

First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer – January 2015

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people . . . This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2: 1-4 ESV

Welcome to our January 2015 First Friday Call to Prayer. Our aim is to provide you with teaching that we trust will enhance your prayer experience and will be an encouragement to you. We will also provide you with praise items and prayer requests coming from within ANiC and the Anglican Communion worldwide.

<p>We encourage you to set aside the first Friday, January 2nd, as a day of prayer and fasting in these critical days, ideally gathering with other believers in your parish or region for corporate prayer at some point in the day.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Prayer Quotes</p> <p><i>“Why is there so little anxiety to get time to pray? Why is there so little forethought so as to secure a large portion of each day for prayer? Why is there so much running to and fro, yet so little prayer? Why so little being alone, so little thirsting of the soul for the calm, sweet hours of unbroken solitude, when God and his child hold fellowship together, as if they could never part? It is this want that not only injures our own growth in grace, but makes us such unprofitable servants of Christ.”</i> William Reid 1814-1896</p>
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Bishop Charlie’s Call to Prayer – Part Two

In our December edition, we began our prayerful examination of Bishop Charlie Masters’ five priorities for ANiC’s future as laid out at our seventh Diocesan Synod back in November. As he introduced them, the bishop said, “My prayer is that these qualities or priorities might be established as the marks or the DNA of our life together and would always sustain us.” He is asking every member of ANiC churches from coast to coast to stand with him in prayer concerning these strategic priorities.

The five priorities are as follows:

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| 1. Bold Witnesses | 4. On Mission |
| 2. Biblically Grounded | 5. Planting and growing churches |
| 3. Loving Children | |

Last month, we looked at the first two priorities – Bold Witnesses and Biblically Grounded. They really are foundational to the next three, so if you didn’t have opportunity to read this strategic meditation, let me encourage you please to do so. You can easily find it in <pdf> format [here](#).

3. **Loving Children** into the Kingdom

As Bishop Charlie poignantly introduced this priority, he commented, *“In 2011 I was off sick for a few months and while away I believe the Lord confronted me particularly with his heart for children. The famous passage (which is often read at the baptism of infants) where Jesus was indignant when he discovered the disciples were sending parents and children away says, ‘Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.’ (Mark 10:14,15).*

“Clearly Jesus is calling all of us to be childlike and humble in our awareness of our desperate need for a Saviour and to put our simple trust in him. But he is also making it clear that children have the inside track in terms of these qualities and are not to be held away at the very time when they are the most receptive and ready to receive.”

As I have read about revivals in the past, God has frequently poured out his Spirit upon children.

Just one of many examples occurred in the Khasi Hills, part of the Garo-Khasi range in the Indian state of Meghalaya where Welsh Methodist missionaries ministered in the 1840's. Here's an excerpt from one account:

"At a daily prayer meeting, a boy, who had not been in the Church very long, got up, and told us how the day before God had met him and showed him his sins. Then he began to speak of Christ on the Cross, and how He had suffered for us; then one of the children began to sob, then another and another, until the whole chapel was filled with the cries of the children—crying to God to forgive them, to have mercy on them, to save them."

"Children have been specially influenced here; they often swing their bodies to and fro, and wave their arms when singing, some of them having a rapt expression on their faces, and unconscious of everything but of the words they are singing. In one of their meetings a little boy got up to speak, and begged the smaller children not to sleep in the meetings, and not to be restless, but to behave worthily in God's House. The parents say that they never had so little trouble with their children."

Can we believe God for such a move among the children of our families, parishes and nations? Will we allow him to give us his heart of compassion for the children near us? Our prayers around this priority might be something like this:

Heavenly Father, we see in the actions of Jesus your passionate love of children and your deep desire for them to come into the Kingdom, even at an early age. We pray for a mighty, sovereign work of your Spirit among the children that you have given into our sphere of influence – our own sons and daughters, grandchildren, neighbourhood kids. Prosper the children's ministries already flourishing in our ANiC churches, and raise up many more, so that the children of our cities and towns may have the opportunity to know your love and saving grace. In Jesus' Name! Amen!

4. On Mission

Here is how Bishop Charlie presented this fourth priority:

"Survival, maintaining what we have, is no small task in and of itself that typically occupies all the energy and thinking that we have. As Anglicans, because we have a whole system of liturgy and corporate life that is wonderful, it is entirely possible that we can do all those things and feel that therefore we are fulfilling the call of God. But the fact is the only reason the Lord leaves us here in this world is because he has called us and appointed us to go and bear fruit. We are to be a people who are strategic and missional and always planning, praying, and working towards reaching the very people who are outside the circle of the church and, in many cases, are showing no interest at all in what we have to offer."

"I believe for us to be on mission means to be missional locally and also to work very hard at engaging in the global mandate to make disciples of all nations. We are to see ourselves as strangers and pilgrims in a foreign land who are like paratroopers who have been dropped behind enemy lines with a mission to reach this world and, in our case, this continent, with the transforming love of Jesus Christ."

So, we must take our eyes off ourselves and all that we've been through as an Anglican reformation movement, and turn them outward, towards those who are dying for the lack of a Saviour because they don't know how very much he loves them. Again, our prayers might look something like this:

O Lord Jesus, we repent of so frequently seeing survival as the ultimate goal and being satisfied with false finish lines. Forgive us, we pray, for not sharing your burden for a lost world, a world for which you paid the ultimate price to redeem. Give us grace to look outside our own parish families to the desperately needy just beyond our borders. Free us from being "the Church institutionalized" and set us on fire with passion to share the Gospel as "the Church mobilized". Come, Holy Spirit, come! Amen.

5. Planting and Growing Churches

“It is clear from Scripture that God’s intention to reach this world for Christ is by the establishment of the church and churches as the platforms through which the gospel goes forward,” said Bishop Charlie. *“We have made a good start, but we have a very long ways to go as we seek to plant churches in every major community in Canada. Every congregation no matter how large or how small needs to be thinking about church planting.”*

Sounds quite daunting, doesn’t it, and so do each of the five priorities. As mentioned last month, the bishop has established a national team around each priority to give leadership under his oversight. The approach is that the team will develop strategies, training and resources around each of these priorities.

Okay, so what do we do in the meantime? It would be all too easy to say, *“Yes, Bishop, that’s all well and good. We’ll just wait until the various teams have developed their plans to see how this will all play out.”*

Church, I implore you, we **must not** do that! The one thing that we can and **must** do is to make a specific New Year’s commitment to pray for the implementation of each of these God-inspired priorities. Bishop Charlie fully realizes the importance of our prayer. He said, *“It has struck me how absolutely impossible this is and therefore how completely important it is that we devote ourselves first to prayer.”* It is essential, indispensable and paramount that we are willing to shoulder the burden to pray *“that God will make all these priorities a **transformational reality** in the life of every ANiC congregation!”* In all honesty, unless we do, the whole project will fall short of meeting God’s purposes for ANiC. Please don’t miss this! Each and everyone’s prayers matter. Yes, even mine...

O Father, we are so grateful that you are continuing to guide us in your purposes for ANiC. You have not left us to our own devices. We are excited about the future that you have planned for us. But we are only too well aware that we cannot achieve these five priorities in our own strength and with our own resolve. The task is quite beyond us! So, we call out to you for your wisdom, discernment, and the power of your Mighty Spirit. Remind each of us to pray daily for these priorities that they would more and more become a reality in our parish lives, and deeply rooted in ANiC’s corporate DNA. We desperately need you, blessed Lord. Hear our prayer we ask. Amen.

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Praise God ...

- **That He reigns supreme.** Despite the chaos and evil in the world, God is working out His purposes for His glory and our good!
- For the **privilege of interceding** on behalf of those around the world who are in desperate need.
- For the incredible gift that God has given us in prayer – immediate access to our Father at any time of day or night. Thank Him for the incredible privilege of participating with him through prayer in his grand redemption plan.
- For **faithful Anglican primates, bishops, clergy and laity** – throughout the Communion – who are standing for truth even when their stand for Christ and His Word makes them targets of attack.

Confess if needed...

- Times where we have grown weary and allowed doubt and apathy to erode our fervour in prayer for renewal in the Church and revival to sweep across our land.
- Our **fear in sharing Jesus with others** when we have opportunities to do so. Sometimes we have allowed embarrassment and fear of rejection to force us into silence.

Please pray...

- For our primate **Archbishop Foley Beach**. Pray for great wisdom, courage and strength as he gives leadership to our province. May God glorify Himself through the ACNA.

- For **Bishop Charlie Masters** (& Judy) – Pray for our diocesan bishop as he leads ANiC. May God grant him vision, spiritual protection, and spiritual and physical renewal.
- For **Bishop Don Harvey** (& Trudy) – Pray for Bishop Don in his new role as senior chaplain to the ACNA College of Bishops and episcopal vicar to ANiC.
- For **ANiC's suffragan bishops**: Stephen Leung (& Nona) and Trevor Walters (& Dede). Pray for discernment, energy and grace as they care for their clergy and congregations. Also for Bishops Ron Ferris and Malcolm Harding.
- For our **Archdeacons**: the Venerables Ron Corcoran (Vancouver Island), Dan Gifford (BC), Paul Charbonneau (Ontario), Tim Parent (Ottawa Valley), Paul Crossland (Prairies), Michael McKinnon (New England, USA), and Darrell Critch (Atlantic Region & Quebec) – and our Dean of Multicultural Ministries, the Very Rev Dr Archie Pell.
- For all **ANiC clergy** and families, especially those experiencing spiritual and physical attack.
- For the **ANiC congregations** that have lost their places of worship and are meeting in temporary facilities. May God comfort and pour out His blessing on them. Pray especially for the rector, Canon Tom Carman, the leadership, and the people of **St Aidan's, Windsor, ON**, as they work through the financial impact of a surprisingly unfavourable legal decision.
- For the **Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada** (ARDFC) as it raises funds for a pediatric ward for a busy health care centre in Yei, South Sudan. Pray also for peace in that troubled country.
- For **Canon Andrew White** and his ongoing ministry in the Middle East. Pray for courage, safety and the provision of basic needs for them and the people that they serve.
- For **those who serve us and are in authority over us** – our police forces, our armed forces, our emergency responders, our municipal elected officials, our provincial MLAs, MPPs and premiers, and our federal MPs and Prime Minister.
- For **God's wisdom for the world's leaders** with regard to the Ukraine, Pakistan, Syria and Iraq. Pray that the evil one's agenda for violence, hatred and bloodshed would be averted. Pray for protection of innocent civilians – adults and children – who so often are the victims in today's urban warfare. Pray also that God would intervene to stop the evil actions of the Islamic terrorists in Africa – the Boko Haram, operating primarily Nigeria, and the al Shabaab in Somalia and Kenya,