

BLESSING OF ACW PLACE

The Rev. Miranda Sutherland, Chaplain

Diocese of New Westminster

September 9, 2023 at 11am

Greetings to all of you and thank you President Kelly for your welcome and introduction.

We gather here today at our new ACW Place, satisfied that we have done well in securing our new home. The efforts of President Kelly Bowman and the Board must be commended in making this happen.

All the work and prayers have surely paid off. Thanks be to God for grace and mercy that has brought us thus far.

I am proud to be associated with this awesome national Christian Group of women as your Chaplain and will continue to hold you up in prayer and to make myself available to you in any way that I possibly can – assist in providing spiritual support, facilitating discussions, offering pastoral care and collaborate with other leaders within the ACW and through the Board, to ensure that the spiritual needs of the organization are being met; as well as to encourage participation in the activities and events organized by the ACW.

The Anglican Church Women of Canada (ACW), became the new name in 1964, after it was founded as Women's Auxiliary in 1893. With its mission "to empower and support women in their Christian faith, and to promote social justice and peace within their communities", we here in the diocese of New Westminster, will continue to do our part in all the practical projects, singularly or in partnerships with other organizations and spiritual training and development as a unique set of stewards in the Kingdom of God.

A passage of scripture that I am inviting us to reflect on this morning is written in Psalm 127:1-2 (NIV):

"Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat— for he grants sleep to those he loves."

This passage reminds us of the importance of seeking God's guidance and blessing in all our endeavors, including the establishment of this new space.

It emphasizes that without the Lord's presence and providence, our efforts alone are in vain, but with His involvement, our work can bear abundant fruit.

It's a fitting passage to reflect upon as we dedicate our new ACW Place to the service of God and this community and in this diocese.

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Prayer of Blessing and Thanksgiving

Let us pray

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God of Creation and Source of all Goodness, we are gathered here today with hearts full of gratitude and joy, to celebrate and bless our new Anglican Church Women of Canada (ACW) Place, here at 6678 152ND Street, Surrey. We thank you for guiding us to this space, a place where we can continue to grow in faith and carry out your work with renewed dedication.

For this ACW Place, **we thank you O Lord.**

Lord, we are thankful for the opportunities that this new location offers us to expand our outreach, service, and ministry. May this space be a sanctuary of love and compassion, a place where your grace abounds, and where lives are transformed through our activities and service to others.

For this ACW Place, **we thank you O Lord.**

We invite you Holy Spirit, to be present in every room, at every corner, and in every heart that will gather within these walls. May our gatherings here be filled with the spirit of unity, understanding, and purpose. May our meetings, discussions, and activities be guided by your wisdom and inspired by your love.

For this ACW Place, **we thank you O Lord.**

Lord, we are mindful of the responsibility that comes with this new beginning. Grant us the strength and commitment to use this space for the betterment of our community, our church, and the world beyond. May it be a beacon of hope, a place where lives are touched, and your name is glorified.

For this ACW Place, **we thank you O Lord.**

We also offer our gratitude for the hands and hearts that have labored to make this new location a reality. We thank you for the leadership of our diocese - our Bishop John, for our ACW President Kelly, for the Board of Governance and for all those who have worked tirelessly to prepare and maintain this space, and those who have generously supported this endeavor and will continue to do so.

For them and for this ACW Place, **we thank you O Lord.**

And now O God, as we embark on this new chapter in the journey of the ACW of the Diocese of New Westminster, we seek your guidance and blessing.

Bless this ground, this location, our neighbours, all who will gather here to give alms and all those who will come to seek alms and support of all kinds. Bless all our programs and givers in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

May our efforts here bear much fruit for your kingdom, and may your presence continue to dwell richly in us and in all that we do, all for Christ's sake. Amen.

We now close with the singing of the doxology –

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise God all creatures here below

Praise God above the heavenly host

Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost

Amen

