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Provincial Newsletter of the Anglican Women's Fellowship

"United in Prayer, Service & Love"

AWF Liaison Bishop's Christmas Message for 2023 The Right Reverend Daniel Kgomoso

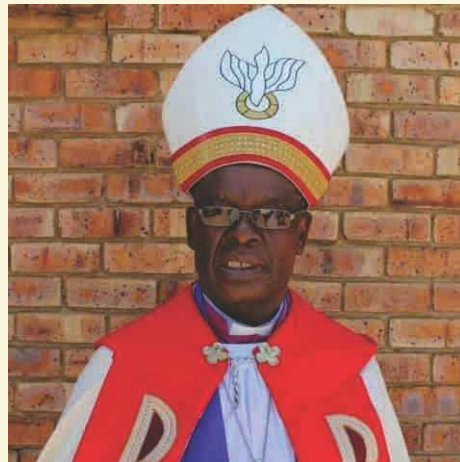


Dear Sisters in Christ,

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

I want to start my letter by requesting that the AWF and other peace-loving individuals step up their prayers for God's people in conflict-ridden countries around the world. My thinking was occupied while I wrote this Christmas Message by the turmoil and violence that have become commonplace during 2023. On 7 October, just when we were beginning to hope that Russia's invasion of Ukraine would cease, and the conflict would de-escalate between the warring factions in Sudan, Hamas militants broke out from the Gaza Strip and attacked Israeli towns and kibbutzes. This incident has further complicated the instability that has characterised the Middle East for seven decades and has worsened the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Approximately 1,400 Israelis, mostly civilians, were murdered and 229 were taken captive as a result of Hamas's attacks. In retaliation, Israel launched airstrikes and then launched a ground incursion into Gaza with the stated goal of eliminating the Islamist militant organization. Medical authorities in Hamas-run Gaza said in early October that more than 8,000 people, including more than 3,457 minors had been killed in the enclave.

Despite the horrifying picture that has been drawn above, I would like to offer the world the good news and word of hope. Since God made us, He does embrace us in His arms, just as a parent holds their child. He loved us and sent His Son, the Light of the World so that we would have courage when things get difficult and joy when things get manageable. For this reason, we can rejoice this Christmas because the light has arrived and is shining on hearts



Many people nowadays are going through difficult circumstances and feel as though they no longer have control over their immediate or distant destiny.

And it is during such moments that I am most drawn to the real meaning of Christmas. That is when the true meaning of Christmas emerged. Individuals who once were oppressed and desperately needed anything to drive out the darkness in their lives were blessed with the reality of Christmas. And it was God who revealed himself to them, giving them strength and new life. Thus, this Christmas, possibly for the first in many, we can fully appreciate the significance and immense delight of the arrival of the Messiah, the Saviour, and the one who will save us and give us newfound hope and happiness.

A child is born to you. Amazing. An amazing mystery.

God descends to earth as a helpless baby, a crying little child in need of love and tenderness, and a mother and a father to keep him, to be kind to him, and to care for him. God does not come as a warrior, not as a great leader, and not as someone who will forge new paths in some strange, distant world. You also ponder. "This is the Son of God," you declare as you glance at the young person. It is a mystery. We are also unaware of his motivation. However, there

are a few fundamental explanations for why he might act in this manner. He does so because he is no longer in love. And love acts in this way. If God is to become one of us, if he is to share in our humanity as humans, then he must go through the same experiences as all young children: weakness and the helplessness to take care of oneself other than by reaching out to people around him.

He would go through the helplessness of a child, the struggles of a teenager, and, of course, the most painful experience of all, that of sharing the good news of God's rescue and healing with a world that might not welcome him.

We are reminded at Christmas time that God became incarnate of the Virgin Mary. God Himself came to share our pain, almost to apologize for the pain that many of us continue to experience in our lives. This is what love does. And out of this comes the great joy of knowing that we are never alone. That God is with us through our joys and our sorrows, and that we walk with him into all eternity.

When Jesus came, he instructed us to "Love one another as I have loved you". Let us therefore love one another as Jesus loved us. And if we do that, we will change the world.

I want to paraphrase a quote from Howard Thurman's speech to wrap up this message. It reads: The challenge of Christmas makes us aware that we are the instruments of His love in the world, we are His hands, His eyes, His feet, His heart. And it is this that makes the challenge of Christmas.

I want to take a moment to wish you a very Merry Christmas. Let us celebrate Hope, Peace, Love and Joy. I pray that all four of these will fill your life in every way this Christmas and beyond. I am grateful to God.

Grace and peace + Dan Mpumalanga





Christmas Message From the Provincial President's Desk

As 2023 draws to a close, the sentiments expressed by Washington Irving resonate deeply: "Christmas is a season that ignites the fire of hospitality in the halls and kindles the warm flame of charity within our hearts."

Warm greetings for the Yuletide season, wherein the spirit of the Lord permeates our hearts as we immerse ourselves in the Advent season, steeped in the love of Jesus.

It is my earnest prayer for the church, and particularly for the AWF, that the Christmas of 2023 be embraced with the profound love of Jesus. I pray that your acts of love and service, not only during this festive period but throughout the year, serve as a beacon guiding others to a deeper understanding of Jesus.

As we commemorate the birth of Christ, may His radiant light illuminate your path, and may the tranquil peace synonymous with Christmas envelop your heart, home, and cherished ones.

May the profound significance of Christmas, the bearer of good tidings, remain steadfast in your life and household, while joy, contentment, and prosperity grace your home during this festive season.

In this year's Christmas, may you discover unwavering hope and resilience amidst the world's challenges, and may the redemptive grace heralded by Christ's birth be a constant presence in your life. Merry Christmas, and may your home be abundantly blessed.



Let us always bear in mind that this Christmas centres on Jesus; may the Almighty shower His blessings upon you.

Merry Christmas to you and your loved ones, accompanied by heartfelt wishes for an exceptional 2024."

Sincerely and affectionately yours,

Pam Mutonintshi

Provincial President



Highlights of events and achievements for the year 2023 from the President's desk

I extend my heartfelt gratitude for the gracious hospitality extended by the Diocese of Christ the King during our recent PEXCO and Presidents Meeting held on 18 -22 October 2023 at St. Benedict's House, Rosettenville. It was an honour to convene at the site where the inaugural meeting of the AWF took place between March 30th and April 2nd, 1965.

We were honoured by the gracious presence of Bishop Mkhusele Sobantwana and Chaplain Rev Netta Gallant, whose welcoming Eucharist enriched our gathering.



*ACSA Deputy Register Rosalie Manning and
AWF Provincial President, Pamela Mntonintshi*

I commend all the Dioceses for actively engaging with the resources provided by the ACSA Environmental Network during the Green Anglicans Provincial Conference in May. The efforts displayed by those who shared images of tree planting and vegetable gardens are truly commendable and deeply appreciated. It is heartening to witness the commitment of all Dioceses in honouring special occasions through diverse engagements and activities.

During the MU Conference in August, Ms. Sharon Harper, named Nosizwe, Worldwide President, inspired members to embrace God's assignment, urging them to collaborate with fellowships. She emphasized that transformation is imminent as we are already transformed through our faith in Jesus

It is our attitude at the beginning of a difficult task which, more than anything else, will affect its successful outcome. -William James.



Special acknowledgment goes to Rector Robert Hendricks for ensuring our comfort.

One of the highlights of our gathering was Ms. Rosalie Manning's invaluable insights into the Constitution, providing us with much-needed clarity.

Additionally, our heartfelt gratitude extends to the AWF catering team, including Mother Tash, Ellen, Mandisa, and all the dedicated AWF ladies who prepared the delightful and nourishing meals.

We know that God is stirring the hearts of women, creating within them a hunger of service. Women are seeking to know Christ intimately: to serve Him more.



*AWF Provincial President with Worldwide MU
President Ms Sharon Harper*





Diocesan Presidents donating to the St. Mary Children's Home

The recent PSC session held online on September 19th, 2023, saw Mrs. Peggy Khambule representing us admirably, providing detailed feedback. We are grateful for her invaluable contribution to the work of the divine.

The SACC Central Committee convened at UNISA from November 27th to 29th, 2023.

Notably, Professor Jerry Pillay delivered a thought-provoking public lecture titled "A Christian Voice in a World in Conflict," offering a profound understanding of the Gaza and Israel conflict.



We celebrate the recognition of our esteemed member, Provincial Alternate Vice President Mrs. Lungsi Ntlokwana, who was admitted as a member of the Order of the Diocese of Port Elizabeth

Recognizing the profound impact of presence, I've committed, in my role as President, to prioritize attending Diocesan invitations. This year, I've had the privilege of participating in five Diocesan Conferences. I've been deeply impressed by the dedication showcased in these events—remarkable preparations, insightful speakers, and well-structured conference programs.

Moreover, I'm grateful for the unwavering support from clergy members and the encouraging messages from other guilds. Witnessing the solidarity of AWF presence from neighbouring Dioceses to support one another has been truly uplifting.



Former President from the Diocese of George, Susan Williams was also awarded with a Simon of Cyrene Award



Ms. Lucille Henniker, former Provincial President was admitted to the Order of Simon of Cyrene on December 3rd, 2023, at St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town.



In response to the challenge posed by GBV, we have introduced a new Portfolio.

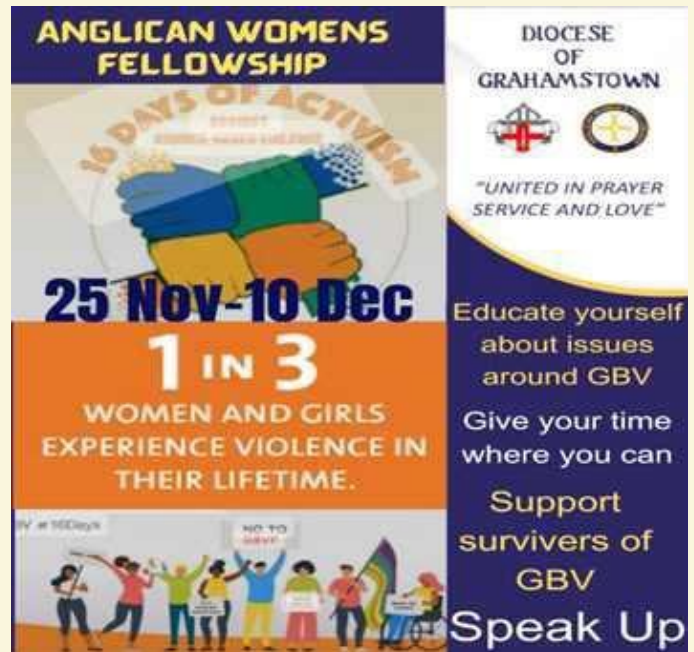
Heartlines was invited to our PEXCO and Presidents Meeting in October, enriching us with resources and an inspiring discourse led by Mrs. Merrishia Singh-Naicker and Pastor Naicker.



Mrs. Merrishia Singh-Naicker giving a brief overview Of Heartline resources for anti GBV campaigns.



Pastor Naicker very vibrant in encouraging AWF members to utilize available resources for anti-GBV interventions.



During the Interfaith GBV Summit and Signature Campaign hosted in Emseni Benoni, a pivotal moment unfolded on November 16th, 2023, with the launch of a collaborative Draft Interfaith Statement of Commitment to eradicate Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF).

I am encouraged by the collective stance taken by all Dioceses against the scourge of this "pandemic" by aligning with church groups and communities, raising our voices against GBV. This unified action truly embodies our purpose.

Your unwavering dedication and commitment are deeply appreciated.



PEXCO and Presidents Meeting at the Diocese of Christ the King in October



Diocesan Presidents wearing black on Thursday 19 October during the PEXCO and Presidents Meeting in October 2023 as a symbol of strength and courage representing their solidarity with victims and survivors of violence and calling for the world without rape and violence.



Hosting Diocesan Team: Rector of St Benedict's House Robert Hendricks, Diocesan President, Magdalene Mogano and AWF chaplain, Rev Netta Gallant



PEXCO and Presidents chilling with children at St Mary Children's Home in Rosettenville



Chaplain and AWF stalwart, Mandisa Mdlulwa Who celebrated her 80th Birthday.



Diocese of Mbashe donating blankets during their conference in September



Presidents showcasing designs of the AWF promotion material.



PE and Grahamstown Diocesan Presidents Buyiswa Malungisa and Noxolo Tshangela at the PEXCO and Presidents Meetings in October 2023.



Executive Members Contact Information:

Provincial President

Pamela Mntonintshi
1196 D. Gama Crescent
Spruitview, 1431
Cell: 081 565 4256

Email: pamelamntonintshi.pm@gmail.com

Provincial Secretary

Jacoba Kleinsmith
PO Box 38107, Pinelands, 7430
Cell: 083 962 7049

Email: awfprovsecretary1@gmail.com

Provincial Treasurer

Frances Dickson
22 United Street, Westering
Port Elizabeth, 6025
Cell: 082 843 2490

Email: francesdianadickson1947@gmail.com

Stock Controller

Ms Busisiwe Mdaka
Cell: 082 577 5580

Email: mwbusi@mweb.co.za

Provincial Editor

Lungsi Ntlokwana
99 Avondale Road
Kabega Park
Port Elizabeth
6025
041 360 0374

Email: lntlokwana@telkomsa.net

AWF Office

St. Edmunds Anglican Church
31 Margaret Avenue
Kempton Park

Email: AWFprovincialoffice@gmail.com



PEXCO at the Meeting in October 2023

Women Empowerment

By Jolene Brighton

Validate women's self-expression.

- "If you see a woman brave enough to make herself vulnerable and share her personal story on social media, let her know you see her and you honour her truth."
- "If you see another person putting down her personal experience or bullying her, step in and gently remind them that this is her truth, and you applaud her for speaking it."

Compliments stick in peoples mind and increase confidence. It takes no time to give someone a small boost!

- "Try to compliment a woman on something other than her looks once daily," Jolene says. "We all like to be told we're beautiful, and we also love to hear we are brilliant, kind, dedicated, strong, etc."
- If they have worked hard and done a good job, tell them.

Find time to spend with yourself.

- "We tend to forget about the importance of untagging and separating ourselves from others to reflect on what's happening in our lives."



Website:

www.anglicanwomensfellowship.org.za