

Partners in P R A Y E R

ADVENT 2015

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.

Letter from our president, the Rev. Dr. John R. Throop

Dear Friends,

Do you pray with a sense of expectation? Take a moment to reflect on that question. It is often misunderstood. At first reading, one might think in terms of *personal expectations*. “O God, I pray that I will be able to buy this car.” Or, “God, I pray that you will move me to be closer to my children.”

Consider a time when I was giving some guidance to a parishioner in a troubled relationship. When I asked him whether he was in prayer about the matter, he said, “Well, I’m praying that God will make her see things my way. (I am not making this up.) On this last prayer of expectation, I tried to help the man to understand that he had the prayer reversed. He ought not to pray that his wife would see things his way, but that God would help him understand his wife’s perspective—and most importantly, would help them both understand what God expected of them in their lives.

In the Advent season, we have the opportunity to pray with expectation. The people of Israel expected that God indeed would send a Messiah to come into the world. Their expectations were shaped, however, in worldly terms. God would send a Messiah to smash the powers of this world and restore the kingdom Israel and the throne of David. They continued to watch and to wait in prayer. God indeed came into the world, but in God’s will and God’s way, in a cave in Bethlehem, a child born of a virgin. God delivered on the Promise—but not in human terms.

The disciples expected that Jesus somehow would be alive again after his death. But they never expected the Risen Christ who opened the gates to eternal life. Before his ascension, Jesus stated his expectations of the disciples—that the Spirit would come upon them, and that they would go forth into all the world proclaiming the Gospel. They never expected what would happen on the Day of Pentecost. The story continues into the Church and into our lives as Christians in this time.

So the Advent question for the person of prayer is, “How do I pray with expectation?” First, we must adapt Jesus’ prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane to be our own: “Father, not my will, but thy will be done.” We are ready and willing to be open vessels. We seek to discern God’s will, call and purpose for our lives and for the life of the church in which we pray and serve. Second, when praying about a situation or problem in our own lives or in the life of another, we ask, “What would Jesus do? How would Jesus be present?” Then, we seek to trust that God will do a great thing in whatever the circumstance. In my prayer life, when I’ve been praying for my needs and those of others, I find myself saying, “O God, may I have a role to play—but most of all, help me to stay out of Your way.”

When we train ourselves to pray with expectation, we believe that God will do great things, in God's time, and in God's way. We know God will be with us. And in that faith, we strive to confirm our wills and desires to God's purposes and plans. And then we can sing with joy, "Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free; from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee."

Faithfully yours,
(The Rev.) John R. Throop, D.Min.
President, AFP Executive Council (U.S.)

From the Diocese of Western Newfoundland

The Anglican Fellowship of Prayer, so called since 1958, is an international organization; we have chapters in the Caribbean and Canada, as well as in the United States. Last month Dr. Will Williamson, past AFP President, sent us a copy of his good friend Bishop Stuart Payne's recently published memoir: *Cut from the Cloth of Fogo: a Life of Teaching, Travel, and Ministry*, Flanker Press Ltd., St. John's, Canada, © 2015. Bishop Payne was the AFP Diocesan Representative for the Diocese of Western Newfoundland at one time.

The memoir is well named. It reads like an adventure story, a poignant account of a life dedicated to following Jesus Christ starting as a youth on an island where life was not easy, and a how-to book for all who would minister to others in the Christian walk they are called to follow. Bishop Payne teaches us by recounting his education and his experiences in pastoral ministry (as son, student, teacher, deacon, husband and father, priest, bishop, metropolitan, and archbishop) and what he learned from them. He also had a deep involvement in issues of the wider communities in which he served, such as the economic difficulties faced by those who had made their living by fishing for cod when that industry came to an end.

Fogo is the name of the town on Fogo Island where he grew up. Looking at a map of Newfoundland, it's about half way down the east coast. St. John's, where he graduated from Memorial University College and Queens College, and was ordained as a deacon and then priest, is farther south, almost on the tip of that coast. Happy Valley-Goose Bay, where he ministered for more than eight years, both as a student minister and as a priest, is in Labrador—to the north of Newfoundland. He and his wife, Selma, married and started their family in Happy Valley. It was followed by a ministry in Bay Roberts, near St. John's—and then in St. Anthony's, on the northern tip of Newfoundland. In 1978, during his ministry at St. Anthony's, he was elected bishop of Western Newfoundland and moved with his family to Corner Brook, on the west coast of Newfoundland. He was elected metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada and in that capacity served as archbishop of Western Newfoundland from 1990 to 1997. He still lives in Corner Brook.

Bishop Payne attended three Lambeth conferences. He writes that they "inspired and affirmed me in the promises I had made at my ordination as bishop...among them to encourage and support all baptized people in their gifts and ministries...and be merciful to all, showing compassion to the poor and strangers, and defending those who have no help...." (p. 173). In 1978 a central concern was the deadly challenge facing Uganda because of the dictatorship of Idi Amin, resulting in the martyrdom of Ugandan Archbishop Janani Luwum.

In 1988, the deaths at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 were memorialized at a service presided over by the Primate of Nippon Sei Kokai, the Anglican Church of Japan, which included the planting of a cherry tree at the University of Kent.

In 1998, Canadian theologian and humanitarian Jean Vanier, founder of l'Arche Community (a world-wide ministry to people with developmental disabilities), led a retreat which included the washing of feet. "The feet washing under Jean Vanier's leadership...reminded us that the church is not about power.... It is not that one knows more than another or that one culture is better than the other, but we are one in faith, servants of one another...." Of the tone of the conferences he says "These conferences demonstrated that people can have different opinions and beliefs, even to disagree, but remain in communion, at union, and as good friends" (p. 173).

Bishop Payne writes that in 1991 he "felt strongly the need to give more attention to prayer." He attended the AFP conference that year in San Antonio, Texas, where the Rev. John Claypool was an inspiring guest speaker, and there were workshops on prayer. As he entered the airport on his way home from the conference a couple asked him to pray for them. They were expecting the birth of their first child. He prayed aloud for them. As he waited at the gate, a man came up to him and said "I've been praying for you for years."

Pastoral ministry, observes Bishop Payne several times in his memoir, is at the heart of everything he has done as a teacher, deacon, priest, and bishop: "Pastoral care is the key to the church's life and future, and it is carried out by lay people as well as ordained folk, all representing Christ and His Church" (p. 150). Note: Bishop Payne's memoir can be ordered from the publisher, Flanker Press Ltd, St. John's, Canada.

From the Diocese of Olympia

All of us feel keenly the need to pray as we encounter present challenges to world peace, and examples of injustice and violence. Refugees, the Middle East, the events in Paris and San Bernardino—we must pray. Thanks to Bee Jay Mar, from the Church of the Redeemer in the Diocese of Olympia, Washington, who created the prayer below in response to the Paris Attacks and shared it with us. If you would like to use the prayer in its original format—a bead prayer—please see our website at www.afp.org. See AFP Canada's website for an article about the Anglican Rosary: http://www.anglicanprayer.org/resources/P-41-Anglican%20Rosary_Web.pdf

A Prayer for International Peace

In the name of God, the God of all people and all religions, we pray.

Invitatory: You, O God, made all peoples of the earth. You are in us all and in all of creation. Thank you for your presence.

We pray for a change of heart, beginning here and now. Beginning with me.

Lead us from ignorance to understanding.

from oppression, to equality.

from dominating others to liberty for all.

from violence in thought, word and deed to tranquility.

from hatred and bitterness to grace.

from injustice to opportunities for all.

from broken hearts to reconciliation. (continued on next page)

We pray for the victims of war.

for all those caught in the crosshairs of gunfire and bombs.
for those who have been maimed.
for those held in captivity.
for those who were killed
for families who mourn.
for refugees, internally displaced and for those seeking asylum far from home.
for those who see no future.

We pray for those who cause such suffering.

for those who see no solutions, no future.
for those who are intolerant of opposing views.
for those who too quickly follow false leaders.
for those who believe might makes right.
for those whose conscience is firm, but at odds with others.
for the families who shake their heads, asking "Why?"
for those whose hatred is stronger than common sense.

We pray for all persons and organizations of influence.

for leaders of national governments.
for the UN Secretary General and Security Council; for NATO, the EU,
and others.
for the UN High Commission for Refugees and all NGO's working on the front lines.
for candidates for public office, at all levels and of all countries.
for religious leaders.
for journalists – print, broadcast, electronic, social media.
for all talking heads.

We pray for a better, more peaceful world. Beginning here, with me.
Help us to behold the image and likeness of God in all we meet.

Teach us to mind our own thoughts and choose our words with peace as our goal.

Amen.

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From the Diocese of Connecticut, and all dioceses where there are AFP members

Laird Mortimer, long an active member of the AFP in Connecticut and nationally, suggested last year that it would be wonderful to have a collection of prayers written by AFP members. We are SO grateful when people have spontaneously suggested original prayers, such as Bee Jay Mar's above, which meet needs that any have felt. Others have sent prayers, too. Please keep them coming. Ways we can share them: in the AFP Newsletter, in our email mailings, on our website at www.afp.org, and on our AFP Facebook Group Page. Email me below with your suggestions.

News from the AFP Board: We are happy to announce that The Rev. Dr. John Throop, AFP US Council President, has accepted a call to be rector of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin (Diocese of Fond du Lac).

AFP Resources

The Kingdom of Heaven is Like Unto: Devotions for Those Who Work in Corrections, by Jane Hall (\$13.99). Note: Jane and her granddaughter are working on a devotional book for middle grade special education students. Please send an email to the address above for ordering information for either book.

Available from the AFP US Office: *The Praying Church*, by Bishop Hultstrand (\$14.95). Also available: *The Parish as a Center of Prayer* (\$5), *The Personal Prayer Notebook* (\$20), and *The Powerhouse of Prayer* (\$2), written under the auspices of the AFP with the help of Harry Griffith, and *The Magnificent Promise* (\$10), by Helen Shoemaker. We also have cassette tapes from AFP International Prayer Conferences. Please call 724-463-6436 to order, or mail your request via email or Post Office. Postage will vary. See last line on pages 4 and 5 for addresses.

Bishop Payne's memoir, reviewed above, can be ordered from the publisher, Flanker Press Ltd., St. John's, Canada. Telephone: 709-739-4477. Toll Free: 866-739-4420.

Our Presiding Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Michael B. Curry, on prayer:

We thank God for Bishop Curry's election, installation November 1 at Washington National Cathedral, his return to health after a recent and brief bout in the hospital, for his leadership, and for his witness to the meaning of prayer. We close this issue with comments on prayer he made in his book *Songs My Grandma Sang*, published this June.

"The Providence of God means that with God there is always, even in the bleakest of circumstances, another possibility. A creative, a hopeful, a life giving possibility.

That is why prayer matters—not because it is like rubbing a rabbit's foot or making a wish to get what we want, but because prayer is about daring to consider the creative possibilities of God, and not just the limits of our options.

That is why faith is not an escape from life but a way of deeper engagement to discover creative possibilities. That is why miracles are not the magical manipulation of the cosmos but the unveiling of creative possibilities not noticed or previously envisioned.

That is why hope endures. It never gives up. For with God there is always another possibility. And that is why, in the end, love wins."

The Rt. Rev. Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop, in Songs My Grandma Sang, © 2015. Church Publishing Inc., New York, NY 10016. Page 77.

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Change Service Requested

May the Lord Jesus, who loves with a wounded heart, be your love forever more. May the Lord Jesus, who walks on wounded feet, walk with you to the end of the road. Look for the face of Jesus in everyone you meet and may everyone you meet see the face of Jesus in you.

Bishop Stewart Payne