

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer

Serving, Supporting, and Encouraging Prayer

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Advent 2022

A Christmas Letter

Paul Feheley, National Director



Friends,

In my parish of St Michael and All Angels in Toronto my wife Jenni and I share together in Ministry. There are some areas that we each work in and then other areas that we share- pastoral care and preaching to name but two. It was Jenni's turn to write the Christmas message for our newsletter and when I read it, I was quite moved by the warmth and tone that it carried. Rather than as they say 'reinvent the wheel' I thought I would share her Christmas message with you this year.

And here we are again, closer and closer to another Christmas... Busy days ahead and for many, increased stresses of finances. Sometimes we sit back and think of the way that Christmas got high-jacked.... Once, simply a sacred time of the year for Christians to take quiet time and fill it with joy and thanksgiving for the promise of Jesus – but nowadays; lost in the midst of a secular holiday that is a massive fuel boost to the economy with Santa's face plastered all over the place. It's not easy to push our way through the trappings and expectations that our western world has placed upon this high holy day... to insistently push our way through the glitter and glam into the quiet, still, gentle moment of promise that we find at the manger...yet that is what we do; year after year, after year. And we continue to do it. Why? Because this is what Christmas is!

Even though the pressures are on to fill the stockings and purchase the perfect gift, our prayer is that you are woken to moments of beauty - moments that allow you to see the warmth in another's eyes... that you are able to let go of dashed hopes and instead, recognize the generosity of gifts in their many forms. As a community, we have lost loved ones along the way, we have felt the pain of isolation and exclusion and so our prayer is that each one of us is able to move past the feeling of loneliness that runs rampant in these times – and instead, feel the constant, gentle, unconditional love of Jesus ...

Join us in the weeks and days ahead as we carve out space for peace, honesty and love; as we etch out time for a sacred Christmas.

On behalf of the executive of the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer may I wish you and those who are close to you a blessed and Holy Christmas and a joyous New Year.

Lord Jesus,
Master of both the light and the darkness,
Send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.
We who have so much to do and seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day,
We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.
We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.
We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.
We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.
To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!"
Amen.
-Henri J.M. Nouwen



"Advent" Source: Flickr
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Imagining Mary in words and pictures has always been one of the most powerful ways of imagining the Church, and so, of imagining ourselves freshly. May we help others to imagine and to encounter the child of Mary as we go to our business of discipleship.

~Rowan Williams

Almighty God, who has poured upon us the new light of your Incarnate Word; Grant that the same light enkindled in our hearts may shine forth in our lives through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

~Book of Common Prayer

Let Us Pray!

As we enter a new year, we are continuing our popular *Let Us Pray* series that happens virtually each month on the third Monday of the month. Looking ahead, here is what we have planned:

December 19 – *The Music of Prayer ... The Prayer of Music* with the Rev'd Andreas Thiel

January 16 – *Let Us Pray Gets Personal* with members of the AFP Executive sharing the role of prayer in their lives and what prayer has meant to them. Within our hour together we will also be having time for breakout groups and for praying together.

February 20 – *Inspiration to Prayer, Books and Other Supports* This gathering will be an opportunity to hear from you, about those books on prayer and practices that have been meaningful to *you!* Perhaps it was something you've come across recently, or a favourite from long time ago, no matter, if it inspired you, we want to hear about it!

March 20 – *Primate Fred on St Columba* Our former Primate Fred will be joining us in Lent to speak about St Columba an Irish abbot and missionary evangelist who founded the important abbey on Iona, which became a dominant religious and political institution in the region for centuries.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87388880778?pwd=YWNXaIB4ZUJaMG5HRIM0ZnVWMIgVZz09>

Meeting ID: 873 8888 0778; Passcode: 997550

OR join by phone; find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/kcEOUrK2Ah>

Looking forward to seeing you there.

Current Work of your AFP Executive

Valerie Kenyon, AFP Canada Chair

Diocesan Contacts – *It's That Time Again*

Monday, January 9, 2023,
10:00am PST; 12:00pm MST; 1:00pm EST; 2:00pm AST

If you are a Diocesan Contact, you will want to note, **Monday, January 9th (see times above)** as our next virtual gathering. It is always a pleasure spending time with these individuals who support AFP Canada by both sharing the prayer needs of their regions with the National Executive, and distributing information about resources and other supports being made available by AFP Canada. If you are a Diocesan Contact an email will be coming to you shortly to save the date, and a meeting link will follow in January.



Let Us Pray – we want to hear from YOU!

As AFP Executive looks ahead, our plan is always to bring to our time together topics and speakers that are of interest to you. No doubt from time to time you come across topics or individuals that you think might have something to share with us. If you do, we'd love to hear from you. Please just reach out to Val Kenyon, Executive Chair, at chairperson@anglicanprayer.org with your thoughts and ideas.

Merry Christmas!

*Let the just rejoice, for their justifier is born.
Let the sick and infirm rejoice, for their savior is born.
Let the captives rejoice, for their Redeemer is born.
Let slaves rejoice, for their Master is born.
Let free men rejoice, for their Liberator is born.
Let All Christians rejoice, for Jesus Christ is born.
—Saint Augustine of Hippo*



Latimore, Kelly.

Mary: Keep Watch,

*from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project
of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville,
TN. [https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-
imagelink.pl?RC=57106](https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=57106)*

*Original source: Kelly Latimore Icons,
<https://kellylatimoreicons.com/>*

Our AFP Finances

Again this year, our all-volunteer Executive has decided that we would not conduct a major fundraising effort. Our sense is people are very weary from COVID, from being “shut-in” in so many ways, and from endless news stories that only heighten our anxiety and frustration. This past year (to say nothing of the years before) has been difficult and challenging for all of us. We still need money, and if you are able to make a contribution to the Fellowship of Prayer- thank you. We value our community of people across the country and thank you for your prayers and all the support you give us.

Waiting in Kairos Time: An Advent Reflection

by Archbishop Anne Germond. Used with Permission.

The outside world is noisy with the sights and sounds and with the hustle and bustle of the festive season. Our parishes are busy with Holly Teas, pie baking and any number of good outreach projects.

I say to you, let's not get to Christmas without going through the season of Advent first. Four weeks are given to us to slow down and wait with hope and expectation for the Light of the World to come.

Advent time is Kairos time, God's time, in which we focus upon, prepare for, and explore the significance of a God who not only loves us, but who came to be among us, as one of us-Jesus the Christ.

It is good news that when Jesus Christ was born we realized that we weren't as alone as we thought, or had been led to believe. God in our time, is Emmanuel-God with us.

Advent is the time for us to wake to that new reality. We who have been baptized into the promises of God have a different outlook than the consumerist world outside. It also means that we prepare differently for Christmas.

Let's do some intentional loadshedding this Advent and live in God's Kairos time as we wait. There is much that is scary and frightening in the world... Even as the days become shorter and the light around becomes dimmer, as we open our hearts to Christ's light we will find that we have nothing to fear.

Let us cast aside all that is dark in our lives and clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, living as the new creation we are in him.

Instead of living in a frenzy, let's hit the pause button and Pray, Hope, Give, Rest, Sing, Believe, Love, Praise, Share, Confess, and Trust as we wait upon the Lord.



"Embraced by Grace"

Annunciation window at Swaffham Catholic Church

Photo by Lawrence OP; CC BY-NC 2.0

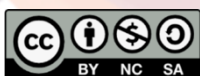
Source: Flickr

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Next Newsletter: March 2023

Submission deadline: March 1, 2023