

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer

Volume 29, No. 2

June 2021

Serving, Supporting, and Encouraging Prayer

The Best of Things in the Worst of Times

A letter from National Director Paul Feheley



This picture is the Chapel of the Holy Trinity, Staunton Harold in Leicestershire England. The story of this church completed in 1653 is a story of faith particularly about its creator Sir Robert Shirley.

During the period when the church was built, England was a deeply divided place following the Civil War, Oliver Cromwell and his regime were causing havoc in churches up and down the land – smashing stained glass windows, throwing out organs and church bells and defacing all interior decoration. The building of a new church at Staunton Harold in the medieval style with carved woodwork, painted ceilings and all the elements the Puritans were destroying elsewhere represented a breathtakingly open act of defiance to Cromwell. This is one of only a very few churches built at that time.

Upon hearing about the church being erected by Sir Robert Shirley, Oliver Cromwell demanded that he contribute to the costs of a new ship for the Navy.

Shirley refused Cromwell's demand and was determined to uphold his faith. He paid the price, being imprisoned in the Tower of London, where he died in 1656 – just three years after the completion of his church which survived him quite unscathed.

After the restoration of the monarchy, an inscription to the memory of Robert Shirley's work and defiance of Puritan rule was set up by his friends and family above the main entrance to the church for all to read on entering. It says: *"In the year 1653, when all things sacred throughout the land were being destroyed or being profaned this church was built for the glory of God by Sir Robert Shirley whose singular praise it was to have done the best of things in the worst of times."*

For more than a year all of us have faced a number of challenges difficulties and pressures. These are not only Canadian or North American problems, but they are also shared by our brothers and sisters around the globe. In my conversations with Christians in other parts of the world, especially Africa the Covid challenges are even more complicated with matters of war starvation, natural disasters, and gender-based violence.

We are called on to do *'the best of things in the worst of times'*.

We have been given the gift of prayer to enable us to share with God our needs and ...can't

The Best of Things... (continued)

hopes and fears. We have others around us who serve as examples of the kind of patience and faithfulness that will inspire us. We have Jesus as the model of unconditional love to sustain us through all that confronts us, and we have the assurance of God that we are valued and cherished people.

Sir Robert Shirley accomplished much by a steadfast faith. We are called to risk by also doing, 'the best of things in the worst of times.'



Current Work of the AFP Executive

Val Kenyon, National Chair

At a recent workshop I attended, the leader opened with the question, "How is it with your soul?" When we see each other, as we all know, it is quite common to ask, "How are you?", which of course is an entirely appropriate question. However, "How is it with your soul, feel more like a question for our times. As we read this, it will very nearly be summer, that season of sun and fun, that season we look forward to as it gives us opportunities for a bit slower pace and some rest and relaxation in the wonder of God's creation ... well usually but maybe not in 2021, not quite yet.

While we anticipate better times ahead as vaccines roll out and slowly, we return to an approximation of life pre-Covid, waiting can be difficult. Isolation and loss can be even more difficult. So many times, during this past year or so I have thought of the verse from the book of Hebrews 12:1, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." At the Executive of the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer, our main concern these days, is how best to support and encourage all of those interested in deepening their prayer life, as we run with perseverance the race marked out for each of us wherever we find ourselves.

AFP Resources: While shared with you earlier, it is worth a reminder that as we slowly transition away from mailing out paper resources, we have a number of pamphlets still available that we would be pleased to make available to you at no charge. Please contact our Resource Coordinator, Paul Dumbrille, at resources@anglicanprayer.org to make further inquiries about the paper resources that are still available. To review all the electronic resources that we offer, a list can be found at: <http://anglicanprayer.org/index.php/resources/>.

Another project we have been working on with our Resources is to make them available to any who would like them on a thumb drive. This will allow those with spotty or no internet to have and print these resources from your own computer. If you would like to learn more about receiving one of these, again please be in touch with Paul Dumbrille at the email listed above.

Let Us Pray: While Covid 19 continues to challenge us in many different ways, it has forced us to be innovative. One of the innovations for AFP Canada has been the introduction of monthly gatherings, *Let Us Pray*. This has been warmly received and well attended over the past five months as we have come together to learn of different prayer practices and to pray together. Our final session for this season will be on Monday, June 21st with Elise Chambers, one of our Executive members from the Diocese of Huron.

Looking ahead to the Fall, and having heard some of your suggestions, we are looking forward to hearing: on September 20th from Rosalyn Kantlah'tant Elm on prayer from an Indigenous perspective, on October 18th from Laura Marie Piotrowicz about Anglican prayer beads, and on November 15 from Paul Fehely on *Lectio Divina*. If you have not been able to join us yet, why not make June your first visit. All are welcome. The Zoom invitation information has been included later in the newsletter. Please share this invitation with anyone who would like to participate. Looking forward to seeing you all there.

Continuing to hold you all in prayer, every blessing!

Prayer Matters: Companions on the Journey

By Paul Dumbrille

One of my favourite contemporary Christian songs is “Companions on the Journey” by Carey Landry. As I listen to that song my mind goes to the story in the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 24, of the Disciples walking on the road to Emmaus after Jesus’ death and resurrection. The Disciples are “Companions on the Journey” who experience Jesus in three powerful ways.

Early in the story the companions walk and share the recent happenings in Jerusalem. Jesus, whom they do not recognize, teaches them using Scripture: “Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.” (V. 27). Jesus is teaching them and engaging their minds and thoughts. When we read and pray with Scripture, and when we seek out teachers, writers and speakers who stimulate our minds, we can experience Jesus. As we pray and contemplate these things, we are led to a better understanding of who God is, how God works, and how we are changed by the Divine Presence. We are experiencing what one might call the “Jesus of the Head”.

Later, after Jesus disappears, and the Disciples said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” (V. 32). Their hearts were burning; they had experienced the “Jesus of the Heart”. They have felt the love of Jesus. When we pray, we pray in love for God, and our response is to love others. It is easy to love others we like, but much more difficult to love others we dislike or disagree with. In prayer we realize that everyone is loved by God and is deserving of our love. In loving God, and others, we are experiencing the “Jesus of the Heart”.

During the story, Jesus and the Disciples stop for the night, and the companions sit down to eat. “When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.” (V. 30-31). When he breaks bread with his hands, they experience the “Jesus of the Hands”. When we use our hands and the rest of our bodies to share what we have with others, we are following the way of Jesus. Prayer is not just understanding God in our minds and feeling it in our hearts, but it is also taking action in how we live our lives; how we reach out and help others; how we view the world. We are called to live a life of compassion. When we follow Jesus and do what God would have us do, we are living a life of prayer.

As companions, we too can experience the Jesus of the Head, the Jesus of the Heart, and the Jesus of the Hands.

It is not easy in these COVID times to travel together in prayer with companions. We are challenged to find new ways to be companions on the journey. In my case, when I, and others, realized this pandemic was not going to be over soon, we established a weekly 30-minute prayer time via Zoom. This has now become a regular part of my life. I have also joined people from across Canada in a monthly online hour of prayer organized by the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer. Participating in a twice weekly prayer time with the L’Arche Ottawa community provides me with an opportunity to be companions on the journey with those with developmental disabilities. None of these opportunities existed before the pandemic. These are examples of taking advantage of what is accessible to me. I encourage those of you who may be without the opportunity, ability, or technology, to do these sorts of things, to seek the help and company of the companions on your journey. Together you can find opportunities of travelling your road to Emmaus and experience Jesus as he travels with you from your Head to your Heart, and into your Hands.

In the words of Carey Landry’s song:

*“No longer strangers to each other,
no longer strangers in God’s house;
we are fed, and we are nourished
by the strength of those who care,
by the strength of those who care”*

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (Canada)

NEW ADDRESS: PO Box 43021, London, ON N6J 0A7
www.anglicanprayer.org



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) International License

newsletter@anglicanprayer.org

Next Newsletter: September 2021

Submission deadline: September 1, 2021



Meeting Your AFP Executive: Libi Clifford

What do I do besides AFP work? Until I retired, I was a drapery seamstress, and later owner /operator of a custom window covering and accessories store.

Now because I have time: I read. I embroider, particularly in the 17th century style called blackwork. I stitch quilts that I have designed. I play golf. For 45 years, I have been an amateur genealogist and have finally completed my trees.

I am the diocesan coordinator for Education for Ministry and an EfM mentor. Through discernment discussions at EfM, I have realized that my ministry is taking on tasks that others shy away from, which is why I am the AFP treasurer.

Let Us Pray - Together

This fall, we will continue to host a one-hour time of prayer (see dates and topics in Val Kenyon's article, page 2) at 1:00pm Eastern time. You are invited to join us for some or all of the hour. It will be a mixture of biblical readings, reflection, music, intercession, silence and other types and kinds of pray. You are welcome to actively participate or simply listen and pray quietly.

We will use the "Zoom" way of gathering people together. To join on computer, please click <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82001408803?pwd=WXRmWFJZSHRLcUYwdGpUU1YvMmlxZz09>
Meeting ID: 820 0140 8803 Passcode: 359803

You can also join us by telephone at one of these numbers (with the same meeting ID and passcode):

(778)907-2071, (204)272-7920, (438)809-7799, (587)328-1099, (647)374-4685, (647)558-0588

We would be grateful if you would share this information with anyone who might be interested, and we look forward to your prayer and presence with us.