

Coop's Scoops # 120 Thursday, October 29, 2020

Fred Roger's little song "It's a beautiful day in the neighbourhood.....won't you be my neighbor?" keeps zinging through my head today. Makes me smile. And then I received a message from Liz at the Diocese that turned that smile into a great big grin. It's kind of a message from someone in the neighbourhood....Our Primate, The Most Rev. Linda Nicholls. Seems our neighbourhood has turned pretty virtual these days, for those amongst us with access to internet and email. Your good neighbor our Primate has a timely and wise message for all of us, and I am sharing it in its entirety here. Please take the time to read through: it'll make it a "beautiful day in the neighbourhood" for all of you.

A Message of Hope from our Archbishop and Primate Linda Nicholls October 21, 2020 [www.anglican.ca/primate/a-message-of-hope-from-the-primate](http://www.anglican.ca/primate/a-message-of-hope-from-the-primate)

Greetings to the Anglican Church of Canada. Although we know that life can be full of surprises, we usually plan our lives in the expectation of stability. We set dates for a longed for vacation trip, we plan a wedding, we look forward to going home for an anniversary or a significant birthday. I know my own calendar was filled with expected events, travel, and celebrations for months in advance until COVID-19 locked us down. At first, my calendar was empty and a bit scary, and then began to have tentative dates, or at least plans to prepare a videotaped message. Yet, even now, seven months later, everything is put into the calendar with a question mark. Will it be in person? Or by Zoom? Or canceled? The stability and security of our daily lives is gone. We had hoped it would be resolved by Easter, then by the summer, then by Thanksgiving, and now Christmas looks doubtful, and we are tired of it all. The wearing masks everywhere you go, sanitizer in every pocket, purse, and in every location we visit or live, and no hugs or handshakes. There is no end in sight as the second wave rolls through our communities and research continues to seek a vaccine. We long for stability, even as we long to gather together again.

Dr. Aisha Ahmad is a political science professor who has visited many disaster zones. She spoke on



Twitter about her experience saying, "I always hit a wall six months into a tough assignment in a disaster zone. The desire to get away or make it stop is intense. I've done this many times and at six months, it's like clockwork." She also knows it will last four to six weeks, struggling to feel creative or hopeful and then she will break through it. We are in that four to six week, six month wall. In this time she counsels, "Be gentle with yourself. Go for a walk outdoors. Take care of essentials for you and your family, and do not expect too much of yourself or others."

As people of faith, we do have one foundational certainty, a rock on which we can stand in the midst of the swirling uncertainties around us. That rock is Jesus Christ. The practice that helps us stay rooted on that rock is prayer. One of the joys of this pandemic time has been the use of the Daily Office. Daily morning and evening or night prayers. Grounding our days and the rhythm of scripture and prayers helps us to remember who we are each day, each night. It is a foundational part of being Anglican. It is expected of clergy and roots the life of religious communities and is offered to all Anglicans through our Book of Common Prayer, Book of Alternative Services and online shared resources around the Anglican Communion. Many have delighted in morning or evening prayer with the Dean of Canterbury Cathedral in the garden or the piggery or around the cathedral, or with the cat. Others have joined one of our bishops including Bishop John Watton, Bishop Mary Irwin-Gibson, Archbishop Anne Germond, Bishop Lynne McNaughton, Bishop David Lehmann or others online through live opportunities. So keep praying!

The uncertainty of the months ahead is depressing. In-person worship has started for some but it's not the same as we observe all the careful and necessary rules to be socially distanced, masked, with no contact or singing or coffee hour! Yet we are God's people. We continue to be the church called to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love our neighbor as ourselves to the best of our ability within the circumstances of our situations. I have been deeply encouraged by the faithfulness of so many during this time in preparing online worship daily and weekly. In reaching out to those in need. Continuing lunch and meal programs to feed the hungry. Caring for friends and neighbors through phone calls, prayer shawls, meals and reminders that they are not alone. Or in advocating for those forgotten in our social chaos.

We are approaching All Saints Day when we remember those who have gone before, and have lived their faith as a visible witness in their time. Many lived through even more challenging circumstances; wars, plagues, natural disasters, political oppression, religious persecution, economic collapse, and pandemics. And they have shown us a way. In living memory, we know people who were faithful through World War One, the Spanish Flu, the Great Depression, World War Two and other regional conflicts and disasters. Our grandparents and parents and great-grandparents were called to faithful perseverance, as are we. They continued to build and sustain church communities, love God and their neighbor, and we are here because of their witness. I am confident Anglicans across Canada will do no less.

So, let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, facing the challenge of our time in COVID-19. And as citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, be built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. Let us pray. Holy God, we give you thanks for the triumph of Christ in the lives of all your saints. Receive all we offer you; our mind, body, soul, and strength. And help us, like them, to run our course with faith. That we may come to your eternal kingdom. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

### **On the Lighter Side of Life:**



- Why don't ants ever get sick?  
Because they have little anty bodies.

- Did you hear about the cheese factory that exploded in France?

There was nothing left but de Brie.



### **Scripture for Today: Philippians 1: 1,2 ; Romans 12: 1,2**

**Romans 12** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely,<sup>[a]</sup> and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us,<sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of<sup>[b]</sup> the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Philippians 1,2:** Paul and Timothy, servants<sup>[a]</sup> of Christ Jesus,  
To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops<sup>[b]</sup> and deacons:<sup>[c]</sup>

**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Homily:** I chose the Scripture from Romans again to affirm what our Primate said in the closing of her letter to us. Patience and endurance and prayer in word and deed are the essence of how we are going to remain in hope during this “Wall” we have hit in the pandemic. Archbishop Primate Linda’s words say everything that needs to be said today, so I will not be “sermonizing”.

The Philippians Scripture was just something I wanted to share from my life experiences. I was leading a children’s group up at St. Luke’s in Thunder Bay stressing that they, like all of us, were saints by the grace and gift of God. I used these verses from Philippians to make a point. One of the children, about eight years of age piped with “Well, we are all saints, but you are not. You just read it in the Bible ....the saints in Philippi were the people and the Bishops and Deacons....doesn’t say anything about Priests!”

**Hope Deacon Rev. Margaret gets a real chuckle out of that!**

**Prayer: In Times of Trouble**

O God, thou art my hope and strength, a very present help in trouble; grant me faith and courage, that I may not fear, though the earth be moved, and the hills carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof rage and swell, and the mountains shake at the tempest of same. O be in the midst of my soul, that I may not be moved, but may be still and know that thou art God. Amen

( based on Psalm 46 and a prayer attributed to Archbishop William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1621-1645, another saint among the cloud of witnesses).

**Blessing:**

Be steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and untiring in love all the day of your life; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.