

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (Canada)

Serving, supporting, and encouraging prayer

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Ven. Paul Feheley



In this season of Advent and Christmas, as we gather to celebrate the birth of Christ, the wonderful mystery of God coming to us as a child, we also have a story about an ordinary, quiet, faithful man named Joseph. The gospel invites us to look closely at him, because through the quiet faith of this ordinary man, God was accomplishing extraordinary things.

Joseph certainly is not seen as the 'star' of the Christmas story.

In Christian art on the birth of Jesus, Joseph is almost never front and center. In paintings of Mary and the child, Joseph is often absent.

In Christmas pageants we all know who the star is- Mary. There are plenty of stories of little girls who were disappointed because they did not get to play Mary in the Christmas pageant; there are fewer stories of little boys who felt slighted because they didn't get to play Joseph. If you are a little boy, you want to be one of the three kings, or, if not a king, at least a shepherd so you can wear a bathrobe and your father's tie wrapped around your head. Joseph almost seems like an afterthought.

Matthew does not tell us what Joseph was feeling when he learned the woman he was engaged to was pregnant. He knew the baby wasn't his. He drew the obvious conclusion. What more was there to say?

In struggling to understand this he must have prayed and experienced much turmoil. Was there distress, hurt, humiliation, disappointment and even anger?

My sense is that at times we go through those emotions in our prayers struggling to understand and find the presence of God in our lives.

Through a dream Joseph found an answer to the dilemma that he faced. He listened for God's word, and he followed it. He believed in the dream and did all that the Lord commanded.

This is our lesson to learn from Joseph. My hope this Christmas is that our prayers in spite of our own struggles may lead us to a greater listening and trusting of God, and that we are able to believe in the dreams God places in our heart, soul and minds and in those we love.

On behalf of my family and the executive of the AFP may you discover in the Christ Child the fulfillment of your hopes and dreams.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Many of us are familiar with the hymn, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel", which is sung most often in Advent. Each verse parallels what are called the "O Antiphons" of Advent. In the Middle Ages, these Antiphons were developed and traditionally sung at Evening Prayer (Vespers) in the seven days before Christmas. They are also echoed in the Advent Litany in the Book of Alternative Services (Pg. 119). Praying them throughout Advent will add a mood of eager expectation that builds and climaxes at Christmas.



O Wisdom You came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and reaching from beginning to end You ordered all things mightily and sweetly:

Come, and teach us the way of prudence.

O Lord and Ruler of the house of Israel You appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and on Mount Sinai gave him Your Law:

Come, and with an outstretched arm redeem us.



O Root of Jesse You stand for the ensign of mankind; before You kings shall keep silence and to You all nations shall have recourse:

Come, save us, and do not delay.

O Key of David and Scepter of the house of Israel:

You open and no man closes; you close and no man opens:

Come, and deliver him from the chains of prison who sits in darkness and in the shadow of death.



O Morning Star Radiance of the Light eternal and Sun of Justice:

Come, and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

O King of the Nations and the Desired of all, You are the Cornerstone that binds two into one:

Come, and save man whom You fashioned out of clay.



O Emmanuel our King and Lawgiver, the Expected of the nations and their Saviour:

Come, and save us, O Lord our God.

The Coming of God

(by Ann Weems—*Kneeling in Bethlehem*)

Our God is the One who comes to us
 In a burning bush,
 In an angel's song,
 In a newborn child.

Our God is the One who cannot be found
 Locked in the church,
 Not even in the sanctuary.

Our God will be where our God will be
 With no constraints,
 No predictability.

Our God lives where our God lives,
 And destruction has no power
 And even death cannot stop
 The living.

Our God will be born where God will be born,
 But there is no place to look for the One who comes to us.

When God is ready
 God will come
 Even to a godforsaken place
 Like a stable in Bethlehem.

Watch. . .
 For you know not when
 God comes.

Watch, that you might be found
 Whenever
 Wherever
 God comes.

BOOK REVIEW

The Glorious Impossible by Madeleine L'Engle

NY: Simon and Schuster Books, 1990

Reviewed by Laura Marie Piotrowicz

This beautiful volume may have been written with young readers in mind, but it is of benefit to anyone, regardless of age and stage. Illustrated with Giotto's 14th century frescoes, the story of Jesus comes to life through word and art.

Each significant moment in the life of Christ, from the Annunciation to the Ascension (and Pentecost) is presented in a one-page, easily accessible format which inspires praise and prayer.

The front cover reads "With a simple clarity that illuminates the life of Christ, Madeleine L'Engle gives eloquent voice to the miracle of God's love."

A wonderful gift to "bring joy to our hearts, hope to our lives, songs to our lips."



CURRENT WORK OF YOUR AFP EXECUTIVE

The Rev Valerie Kenyon

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer Canada – Come Pray with Us Appeal Letter, September 2017

In our last newsletter we included our ***Come Pray With Us*** 2017 Appeal Letter outlining the ongoing work of the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer. In that letter we were all invited to participate in supporting these ministries. Special thanks to all who have responded. With no other funding than what we receive through this appeal, gifts of all sizes make a real difference in making ministries and resources possible. Several years ago having moved away from a membership system based on a particular amount of donation, we now invite all who share our interest in supporting prayer to be a part of this important work. Gifts are gratefully received at:



Anglican Fellowship of Prayer, P.O. Box 78084, Meriline, Nepean, ON K2E 1B1.

Alternatively, if you'd prefer gifts can be sent to the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer via Canada Helps at: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/3444>

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer YouTube Channel:

As noted in an earlier newsletter, we continue to work at the development of an AFP (Canada) YouTube Channel. Additional materials have been posted over the last month. Supportive materials for programs posted online are also available. Please visit

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCULOKI2W9yo81cvSGzB_cqA

Oh My God: Making Prayer a Priority –

June 4-8, 2018 – St John's College, Winnipeg:

What are you doing on the first week of June, 2018? Why not consider joining us at our national gathering where diocesan representatives and others interested in prayer, come together to consult, to encourage, to learn and to be inspired in their work. We are so pleased that our Primate will be available to join us for a portion of the week, and are looking forward to a variety of speakers and workshops around our theme: Oh My God: Making Prayer a Priority. Registration for the week is \$300 and needs to be received by May 15th. If interested ...

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Next newsletter - Lent 2018

Submission deadline: Jan 8, 2018