



Anglican Network in Canada

First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer July 2015

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit.
1 Thessalonians 5:16-19 ESV

Welcome to our July 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.

We encourage you to set aside **the first Friday, July 3rd**, as a day of prayer and fasting for the Church in these critical days, ideally gathering with other believers in your parish or region for corporate prayer at some point in the day.

Prayer Quotes

"God will either give you what you ask, or something far better."

Robert Murray M'Cheyne 1813-1843

Guardians of the City

Over the past few months, we have been pressing the people of ANiC to pray with a growing sense of urgency. We have exhorted every member of ANiC parishes to begin to pray for revival within our churches and across our continent. Bishop Charlie Masters has passionately asked us to pray into being his Five Ministry Priorities, like spiritual midwives as it were.

One cannot look at our secular culture and world events without seeing that the darkness is getting darker, even as the Light is getting brighter. Many Christians are sensing that God is preparing to do new things on the earth and, as always at such times, is seeking to mobilize intercessors who will stand in the gap on behalf of our fallen and lost world.

What if I were to suggest that we could make a difference to the culture around us through prayer? What if yours and my prayers could actually positively impact the crime, divorce and suicide rates, or incidents of wife and child abuse, and gender confusion in our communities? What if God is waiting to see regular, fervent prayer times in our ANiC churches for the people, children, marriages and families in their surrounding communities before he releases the new awakening for which we've been asking him?

Recently I've been reading a book given to me by a pastor friend in Wisconsin entitled "Desperate for His Presence: God's Design to Transform Your Life and Your City" by Rhonda Hughey. The author makes a strong case for what Reformationist scholars referred to as "the priesthood of all believers" based on 1 Peter 2:5,9 and goes on to suggest that, with Jesus as our high priestly model, we, too, as "priests", have both the privilege and responsibility to intercede before God for the lost of our communities.

The writer of Hebrews describes Jesus in his high priestly role in intercession like this:

He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.
Hebrews 7:25 ESV

The apostle Paul also recognizes this vital role of our Risen Lord;

Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.
Romans 8:34

It is in the spirit of that understanding of Jesus' role that Paul exhorts Timothy, his young protégé, in the importance of intercessory prayer and that we, too, should follow Jesus' example. I've used the Amplified version of the text to help convey the urgency that Paul puts on intercession:

First of all, then, I admonish and urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be offered on behalf of all men, For kings and all who are in positions of authority or high responsibility, that [outwardly] we may pass a quiet and undisturbed life [and inwardly] a peaceable one in all godliness and reverence and seriousness in every way.

For such [praying] is good and right, and [it is] pleasing and acceptable to God our Saviour, Who wishes all men to be saved and [increasingly] to perceive and recognize and discern and know precisely and correctly the [divine] Truth. 1 Timothy 2: 1-4 Amp

Rhonda Hughey makes some strong statements in her book about our role here that have deeply challenged me. Let me share just a few quotes. Please read them prayerfully:

“Nobody should be able to live in a city where the church exists without coming into contact with Jesus through His body praying for them”

“The body of Christ has taken off her priestly robes of mediation and has abdicated her spiritual responsibility, leaving the people of our cities to fend for themselves. Contenting ourselves with merely ‘doing church’ we have tragically left our cities defenseless against the attacks of the enemy. No matter what other good works we may be doing as we gather together in our church buildings, if we aren’t praying, we aren’t functioning in our role as priests and mediators for men before God. The lost people in our cities and communities suffer when we are not obedient to our calling.”

“What would a city look like if every believer in the city was functioning as a spiritual ‘watchman or gatekeeper’ and guarding the city through prayer? What if the hurting, broken people in the city were being fought for in prayer, had people standing in the gap on their behalf, fighting for them to be freed from darkness and despair? **We need to move prayer from a ‘church’ activity to a ‘city’ responsibility.**”

“If only we understood better the authority and power God grants to us in the place of prayer! When we realize that we can impact the rates of suicide, murder, divorce, and other devastating consequences of sin, we will hopefully rise up and take our place in prayer.”

When I wrote about praying for revival a number of months ago, I spoke of the sacrificial cost that may well be involved in participating with the Lord in his global redemptive process. I frankly admitted that I often struggle with the question of whether I **really** want God to send revival or not. It’s inconvenient, and messy, and may require more of my time and energy than I am willing to give. And when I have actually prayed for the lost, I’m aware that most often I see them as faceless unbelievers who are blind, deceived, and just don’t get it. Certainly, I want them to meet Jesus, and enter into the Kingdom, but there is hypocrisy and condescension in my attitude towards them. Certainly, it had never occurred to me that part of the unrelenting stress and difficulties that they may be facing are partially the result of my prayerlessness – my unwillingness to be a guardian; a watchman on the wall of their city.

We don’t live in walled cities anymore, but in Biblical times the role of the watchmen was critical to the health and safety of the city. God, speaking through the prophet Isaiah made this statement:

On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent. You who put the LORD in remembrance, take no rest, and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it a praise in the earth. Isaiah 62:6-7 ESV

One commentator made this observation about the role of watchmen: “The watchmen were prophetic guardians, like sentries on a city wall, praying and watching for the fulfillment of God’s promises.” In this passage, the Lord urges them to constantly cry out to him, giving him no rest, until he fulfills his promises.

One of the gifts that the Holy Spirit brings to Christians is “the ability to distinguish between spirits” (1 Corinthians 12: 10 ESV); what we have perhaps inaccurately referred to merely as “discernment”. It’s the God-given ability to see what is actually going on in our world and the spiritual realm that influences it. Those without Jesus have no such ability, but we do. With the eyes of the Spirit we can see evil coming, often masquerading as progressive social change or tolerant inclusivity, but is in reality the agenda of the enemy to deceive and enslave unsuspecting and vulnerable humanity. When evil is

consistently called “good”, and Biblical morality is ever increasingly called intolerant, unhealthy and a threat to personal liberty and self-expression, the guardians who see it clearly must take action.

What would our communities be like if each ANiC parish undertook to put back on our “priestly robes”, embraced our role as watchmen and guardians of the community, and began to fervently pray for the individuals and families of our region? Could we see such prayer gain momentum so that there was prayer being offered weekly, then daily, and ultimately 24/7?

Sound too extreme? Sound too hard, too intimidating for the “average” Anglican Christian to embrace? Perhaps, but I feel passionately that such a prayer commitment is part of the key to unlocking the floodgates of revival in our day. We **can** impact the social and moral fabric of our local communities in a way that is achievable by no other means! Shrill criticism by the church of our society is ignored or resented by most people. Changing the laws, our national leaders, or the political parties in power ultimately will have no lasting effect. Only caring, compassionate, fervent prayer for the lost will make a permanent difference in the lives of our neighbourhoods and communities.

We can ignore this call of God. We can go about doing “business as usual”. Or we can make the sacrifice of time and energy to seek to be guardians of the places where you and I live. The choice is strictly ours. How will you choose?

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Thoughts on Revival Prayer – The Five Priorities

Bishop Charlie Masters’ cross-Canada tour is now completed. Visiting every region where there are currently ANiC parishes has been the Bishop’s means of introducing his Five Ministry Priorities to our congregations, priorities which he first presented to ANiC Synod in November 2014. His heartfelt desire is that we would “*pray that God will make these five priorities **a transformational reality** in the life of every ANiC congregation.*”

In order to keep them prayerfully before us, we will feature one of the five priorities each month in this box as a visual reminder to pray fervently for these urgent concerns. Over recent months, we have shared the first three. Here is our prayer for the 4th Priority:

4. ON MISSION

“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.”

+Charlie’s 2014 Charge to Synod

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 the tendency to slip back into “doing church as usual” and 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”. Give to the leadership team around this priority all that they need to keep our vision and activity outward looking. Come, Holy Spirit, come! Amen.



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!
- That He has given to us the **incredible privilege of being guardians** or watchman on behalf our city, community and neighbourhoods
- 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...

- **Our prayerlessness on behalf of the lost** in our neighbourhoods and communities. Repent of complacency or unwillingness to be inconvenienced by prayer.

Please pray...

- For **a major awakening**, a sovereign move of God in our churches and across our nations like has not been seen in our lifetimes. **Rise Up, O God** we pray. Intervene, O Lord, in the midst of our decaying culture and society! Raise up **an army of intercessors** who will call out to you for a mighty visitation of your power and presence!
- For our primate **Archbishop Foley Beach** (& Allison) - 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 roles as ANiC's episcopal vicar and senior chaplain to the ACNA College of Bishops.
- 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 pray for Bishops Ron Ferris (church planting in Langley, BC) and Malcolm Harding (retired in Brandon, MB).
- For our **Archdeacons**: the Venerables Ron Corcoran (Vancouver Island), Dan Gifford (BC), Bruce Chamberlayne (Alberta & BC Interior), 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, giving them solid hope for the future.
- For the **Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada** (ARDFC) as it raises funds for drilling water wells in South Sudan as well as for emergency aid for earthquake relief in Nepal.
- For **Canon Andrew White** and his ministry team 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 world's leaders** with regard to the Ukraine, Syria, Iraq and other troubled nations. 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 warfare. Pray especially for the many Middle East and African Christians who are brutally persecuted for their refusal to renounce their faith in Jesus.