8-9).

In the first 6 years of my retirement I spent the Fall in Churchill, Manitoba, assisting our friends with their 'polar bear tour' business. As the temperature dropped, the still, clear, cold, nights provided the right condition for observing the mysterious, dancing, multi-coloured Northern Lights - the aurora borealis. However, in order to get the best observation, I would drive people out of town into a dark area away from the lights of the Town. Darkness was best place to see the lights. We made a journey into darkness in order to see the light.

In our spiritual journey there are times when we experience darkness that is full of fear, anxiety, loneliness, broken relationships, struggles in our families, work place, etc. You know your 'dark' times. Sometimes I think that we are the ones who 'walk into the darkness' by our choices. However, I know that others can make our lives 'dark' because of the choices that they have made which then affect our lives.

But the message of Jesus is that God is light and

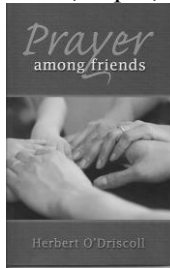
Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1 – SYMPHONIES AND SONGS ironically, even by people unaware they are praying—and are in no way lesser because of their simplicity. Often such prayers will be a quick utterance: a cry of need, a fervent thank you, a plea for guidance, the naming of someone we love or someone who may be in need of healing or comfort, or a quick recognition of the beauty of an object or a place suddenly encountered.

In Helen Mirren's recent wonderful portrayal of the Queen (Elizabeth II) in the film of the same name, there is a searingly beautiful incident that illustrates perfectly such a moment. The queen has driven alone to a high point in her Balmoral estates. Seated on a rock, she hears a sound, turns, and sees a magnificent stag. For a long moment their eyes lock, and then the queen says in a hushed and wondering voice, "Oh, you beauty!"

Sometimes in such moments we will consciously be placing the encounter or the need or the recognition of beauty in the context of the presence of God. I would dare to say that we are doing this whether or not we consciously name God in the moment. Our actual words, often blurted out, perhaps even muttered or whispered, may well be simple and unadorned, but the fact that we are bringing this human moment into God's presence gives it all the loveliness, depth, and dignity of the most classical expressions of prayer.

This article is taken from Herbert O'Driscoll's book PRAYER AMONG FRIENDS, a Path Book published in memory of Pat Curtis. A copy can be obtained from the Anglican Book Centre (www.afcanada.com) and from local church bookshops.



Other Resources



Lent is traditionally a time for Prayer, Fasting & Almsgiving. The Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (Canada) (AFP) has resources that can assist individuals and congregations to observe Lent in meaningful ways. An AFP pamphlet is available entitled "Keeping A Holy Lent" that

provides helpful suggestions for those wishing to use Lent as a time to strengthen their faith. In addition there are pamphlets and material about devotional fasting and many types of prayer that are available. The pamphlet "Listening to God", contains a ten session adventure in purposefully setting out to listen to God. "A Circle of Prayer: The Anglican Rosary for all God's People" explains a prayer form which is a blending of the Marian (Roman Catholic) Rosary and the Orthodox Jesus Prayer Rope and encourages a wider range of prayers. "A Practical Guide to Fasting" is a useful resource for those who want to explore fasting as a Lenten discipline. Additionally there are other pamphlets available that focus on spiritual Self Examination and Contemplative Prayer. www.anglicanprayer.org contains a full listing of available resources. These and other resources can be obtained from our Resources Coordinator.

MESSAGE FROM OUR NATIONAL DIRECTOR (continued from page 1)

darkness can never overcome the light of love, which is the central character of God. The words from 1 John 4:16 ring in my ears: "God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them."

What images come to mind for you when you think of darkness and light? How have you experienced time of darkness and times of God's light?

The Light of Christ be with you always,

+Gary

Bishop Gary Woolsey
AFP-Canada National Director

Something to Think About

FYI: New Anglican-Lutheran prayer cycle

A new Anglican-Lutheran prayer cycle lists prayer suggestions for the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) side by side. The suggestions cover the work of bishops, ministries, and staff and are for use in Sunday services between Nov. 2008 and Nov. 2009. The prayer cycle was developed by the Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission, which oversees this relationship in Canada.

"The Commission believes that a very important part of what we do for one another is to pray," said the Rev. Paul Johnson, assistant to the bishop (ELCIC). "It is the hope of the Commission that every congregation in our two churches might take advantage of this offering in a very intentional way, and uphold both of our churches through the sacred work of prayer."

The prayer cycle is available at www2.anglican.ca/faith/relationships/index.htm. Under Resources you need to click on New Anglican-Lutheran Prayer Cycle (November 2008 to November 2009).

LOVE

**Above all, clothe yourselves with love,
which binds everything together in
perfect harmony.
Colossians 3:14**

Please Pray For

The Work of AFP across Canada and particularly for recently appointed Diocesan Representatives:

Name	Diocese
Karen Holmes	Ontario
Robert Mondloch	Niagara
Ruby Lockhart	Central NFLD
Diane Guilford	Rupert's Land
Frances Aird	Quebec

The next meeting of the AFP Executive, June 1-2.

The Church

For the unity of the whole people of God, that we will be united in Christ.

For the Anglican Communion, particularly the Primates throughout the World.

For the Anglican Church of Canada, that it will pursue unity, peace and compassion as it proclaims the Good News of Jesus in Canada.

Provincial Synod of Rupert's Land, June 11-14.

The Indigenous Peoples of Canada and particularly the Truth and Reconciliation process.

The World

The People in places where there is violence and war, especially:

- Zimbabwe
- Iraq
- Afghanistan
- Middle East

“But I say unto you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you; so you may be the sons of your Father who is in heaven.” (St. Matthew 5:44-45)

“Ask, and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened. For everyone who asks receives, anyone who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.” (St. Matthew 7:7-8)

OUR CANADIAN BISHOPS

The Primate Indigenous People Armed Forces	Most Rev. Fred Hiltz Rt. Rev. Mark L. MacDonald Rt. Rev. Peter Coffin
Diocese	Name
Algoma	Bishop elect Rev. Stephen Andrews
Arctic	Rt. Rev. Andrew Atagotaaluk Rt. Rev. Larry Robertson Rt. Rev. Benjamin T. Arreak
Athabasca	Most Rev. John R. Clarke
Brandon	Rt. Rev. Jim Njegovan
British Columbia	Rt. Rev. James A.J. Cowan
Caledonia	Rt. Rev. William Anderson
Calgary	Rt. Rev. Derek Hoskin
Central Interior	Vacant
Central Newfoundland	Rt. Rev. David Torraville
Eastern Newfoundland & Lab.	Rt. Rev. Cyrus Pitman
Edmonton	Rt. Rev. Jane Alexander
Fredericton	Rt. Rev. Claude E.W. Miller
Huron	Rt. Rev. Robert F. Bennett
Keewatin	Rt. Rev. David Ashdown Rt. Rev. Gordon Beardy
Kootenay	Rt. Rev. John E. Privett
Montreal	Rt. Rev. Barry B. Clarke
Moosonee	Most Rev. Caleb J. Lawrence
New Westminster	Rt. Rev. Michael C. Ingham
Niagara	Rt. Rev. Michael A. Bird
Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Isl.	Rt. Rev. Susan Moxley Rt. Rev. Ronald W. Cutler
Ontario	Rt. Rev. George L. R. Bruce
Ottawa	Rt. Rev. John Chapman
Qu'Appelle	Rt. Rev. Gregory Kerr-Wilson
Quebec	Most Rev. A. Bruce Stavert Rt. Rev. Dennis Drainville
Rupert's land	Rt. Rev. Don Phillips
Saskatchewan	Bishop elect The Very Rev. Michael W. Hawkins
Saskatoon	Rt. Rev. Rodney Andrews
Toronto	Rt. Rev. Colin R. Johnson Rt. Rev. Patrick Yu Rt. Rev. George Elliott Rt. Rev. Philip Poole Rt. Rev. Linda Nicholls
Western Newfoundland	Rt. Rev. Percy Coffin
Yukon	Most Rev. Terrence O. Buckle

A "FOLLOW-UP TO BISHOP GARY WOOLSEY'S MESSAGE"



Bev Timpson

My young friend Jane, formerly from Essex County, is now living in the U.S. On her visit "home" 3 years ago she talked about a book she was reading on "attitude of gratitude". She was struggling with some difficult issues in her life and wondered if this would help her cope with the stress from them. We discussed it for awhile and then she asked me if I would "partner" with her to look for something every day for which we could be thankful. The idea appealed to me and I agreed. We set up simple guidelines:

- We would e-mail each other daily when possible and name something we were grateful for in that day.
- We were not to "reply" to each other's e-mail.

So began heartwarming exchanges of our thanks in our daily living. As I read Bishop Gary's article I realize that we usually are grateful for the wonders of nature (right now the autumn colours are spectacular and Fall is the favourite season for both of us.) We share our "awe-filled" moments from our vacations, but most of our daily thanks is for people and events in our lives, especially acknowledging the kindness of strangers. Such a simple thing. Such a change of attitude for both of us.

However, there are days when I sit in front of the computer and think hard about what I can find to be grateful for in this challenging day. But I can always find something when I work at it. I think that's part of the gift in the exercise - I have to look for the "awe" when it's not readily apparent. Sometimes it's very hard not to "reply" to what Jane has e-mailed. If I can't resist a response, I will request a time for a "telephone" chat. That has happened less than a dozen times in the 3 years we've been doing this exercise.

I am surprised how well I know Jane just from her one or two sentences in her daily e-mail. I'm sure she would say the same about me. It is a great way for us to stay connected in our long-distance relationship. When we meet in the summer, we pick up where our e-mails left off.

I am thankful for Jane and her great idea. This 2 minute exercise enriches my life daily.

Bev Timpson,
AFP rep for St. Stephen's Church,
Oldcastle, Ontario.

ANAM CARA A BOOK OF CELTIC WISDOM

by John O'Donohue
published by Cliff Street Books,
Harper Collins
reviewed by Esther Jackson



Riding home on a Charter bus from a ski trip I was sitting with a friend I have known only briefly. She mentioned that she was reading Anam Cara. She had a copy with her. She said that she was finding

the book inspiring. I leafed through it looking at the chapter headings.

A few days later I was looking at my book shelf, and there it was; Anam Cara A Book of Celtic Wisdom by John O'Donohue, part of the collection of books that Archbishop Barry Curtis had given me from his wife Pat's library following her death. Pat had highlighted the passages she found particularly significant.

O'Donohue writes with a lilting Irish prose, deeply rooted in the Celtic tradition. In individual chapters he reflects on The Mystery of Friendship, and The Spirituality of the Senses. He expands on the themes: Solitude is Luminous, Work as a Poetics of Growth, Aging and the Beauty of the Inner Harvest, and finally, Death, The Horizon is the Well.

An underlying theme is that to be holy, is

to be natural, to befriend the worlds that come to balance in you. Each of us is..... an inner artist, who cares AND shapes a unique world. Everything that happens to you has the potential to deepen you. It brings to birth within you new territories of the heart.

Love begins with paying attention to others, with an act of gracious self forgetting. This is the condition in which we grow.

The title of the book comes from the idea of Soul Love. In Gaelic, Anam is soul, and Cara is the word for friend. There is nothing in the world so lonely as that which has grown cold. Bitterness and coldness are the ultimate defeat. He suggests the following exercise to develop the well spring of love within. "Focus on the well at the root of your soul. Imagine that nourishing stream of belonging, ease, peace, and delight. Feel within your visual imagination, the refreshing waters of that well flowing up through the neglected side of your heart."

Anam Cara is a rich treasure to strengthen one's relationship with the inner being, with others, and with the promises and possibilities of each day in the world of creation.

Lord Jesus Christ, who by your life as one of us made holy the life of a home, we pray for our homes and all those we love, both near and far. As we give thanks for the blessings we enjoy as families, help us to remember those for whom the word "home" means nothing because of the circumstances in which they grew up, or now find themselves, and to open our homes to them in love.

Bless all those struggling to raise their children alone as single parents, and strengthen them to face their difficulties with courage, knowing that you are there to comfort and guide them every step of the way, for Jesus Christ's sake.

Amen

New Diocesan Representatives



Karen Holmes

Karen has been appointed the new Diocesan Representative for Ontario. She currently works as a spiritual director within the Diocese of Ontario. In addition to prayerfully meeting with directees on a one-on-one basis, she designs and facilitates retreat days and learning series for parish groups. As part of ministry to the soul and well-being, she teaches piano to both children and adults, and is active in facilitating children's play groups and nutrition circles.

Karen is involved in several volunteer ministries in her parish of St. James in Kingston, including The Open Door Ministry, Family Choir, and Lay Assistant Roles. She is passionate about the formation of sustainable and inclusive small Christian communities which support spiritual development as well as providing pastoral care and mutual encouragement.

Karen has been formed in Roman Catholic, Anglican and aboriginal approaches to spiritual direction and spirituality, and maintains a connection to all these communities. Karen's husband, Kevin, is a teacher in the Roman Catholic school board.

Kevin and Karen live on two acres of Canadian Shield in a small village north of Kingston along with their dog, Lucy. They farm this space using Biodynamic, organic and traditional methods of agriculture, nurturing herbs, flowers, vegetables, fruit trees and the soil around them. They are always learning new ways to improve the quality of the land and its ecosystems.

Trained in theatre arts and drama, Karen's hobbies continue to centre around story-telling, personal expression, and collaborative endeavour. These hobbies include: historical research, writing, puppet-making, dance, radio-drama, earth-works art installations/rituals and drawing.

Karen has her B.Ed., M.R.E. (Master of Religious Education). She is also a Registered Yoga Teacher (RYT) with 500 hours attained.



Michael Mondloch

Michael Mondloch is the new DR for the Niagara Diocese. He is married to Cathy and has two teenage children.

Michael has a PhD in Experimental Psychology from Indiana University (where Cathy and he met) and a Masters of Divinity from Wycliffe College.

Michael has been the rector of Grace Anglican Church in St. Catharines, Ontario since July of 2002.

Michael and his family enjoy curling, golfing and cottage life.

“Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion?”

--John Wesley--



Fran Aird

Frances (aka Fran) has just been appointed Diocesan Representative for the Diocese of Quebec. A native of the Gaspé Peninsula, Fran returned here in 2007 after many years “away” – including about 26 years in the Ottawa area and more recently 7 years in Western Canada.

Ordained to the transitional diaconate by Archbishop Bruce Stavert in February 2007, Fran was priested in the church of her baptism – St. James, Cape Cove – in September of the same year. Her education includes a B.A. (Psychology) from Bishop's University, Lennoxville, QC, a certificate in Spiritual Direction from the Pacific Jubilee Program and an M.Div. from Vancouver School of Theology.

Fran was hired by the Gaspé Ecumenical Chaplaincy Foundation as the first chaplain to the Anglophone community in the healthcare institutions of Gaspé. Her work centers around the local hospital, long-term care facility and two seniors' residences, as well as serving the Gaspé-Cap-aux-Os Pastoral Charge of the United Church of Canada. She writes a monthly spirituality column for the Quebec Diocesan Gazette entitled “The view from my window...” and is passionate about the importance of spiritual direction or companionship. “It is an amazing privilege to walk with people on their life's journey towards a deeper relationship with God.”

When Fran is not doing formal ministry, she can usually be found helping her husband, Peter Ross, renovate their 1882 home in Farewell Cove, gardening, cooking, kayaking, quilting, reading...or on the computer talking with her adult kids!



Ruby Lockhart

My husband and I just retired to a beautiful little village by the sea, where I grew up. Chuck and I have three children. Only our daughter lives in Newfoundland and she is married and has a son, Jacob. Our sons live in British Columbia. Our oldest is married and has a stepson, Spencer. Our youngest son will complete a theology degree in the spring.

Over the years I have been involved in different church related activities such as vestry, Sunday School, ACW, Alpha, Prayer Group. I've been on the Diocesan Executive Committee and other Diocesan Committees as well as Synods: Diocesan, Provincial and National. Since 1988 I have been involved in Cursillo, including Lay Director for 4 years. My husband and I presently meet weekly in Group Reunion with another couple. I completed an Education for Ministry course and really enjoyed learning and sharing with that little group. Presently I am doing a Spiritual Director's Training Program with seven others and it is a wonderful experience.

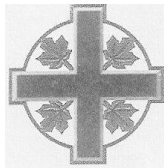
There are other things in my life that I do and enjoy besides church related things. I like to quilt, play cards, read novels - especially fantasy, walk, pick berries and fish in season, and visit with friends. I try to learn something each day from the ordinary things in life.



Anglican Fellowship of Prayer Canada Executive
Back Row: Harry Langston, Roger Harris, Ken Watts,
 Paul Dumbrille, Tony Day, Gary Woolsey
Front Row: Anne Moore, Marian Haggerty, Esther Jackson,
 Grace Coleman Anthony, Cathy Reynolds
Missing: Bernadette Njegovan, Win Mizon

The Anglican Church of Canada

A letter from The Most Rev. Fred J. Hiltz
 Archbishop and Primate



November 2008

Dear Friends:

It is an honour to write a letter of encouragement for those involved in the 'Alongsiders' prayer program of the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer. As a parish priest I very much enjoyed visitation with those who were elderly, sick or shut-in. I found them to be very grateful for this ministry and deeply appreciative of the prayers of the Church for them, their families and their caregivers.

Ministry of this kind is in the first instance an expression of thanksgiving for the many years of faithful service that they have given to the Church and in the second an expression of the Church's care for them in their present circumstances. That care is wonderfully enshrined in a prayer for "Relatives and Friends" found in the Book of Common Prayer. It reads as follows:

"O loving Father, we commend to thy gracious keeping all who are near and dear to us. Have mercy upon any who are sick, and comfort those who are in pain, anxiety or sorrow. Awaken all who are careless about eternal things. Bless those who are young and in health, that they may give the days of their strength unto thee. Comfort the aged and infirm, that thy peace may rest upon them. Hallow the ties of kindred, that we may help, and not hinder, one another in all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

With gratitude for your commitment to the work of prayer, I am
 Sincerely in Christ,

The Most Reverend Fred J. Hiltz
 Archbishop and Primate

Praying the Jesus Prayer

A meditative prayer activity for youth developed by Bernadette Njegovan for the 2006 PWRDF Youth Famine, Diocese of Brandon



The Jesus Prayer is an instrument by which we can be attentive to the presence of God dwelling deep in our hearts. A simple repetitive prayer that gives our wandering thoughts & imaginations something to focus on.... We can make our bodies part of our prayer as well as our minds!

This is a heart prayer. A tool to help you develop a reservoir of God's presence within you....

To begin... Adopt a relaxed posture; one in which you can remain for quite a while... sitting on a pillow cross-legged, works really well.

Begin with a simple relaxation technique... Tense the muscles in your feet...release...your calves...release... thighs...release...abdomen...release...shoulders & arms...release...neck and face...release.

A Breath Prayer...A Jesus Prayer!
Breath in..."Lord Jesus"
Breath out..."have mercy"

Take a few moments to begin... focus on praying these words in silence as you breath in & out...let your breathing rate fit the words...intentionally slowing your breath a bit. Close your eyes to help you focus...Keep repeating the words in your mind as you move through the postures...

Posture 1: Palms Down...resting your wrists on your knees. Palms down symbolizes release. Let go of all the details of life. Let go of all your worries & concerns. Shed all of these thoughts, and all of the emotions that go with them. Give it ALL over to GOD your Father....

Posture 2: Palms up...resting your hands on your knees. Palms up symbolizes receiving. Open palms up to receive strength from our God. God loves & cares for you ! Receive His love & guidance. Listen for thoughts of direction from Him...He will guide you...

Posture 3: Bring your palms together in front of you...fingers straight & touching... Give prayerful thanks to God. Thank Him for His healing touch in your life... Feel God's peace pour over you.

God's peace will give you strength to face the days ahead...

And finally change your words to Amen...Amen...Amen on your exhalations (you're breathing out...). My prayer for now is finished.

I am renewed by my God's love & care!

AFP CANADA LAUNCHES NEW 'BLOG'

At the Diocesan Representatives Conference in June of '08 it was suggested that AFP look at creating a 'blog' which would assist AFP members and leaders in their ministry. The National Director and the Reverend Deborah Rivet agreed to pursue the idea. Bishop Gary worked with the National Executive and our web master, Jith Paul, to start the work on this new communication venture. Testing was initiated with the Executive in January and it is now being launched.



Rt. Rev. Gary Woolsey

1. Why a 'Blog'? To assist prayer leaders in their special ministry and to allow prayer leaders to communicate with each other.

2. For Whom? The blog is especially designed for all those who wish to share their ideas on prayer and to seek advice from others who are involved in parish prayer ministries.

3. How do I become a blog member? Go to the AFP Blog site: www.anglicanprayer.org/blog and follow the directions in the section 'How to use the AFP Blog' by sending the Administrator (Bishop Gary Woolsey) an email containing the information requested. Bishop Gary will send you a personal email with your login username and password.

4. Now you can **sign-on** and add '**comments**' to any of the categories (topics shown on the left side of the site).

5. You can send a **personal email** to another member by placing your cursor over the person's name (who has submitted a comment) and clicking on the name. This will allow you to send a personal message directly to that individual.

If you have any questions, please send a message to Bishop Gary who will help you navigate through the blog. Each month we hope to be adding new 'messages' to encourage the use of prayer in personal and parish life. Be patient with us as we seek to develop this communication tool. Your suggestions and usage will make it work!

**An Ecumenical OSL
Healing Conference**
(FLIN FLON MANITOBA)

May 29th - 31th 2009

**At Prospector Inn
(Formerly RJ's Hotel)**
225 Creighton Ave.
Creighton, SK

**Sponsored by the
Order of St. Luke (OSL)**



Speakers: Internationally known Rev. Jack and Anna Marie Sheffield of USA. Jack is an OSL Chaplain and Director of Region V which includes 5 states. They have published four books on healing. Their healing missions reach out to all denominations and non-denomination people. Everyone is welcome.

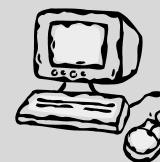
Registration: \$125.00 before March 31
\$150.00 after that date. This includes coffee/tea/snacks, Saturday lunch and Saturday supper. Make cheques payable to "Order of St. Luke" c/o Shelley Andres, 138 Riverside Dr., Flin Flon, Manitoba R8A 0L9.

For more information : email Shelley at sandres@mts.net, or OSL Chaplain Rev. Clare Edwards at edwardsd@mts.net, phone 1-204-687-8371.

The AFP and OSL often support each other in the healing ministry in our area with many members belonging to both organizations.

Check out the AFP-C website.

www.anglicanprayer.org



Any articles or events relating to prayer that you wish to include on our website should be forwarded to
Roger Harris
rognet@sympatico.ca

THE ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER
&
THE INTERNATIONAL ANGLICAN WOMEN'S NETWORK

SPRING CONFERENCE 2009
"PRAYING FOR EQUALITY"
MOOSONEE - MAY 7TH & 8TH

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
ELIZABETH LOWETH
CANADIAN PROVINCIAL LINK IAWN

DETAILS CONTACT:
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Please keep those prayer articles coming!

Prayer and Church Meetings by Paul Dumbrille



I recently read an article by Charles M. Olsen adapted from *Transforming Church Boards into Communities of Spiritual Leaders*, copyright © 1995 by the Alban Institute. It

triggered me to think about how prayer is normally included in church meetings. In the many church meetings that I have attended, particularly Parish Council meetings, I realized that they almost always consisted of what Olsen calls, “book-end prayers”; a perfunctory way in which prayer is used. We traditionally separate out the spiritual aspects of the meeting from the “business at hand.” The business part of the meeting resembles the process that one would typically see outside the church—an emphasis on efficiency, a reliance on “reasoned” judgments, and a structure based on parliamentary rules, all ordered by a litany of reports with recommendations and decisions voted by majority rule. We just “book-end” the meeting with prayer.

However, if we redefine the activity of the people of God serving on church councils and groups and see it as **worshipful work**, then prayer will no longer be relegated to a book-end position; instead, it will saturate the agenda and thread its way throughout the meeting.

Church groups and Parish Councils that do church differently can discover ways to allow prayer to permeate the whole meeting. Here are some of the ways that Olsen suggests we can do things differently and make prayer an essential and life-giving aspect of our meetings.

Frame the Agenda with Prayer

Use opening and closing prayers that relate to the agenda of the meeting. The beginning prayer might focus on the image of God and create an openness to and awareness of the Spirit’s presence and leading. The closing prayer might be a thankful offertory for the work of the meeting—lifted to God. Preparing for a night’s restful sleep invites prayers of release and relinquishment, and acknowledgment that people cannot maintain control. Entrust the staff of a meeting to God in the same way you prepare for sleep—by letting go.

Collect Prayers

At the beginning of a meeting, you might assign four people to keep notes with an eye

toward separating out items for prayer. (They do not record the decisions being made - that is the task of the meeting secretary.) One of the four should note anything that would be the basis for **thanksgiving**. Another would record needs or opportunities in the church or wider world that call for **intercession**. Still another would note situations within the board itself that would be the basis for prayers of **petition**. The fourth would note the work of the Spirit of God in the life of the council or congregation - a basis for **praise**. At the end of the meeting, focus worship on the four areas of thanksgiving, intercession, petition, and praise.

Offer Prayers of Confession

We need to admit who and how we are. **Confession** covers not only errors and sins but also weariness, frustration, confusion, elation, boredom, fulfillment, and so forth. Naming “how things really are” and “what is left undone” are healthy processes for a church meeting, but by themselves they can bind and paralyze it. A Parish Council, in particular, needs to have a safe place to work through these issues. In an era of individualism in our culture and faith, understanding the spirituality of the community is difficult. Perhaps confession is a good starting place.

“Time Out” for Prayer

After twenty minutes of debate and discussion over an issue on which people seem divided, the egos take over. Some deliberative groups have found value in taking three to five minutes of silent “time out” for personal refocusing and prayer. Let each one silently consider these questions: Am I closing myself off from information that we need to make this decision? Who do I need to forgive to be more fully present here? What is an image of God that needs to come to bear in this setting? How does the scripture that we read shed light on us now? Am I operating in a need-to-win or need-to-save-face mode? How would servant leaders make this decision? Time out periods could be called by a strict clock setting by the meeting moderator or by any member who requests it at any time for any reason.

Rotate Prayer

At the beginning of the meeting, assign separate persons to a certain fifteen-minute segments of the meeting; and during that assigned time, the assigned person should pray silently for each person in the group and for the deliberative process in which the board is engaged at that time.

Draw Upon Model Prayers in Scripture

Scripture provides many models that can be used for prayers at meetings: *The Psalms*; *The Lord’s Prayer*; *Jesus’ prayer for his friends and disciples* (John 17); *Paul’s heartfelt prayer of thanksgiving for his friends* (Phil. 1:3–11); *Paul’s great prayer for the church* (Eph. 3:14–21) are a few examples. In *Matthew 18:19–20* Jesus invited his followers to agree on what to pray for. The most significant decision a church group can make is about what its prayer will be. The prayer is not a strategic plan to be accomplished but a petition that cannot be accomplished by our own efforts.

Meetings Are Worship

Resistance to infusing the work of a church group or Parish Council with prayer tends to come from the conviction that “there is a place for everything and everything should be in its place”—that worship belongs to Sunday and sanctuary and prayer belongs to worship. But an inspirational moment in a meeting does wonders in loosening the strings of resistance, and those inspirational moments will come once worshipful work is attempted. Let the only rule be “meetings are worship.” All else will flow to and from that fountain. Then we can drink from its fullness!



AFP-C Executive director
the Rt. Rev. Gary Woolsey &
AFP-C Secretary Cathy Reynolds

**The best mathematical
equation
I have ever seen:
1 cross + 3 nails = 4 given**