



Anglican Network in Canada

First Friday of the Month Call to Prayer December 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 December 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, December 4th**, 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.

Collect for Christmas

O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of thy only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that as we joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come again to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with thee and the Holy Spirit, now and ever. Amen.

Book of Common Prayer

“Take Up the Whole Armour of God”

Military images or illustrations are not in vogue very much these days. Using an analogy that includes weaponry or battle tactics is not politically correct. Even on November 11th, as we pause to reflect momentarily on Remembrance Day, we struggle to honestly embrace the cost of the sacrifice made by thousands of men and women on behalf of our freedom and way of life. “Lest we forget” is the motto used to remind us, but many Canadians are striving actively to forget anything that even hints of warfare. However, the current flood of refugees coming to North America fleeing the atrocities of Islamic militants in Syria and Iraq has made the brutal realities of war inescapable.

It’s also true in the Church. We typically don’t sing “Onward, Christian soldiers” or “Stand up, stand up for Jesus” much anymore. It would seem that we don’t want to be reminded that, as Christians, we find ourselves inextricably involved in a titanic struggle in the spiritual realm, whether we want to be or not. Perhaps we can ignore it, or theologize our way out of it. Maybe if we don’t believe that there is a satanic force waging war against the Lord and his Church, it won’t impact us. How about a little “detente” with the devil – you leave me alone and I’ll leave you alone.

However, surely the recent terror attacks in Paris, Mali and elsewhere remind us of the stark reality of evil in a staggering way, and even the events over the past decade in the Anglican world, although more subtle, have been sufficient evidence of the spiritual warfare of which I speak. Look at what Paul the apostle says about the nature of our battle.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:12 ESV

Let’s be clear – because of Jesus’ victory over sin, death and the evil one at Calvary, our ultimate victory is gloriously secure. However, we cannot stand back and ignore the fact that a cosmic struggle is happening, even as you read this, for the hearts and souls of humanity around the world.

Candidly, I don’t believe that the devil cares if we want to “do church”, as long as we are not a threat to his kingdom by reaching the lost with the message of the true, transforming Gospel of Jesus. “Go ahead”, he says. “Sing your hymns, have your services. It doesn’t bother me.”

But what does bother him is the proclaiming of the truth that Jesus, the Son of God, has risen from the grave, that he offers forgiveness, healing and transformation no matter what our sin may be, and that he is raising up a Church that will not compromise with or be seduced by the contemporary decadent, humanistic culture in which we live. Satan hates the Bible and the standard, or benchmark, which God's Word sets for us in all areas of life, and he hates those who choose to live under its authority.

So, in the light of this reality, we speak in military terminology about the wonderful provision of protection that God has provided for us. He has not left us defenseless or vulnerable to the attack of the enemy. Paul calls it, "the Armour of God". Let's look further into Ephesians...

Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Ephesians 6:13-17 ESV

Let's take a brief look at each piece of the armour and see what it is protecting:

The Belt of Truth – Reflecting the symbolic belt of the Messiah spoken of in Isaiah 11:5, we are urged to "gird ourselves" with truth. Having our belt on is the first step we take to be ready for action.

The Breastplate of Righteousness –The breastplate covers all our vital organs, including the heart which provides our body with blood, the source of our physical life. Does our righteousness protect us? NO! Our righteousness is no better than "filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). It is only the righteousness of Jesus, that He provided for us in His death, that can truly protect our spiritual heart.

The Boots of Readiness – Just as protection for feet is absolutely essential to being prepared for action, so the Gospel of Peace prepares us to be available to the Lord's command at any moment.

The Shield of Faith – The leather shield carried by the Roman armies into battle with which the Ephesian church would be familiar was large enough to completely protect a soldier and was often soaked in water to extinguish flaming arrows. It is our faith in God's love and His protection that can quench the "fiery darts" of accusation, gossip, fear, deception and all the other "darts" that the enemy loves to hurl at God's children. Hold the shield high!

The Helmet of Salvation – Helmets protect the head, and God's helmet is intended to protect our mind, our thought-life; often the very battleground of our struggles. Wearing the helmet of salvation helps us to "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" 2 Cor. 10: 5b. Perhaps another way to express this is to daily submit all our thoughts, dreams, anxieties and fears intentionally to the Lordship of Christ.

The Sword of the Spirit – Paul says the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. Just as Jesus used scriptures to fend off the devil's temptations in Luke 4, so we too have been given this offensive weapon to resist the enemy's agenda against us. Knowledge and memorization of the Word makes it an active part of our victory in battle, and a key element in interceding for individuals and the Church.

The apostle, like our Lord Jesus, spoke in analogies for his listeners to better understand the spiritual truths he was explaining. In using the imagery of a soldier's armour, he was using every-day things to explain deep spiritual realities. He clearly exhorts the Ephesian church, and all of us who read it now, to "put on the armour of God". It is a conscious decision, and, like all the provisions of God, it is not automatic. It must be appropriated by faith. What works for me personally is to remember to put on the individual pieces of God's armour as I am physically putting on my clothes each morning. Dress your body and dress your spirit to prepare for the day. Give it a try!

As the world around us becomes progressively darker, we must be properly outfitted if we are going to engage the battle without becoming a casualty. Physical harassments, aberrant confusion, anxiety attacks, relationship fractures or betrayals, premature breakdowns of cars and appliances, uncharacteristic moodiness or depressive behaviour in ourselves or our loved ones, and such things

can all be the signs of the enemy's assault on the Church family. Let's actively and intentionally put on the Armour each day, and, in prayer, let's place it on our families, our bishops, our rector, and other parish leaders. Alleluia, the victory is ours, through our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen.

Garth V. Hunt+
prayer@anglicannetwork.ca



Praise God ...

- For the **ultimate victory of Jesus** over all the works and schemes of the evil one. The final outcome is not in doubt. Alleluia!
- For the **wonderful protection of His children** that He has provided in giving us His heavenly Armour to wear as we serve Him in a hostile world.
- 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 **reluctance** to take the reality of spiritual warfare seriously, and our **neglect** of God's amazing provision for us in the privilege of wearing his Armour!

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 **ANiC's 5 ministry priorities** that they will transform our congregations: Bold witnesses; Biblically grounded; Loving children; On mission; & Planting churches.
- 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 are meeting in temporary rental facilities. May God comfort and pour out His blessing on them, giving them solid hope for the future. Also pray for those congregations considering, praying for, and raising funds to build a permanent facility.
- For the **Anglican Relief and Development Fund Canada** (ARDFC) as it raises funds for farming tools, seeds, goats and agricultural training to address malnutrition and extreme poverty in 3 villages in Burundi - as well as for emergency aid appeals for Syrian Refugees, Myanmar flood relief, and 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 as a new government is formed.
- For **God's wisdom for world's leaders** with regard to the hundreds of thousands of refugees who are seeking safety and asylum in Europe and North America.
- 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.



Our Primate, Archbishop Foley Beach has asked us to pray the following prayer for refugees throughout Advent and Christmas:

A call to prayer for refugees:

LORD JESUS CHRIST our Refuge and Deliverer, Who as a child sought refuge in Egypt while fleeing from those who would persecute and harm You. Remember those today who must flee in the same manner, and find themselves in foreign and strange lands, granting them your Presence, your protection, and your provision. Illuminate us to be a shining light upon a hill amidst the dark evil in our world, that we may do our part with hospitality and resources, and that all who are refugees might be led to the brightness of Your redemptive love made present by Your glorious Incarnation, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.