

ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

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Advent/Christmas 2023

Serving,
Supporting,
& Encouraging
Prayer

*Come and sing the Christmas story this holy night!
Christ is born: the hope of glory dawns on our sight.
Alleluia! earth is ringing with a thousand angels singing.
hear the message they are bringing this holy night.*

Of all the wonderful traditions and customs that surround the Christmas season few things bring me more joy than singing Christmas carols. I am one of those people who loves to have a Christmas in July celebration just for the sake of singing. The hymn verse above come from Michael Perry (1942 - 1996) a Church of England clergy and one of the leading British hymnodists of the 20th century. It is from the hymn that I use each year to open our midnight mass. While many start their service with a loud and stirring hymn, I prefer a quiet start with the church only lit with candles. The music is the beautiful Welsh tune *Ar Hyd Y Nos* (All Though the Night) which many of you would have sung in school.

I find the words of many of the carols affect me emotionally and are a unique and beautiful form of prayer. I can express feelings of hope and gratitude by singing the lyrics as well as giving thanks for the birth of our Saviour.

*Jesus, Saviour, child of Mary this holy night,
in a world confused and weary you are our light.*

Who knows for sure what the author had in mind when he wrote these words, but what is certain is that they have a very deep meaning this year. We are indeed 'confused and weary' by the horrors of war and death, especially children in Israel/Palestine. So many of our carols speak of peace and goodwill – will they become words of our prayers for a world in need of compassion and peace?

*Lord of all! Let us acclaim him this holy night;
king of our salvation name him, throned in the height.*

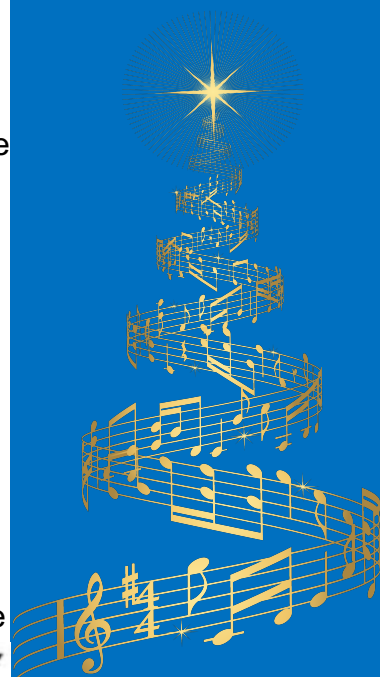
We need ways to grow express, celebrate and proclaim our faith. Carols provide for us way of reflection and contemplation and give us words that resonate with others.

On our next *Let us Pray* at 1:00pm Eastern on Mon, Dec 18 (see zoom details in this newsletter) we will be presenting some of the favorite carols of our executive and take some time to chat about them and see them as prayers. Please join us if you are able.

May the music of Christmas provide a prayerful dimension in your life and a wonderful way of connection with others and the divine.

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Musical Notes by
Paul Feheley,
National Director



"The Lord is coming, always coming.

When you have ears to hear and eyes to see,

you will recognise him

at any moment of your life.

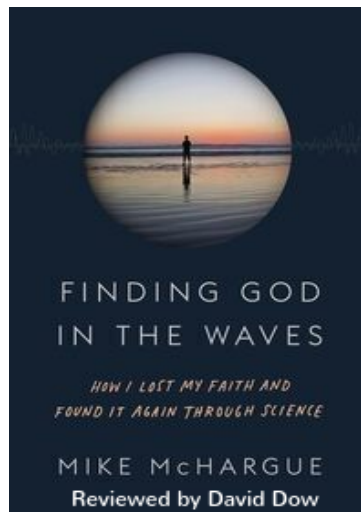
Life is Advent;

life is recognising the coming of the Lord."

~Henri Nouwen



"Advent 2009" By Jorbasa; CC BY-ND 2.0. Source: Flickr



"Trust the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."

Proverbs 3:5-6

In the context of the exploration of faith, doubt and the interplay between reason and spirituality, "Finding God in the Waves" by Mike McHargue, navigates the tumultuous seas of doubt and belief with a refreshing blend of scientific inquiry and personal narrative.

With a keen eye for detail and an unwavering commitment to authenticity, McHargue invites readers on a transformative journey, urging them to grapple with the timeless conundrum of finding spiritual solace amidst the ever-evolving landscape of scientific exploration.

Let Us Pray

Our popular monthly virtual *Let Us Pray* series will continue in the New Year on the third Monday of January and March, and the fourth Sunday of February. Please mark these dates down in your calendar and plan to attend:

- January 15, 2024 – We are so pleased that Archbishop Lynne McNaughton will be able to join us in January as we consider different aspects of **Medieval Mystics**;
- February 26, 2024 and March 18, 2024 – In February and March, Paul Dumbrille of the AFP Canada Executive, will be speaking to us about the **Seven Pathways**. Our individual uniqueness means we all experience God's presence, and learn to relate to God, in different ways. God wants to be fully present with each of us. But because God has made us to be different from one another, we are not identical in the practices and activities that will help us connect with God. In our Let Us Pray sessions, and in no specific order, we will explore Seven Spiritual Pathways through which we most naturally sense God's presence and experience spiritual growth and how that affects our prayers.

Join Zoom Meeting online at <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84453751334>

Or find your local number at <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84453751334>

Supporting the work of our Diocesan Contacts: *A Reminder*

With a desire to support the work of the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer in Canada, the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (Canada) has approved, for the use of any approved/appointed Diocesan Contacts, an annual reimbursement of up to \$250 for expenses consistent with the AFP commitment to encourage and enable the ministry of prayer in Canada.

Receipts must be sent to the treasurer, Libi Clifford, at treasurer@anglicanprayer.org and will be presented to the Executive for approval. Receipts for 2023 should be submitted by December 30, 2023. Any questions about this, may be addressed to the AFP Chair, Val Kenyon at chairperson@anglicanprayer.org.

Let Us Pray Video Resources

The perfect resource for a prayer gathering any time it suits your schedule. Please visit our website at anglicanprayer.org approximately one week following the event to view this resource.

Current Work of the AFP Executive by

Valerie Kenyon,
National Chair



Our AFP Finances

We have not conducted a major fundraising initiative for a few years, nor will we this year. AFP is run entirely by volunteers, and we are very careful with your gifts that support the work. We still need money, and if you are able to make a contribution to the Fellowship of Prayer- thank you. A reminder that if you are to receive a tax receipt for this year, we must receive your donation by December 29, to ensure a deposit in 2023. Our contact information is on the back page.

Every person is valued within our praying community, and financial giving is never a requirement to belong and participate.

I'll Pray For You *(an excerpt from a full article, available on our website anglicanprayer.org)* Herb O'Driscoll

Many of us will have experienced problems with remaining faithful to such a promise sincerely meant at the time. But, as we know all too well, life is busy, other needs and requests come into our lives, we lose track of our friend or acquaintance, we ourselves may develop worrying needs that make difficult managing our prayer life. For all this we can sometimes feel regret and even guilt. ...

Eugene Kennedy writes "A change actually occurs between two people when one promises sincerely to pray for the other. The former has placed themselves in a new kind of relationship with the one to whom they have made the promise. They have committed themselves to the other's world of personal concern. In other words, they have made themselves present to the one in need in a new and vital way.

Arise, shine, for your light has come; and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

~Isaiah 60.1

Sensible Prayer – Smell and Taste

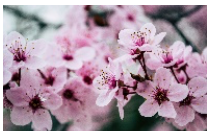
Paul Dumbrille

This is the third of a series of articles exploring the use of our senses in connecting with God.

If we restrict our understanding and the practice of prayer as being an activity only of the head, it can be likened to a bird trying to fly with one wing. We would be missing the richness of the use of the senses that God has given us. To “sense” something is to understand and experience life, gaining knowledge and achieving our potential. As we do with the physical world around in touching, tasting, smelling, seeing, and hearing, so, too, we can use our senses to learn about and experience God.

In this article we explore the use of our **Sense of Smell and Taste** in prayer.

We might not immediately identify the sense of smell with prayer. However, incense, which has distinctive aroma, has been employed in worship by Christians since antiquity. The practice is rooted in the earlier traditions of Judaism. The smoke of burning incense is interpreted by both the Western Catholic and Eastern Christian churches as a symbol of the prayer of the faithful rising to heaven, as in Psalm 141, v2: "Let my prayer be directed as incense in thy sight: the lifting up of my hands, as evening sacrifice." For many the smell of incense is an invitation to prayer.



Connecting with God through smell is not restricted to worship practices. As we go through our day we smell many things. When we are outside in nature, we are constantly smelling many things: flowers; vegetation; earth; and trees (I love the smell of pine trees). Sometimes we can smell the presence of animals and birds, although sometimes those smells are not particularly pleasant. Triggered by smells of nature, we can offer prayers in prayer to God, the Creator.

Our sense of taste is connected with our sense of smell. One of my favourite smells of food that is being cooked and served as meal, as I anticipate the taste of it. I try and say a prayer of Thanksgiving (“Grace”) at least once a day before a meal. But we can also be thankful silently during and after a meal. Triggered by the smell and taste of food, we thank God for the many blessings we have been given. Every time we eat or drink there is an opportunity to offer prayers of thanksgiving.



Eating the bread and drinking the wine in a Eucharist celebration is in itself an act of prayer invoking our sense of taste. In some Eucharistic liturgies we are invited to, “Taste and see that the Lord is good”, invoking the sense of taste. A useful practice might be to thank God for the bounty of creation, or thanksgiving for the gift of Jesus, as the bread touches our lips. As we swallow the wine, we might thank God for the sacrifice of Jesus and God’s forgiveness.

Smell and Taste can be powerful ways for us to realize that God is in everything, and loves us unconditionally.

Paul explores the sense of hearing in our next issue.

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Next Newsletter: March 2024

Submission deadline: Feb 28, 2024