



Handle with prayer

News – ANiC legal matters

Day of Praise

Bishop Donald Harvey and Executive Archdeacon Charlie Masters have proclaimed an ANiC Day of Praise for May 22. Earlier this year, following the Biblical model, we held a Day of Prayer and Fasting. Now, again following the example of 2Chronicles 20, we will join together in a day of praising and worshiping Almighty God. Please read [Charlie's letter](#) and join us!

Legal update

- In the **Diocese of Niagara case**, on April 28, a judge in the Hamilton court turned down the ANiC parishes' request to move those hearings from Hamilton (where the action was filed by the diocese and where the diocesan office is) to Halton (where two of the three properties are located and which is closer to and more convenient for the congregations).
- We praise God that in the **Diocese of Huron case** involving St Aidan's, three interim motions were settled in a judicial case conference on May 11. This means three court hearings being pressed by the diocese will no longer be necessary. The diocese and the congregation will be sharing the church building until further order or a final a resolution of the matter and the two actions (one in Windsor and one in London) will be consolidated as is appropriate.
- In the **Diocese of New Westminster case**, the parties appeared before the trial judge, Mr Justice Kelliher, on Monday, May 11, to give him an introduction to the case. Surprisingly, in a move highly unusual in Canadian court proceedings, the Diocese of New Westminster posted both counsels' written submissions on their website. You can see the ANiC parishes' (Plaintiffs) [introduction](#) and the Diocese of New Westminster's (Defendant's) [introduction](#) posted on the diocese's website.

Diocese of New Westminster and ANiC parishes enter mediation

Earlier this year, the ANiC parishes served a "Notice to Mediate" on the Diocese of New Westminster but did not set a date for mediation until after the first batch of affidavits had been delivered by both sides. The parties began a two-day mediation session today and it is scheduled to continue tomorrow, Friday (May 15). The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of BC is acting as the mediator. Please keep the parties and this mediation process in your prayers tonight and tomorrow.

New Westminster Trial begins in 11 days

The trial in New Westminster begins in only 11 days, on May 25. Our legal team is working virtually 24/7 (at least it feels that way!) to prepare for the trial (which in itself is a massive undertaking), while at the same time, preparing for and attending the two-day mediation which started today, receiving and responding to the diocese's affidavits which have come in over the past week, and preparing for cross-examination of 5 of our witnesses before the trial. We do not yet know when our witnesses will be cross-examined, but we will send regular updates over the next 11 days to keep you informed and to covet your prayers.

Visitors welcome to observe Vancouver court proceedings

People have been asking if they can attend the court hearing. You are most welcome to come.

Location: 800 Smythe Street, Vancouver

Date: Monday – Friday, May 25 - June 12

Daily Hours of Court: 10:00 am – 12:30 pm and 2:00 pm – 4:00 each day

Diocese of New Westminster prepares to close and consolidate churches

[An editorial](#) in the New Westminster diocesan paper discusses the need to close parishes in the diocese due to a 30 per cent drop in average Sunday attendance since 1994. The editorial covers the Diocesan Council's December meeting and quotes one of the co-chairs of the diocesan strategic plan working group suggesting the diocese is "*an unsustainable system*". According to the diocesan strategic plan working group, "of the diocese's (77) parishes, 17 have an average Sunday attendance below 50, and another 24 have 100 or fewer coming to Sunday services. Only six have average Sunday attendance above 200."

At the same time, the diocese is in court, seeking to take over church buildings that have healthy ANiC congregations with average Sunday attendance of 160+, 200+, 225+ and 750+, knowing full well those congregations will vacate the buildings if the diocese gains control.

Legal defense Fund

Given the intensity and volume of work, and the number of lawyers required to prepare for this expedited trial, we need to remember that all this is a very expensive process. If you support the stand we have taken to defend the clergy, wardens and trustees, and to preserve these valuable church properties for ongoing Anglican worship and ministry with healthy and vibrant congregations, please prayerfully consider how you could contribute financially to our Legal Fund.

This trial is the first to examine the major trust issues and to determine who will ultimately retain the parish property. The decision in this litigation will have a potential impact on every Anglican congregation in Canada, particularly those who wish to uphold Communion teaching and who desire to remain "in full Communion with the Church of England *throughout the world*".

The battle is the Lord's; prayer warriors needed!

Would you join with ANiC members and friends across the country in praying during the anticipated three weeks of the Vancouver trial – both personally and in small groups? We know and are counting on the fact that many will be praying and interceding for us over the three weeks of the court case. We will try to provide daily updates as the case progresses so you will know how to pray more specifically. Some immediate requests are listed at the end of this newsletter.

It would be wonderful if ANiC parishes organized special prayer times during this trial.

If you are within driving distance of ANiC's National Office in Burlington (Crossroads Centre, third floor, 1295 North Service Road) you are invited to join others in prayer for this trial as it unfolds. Please do come and pray as you are able. A prayer room will be open during these times:

May 25-29, Monday – Friday 12noon – 5pm

June 1-5, Monday – Friday 12noon – 5pm

June 8-12, Monday – Friday 12noon – 5pm

Note from ANiC Chancellor Cheryl Chang

I want to thank you all for your partnership in the Gospel and in our desire to stand firm together, united in the faith. Please pray that all we do will bring glory to God and that we will be godly witnesses throughout this entire trial process.

Yours in Christ,

Cheryl Chang, Chancellor

News – ANiC and AEN

Christ's Church (Nanose Bay, BC) is holding a mission with Steve James

From Wednesday, May 25 through Sunday, May 31 Christ's Church will be hosting mission with Steve James – a noted British singer, songwriter, worship leader, evangelist and former priest at St John's (Shaughnessy). Events include a Devonshire Tea, coffee parties, a youth event, men's breakfast, barbeque on the beach and Pentecost Sunday worship. The highlight of the week will be a dinner and concert on Friday evening, May 29. See [poster](#) for more information.

Correction – Women’s conference

For the May 30 women’s conference at Crieff Hills Conference Centre which is sponsored by St George’s (Lowville), the correct email contact is: office@stgchurch.ca. All are welcome!

Next meeting of Toronto Centre ANiC project

The group seeking to launch an ANiC church plant in Toronto Centre will meet next on June 10 at 7:30pm. For information, contact Claus Lenk by [email](#) or by calling (416) 445-0880 ext 102.” A [flyer for the event](#) is posted on the ANiC website.

News – Canada

Anglican Church of Canada (ACoC) divided over sexuality

At the recent Council of General Synod (CoGS) meeting, it was decided that CoGS would not ask General Synod 2010 to change the marriage canon. In response to General Synod 2007’s request for further study on the Christian perspective of human sexuality, ACoC’s Faith, Worship and Ministry (FWM) Committee has [gathered resources](#) and trained facilitators to hold focus groups in the dioceses.

The [ACoC website](#) also tells us that “The Rev Canon Isaac Kawuki-Mukasa, FWM’s coordinator for dialogue, has set up several conversations about homosexuality between Canadian dioceses and African dioceses.” The [Anglican Journal explains](#) that,

“The project involves Canadian dioceses that have taken steps towards the blessings of same-sex unions writing letters that explain how they arrived at the conclusions they did and then the dioceses in Africa receiving those letters, studying them and responding about their own views of the situation. Mr. Kawuki-Mukasa says the hope is that direct conversations will help to counteract the “demonization of the other” that tends to happen on both sides. So far, these international conversations include Toronto and Mauritius; Niagara and Central Tanganyika, Dar es Salaam; Ottawa and Rift Valley, and there is interest from more dioceses.”

CoGS also received the “Galilee Report” – a report by the Primate’s Theological Commission examining questions posed by General Synod 2007 related to the blessing of same-sex unions – and concluded that more work needs to be done to distinguish between various types of unions – for example, blessings vs nuptial blessings. The report also indicates that members of the commission were divided on the matter. The [Anglican Journal reports](#), “Members of the commission “come from a diversity of positions on the questions we are facing,” said Bishop Nicholls, and they felt that the commission’s struggle reflected the broader struggle in the church.” Papers by members of the commission reflecting these differences of perspective will be posted to the ACoC website by the end of June.

Another report, the Rothesay Report, which attempted to prepare “a theological rationale to allow for the marriage of all legally qualified persons” ran into similar problems, causing CoGS to decide not to pursue a change in the marriage canon. The [Journal reports](#).

“Committee members come from diverse cultures (including First Nations), and different ministry and academic backgrounds, and some found themselves preparing an argument for a change they would profoundly disagree with personally, [Janet Marshall] said. They were uncomfortable creating a rationale for only one side of the argument and some expressed “grave concerns ... that the resulting rationale would be experienced by some within the church as deliberately provocative, and as such block its helpfulness as a resource,” she added.”

Soul food

Correction – ordering DVDs and CDs

DVDs and CDs of the *Sex and the City* conference in London (England) can be ordered by [emailing](#) Canon Dr Chris Sugden. The cost is £5 per disc.

Please pray...

For the New Westminster legal team that is currently stretched to capacity, we urgently covet prayer and fasting for them. May God grant them adequate time, rest, and discernment.

In addition, please pray...

- For the New Westminster **mediation session on May 14 -15**. Please pray that a settlement could be achieved that would be a model for all dioceses and ANiC parishes to follow, and that further court proceedings would be unnecessary anywhere in Canada.
- For the **congregations** involved in court proceedings and disputes. Pray for wisdom, courage and peace for the congregations, and particularly for the wardens and trustees who are on the front lines and bear the burden of responsibility. Pray for a continued focus on, and blessing upon, their ministry in the midst of this turmoil.
- For the **judges** hearing, mediating and possibly arbitrating these cases throughout Canada, but particularly in Hamilton, London and Vancouver.
- For **our lawyers** in the Dioceses of New Westminster, Niagara and Huron cases as well as Ottawa.
- For an **equitable decision** from the March 11 hearing – involving three ANiC parishes and the Diocese of Niagara – regarding the awarding of court costs.
- For generous contributions to the **Legal Defence Fund**.
- For the **leaders and parishioners of the dioceses** pursuing eviction of and damages against ANiC congregations and wardens in court.

And now a Word from our Sponsor

Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand." So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword.

Exodus 17: 8-13 (ESV)

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person

Colossians 4:2-6 (ESV)