



## Anglican Network in Canada

### **PREPARATION IN PRAYER FOR OUR 2011 ANNUAL SYNOD**

*Please note: This document replaces the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the Month Call to Prayer for October.*

Dear ANiC Member;

As we approach our annual diocesan synod and conference, we continue to be profoundly grateful to our Lord Jesus for His blessing and mercy upon us and upon our province, the Anglican Church of North America (ACNA). The past year has not been without its difficulties, but we do not take for granted the new freedom that we have to preach the true Gospel of Jesus Christ without intimidation or constraint. Empowered and emboldened by the Holy Spirit, it is a privilege beyond description to participate with God in His redemptive purposes for humanity!

And so we come to our fourth Synod, **November 2 - 4 in Victoria, BC** where the keynote speakers, the Rev Canon Phil Ashby, Chief Operating Officer of the American Anglican Council, and the Right Reverend John Guernsey, Bishop of the ACNA Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic, will be bringing to us a pertinent word.

Whether you are a delegate to synod or not, **please take this prayer preparation to heart** and make a commitment to uphold synod in prayer on a daily basis. May the Lord grant wisdom, courage, and vision to those giving leadership in these days.

### **Meditation and Prayer**

The theme verses that Bishop Don Harvey, our moderator, has prayerfully chosen for this year's synod are taken from the book of Hebrews:

*JESUS CHRIST THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TODAY, AND FOREVER (Heb 13:8)  
"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...." (Heb 12: 2)*

As children of God, adopted into His family, we are so grateful that our Lord Jesus never varies or is capricious. It is because of this great faithfulness and our desperate need for His grace, mercy and direction that we can and must "look unto Him", with our gaze fixed firmly on Him despite the distractions of the world.

The format for our prayer preparation is slightly different this year. You will note that, for each of the weeks between now and the beginning of synod, there will be both a morning and evening prayer with the meditations also based on the book of Hebrews. Please use these prayers each day throughout the week as we thank God for His gracious guidance in the past, and His vision and direction for the future.

We also commend to you for daily use the prayer items listed in the October and November ANiC Prayer Calendars.

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## Week One: October 9 – 15

### Morning

*Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.*  
Hebrews 1:1-4 ESV

Who is this Jesus who never changes and upon whom we are to fix our gaze? Let us remind ourselves with this amazing declaration from the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Hebrews. God the Father has spoken to humanity through the words and actions of His Son. This Son, heir of all things and creator of all things, has come to show us the majestic brilliance of God's glory and the profound perfection of His nature. The entire universe is dependent on Him to keep it from imploding on itself. As the perfect High Priest, he has "made purification for sins" through the shedding of His own totally innocent blood, through which we may be adopted into the family of God and delight in intimate fellowship with the Trinity. Yes, our Saviour and Lord is marvellous beyond any words to describe Him! Surely He is the One who is worthy of our praise and our trust.

**Almighty and everlasting Father, we are so grateful for the gift of Your Son, Jesus. As we allow these words from Hebrews to wash over us and impact our minds and our hearts, we are convicted by the times we have doubted Your changelessness and whether You were up to the task. We have lost sight of who You are. Forgive us, we pray, and cause us once more to look unto Jesus who is, indeed, the Author and Finisher of our faith. May we look to Him for direction and guidance for ANiC, knowing that He is our only Hope and Provider. May our posture at synod be one of both dependency and expectancy, through Christ Jesus our Lord, Amen.**

### Evening

*"You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honour, putting everything in subjection under his feet."*

*Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.*  
Hebrews 2:7-9 ESV

As we appreciated this morning, once again we see that our unchanging Saviour is completely capable to bring salvation to a fallen world that is totally incapable of saving itself. Everything in heaven and on earth has been put into subjection under His feet; nothing is outside of His control. This is a glimpse of the heavenly Kingdom where all things are done according to His will and purpose. It is what we mean when we pray "Thy Kingdom come; Thy Will be done on earth as it is heaven." Let us pray for our synod by actively submitting to His reign and lordship. May everything that is spoken, prayed, sung, and decided be in complete subjection to our Lord Jesus.

**Heavenly Father, we marvel at the glory and honour You bestowed on Your Son after His obedience in dying for the atonement of the world. You have given Him authority and control over all creation, and we are deeply thankful that He is our Lord and coming King and that the outcome of human history is not in doubt. Forgive us for the times in which we have rebelled against His authority, and chosen paths that were not of His leading. Redeem our mistakes, we pray, and lead us as a diocese in the Anglican Church in North America in ways that will glorify Your Name and bring a harvest of many new converts into Your family. In the mighty Name of our unchanging Saviour, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.**

## Week Two: October 16 – 22

### Morning

*Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery... Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*  
Hebrews 2:14-15, 17-18 ESV

Aren't you glad that Jesus didn't come to earth as some awesome warrior king or invincible superhero, gathering armies of followers around Him to carry out His mission? Think about it for a moment. Isn't that the way you or I might have planned it? Down with the "bad guys" and up with the "good guys"! But no, our unchanging Saviour through the Incarnation came as a vulnerable babe and experienced being flesh and blood, in every respect as we are, partaking in temptation and suffering, and living a sinless life on our behalf. He even experienced death as we do. But in doing so and rising again, He destroyed the one who had the power of death, and delivers those who are held in bondage to the fear of death. This is the Jesus to whom we are to look for all our needs because He fully understands first-hand what it means to be human.

**Lord Jesus, our hearts are overwhelmed by Your love that is so strong for us that You would become like us, clothed in flesh and blood. We are humbled by Your humility! You have opened the gates of Heaven for us to spend eternity with You by defeating death itself. We pray that all who participate in our annual synod would be touched by Your humility, more deeply than ever before, so that there would be no room whatsoever for pride or personal agendas. May our eyes be firmly and resolutely fixed on You and Your will and purpose for our Church. In Your Mighty Name, we ask these things. Amen.**

### Evening

*Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honour than the house itself.*  
Hebrews 3:1-3 ESV

The author of Hebrews exhorts the Jewish messianic believers to whom he is writing to "consider Jesus" – to fully understand His role as apostle and faithful high priest. He compares Jesus to Moses, the greatest of Jewish Old Testament heroes who was faithful to his calling as Israel's deliverer from slavery in Egypt. But Jesus is far greater than even Moses, as much greater as a creator is than the created things of his hand.

This unchanging Jesus is so much more than how we often "consider" Him; a mere babe in a manger or a prophetic carpenter from Nazareth who can heal the sick. He is the One – the only One – who is worthy of all glory and all honour and all praise! There is none who can compare to Him.

**Heavenly Father, as those who attend synod have opportunity to sing Your praises and worship You in the daily offices and Holy Communion, may they do so aware of the honour and glory that are due Your Name. May the level of worship "raise the roof" of the conference buildings in Victoria, and may many hotel employees and onlookers be drawn to Your saving Grace through the authentic fervour of those who are expressing their love and adoration to the One who is worthy, Jesus, Your beloved Son and our blessed Saviour. Amen.**

## Week Three: October 23 – 29

### Morning

*Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*  
Hebrews 4:14-16 ESV

Here, again, we see Jesus referred to as “a great high priest” which is an image that would be very familiar to the author’s Jewish readership. The high priest was the only one of the religious establishment who was allowed annually to enter the Holy of Holies, the innermost room of the tabernacle, to offer atonement on behalf of the sins of the people. We are reminded once more that this, the greatest of all high priests, although He is the Son of God, can empathize with our weaknesses because He was tempted just as we are. He experienced exactly what we go through, yet He did not yield to the temptations. Through His perfect obedience, He fulfilled the terms of the Law in our stead because we are totally incapable of fulfilling it ourselves. So we have the incredible privilege of drawing near to the throne of grace with complete confidence of our acceptability. What an amazing, unchanging Saviour we have been given!

**Almighty God, we want to approach our synod with eyes that are fixed firmly on our great High Priest, and with hearts that are unfeignedly thankful for His perfect life and ultimate sacrifice on our behalf. There just aren’t adequate words to express our gratitude for all that He has done for us! We look to Jesus to guide and direct us throughout synod that we may please You in our worship, our prayers, and in all the decisions that are made concerning the future. We do not want to miss You on even the smallest detail. May we boldly come to your throne of grace, confident of Your mercy and longing for Your gracious touch in our time of need. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

### Evening

*The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, 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. For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.*  
Hebrews 7:23-27 ESV

As we noted this morning, the role of Jesus as the great High Priest is fulfilled perfectly as compared to those who had preceded Him and who would follow after. He continues in His office eternally because He will not die ever again, and He is able to “save to the uttermost” those who drawn near through Him. Saved to the uttermost conveys both the sense of utterly complete and for all eternity. How amazing is a salvation like that! And our High Priest continues to make intercession for us with the Father. Imagine! Jesus is interceding on behalf of all who have put their trust in Him.

**Lord Jesus Christ, this evening we fix our gaze on You, the One who intercedes on behalf of all who draw near to God through Your sacrifice offered once for all. We thank You for caring about and being involved in the most intimate details of our lives, our parishes and our diocese. We pray for a fresh revelation and outpouring in our churches of Your redeeming grace that “saves to the uttermost”. Give us a deeper passion for those who do not yet know You. Give us opportunity to share Your life transforming Gospel, and add to our numbers daily those who are being saved. In Your precious Name, we ask this. Amen.**

## Synod Week: October 30 – November 4

### Morning

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

*Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.*  
Hebrews 12:1-3 ESV

Tuesday of this week is All Saints Day and it seems appropriate as synod begins that we should be reflecting on “so great a cloud of witnesses” – those faithful ones who have gone before us – for we are not alone on this pilgrimage. The writer of Hebrews, who in the previous chapter has gone on at some length to describe the lives of a number of these witnesses, exhorts us therefore to “run the race with endurance” with our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus, both our Source and our Goal. Again, the author says, “Consider Jesus” – take a look at Him; let Him be your example, your focus – so that we do not allow weariness or discouragement to beset us.

**Our gracious heavenly Father, we are so grateful for the gift of Your written word, the Bible, that teaches us of Your loving redemption of the world through the sacrifice of Your Son on the cross of Calvary, and also reveals to us those who have faithfully served You in the past. As we embrace the fourth ANiC synod, we look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, for grace and renewed vigour so that we may, indeed, run with endurance the race set before us. By Your Holy Spirit, revive any who may be weary, discouraged or fainthearted. Grant us true unity and freedom to serve you to the race’s end. Through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.**

### Evening

*Through him (Jesus) then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.*  
Hebrews 13:15 ESV

Near the end of his letter, the author of Hebrews exhorts us once again, this time to continually offer the praise of our lips to the glory of God’s Son. This Jesus, whom he has described in such vivid detail, is utterly worthy of our praise. We cannot and need not offer a sacrifice such as His. We have already seen that He offered His sacrifice “once for all”. It is finished, complete. But we can offer our worship, our adoration, and our love that expresses itself both in our praise and in our faithful obedience to His word.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father, whose only Son, our Lord Jesus, never wavers or changes, but is constant and steadfast in His covenant love and mercy toward the Church, meet with us in power during our synod we pray. Give wisdom and strength to those who are seeking You for direction and strategy. Endue our bishops with the courage of the Apostles as they seek to lead Your people in the power of the same Spirit that was given at Pentecost. Protect us from making any decision that is not in keeping with Your perfect will for ANiC, and forgive us for the many times in the past year that we have ignored the promptings of the Spirit and relied on our own strength and human wisdom. May our eyes be firmly fixed on Your blessed Son, the author and finisher of our faith. This we fervently ask in the name of that same Son, our Saviour and Coming King, Jesus the Christ. Amen**

**Most gracious God, we humbly beseech thee for thy holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth; in all truth with all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where any thing is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen and confirm it; where it is in want, furnish it, where it is divided and rent asunder, make it whole again, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

Prayer for the Church found in the Book of Common Prayer