

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer

Serving, Supporting, and Encouraging Prayer

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Lent/Easter 2023

Lenten Reflections from Ghana

Paul Feheley, National Director



Last month I had the privilege of being part of the communication team at the global Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-18) in Accra, Ghana. The meeting took a day to move away from the week-long agenda to visit a 17th-century castle on Ghana's Cape Coast. Cape Coast Castle was built by the Swedes in 1653. Over the years, it fell into Danish, Dutch and, finally, in 1665, English hands.

The castle was the center of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, many enslaved Africans who were taken from their homes sometimes hundreds of miles away were held at Cape Coast Castle before being transported to the Americas on British slave ships. We toured the various places and there is little or no doubt that as one ACC member said, "A pilgrimage to Cape Coast changes your very being. There is no return from breathing in the atmosphere of this place."

One of the most difficult places for me was the dungeons. The female slaves were separated from the men and any enslaved woman could be violated without recrimination by the Governor or soldiers that lived in the castle. The male dungeons, no bigger than the average living room crammed in over 1000 African men. Here they had to sleep, rest, and relieve themselves. In one dungeon the excrement formed a substructure several feet deep. With no water or food many died of dehydration and any number of other diseases. Those who died were thrown over the castle walls into the Atlantic while those who survived were led down a tiny passage to the Door of No Return, where the boats awaited to take them.

A greater shock still awaited me. Directly above the dungeons was the chapel. The sound of the wailing of Africans would have mixed with the hymns and prayers being offered above. My mind still does not understand how you pray within a few short yards of this sea of humanity dying underneath you. How warped is the understanding of the gospel in that place at that time?

In commenting on the visit, The Archbishop of Canterbury said, "Our response must begin on our knees in prayer and repentance. In calling on the God who blesses the broken, the reviled and those who mourn. In looking to God who transforms, redeems, and reconciles. But our response does not end there. We are called to transform unjust structures, to pursue peace and reconciliation, to live out the Beatitudes in big ways and small."

When we stop to pray, to worship to sing hymns do we hear the voices of those we judge not to be like us. Do we shut the doors of our Churches so as not to see the needs of the world?

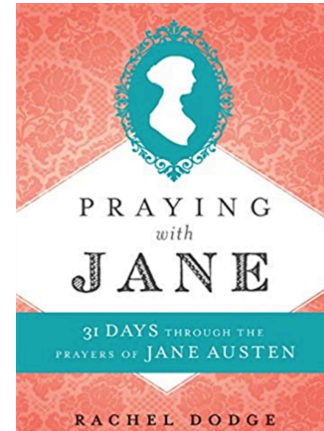
The Rt Revd. Graham Usher, the Bishop of Norwich, thoughtfully summed up our day: "We cry out to God because we know this should never have been — and that the legacy of this horrible place lives on in relationships that are still out of kilter. We cry out, holding on to the hope of a better future. In a place like this, only lament offers hope of return in our search for God."



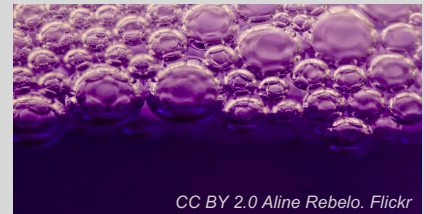
Book Review – “Praying with Jane” by Rachel Dodge

Reviewed by Carol Knox, Diocese of Algoma

Last summer a friend gave me a little book by Rachel Dodge titled “Praying with Jane: 31 Days Through the Prayers of Jane Austin”. Most helpful was a novel way of doing intercessions to cover a person in prayer. In Jane’s day, postage was very high, so people often wrote letters that covered the page in 3 directions by twice turning the page 90 degrees. Similarly, when doing intercessions, a person being prayed for can be covered in prayer by our praying in 3 directions. First pray for the “horizontal” life of the person. This consists of the things they do, the places they go, their work, and their general safety, health and influences. Next pray for the “vertical” part of their life: their relationship with God, their desire to please God, their interests and investment in spiritual growth, and their passion for scripture. Finally, rotate again and pray for their “future”, their purpose, service, and ministry. This final direction is so important when we pray for those in ordained and lay ministry in the church. We can pray for them to be stirred up by the Holy Spirit and be fanned into flames to exercise their spiritual gifts as Jesus’ heart and hands and feet in the church and in the world.



*"O Lord, make this Lenten season
different from the other ones.
Let me find you again. Amen."
~Henri Nouwen*



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Let Us Pray!

Looking ahead to the Spring, 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:

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.

April 17 – *Dr Michael Harvey, ACORN Prayer*

May 15 – *Bishop Riscylla Shaw, “Praying in a New Heaven and a New Earth”*

June 19 – *Prayer from the Primate's Perspective* We are so pleased that Archbishop Linda will be able to be with us in June. Join us as we hear the Primate's perspective on the different aspects of prayer in her life and ministry.

<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

Let Us Pray Video Resources

Not able to attend the monthly *Let Us Pray* sessions, or did you enjoy so much you'd like to share it with others? Now you can! Beginning with our March session of *Let Us Pray*, recordings of our sessions will be available to you online.

These videos will not contain any personal details of participants, but will isolate the presentation portion of the session, for use in *your* parish, deanery or Diocese. A perfect resource for a prayer gathering any time it suits your schedule. Please visit anglicanprayer.org approximately one week following the event to view this resource. Have questions? Please reach out to our web coordinator at: webcoord@anglicanprayer.org



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.

Internet a Little Sketchy?

Do you have trouble accessing the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer online resources due to inconsistent internet availability in your area? No worries. Just reach out to our Resource Coordinator, Paul Dumbrille, at resources@anglicanprayer.org and we will send you all of our print resources on a flash drive. Availability is limited, so please don't hesitate in reaching out to us.



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Source: Flickr

*While fasting with the body, brothers and sisters,
let us also fast in spirit.
Let us lose every bond of iniquity;
let us undo the knots of every contact made by violence;
let us tear up all unjust agreements;
let us give bread to the hungry
and welcome to our house
the poor who have no roof to cover them,
that we may receive mercy from Christ our God.
- Byzantine Vespers*

*Come, my Light, and illumine my darkness.
Come, my Life, and revive me from death.
Come, my Physician, and heal my wounds.
Come, Flame of divine love, and burn up the thorns of my sins,
kindling my heart with the flame of thy love.
- Dimitrii of Rostov*

Prayer on a Dementia Unit

A Reflection by Chris Salstrom, Diocese of Rupert's Land

I have been a health care chaplain (now named a Spiritual Health Practitioner) for about a decade now. The last number of years I have specialized in dementia care and special needs behaviours within that disease. As a spiritual health caregiver in this setting, prayer does not look the same, necessarily, as it does on other units or outside of the care facility. If we say a formal prayer, at the end of my program or visit, it is usually *The Lord's Prayer*, as that's the one most of my spiritual residents learned earliest in life and still remember. However, it is not the most common way I pray with residents on the dementia units.

As a young chaplain dementia care is what I feared most. *How can I talk to people who cannot respond to me?* I thought. I also wondered how to run church services. I find it quite ironic that this is now a place I feel quite comfortable and passionate about working. When I sit down with a resident, I listen and respond to their whole self. I see beneath their disease as best I can and I watch their body language because that is communication. I watch their eyes, for every look and every tear is sending a message to me and to God. Some reach out and hold hands, touch foreheads, or make sounds. All of that to me can be sacred and prayerful. I was taught that every tear was a prayer that God hears and to which God responds. I believe that. My experiences, however have led me to believe so much more!

I know that church hymns are some of the first songs that this generation of dementia residents learned. Music is also some of the best medicine for dementia, if you can find the right style for a resident. So, I try to find hymns in every style: country, country-crossover, jazz, blues, traditional, maybe a little rockin' for the younger of the residents and any others I can think of. And then I watch people come to life. I watch people's eyes light up, they sing, they dance (in their chairs or the ambulatory often with me and the other staff), they applaud, they call out praise, and they laugh. The laughter is the most wonderful sound, because it is not heard enough. This is prayer.

I will often still say *The Lord's Prayer* at the end of my programs but I think God has heard our prayers long before we reached this point. I think God has been present and hearing everything these residents have been saying all along, in every interaction. Especially those where there are no words.



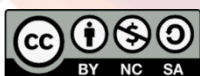
*Praying Hands,
Albrecht Dürer.
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Submission deadline: June 1, 2023