

# Partners in P R A Y E R

Harvest 2011

NEWSLETTER OF THE ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP OF PRAYER

**Our Mission:** The Anglican Fellowship of Prayer serves the church by encouraging, facilitating, and promoting the understanding and discipline of prayer in the Anglican Communion.

**From our president, Dr. William C. Williams:**

## Why Wasn't My Prayer Answered?

I think this is a question many people must have on their minds when what they ask for is not granted when they want it or when they need it. However, the question of God's answering of prayers does not lie in the realm of, "Did I get what I asked for?". As Leslie Weatherhead, prominent London clergyman of the 1940s, wrote in his book In Quest of a Kingdom, "To say prayer is not answered is one thing; to say we do not get what we want is another thing. The latter is true. But the former is not true." He goes on to use as an illustration St. Paul's thorn in the flesh. Paul asked God thrice (i.e. many times) that it might be removed, because, whatever that thorn was, Paul felt it hindered his work for Christ. Paul's request was not granted but his prayer was answered and, this was the answer. "My grace is sufficient for you and my power is made perfect in weakness." Paul's reaction? Rather than saying he did not get what he asked for, therefore God does not answer prayers, Paul recognized this as God's answer and said, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my weakness that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12:8). What a difference!

Dr. Weatherhead used a second example. When Christ was in the Garden of Gethsemane he offered a prayer which some people would say was not answered. Jesus asked for that cup to be passed from him. It was not. Did God not answer this prayer? He did not grant that request but He did answer the prayer which was something even greater than the answer hoped for. Had God granted that request then the cross would have remained just a symbol of torture for criminals and enemies of the Roman Empire. Jesus sweated blood during His time in the garden, but God let Him know that He would be with Him all the way to the end and through the new beginning. Jesus knew the Father's answer and he accepted it.

Isaiah said of God, "Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." As I see it, God gives three answers to our prayers: 1) Yes; 2) Not yet; 3) No, I have something better (greater) in mind. The answers might not come immediately, but God, in His time, will, indeed, answer. As the Rt. Rev. Donald M. Hultstrand (ret.) has written in his book, The Praying Church, "The accumulated experience of answered prayers becomes the firm foundation upon which a life of increasing prayer is built". Thank God that He listens and He answers our prayers.

**From Carla Lisbeth Rueckert, AFP Representative in the Diocese of Kentucky © 2011 L/L Research:**

Dear Heavenly Father, how we thirst for the water of your wisdom, love, and sense of rightness! How we hunger for your truth and justice! We know that all things are in your care, but Lord, often the ways of humankind seem folly indeed, and to our untutored eyes, it looks little like the creation of the Father. Touch our eyes with faith that moves beyond understanding, and open them to the underlying beauty, rightness and goodness of all that you have made. (continued next page)

In addition, Father, we pray for discernment, that we may act and speak aright. Help us to find ways to enlarge the beauty of life for those about us. Help us to be your hands and your voice in the world around us. Help us to see with eyes of love, and to think with our hearts. May Your Holy Spirit so inspire and enliven our hearts that we may evermore richly find ways to enlarge Your kingdom of heaven upon this earth.

These things we ask through Jesus, Prince of Peace and Lord of our lives. *Amen.*

***From Diane Pyle, AFP Representative in the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania:***

### The Close Pin Story

#### **Act 1 -- Setting the Scene**

There we were, just plain “clothes pins” stacked up at the Dollar General store. Not many people buy clothes pins anymore. They use dryers instead. We had lost hope of any purpose anymore. Between the mops and dustpans we were waiting.

One day, however this lady stopped and kept looking at us. She picked up a package –we were lined up like soldiers. Then all at once she smiled. That was the beginning of our new life.

#### **Act 2 -- What Happened Next**

We were all dumped out on her kitchen table. She started painting us in different colors with her grand children’s paints. We started fussing because, well, some liked to be blue and some yellow. Then she wrote words on us like “Wow Wee” or “God Loves You”. We began to feel different from each other like personalities. We had a message! We bunched together and complimented each other, then we began to wonder -- what does all this mean?

#### **Act 3 -- Final Act**

Next she changed our name – from clothes pins to Close Pins – just like they do in Hollywood. Then she gave us our job descriptions – it would be a new and exciting purpose in life. We get to hold things closed like bags of chips, frozen food, bread bags or candy or just act like a big paper clip. Now how much fun is that! Our lives have been transformed and we now have a new purpose. She said we get to travel all over and be helpful. We will lie in a drawer and be ready to apply our strength and dedication to the task. This is our debut – we will be waiting - your very own “Close Pin”.

#### **The Moral of the Story**

God gives us the gift of inspiration and sometimes a way to move forward on a plan. We have only to look and be aware. Sometimes the idea comes directly into our thinking and other times through someone else, reading a book, seeing the world around us or someone’s need. The “Close Pin Story” shows how we can be inspired and the clothes pins are transformed into a realm they had never dreamed of before – unique and useful again – a New Life.

Jesus was the inspiration of God, His father and gift to us through his birth. Jesus’ plan was to show how His Father loves us and transforms our lives. Then Jesus gave himself to us through His death and resurrection. We receive His transforming love, inspiration and purpose. (Story written as a Christmas 2010 gift for my six grandchildren, of course with “Close Pins” hidden to find—*Diane Pyle*)

## **AFP NEWS AND NOTES**

***The Rt. Rev. Donald M. Hultstrand’s*** visit to St. Paul’s Cathedral, Springfield:

+Don and Ann Hultstrand were invited by Dean Bob Brodie to take part in the celebration of the 175th anniversary of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Springfield, Illinois. +Don is a retired bishop of the Diocese of Springfield. This celebration took place on the weekend of September 18-19th, 2011.

Don spent two sessions autographing copies of [The Praying Church](#) and [Holy Living Today](#) in the lobby of the parish hall. He preached at the Sunday evening service wearing the cope and mitre of Bishop

Loring, whose remains rest under the altar of the cathedral. These vestments, along with many others, were given to Don by the widow of Bishop Loring about 20 years after his death. -- The celebration ended with a banquet at which a slide presentation was given showing the succession of historical leaders of the church beginning with Bishop Philander Chase, the founder of both the Diocese of Ohio and the Diocese of Illinois.

When Don became bishop he introduced the tradition of having an annual prayer conference at the Cathedral for the whole diocese. +Don had been executive director of the AFP when he was called to the diocese. Through the years following his episcopate this tradition has been continued.

Historical note about St. Paul's Cathedral: few people know that Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd were married at St. Paul's. The record is there to be seen.

**Patricia Hayes, AFP Representative in the Diocese of Oregon** for a number of years and on the AFP US Council, tells of a recent surge of interest in prayer in her parish and diocese:

...I recently asked one of our (parish) Prayer Chain members to take on the task of getting stories from members on their experiences in God's answers to their prayers. This has only just happened so can't report on any yet, but I'll ask if we could share them... ...(Our new priest) ... has a heart for prayer (and) makes one realize we are not alone. The emphasis has been on social action for some years and we are a very active church with many social action ministries, (but) prayer seems to have taken a "back seat" over the years... I feel so hopeful now for a change, and I even brought up the idea of having a prayer retreat for the parish, which we haven't done for at least 10 years... Social action and prayer complement one another.

Over the years as Prayer Chain coordinator at our parish and AFP Representative, I realized we often get some very serious and urgent prayer requests. I asked a number of people in the diocese who I knew to be 'prayer warriors', some lay and some clergy, if they would be willing to pray for these urgent prayer needs as they occur every now and then. The response has been very positive, and has even resulted in their asking for prayers in response. This is one way of "reaching out" to other pray-ers in the other parishes.

Many years ago, I held a prayer fellowship in my home every Monday morning; those who came prayed for each others' needs and families. This was a great encouragement to our faith. We used the A.C.T.S. formula for our prayer, Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication. ... Out of this fellowship grew the Prayer Chain, and our members were often invited to speak about Prayer at ECW events around the diocese. Now after a hiatus of some years, we are starting up a prayer group again, this time set for Saturday mornings in our parish library. Prayer power is the gift of God that undergirds the work of the church, and encourages and empowers each member who joins the fellowship.

## **AFP Resources**

1) Please visit our website at <[www.afp.org](http://www.afp.org)> and recommend it to others. 2) If you are on Facebook, you can "friend" our Anglican Fellowship of Prayer "Group Page." 3) Bishop Don Hultstrand's [The Praying Church](#) is a good resource for your church prayer or study group. It is available from our website. 4) In the works: a new printing of AFP's [Personal Prayer Journal](#), done by St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Charleston, South Carolina.

NOTE: we would appreciate any donation you might be able to make to support our ministry, and the publication and mailing of the newsletters. *Please send to AFP, 1106 Mansfield Avenue, Indiana, PA 15701.*

**Anglican Fellowship of Prayer  
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Change Service Requested

**Lift us, O God, to your presence  
where we can be still and know that you  
are God, that you are closer to us than the breath  
we breathe, and that you are always doing for us and  
for those we love far better things than we ever desire  
or pray for. --*Trinity Church, St. Paul's Chapel***