



ACW Newsletter Winter 2020

Anglican Church Women Diocese of Toronto

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PRAYER LINKS

December 2020

- ACW members in York Mills & York Central Deaneries
- The Dioceses of Eastern Newfoundland, Edmonton and Fredericton
- Moorelands, The Diocese of British Columbia

January – 2021

- Deaneries of Durham-Northumberland and Eglinton
- ACW sisters in Dioceses of Huron, Keewatin, Kootenay
- Council of the North, LOFT

February -2021

- Deaneries of Etobicoke-Humber, Holland
- ACW sisters in Montreal, Moosonee and New Westminster
- Evangelical Lutheran sisters in Diocese of New York
- Primate's World Relief and Development Fund

March- 2021

- Deanery of Huronia
- ACW sisters in Niagara, Nova Scotia, PEI and Diocese of Ontario
- Canadian Mothers' Union
- Mission to Seafarers
- Women in Diocese of Bungoma, Kenya

COMMUNICATIONS

Website: www.toronto.anglican.ca
(under Departments and Ministries)

ADVENT PRAYER

God of hope who brought love into the world,
be the love that dwells between us.
God of hope, who brought peace into this world,
be the peace that dwells between us.
God of hope, who brought joy into this world,
be the joy that dwells between us.
God of hope, the rock we stand upon,
be the centre, the focus of our lives
always, and particularly this Advent time.
God of hope and promise, be with us throughout
this Advent season and draw us ever closer as we
journey together toward the stable and the birth of
your Son, our Saviour. Amen

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Advent – the beginning of a new liturgical calendar year with readings and prayers for HOPE, PEACE, JOY and LOVE. It is the season of spiritual preparation, joyful expectation, reflection and traditional Advent customs leading up to Christmas. Spiritual preparation may include daily devotions with an Advent theme, an Advent wreath with accompanying readings and prayers or an Advent study group. Traditional customs may include an Advent calendar, decorating your home inside and/or out, setting up your Christmas tree, sending Christmas messages, helping with Christmas hampers for the less fortunate, or preparing gifts for family and friends.

This year, we will still have what means most to us for Advent and Christmas but much will be done in new ways. New traditions will be introduced. Study groups will be virtual. Christmas services will be hybrid. Church School pageants will be replaced by outside tableaux or virtual pageants. Family gatherings will be by Zoom, face-time or outdoors with distancing. Christmas dinner will include a smaller number than usual. But we will have Advent. We will celebrate Christmas.

We are living through a turbulent time with the global pandemic, political unrest in many parts of the world, and racial tensions with protests and demonstrations. No wonder so many are feeling stressed, anxious and fearful. But we receive the gift of HOPE knowing God is with us and nothing is too difficult for us to handle with God's help. We seek PEACE in the world, in our home and in our mind, one step at a time. We feel JOY in our hearts, in spite of our trials, as we remember the good news of Jesus' birth. We give and receive LOVE as we reflect on the magnitude of

God's love and do our part to share God's love through words and actions.

May you have a Blessed Advent season and a Joyous Christmas!

Enid Corbett



Every Christmas letter we speak of the promises the birth Jesus fills our lives and hearts with, and this is still so true and comforting. We can never deny, nor would we want to, the birth of the Saviour, but this year we also cannot deny things are, and will be, so vastly different. We cannot deny that we hurt, we ache, we long for family, for consistency, we want this pandemic to be over, and for our lives to be as we knew them. Just as Jesus lived his life in a counter-cultural way many aspects of our lives also feel so counter-cultural at this time.

Christmas conjures up thoughts of families sharing merriment and bountiful meals, such as seen in Norman Rockwell paintings, but with Covid-19 in our midst, many will be experiencing losses this season, some small, others of great significance. Some have lost loved ones to COVID, some have lost financial security, some employment, some the ability to travel, and some are confined to home, dealing with loneliness and feeling a loss of purpose. Some have heavy hearts and feel that if a tradition is broken, it may not be re-established. But for others it feels like a relief. For some Christmas brings joy, anticipation, and time with family, and is the happiest time of the year; for others it is decidedly the worst time of the year bringing feelings of loneliness, despair, sorrow, and the pain of fractured families. As families face physical distancing and isolation, and for whom the highlight of the year is the once-a-year family gathering over Christmas, the absence of that time together is heart-wrenching. Babies have been born, weddings postponed, graduations cancelled, family members have died, and are not able to engage in the solace grieving together provides. Some have alleviated the difficulty of the season by volunteering,

but much of that is not possible. But whatever one's situation, we know there is no virus, plague, or anything, that can stop the greatest gift of Christmas - the birth of the Saviour of the world, and the joy that brings.

It is not helpful to deny our feeling or the feelings of others, or pretend we are not sad. We are! But it is helpful to share we know things will improve. Deep inside we know we are blessed, we have God, modern medicine, the church, great leadership, faith, and each other. Uncertainty and change are antithetical to Christmas traditions and we are defined by the traditions of our culture. When things feel so different, so uncertain, and so terribly ongoing, I encourage you to remember the words of Romans: 12:12. "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." We need to remember this is temporary, and we are creative people, we have shown that throughout the church, in the innovative ways we welcome, worship and wait for the "new normal" we so long for. We can have Christmas in June, July, use social media, share via Skype. We can drive to people's houses, call from our cars. Ideas are not what we lack! This will be a simpler Christmas, a less hurried time, gifts may be wrapped differently, but let us remember, the first Christmas was very simple, and the greatest gift was wrapped in a swaddling cloth. Look at how that gift impacted the world!! We are the church and we shine in the darkness. It will get better, but in the meantime, let us all look to the stars on Christmas Eve, as the Wisemen did, and say "Come, Lord Jesus, Come."

May all have a blessed Christmas!

Rev. Canon Joan Cavanaugh-Clark
ACW Chaplain, Diocese of Toronto

*Rt. Rev. Richard Bolt, the current Moderator of the United Church of Canada, composed this **prayer for when we put our masks on**, and has given permission for it to be shared, asking only that we attribute it to him.*

Creator,
As I prepare to go into the world,
Help me to see the sacrament
In the wearing of this cloth –
Let it be "an outward sign of an inward grace" –
a tangible and visible way of living love
for my neighbours, as I love myself.

Christ,
Since my lips will be covered, uncover my heart,
that people would see my smile

in the crinkles around my eyes.
Since my voice may be muffled,
help me to speak clearly,
not only with my words, but with my actions.

Holy Spirit,
As the elastic touches my ears,
remind me to listen carefully –
and full of care to all those I meet.
May this simply piece of cloth
be shield and banner,
and each breath that it holds,
be filled with your love.
In your name and in that love,
I pray. May it be so.

HOMELESSNESS

One definition of homelessness is “the situation of an individual, family or community without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it”. There are additional factors when Indigenous persons or youth are involved.

It is estimated that approximately 235,000 Canadians experience homelessness each year. Street people represent less than 20% of this figure. Up to 50,000 Canadians are the “hidden homeless”, those who temporarily stay with family or friends because they have nowhere to go.

Anyone can become homeless and usually not by choice. Generally, the root cause is poverty with underlying issues including poor physical or mental health, violence or abuse in the home, lack of employment or income or a shortage of affordable housing.

There are as many specific reasons for being homeless as there are people but some of the more common reasons are: unemployment with low or no government benefits, employed but not enough income to afford rent, employed but not enough money for first and last month’s rent, sudden eviction for rent arrears or some other reason, leaving past housing due to unsafe or unhealthy living conditions, leaving past housing due to mental or physical abuse, the landlord unwilling to rent housing due to a person’s recent release from prison/jail.

Preventing homelessness needs to be addressed by various government agencies at the federal, provincial and local levels. Currently government and volunteer organiza-

tions are involved among other efforts, in emergency shelters, transitional housing facilities, meal programs, drop in centres and food banks. There is some affordable housing but the wait list is long. But these address the ‘now’ situation not the root of the problem.

Prevention or stopping homelessness before it begins must be a prime focus. Structural change in programs and policies needs to be developed. Homelessness needs to be addressed when it begins. Finally there also needs to be efforts to help those who have previously experienced homelessness so that they do not experience it again.

How can individuals help? Donate money to a local organization that helps those experiencing homelessness, attend fundraisers for an organization whose aim is to provide affordable housing, donate winter clothing and blankets, donate personal care bags, help individuals get to a warming centre, volunteer hands-on with the work of these organizations such as Out of the Cold, serve on the Board or Committee of the organization, encourage information sessions to educate yourself and your fellow Parishioners about the issues, write letters to the various levels of government.

November 22 is/was National Housing Day. Please visit the Diocesan Social Justice and Advocacy Committee’s section on the Diocesan Website to learn about their new campaign “Housing Matters”. It is a campaign to prevent and address homelessness in the face of a Covid 19 winter and includes a toolkit of materials.

References: Homeless Hub, Raising the Roof, Peel Housing and Homelessness Plan 2018-2028

From the Diocese of the Arctic Newsletter

Lucy Netser was elected as a suffragan bishop for the Arctic on March 28, 2019, and consecrated on March 31. Before becoming a priest, Netser spent three decades as an active participant in the Woman’s Auxiliary/Anglican Church Women of Canada. She currently lives in Arviat, Nunavut, where she serves as lead pastor at St. Francis’ Church in addition to her duties as bishop and as regional dean for the Kivalliq deanery.



L-R: Bishops Lucy Netser, Annie Ittoshat, and Joey Royal at their consecration on March 31, 2019

Some people don’t understand why there are three suffragan [bishops] besides Bishop David [Parsons]. We need to have those in order to keep in touch and in order to travel. For Nunavut, we can travel. But we can’t travel outside of Nunavut, even to the churches. Sometimes it’s mentioned that we have way too many bishops. But a lot of us are so far away, we can’t even see each other unless we have a meeting somewhere sometime, like for executive once a year. That was before; it doesn’t happen anymore because we’re all in different locations. Our boss is in Yellowknife ... [Bishop] Joey [Royal] is in

Iqaluit ... [Bishop] Annie [Ittoshat] is down in Quebec, and I’m way down here pretty close to Churchill. The only connection we have is the telephone or internet. We try and update each other as much as possible.

From Women’s Inter-Church Council of Canada

Yes, there will be World Day of Prayer in 2021 including a service video option!

We need your help promoting the service video and online worship service with your area churches and telling others about the World Day of Prayer options for March 2021. Check www.wicc.org.

Youth Without Shelter – A 2020 Special Project

Youth Without Shelter has six main programs to help youth who are homeless or in need of ‘housing’ assistance.

The YWS Residential Program offers emergency accommodation for up to 33 youth each night. The program meets the immediate needs of the youth by providing them with crisis counselling, safe shelter, nutritious food, new clothing and hygiene products.

The YWS Housing Program is operated from a Housing First Approach, focusing on placing youth in permanent, affordable housing while addressing the obstacles faced by homeless youth that interfere with the achievement of independent stable living conditions.

The Housing Program is paired with an After-Care Program which offers support to former residents with laundry facilities, food bank access, housing counselling as needed, as well as a bi-weekly social program.

The YWS Employment Program provides one-on-one assessments, teaching the necessary skills to gain employment such as resume writing and interview skills. It provides connections to training programs, career shadowing and volunteer opportunities. It aims to help remove

barriers such as: literacy, legal issues and lack of financial resources to access appropriate foot and work wear.

The YWS Life Skills Program aims to provide residents and former residents with life skills training and support, based on their individual needs. The need is real because 40.1 % of homeless youth were younger than 16 when they first experienced homelessness. The range of life skills training is unlimited and ranges from communications/interpersonal skills, to how to cook, to how to maintain personal hygiene, to time management.

The YWS Stay in School Program, with 20 beds, removes the barriers a homeless youth faces in completing their education by providing a safe and stable environment to live in while being given support and guidance from qualified staff.

The YWS Educational Outreach Program, One Youth at a Time, provides interactive workshops for elementary, middle and high school classes. The program breaks down the stereotypes and myths and introduces students to the realities of homelessness. It teaches about resources available in their community that can provide assistance in preventing and responding to family emergencies.

Ideas for Fundraising:

One parish had a meat contact and they are selling meat products. Another sold cheese.

Another mentioned a Festival Donation Campaign - that you donate about the amount you would spend to attend a special event at the church.

Another collects old gold/silver - for instance odd earrings/ broken chains and sells to a dealer or jeweler.

St. Mary's Richmond Hill On-Line Christmas Market

by Marlene Gardiner

With the help of a wonderful young woman at St. Mary's, Jennifer Ferdinands, and our ACW committee we all agreed to give this a go! Essentially, Jennifer set us up on Shopify, an online sales platform (there are charges for using this). We had our ladies work on sewing and knitting during the Covid lockdown so that we had lots to offer. Of course we had our parish donations of goods. We also added a sponsorship aspect to our Christmas Market & Bazaar which we had not done before. The reason was to raise more funds since we couldn't do our usual profitable luncheon and of course we couldn't do a raffle online because we would have needed a gaming license. We decided not to do a bake sale due to all the Covid restrictions. I worked with a local bakery in town and posted Christmas themed cookies, fudge, squares and cupcakes. This has been quite the learning experience.

The work involved taking pictures of each donated item, upload them to the website with description and price. People

shop on-line, pay by credit card and we set up two pick-up dates, one for Bazaar items and one for Poinsettias. Buyers come to St. Mary's on specified date & time, curbside with all Covid safety precautions in place, pop their trunk and we place the order in the trunk. We are still accepting donations and every day more items are added to the market.

Please visit St. Mary's Christmas Market & Bazaar here is the link: <https://st-marys-anglican-church-christmas-market.myshopify.com/>

If parishes are looking for a simplified sale, **Bradford Greenhouses** has a fundraising program in place. They sell the flowers at a reduced price, you sell at market value and keep the profit. <https://shop.bradfordgreenhouses.com/>

Online Courses offered by the Sisters of St. John the Divine

These courses are non-credit, for personal enrichment, and require no registration with the university – only registration through the Sisterhood's website and a commitment to do the homework and participate in classes. All classes will be limited to 30 students and will be held on Wednesday evenings 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Contact convent@ssjd.ca or call 416-226-2201

Introduction to Contemplative Prayer

- Part 1: Rooted in God Jan 6 - Feb 10, 2021
- Part 2: Growing in God Mar 3 - Apr 14, 2021