

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer

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March 2021

Serving, Supporting, and Encouraging Prayer

A Hymn Reconsidered

A letter from National Director Paul Feheley

Every now and again something will happen that causes us to stop in our tracks and look again or reconsider something. A few weeks ago. I was driving and pulled the car into our home parking spot when a piece of music came on the radio. I had never heard of the composer although I knew the words, 'O love, that wilt not let me go.'

The music was exquisite and a beautiful setting of the text. The composer was Elaine Hagenberg (www.elainehagenberg.com - go to the listen tab for *O love that will not let me go*) The loveliness of the music caused me to go and relook at the text that I had sung any number of time to the traditional tune St. Margaret. It struck me as a hymn that speaks so strongly to the times we live with the pandemic and the frustrations and anxieties that it brings.

1
O Love, that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

2
O Light, that followest all my way,
I yield my flickering torch to Thee;
My heart restores its borrowed ray,
That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be..

3
O Joy, that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

4
O Cross, that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

The author George Matheson had served very successfully as a minister in several parishes in Glasgow, when in 1886 he became the pastor of the 2,000-member St. Bernard's Parish Church in Edinburgh. He wrote several theological books one volume of poetry.

Matheson wrote the words on the evening of his sister's marriage. Years before, he had been engaged, until his fiancée learned that he was going blind and cancelled their engagement. He went blind while studying for the ministry, and his sister had been the one to care for ... con't



A Hymn Reconsidered (continued)

him through the years. This marriage brought a fresh reminder of his own heartbreak. It was amid this circumstance and intense sadness that he wrote this hymn.

He shared a fascinating note about its composition: "I am quite sure that the whole work was completed in five minutes, and equally sure that it never received at my hands any retouching or correction. I have no natural gift of rhythm. All the other verses I have ever written are manufactured articles; this came like a dayspring from on high."

Each of the four verse begins with a significant word for us this day—Love, Light, Joy and Cross. The love that sustains our weary souls, the light that will lead us out of darkness, the joy that through pain brings us to the tearless morn and the cross that leads to the birth of new life.

Pray these words as we seek God knowing that the love of God will never let us go.

Current Work of the AFP Executive

Val Kenyon, National Chair

As you read this newsletter, for most of us, we have just passed the first anniversary of life with Covid-19. Imbedded within most conversations these days, are references to these unusual times, the losses and challenges of these times, and even in some respects the gift of these times. One thing is certain, there is nothing quite like a global pandemic to drive us to the essence, the core of our faith as found in the life and ministry of Christ, to help us remember, and in some ways rediscover more precisely what it is to live as disciples of Jesus. As we all engage in this transformative process, as the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (Canada), our primary focus remains how we might best offer supports and encouragement in the area of prayer and spiritual formation. Below you will find two such supports that we hope will be of service to you.



AFP Resources

Since early days, central to the work of the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer, has been the development, production and distribution of prayer resources. Over the years we have amassed quite a collection. To review all that is available a list can be found at: <http://anglicanprayer.org/index.php/resources/>. What is new, however, is that print versions of these resources will now be available to any who ask free of charge. For more information about accessing these resources, please see an update from our Resource Coordinator, Paul Dumbrille later in this newsletter.

Let Us Pray

The brainchild of our National Director, Paul Feheley, it seemed the most appropriate activity for the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer during a time of crisis would be to pray, and so that is exactly what we have been doing. For the past three months we have been gathering monthly for an hour-long time of prayer led by different members of the Executive. This was received so enthusiastically that our plan is to continue to offer this at least until June of 2021. The response has been excellent with participants coming from all across Canada. If you haven't had a chance to drop in before, please mark down: March 15, April 19, May 17 and June 21 and note the Zoom contact information that is provided later in the newsletter.

In Closing

Let me close by including a prayer that I find very helpful in these times. In some places I have seen it attributed to Teresa of Avila, and in others to Therese of Lisieux. But no matter its author its sentiment is hopeful and full of possibilities. May it speak to you where you are today:

"Therefore, I will trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen."

~Thomas Merton

*May today there be peace within.
May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.
May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.
May you use those gifts that you have received,
and pass on the love that has been given to you.
May you be content knowing you are a child of God.
Let this presence settle into your bones
and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.
It is there for each and every one of us.*

Continuing to hold you all in prayer, every blessing! ~Val

Meet Your Executive: Jane Bourcet

Hi I'm Jane Bourcet, the AFP Diocesan Contact from the Diocese of Kootenay which is in southeastern British Columbia. I'm a member of our diocesan Spiritual Development Committee, which also encourages folks in their spiritual journeys. I've spent my whole ministry, all over 35 years of it, primarily at All Saints Anglican Church in Vernon in the Okanagan Valley. I've always been particularly drawn to how people grow spiritually and have enjoyed presenting Quiet Days and facilitating small groups dedicated to deepening our connection to the Divine. I'm married with four grown children, three boys and a girl. Our grocery bills were a sight to behold in the teenage years! My husband, a structural engineer, has just retired, as I did three years ago, so we are entering a new chapter in our lives, which we hope will include a lot of travelling, across Canada for sure and abroad when the pandemic has run its course.

Prayer Triads

By Jane Bourcet

Several years ago, I attended the AFP conference in St John's NFLD. At the conference one of the exercises we were introduced to was Prayer Triads. We were divided into groups of three. One person was to share a concern from their own life that they wished the other two people to pray about for them. We were to only share concerns we felt comfortable with sharing. The concerns to be prayed for had to come from our own lives, not the problems in the world or our parishes. Once the timer had rung after a couple of minutes, we rotated through our roles, becoming the one to pray aloud for the concern of the others. If we didn't feel comfortable praying aloud, we were told that we could simply hold silence and then move on. I have to admit that, as we began, I didn't think much about the exercise. What I found, though, was that having two people pray just for you and what is on your heart was amazingly powerful. It not only lifted the weight of the concern, but also bound the three members of the Triad together. We met in triads more than once and I found that my desire for God to work in my partners' lives only deepened. I was very moved by the exercise and it's ability to make praying aloud for others very simple and ordinary, not just for clergy, but as a resource for everyone. Fast forward to 2019, when I was facilitating a Quiet Afternoon at one of the local parishes. I led the group through the Prayer Triad exercise and was again struck by how powerful the exercise was. One gentleman shared how it was the first time he had prayed "on the hoof" so to speak, something he had wanted to do but had never done.

I think we do ourselves and our faith a disservice when we allow this healing style of prayer to drift away, mainly because we're afraid we won't have the right words or we'll um and ahh. What we are called to is to "be not afraid", rest in the assurance that the Spirit will give us the words we need and say the words anyway- all of us, any time, any place.

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (Canada)

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Next Newsletter: June 2021
Submission deadline: June 1, 2021

Let Us Pray Together

One of the ways that we are responding and helping people dealing with the COVID pandemic is to host a number of sessions where we can come together and pray.

We will be hosting a one-hour time of prayer on March 15, April 19, May 17 and June 21 at 1:00pm Eastern time. We are inviting people 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. Please share this information with anyone who might be interested, and we look forward to your prayer and presence with us.

AFP Resources Now Free

We are delighted to announce that many of the resources developed by the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (AFP) over the past many years are now available at **no cost**. Versions of resources about many aspects of Christian prayer can be viewed on our website at <http://anglicanprayer.org/index.php/resources>. Paper copies can now be provided at no cost by contacting our Resources Coordinator, Paul Dumbrille, at “resources@anglicanprayer.org”. As in the past, electronic versions can be downloaded at no cost and there are also videos which can be viewed on our website, www.anglicanprayer.org.