

Partners in P R A Y E R

SUMMER 2013

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 board

Dear Friends,

Our meeting at beautiful Roslyn Retreat Center in Richmond, Virginia April 2-3 was both happy and sad. We were very glad to be together again, but sad that this would be the last meeting chaired by our outgoing president, Will Williams. We worked on answering the question “Where do we go from here?”

We reflected upon the history of the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer, our tradition of prayer life, both individual and corporate—and the changes we are facing in how we carry out our mission. We no longer gather for national conferences, renewing friendships, making new ones, sharing experiences face to face, and learning about prayer from a wide variety of teachers—theologians, ordained clergy, and talented lay persons, with the opportunity for questions and group discussions. And praying together. But we’ve had a couple of local ones.

One of our primary concerns is how we can best operate in the multimedia world, which seems to be the successor to the “multimeeting world.” Do we need to redefine who we are? Do we restate our mission, or do we adapt it to new methods? Can new ways of communicating give us a broader reach, both globally and at home? If so, how do we go about doing it? And can the reach be deep, as well as broad? Do new technologies like our Facebook page, or the “prayer request” section on our website, increase one’s sense that it is easy to reach out when there is a need of prayer for healing, guidance, and so on? Is the “feedback” gotten from such a reaching out as warm and personal as meeting face to face? If not, how can we make it more nearly so? Note: a word of gratitude to those who respond to prayer requests on our Facebook page with beautiful prayers which go to the heart of the concerns of the one who has asked for prayer.

Our board has downsized in membership; soon after our meeting we were very sorry to hear from our beloved Patricia Hayes (Diocese of Oregon) that she needed to resign from the board for health reasons, and we are praying for her.

Currently we have no bishop serving on the board, and only one member of the ordained clergy. Do you know of someone who might volunteer? We will be welcoming a new Diocesan Representative in this newsletter, but we need more! How can AFP attract new leadership and new members to help us encourage and teach about group and individual prayer? What additional resources might we need?

We invite our readership to respond to our concerns. Please note that there is no questionnaire to return. We ask that you pray about these issues and respond via email, telephone, or “snail mail” to the contact information given on page 5 of this newsletter.

Prayerfully yours,

The AFP board: Paula Claire Hall+, priest, Diocese of Western Louisiana; Celinda Scott, Diocese of Pittsburgh; Mary Leberknight, Diocese of Idaho; and Paige Grimbball, Diocese of Upper South Carolina



AFP Board Meeting in Richmond, VA, June 3. From left to right: Pat Hayes, Barry Scott (treasurer), Celinda Scott, Mary Leberknight, Nancy Williams, Dr. Will Williams, and the Rev. Paula Claire Hall. Absent: Paige Grimball

Ideas and encouragement from the Bishop of Pittsburgh

Many thanks to the Rt. Rev. Dorsey McConnell, newly consecrated bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, who joined us via conference call. He has been on missions in Africa, and was going again soon. We wanted to know ways to reach out globally in prayer. He said that contacting the Mothers' Unions in Africa would be a good starting point; they have strong faith, and are strong "prayer warriors." He also mentioned organized prayer hubs, sometimes at hotels with satellite links, as in the Diocese of Soroti, Uganda. A goal would be our participation in "a global network of prayer to encourage and spread the Gospel." He mentioned the appointment by Archbishop Welby of Canon David Porter, who has had mission experience, as director of reconciliation. Bishop McConnell sees this as a positive move. On the "multimedia age": in a phone call to one of the board members in March, Bishop McConnell recommended a book called *Tweet if You Heart Jesus: Practicing Church in the Digital Reformation*, by Elizabeth Drescher. On reaching younger adult Christians: he mentioned the website "Mockingbird." The address is www.mbird.com

Welcome to the new AFP Diocesan Representative for the Diocese of Central New York

His name is the Rev. Dr. John Throop. The newly called rector of Emmanuel Episcopal Church (Adams, NY) and Zion Episcopal Church (Pierrepont Manor, NY), he has lifted up prayer ministries throughout the church every Friday in his daily prayers for many years. He first knew of the AFP through the Rt. Rev. Donald Hultstrand. He comes to New York from the Diocese of Southern Virginia. Please pray for him as he works with Bishop "Skip" Adams to revitalize the AFP in the Diocese of Central New York.

From the Diocese of Kentucky

Please pray for Carla Rueckert, DR of the Diocese of Kentucky, who has been undergoing spinal surgeries. for the past few years. A talented musician and writer, she had been planning "A Day of Contemplation and Prayer" for the diocese when she found she needed the first surgery. She will have a skin graft in very near future, and says "I know that my Lord has much for me to do, and look forward to healing so I so that I may serve Him more fully."

From the Diocese of Georgia

We had a very enjoyable discussion with Jane Hall when she called to order copies of *The Praying Church*. When Jane found that I'd taught in the poorest school district in my state for 18 years, she told me about a book that she had written for teachers of difficult children, for juvenile workers, and for corrections officers. The name of it is *The Kingdom of Heaven is Like Unto: Devotions for Those Who Work in Corrections*. She based it on 25 years work in correctional systems in Georgia, and wants very much to share her insights with as many others as possible. I ordered a copy, and found the devotions honest, apt, and deeply moving. I then got copies I could share with friends in that field. Richard Croce, who does corrections work in Indiana, PA was impressed by "the writer's interaction with both inmates and staff;" he said "what she gets out of the Gospel inspires me in light of what I do for a living." For insights into why Jane wrote the book, an opportunity to learn about, pray about, and discuss the issues she raises, which are important to all of us-- and for ordering information, please see her blog: janehalldevotions.com.

From the Diocese of South Carolina

When we asked for prayers for our dear Patricia Hayes, DR from the Diocese of Oregon, who is currently undergoing chemical and radiation treatment for a tumor in her lung, Ida Swindell (Church of the Good Shepherd, Diocese of SC) responded with this observation from her own experience:

"When I was going through my chemo I remembered the picture of the empty tomb that my daughter had taken in the Holy land several years before. There was the stone slab and there were bars in the front much like I could imagine in front of a jail cell. I sensed that Jesus would not lift me from the stone slab nor would he take me through the bars in front of the slab. I could sense that I must walk through myself. He had done the healing on the cross and I must believe him and accept the finished work of the cross.

Prior to this time I had given up on the whole process of healing. Immediately when I decided to accept the healing Jesus paid for, my thoughts and spirit changed and the healing was received.

I had been reading Isaiah 53:5 all my life for healing at various times. I sensed in my spirit that the Holy Spirit said to me that I must believe the Word specifically for myself and to now believe that Jesus would do it for me again. Believing the Word was the key. It was the difficult part; but the Lord gave me a gift of faith and I was healed completely. The oncologist is still amazed about my healing one year and two months later.

My daughter's picture saved my life literally. The picture was not even in my hospital room at the time. It was memory that I received the impulse to accept my healing. Jesus is creative in the manner He deals with all of us. The healing has been paid in full on the cross. He even helps us receive that healing.

I pray that you can receive the total recovery Jesus has paid for. You are victorious and you are special to the Kingdom of God. Jesus showed me Proverbs 14: 30: "A heart at peace gives life to the body. . . ." (NIV translation). I used this one night on the ER and symptoms left."

From the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania

The Rev. Carol Carlson, vicar of the Episcopal Church of the Holy Cross in North East, PA recently preached a sermon on the story of Jesus, Mary, and Martha, which included an imaginary letter that Martha might have written to Jesus, taking issue with our Lord's saying that her sister had "chosen the better part." That letter was followed up by a letter Jesus might have written to Martha:

"I do care, for you *and* for your work, and for how distracted, sad, and worried it makes you. But don't you see that I can't do my own work in the world in little pieces, one after another, fixing this problem and that problem and hoping that they'll stay fixed for longer than it takes all the *next* little problems to come up? What I'm about in the world is not the hope of things not turning out so bad – what I'm about is the hope of *glory* – *everything*, *all* things being brought to a perfection you can hardly imagine.

But *unless* you imagine it, all the work you put into my purposes in the world might just fall flat. Unless you can somehow see *beyond* your chores, the chores are just going to get you down so far that you'll have to stop doing them, or you'll start doing all the wrong ones, or you'll do whatever you do in such a way that it eats up the community I've given you to *help* with the chores. Where there's plenty to eat but a famine of God's word, people won't be getting fed, no matter how fat they get on calories. Where the routines of worship, or business, or even hospitality get to be ends in themselves, and you forget whose work you're really doing, you might be better off doing nothing at all.

So before you get started on your next project, your next batch of chores, why don't you sit down at my feet for a while and welcome me into your brain, your heart, your imagination, as well as your house and your church? Why don't you read again all the things my friend Paul said about me in that letter you read this morning, and notice how many times the word 'all' comes up in it? Do you really think that the God who is about reconciling all things to himself is likely to *forget* some of the details and will need you to remind him of them? Do you really think that the God who has welcomed the likes of you into his Kingdom his family, his household, is going to have trouble drawing in everyone else as well" Many things for you to do in that Kingdom, sure; but all of them are in my hand, not yours, and there is nothing in any of them to make anxious, unless you're just not paying attention. And all of it will be accomplished and gathered up into glory in my will and in my good time.

You just have to see that, remember it, know it and feel it and get used to it, and let it become so much a part of you that the world's multiplicity can't shake it at all – and then you can take on the chores, and they'll be a blessing instead of a curse to you and your brothers and sisters. Take time to pray, to study my words, to listen to them again and again and ponder them. Take time to contemplate the glory you can already see, the little bits of perfection that are all around you and will remind you of my intentions for this earth and its destiny. Try to remember that stillness and gratitude aren't the *opposite* of your chores; they're the *prerequisites* for the chores, and they're what will keep you going at the chores when you think you can't keep going any longer.

I know how frustrated you get when you work and work and nothing seems to get better and nobody seems to appreciate you – I've been there and done that too, along with all the rest of the human journey. I know I left you with a tall order, a lot to do and sometimes only a shoestring to do it on. But don't forget that I'm still beside you and behind you and ahead of you, and as long as you're listening, like Mary, you won't go too far from my side, or from my hopes for the world. Oh, and by the way, don't forget that I love you, and that you'll never go anywhere that I haven't been and won't be there to meet you. Don't worry, Martha. As my friend Dame Julian of Norwich said (she was quoting me at the time): All shall be well and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well. Don't forget."

AFP Communications and Resources

1. Please visit our **website** (www.afp.org) and recommend it to others. One of the links on the site is called "Prayer Requests." When there are prayer requests, Bob Hilton sends them to John Rohde, who sends them to prayer warriors. We are grateful to Bob and John, AFP members who have carried out this ministry of intercession for many years. Additional prayer warriors are always needed, and if you feel called to this ministry, there is an opportunity on the site to volunteer.

The AFP website has links to Daily Devotions and the Lectionary. If, like me, you find it helpful to use a computer as a resource in your daily prayers and Bible study, these links are useful.

Also included are links to other organizations which include prayer as a focus, such as Daughters of the King and the Brotherhood of St. Andrew.

Past editions of Partners in Prayer, the AFP newsletter, may be accessed from the website.

We love to hear from AFP Canada. You can access their website from ours.

Any suggestions you have for **additions or improvements to the website** are most welcome. For example: there is a link to a calendar of prayer meetings which are regularly held in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. We would love to add such a calendar for your diocese if you send us one.

2. If you are on Facebook, "friend" our **Anglican Fellowship of Prayer Group Page**. The web address is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/69238338668> There are opportunities for prayer requests, prayers, and news on the site. Thanks to Paige Grimball for her inspiration and leadership in bringing us a little more up to date on media resources. Please call or write the AFP (see contact information below) if you have questions about it.

3. **Let us know your email address if you would be willing to receive prayer requests and news once or twice a month in your inbox.**

4. Bishop Hultstrand's *The Praying Church* (2008 edition) is available from our website.

5. We are grateful to St. Michael's Church, Charleston, SC for a new edition of *The Personal Prayer Notebook*. This popular prayer resource, first published by the AFP in 1986 when Harry Griffith was executive director, is still in demand—but we had run out of copies. St. Michael's has used it in various ministries for many years, and was willing to undertake a new printing. The cover is new and there are a few minor revisions. To order, contact Gretchen Hauser at office@stmichaelschurch.net or 843-724-7588. Cost is \$20 plus shipping.

6. **To contact AFP:** Email address is celinda@fastmail.fm, the telephone number is 724-463-6436, and the postal address is 1106 Mansfield Avenue, Indiana, PA 15701.

Note: We do not ask for dues, but would appreciate any donation you might be able to make to support our ministry, the publication and mailing of the newsletters, and the maintenance of our website. Please send to AFP, 1106 Mansfield Avenue, Indiana, PA 15701.

**Anglican Fellowship of Prayer
1106 Mansfield Ave.
Indiana, PA 15701**

Change Service Requested

**“Whatever is true, whatever is noble,
whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is
lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent
or praiseworthy—think about such things.”
*Philippians 4:8***

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