

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer

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Lent 2019

Serving, Supporting, and Encouraging Prayer

Seeking oneness with God

By Paul Feheley, National Director

If I asked everyone who wants a deeper relationship with God to raise their hands, I expect about 100 % of those who just read that question would have their hands up. It is not difficult to say yes; however it can be difficult to actually achieve that long sought after oneness with God.

The season of Lent is upon us and this year, my hope is that as well as looking to what we might “give up,” we would also “add to” our Lenten time by focusing on that deeper oneness with God.

I can see us nodding yes and then I know the hesitation starts. We begin to offer the rationale for why we cannot do it today, and then we say probably tomorrow or maybe next week and for sure by next month. ‘The spirit is indeed willing but the flesh is weak.’ The excuses pile up and in the darkness and cold of this winter season, we shut ourselves off from taking that critical first step into the deepness of God’s fellowship and love.

Gregory Norbert, a monk of the Weston Priory wrote a beautiful hymn called “Hosea” with these words *“Come back to me with all your heart. Don’t let fear keep us apart. Trees do bend, though straight and tall; so must we to others’ call. Long have I waited for your coming home to me and living deeply our new life.”*

Those are the words that we need to hear and act upon. That is the invitation that I hope will get us to move past our fear, anxiety, lethargy, and indifference, to coming into the open arms of a loving gracious and accepting God whose unconditional love is waiting for each of us.

I know of no better way to start all of this than with prayer. What prayer? What should I say? Instead of worrying about “what” to pray simply find a quiet place and move past words like “wait” and “if only” and “If God really knew about...” and open your heart, then words will not be necessary.

May this season be a time of deep learning and refreshment as God with joy welcomes you into “living deeply into our new life.”



Current Work of the AFP

By Val Kenyon, AFP Executive Chair



Our Diocesan Contacts: It is a truth worth repeating that Diocesan Contacts are central in promoting the work of the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer Canada to the parishes throughout our dioceses from coast to coast to coast. From time to time of course, diocesan contacts need to step back for a whole variety of reasons. We would like to express our thanks to Karen Holmes from the diocese of Ontario for all her support over the years. Karen will be leaving the DC position but we know she will continue to support the work of the AFP wherever she finds herself. Thank you Karen. As well, we are pleased to share that Dr. Carol Knox has taken on the role of Diocesan Contact within Algoma. We hope in a future issue to more particularly introduce Carol, in the meantime, thank you Carol for accepting this position.

AFP Executive Calling: Since our summer Executive meeting we have filled five AFP Diocesan contacts positions, leaving just ten of the 30 diocesan positions vacant. As well in an ongoing effort to support our Diocesan Contacts in their particular ministry settings, members of the Executive who are or have been DCs in the past, will be directly contacting the Diocesan Contacts on a regular basis to lend support to their efforts, answer any questions they may have, and journey with them as together we all look to support prayer in each of the dioceses. If you are a DC, don't be surprised if before too long you receive a call from an Executive member, offering their support.

Videos: Before too long we hope to have the first two in a series of promotional videos available for use first in recruiting Diocesan Contacts, and second in orienting new Diocesan Contacts. Watch for details and links to these videos in the days ahead.

AFP Canada Treasurer: As noted in our last newsletter, Janet Stevens the current treasurer of the Executive of the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer will shortly be leaving this position. A job description has been circulated to all the DCs to ask them to share this around in their diocese as we search for someone available to help in this way. Please help us by inquiring where you are, to see whether anyone might be available to help in this way. Training is provided.

Synod 2019: With Synod 2019 just four months away, we continue to work on the details of the upcoming General Synod to be held in Vancouver. While we would not have a physical presence, in addition to other prayers and in particular praying for each delegate by name that will be present, we would like to aim to have every ecclesiastical province commit to taking one day each, between July 11 and July 14 to pray for all that will be happening at General Synod. On July 15, all would be encouraged to hold the election of our new primate in prayer. More details on this to follow.

Please feel free to be in touch with the Executive at any time. We always appreciate any feedback, suggestions, or ideas that you may send our way.

Sharing the Light of Christ through Prayer

By Deborah Loneragan-Freake

Having lived and served in the Diocese of Moosonee for 34 years, first as a Lay Reader, then deacon, priest and archdeacon, the clergy and people of our northern dioceses are never far from my mind and prayers. Although I am now retired and living in Nova Scotia, I try to stay current with the work of the Anglican Church across the northern dioceses which make up the Council of the North. Recently I noted a post on the Council's Facebook page requesting: "Let us lift up our clergy in the north. Thank you for all that you do!"

As I pondered this request I wondered how many people would actually see it and of those, how many would act upon it. One might wonder why the clergy of the north need continuous prayer support more than any other clergy. Northern clergy face challenges and obstacles which are unknown to clergy serving in most other regions of Canada. Isolation, driving long distances in all kinds of weather, stretched financial resources, relatively few clergy, providing ministry in challenging social circumstances.

As I write this article on January 28th, a locally raised, non-stipendiary clergy colleague from my former parish of St. Luke's, Hornepayne posted that it's -42 degrees. During the cold snap which blanketed most of Canada on Epiphany 3, Bishop Tom Corston posted that 4 clergy of Moosonee were on the roads in -50 to serve their parishes, including himself who drove a round trip of 900 km to serve a parish that Sunday.

The north is diverse and each member diocese of the Council of the North faces its own unique challenges while at the same time sharing the demands of providing pastoral, sacramental and missional ministry with very limited resources and across a huge part of the geography of this country. Serving in Canada's north is not a call for everyone but for those who accept it, it's one full of grace and blessings. Clergy serving in the north need the prayerful support of all Anglicans. Epiphany is a time of sharing the light of Christ. Anglican Fellowship of Prayer members and those to whom we reach out can share the light of Christ all year with the clergy of the north by committing to pray for them each day. To get to know their ministries, check out the Council website at www.anglican.ca/cn or their Facebook page and follow links to their individual diocesan sites. May we share Christ's light by daily holding the faithful clergy of the Council of the North in our prayers.

*"Lent is a time of going very deeply into ourselves. What is it that stands between us and God? Between us and our brothers and sisters? Between us and life, the life of the Spirit? Whatever it is, let us relentlessly tear it out, without a moment's hesitation."
~Catherine Doherty*



Council
of the North

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Next Newsletter: Easter 2019

Submission deadline: March 25, 2019

AT THE END OF EPIPHANY

By Paul Dumbrille

The Church's liturgical season of Epiphany covers the time between January 6 and the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday. As I understand it, its general theme is to show us the nature of Jesus and his mission, through scripture and prayer. As I reflected and prayed about this during Epiphany this year, I came to appreciate that this is a season in which we, as followers of Jesus, are called to reflect what Jesus is like in our own lives, and how we can show others the nature of Jesus. We are called to live out our lives demonstrating the Fruits of the Spirit: "love; joy; peace; patience; kindness; generosity; faithfulness; gentleness; and self-control" (*Galatians 5:22-23*). May our prayers encourage and enable us to show others the nature of Jesus in how we live our lives every day, through our actions and in our relationships with others.

*"Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness,
fear, confusion, and anguish.*

*Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to
weep with those in tears.*

*Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless
with the powerless.*

Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human."

~Henri J.M. Nouwen