

INTRODUCTION

In September 2018, the 125th anniversary of General Synod, Archbishop Fred Hiltz will invite the church to listen to its heartbeat—launching 10 months of “conversation circles” which will take place all across the country.

Conversation circles are guided by the 4 simple steps set out below, that will help Anglicans speak from the heart about their faith: where the holy is experienced in our lives, what moves us to pray, and what makes our hearts lift—or ache.

The Primate is inviting all Canadian Anglicans to listen carefully to their experiences of how God has touched their hearts, and to share their prayers for our beloved church with one another.



CONVENING *A conversation circle*

Any group of 4 or 5 Anglicans may form a conversation circle. Larger gatherings, such as a committee, council or synod, are best broken into groupings of 4 or 5 people. Smaller groupings will allow you to complete your conversation circle’s work within a couple of hours.

Circles can be held in homes, churches or wherever suits the group. Each circle may wish to nominate one person to lead them through the 4 steps of the conversation.

What matters is making a safe and comfortable space for everyone, so that each person feels okay about speaking from their heart.

Conversation circles commit to listen to one another with acceptance and without judgment, and to make their shared prayer available to all Anglicans across the country—so that our heartbeat as a church may be heard by us all.



CONDUCTING *A conversation circle*

STEP 1: *Opening*

1. Once everyone has settled, take some time in silent prayer.
2. Then pray this prayer together (*written in 1963 by Archbishop Howard Clarke*):

Draw your church together, O Lord, into one great company of disciples, together following our Lord Jesus Christ into every walk of life, together serving him in his mission to the world, and together witnessing to his love on every continent and island. We ask this in his name and for his sake. Amen

STEP 2: *Speaking from the heart*

Everyone in the circle answers one question from each set of two:

- *When and how do you pray?*

Describe a time when prayer came from deep in your heart.

- *Where do you meet God?*

Describe a time in your life when you had a sense God was with you.

- *What story about Jesus touches your heart?*

Describe a time when you felt close to Jesus.

STEP 3: *Reflecting and praying on words of Jesus from the Gospel of John*

1. Ask someone to read this passage from John (John 15.12-17).

[Jesus said,] “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.”

2. Everyone in the circle answers this question:

What in this passage made you stop and think?

3. Ask someone to read the passage again.

4. Everyone in the circle answers these three questions:

In light of these words of Jesus:

a. describe a time when our church made your heart glad;

b. describe a time when our church made your heart ache; and

c. describe a time when our church gave you hope.

5. When everyone has answered, spend some time in silent prayer, and then answer the following question together. Ask someone to record your answer (see “*Sharing your Conversation Circle’s Prayer*” below).

What is your heartfelt prayer for our Church?

STEP 4: *Closing*

Close your conversation circle by praying together, silently or aloud, and conclude by exchanging the Peace with one another.

SHARING: *Share your conversation circle’s prayer with the whole church*

Submit your conversation circle’s prayer online at www.anglican.ca/heartbeat. Once you have submitted the prayer, you will receive a confirmation by email.

If you do not have internet access, mail your prayer to:

Heartbeat of the Church
Anglican Church of Canada
80 Hayden Street
Toronto, ON M4Y 3G2

Be sure to include your name, parish affiliation, city/town and province, telephone contact, as well as your conversation circle’s heartfelt prayer for the church.