



11 May 2009

Dear Friends,

Re: ANiC Day of Praise – May 22

We have so much for which to praise our mighty, merciful God! Throughout Scripture we see the importance of praise and worship in the life of the people of Israel and then the Church. We are asking parishes to set aside **May 22 (Friday) as a Day of Praise**.

Earlier this year, ANiC parishes and members across Canada participated in a Day of Prayer and Fasting. Our text for that day was 2Chronicles 20. In that same text we see King Jehoshaphat and the people of Israel modeling praise. Praise, particularly in dark and desperate circumstances as we see in 2Chronicles 20, is the most sincere expression of faith, I think. When all around us would lead to despair, remembering Whose we are and Who we serve, as Jehoshaphat did in verses 5-12, and understanding that “the battle is not yours but God's”, naturally – or rather supernaturally – leads us to express our full confidence in God through an outpouring of praise.

Then Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the Lord, worshiping the Lord. And the Levites, of the Kohathites and the Korahites, stood up to praise the Lord, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice.

And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the Lord your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed.” And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who were to sing to the Lord and praise him in holy attire, as they went before the army, and say, “Give thanks to the Lord, for his steadfast love endures forever.”

2Chronicles 20: 18-21

On May 25, the first significant ANiC parish trial begins in Vancouver. This trial will address the question: For whom are these parish properties held in trust – the people of the parish for ongoing traditional and historic Anglican ministry and worship, or the diocese of New Westminster for Anglican Church of Canada purposes? To date, the other court hearings have simply addressed issues of interim use and control of church properties until a decision is reached on this larger question.

Unlike Jehoshaphat in the 2Chronicles 20 account, our circumstances are far from desperate. We know that the church is not the building, it is the people, and we are fully confident that God will provide for our congregations regardless of the outcome of the trial. However, we want to follow the Biblical pattern Jehoshaphat modeled, by entering the (court) “battle” with praise.

Think about it. The singers who lead the army into battle were utterly defenseless, totally dependent upon the Lord for protection. In their minds, they must have seen themselves

praising straight into a certain death. Yet as they focused on God's ability, their own inability was eclipsed. In this circumstance, Israel's only contribution to the battlefield victory was this praise. God did the rest.

We expect our lawyers will enter the court on Monday, May 25th, fully prepared to fight our case and we are fully committed to upholding that legal battle in prayer. However, we want to enter the battle with praise, acknowledging the One – the only one – who is able to give the victory. Whether that victory is evident in the eventual court decision or in other evidence of God's blessing, we want to ensure our hearts are right before God; that our faith is placed only and wholly in Him; and that we correctly understand our relationship to Him.

We are not asking God to help us in *our* battles; rather we have enlisted in *His* battle, under His full command, and seek only the advancement of His rule and reign. The small skirmish in which we find ourselves is part of a cosmic battle, a battle whose ultimate conclusion was predetermined by the victory God Himself won in the death and resurrection of His Son, our Lord and Saviour.

Will you and your parish join us as we enter this battle worshipping and praising our Lord?

For the 24 hour period from 7pm Thursday May 21 until 7pm Friday May 22, we'd love to see around-the-clock small group worship, culminating in a congregational service of praise on Friday evening. Perhaps you would consider inviting other Christian churches to join your parish for Friday evening. Please pray and talk with your people about this. I'm excited to see how God will lead each ANiC parish as we join together to lift our voices in praise.

In the mighty name of Jesus,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Charlie Masters'.

The Venerable Charlie Masters