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What is Praxis?

See www.praxisworship.org.uk
Praxis was formed in 1990, sponsored by the Liturgical Commission, the Group for the Renewal of Worship (GROW) and the Alcuin Club to provide and support liturgical education in the Church of England.

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Affiliation

The work that Praxis does is supported mainly by affiliation. If you are not an affiliate, why not consider becoming one?

Accessible Texts for Holy Baptism

In July the General Synod debated alternative texts to use at a baptism service. We print them for you on page 2. The process of authorizing liturgical texts in the General Synod is complicated and Colin Buchanan, a veteran of synodical procedures, explains what will happen next.

Please note that the alternative texts are NOT a complete service (you will find there is no actual baptism!). They are a series of separate texts, any or all or none of which may take the place of texts in the existing *Common Worship* service. The sample service appended is only for information, *not* for use.

What happens now to those baptism texts?

The additional texts for baptism, to become part of *Common Worship*, started their final synodical passage in July. (They are technically only a selection of texts, not a new alternative service.) They had already had the preliminary airing under Canon B5A which allows texts scheduled for the authorization procedure to be tried out in advance in parishes or other places specified by the two archbishops. In July they were referred under Standing Orders to a Revision Committee, and members of Synod (and others who read the Report of Proceedings) had to submit proposed changes to the Clerk of Synod by 15 August. The Revision Committee has the task (led by a Steering Committee within its membership) of reviewing the texts carefully in the light of the reports from trial use, the expressed mind of speakers in Synod, and the written submissions received by 15 August. On

the basis of this they have to recommend a revised text to Synod, presumably in February 2015. Then comes the General Synod Revision Stage, during which members may move that any of the texts be referred back to the Revision Committee for reconsideration, and, if any such motion is carried, the Revision Committee does then have to re-think its own text, and has to come back to Synod for a Second Revision Stage, at which, in respect of any alterations proposed, members of Synod may move actual textual amendment.

Once the Revision procedure is complete, the texts are referred to the House of Bishops to decide their final form (they would be unwise to do more than move a comma), and the texts return to Synod for Final Approval, with two-thirds majorities needed in each House. If only one Revision Stage is needed (i.e. no motions to refer texts back succeed), then after that Stage is concluded in February, the House of Bishops can do its bit at any meeting before July, and Final Approval will come then. However, if a Second Revision Stage is needed, then it will presumably come at the July Synod, with the House of Bishops then approving the texts over breakfast, and Final Approval coming within the same group of sessions. As this General Synod is dissolved in Summer 2015 and a new Synod elected, it would be folly to allow Final Approval to be postponed till after the election – this present Synod must finish the job.

The texts appear overleaf

The New Baptism Texts

Presentation of the Candidates

The candidates may be presented to the congregation. Where appropriate, they may be presented by their godparents or sponsors.

EITHER

At the baptism of infants, the president addresses the whole congregation: Jesus said, 'Let the children come to me. Do not stop them'. We thank God for N and N who have come to be baptized today. Christ welcomes them into his Church. So I ask you all: Will you help these children to become part of God's family?

We will.

Will you promise to support them as they begin their journey of faith?

We will.

The president then addresses the parents and godparents:

Parents and godparents, you speak for these children today. God knows them by name and they are his.

Will you pray for them, and help them to follow Christ?

We will.

OR

The president asks those candidates for baptism who are able to answer for themselves

Do you wish to be baptized?

I do.

Testimony by the candidate(s) may follow.

The president addresses the whole congregation

We thank God for N and N who have come to be baptized today. Christ welcomes them into his Church. Will you promise to support them on their journey of faith?

We will.

The Decision

We all wander from God and lose our way: Christ comes to find us and welcomes us home.

In baptism we respond to his call.

Therefore I ask:

Do you turn away from sin?

I turn away from sin.

Do you reject evil?

I reject evil.

The candidates, together with their parents, godparents and sponsors, may now turn to face the font, a cross, or the large candle.

Do you turn to Christ?

I turn to Christ.

Do you give your life to him?

I give my life to him.

Signing with the Cross

The president or another minister makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of each candidate, saying Christ claims you for his own. Receive the sign of the cross.

The president may invite parents, godparents and sponsors to sign the candidates with the cross. When all the candidates have been signed, the president says

Do not be ashamed of Christ.

You are his for ever.

Stand bravely with him.

Fight against the power of evil, and remain faithful to Christ to the end of your life.

May almighty God deliver you from the powers of darkness, and lead you in the light and obedience of Christ.

Amen.

Prayer over the Water

EITHER

Loving Father, we thank you for your servant Moses who led your people through the waters of the Red Sea

to freedom in the Promised Land.

We thank you for your Son Jesus, who has rescued us from the deep waters of sin and shown us the way of salvation.

Now send your Spirit, that those who are washed in this water may share Christ's death and resurrection, and find true freedom as your children, risen with Christ for ever.

Amen.

OR

We praise you, loving Father, for the gift of your Son Jesus. At his baptism in the River Jordan you poured your Spirit on him.

He sent his followers to baptize all who turn to him. And so, Father, we ask you to bless this water, that those who are baptized in it may be cleansed in the water of life, filled with your Spirit and know themselves loved as your children, safe in Christ for ever.

Amen.

Commission

EITHER

Where the newly baptized are unable to answer for themselves, a minister addresses the congregation, parents and godparents. The address includes

- The welcome of the Church, local and universal
- The importance of belonging to the Christian community
- The responsibilities of parents and godparents
- The challenge to grow in Christian faith, prayer and practice.

OR

Where the newly baptized are able to answer for themselves, a minister addresses them. The address includes

- The welcome of the Church, local and universal
- The importance of belonging to the Christian community
- The challenge to grow in Christian faith, prayer and practice
- The call to share God's love.

A sample form for the wording of the Commission is suggested in both cases, but ministers are strongly encouraged to use their own words at this point. This information may be found on the Church of England website. There are some good accompanying notes in the Synod paper.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2011171/gs%201958%20-%20additional%20texts%20for%20holy%20baptism.pdf>

Events

Welcoming Weddings

Wednesday 15 October 2014

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Praxis East

Bar Hill Church Centre, CB23 8EH

Speaker: Sandra Millar

A follow-up to the Weddings Project, this day will look at the opportunities of the wedding service and suggest examples of good practice, and ideas that can help make the service special, serious and personal.

Contact elizabeth.gregory@talk21.com, 07528 518968

Worship for the winter of life

Thursday 30 October 2014

10 a.m. - 3.30 p.m. Praxis Midlands

St Philip's Anglican Cathedral, Birmingham

Speakers: David Winter & Robin Rolls
How do Christians face up spiritually to getting older, and how can we support and encourage those who are approaching or are in 'the winter of life'? Clergy and lay ministers often struggle, for example, with the challenge of leading worship in residential and care homes. Canon David Winter, retired parish priest and broadcaster, who has just published *At the End of the Day – Enjoying Life in the Departure Lounge* (BRF 2013), is one of our speakers, as is Robin Rolls, Director of the Outlook Trust.

Contact jayne.crooks@blueyonder.co.uk

Funerals and how to improve them

Wednesday 5 November

10.30 a.m. - 3.30 p.m. Praxis South

St Mark's, Hamilton Terrace, London NW8 9UT

Speaker: Sandra Millar, Projects Officer for the Archbishops' Council

A fresh look at this vital pastoral ministry in changing cultural conditions, when clergy and lay leaders are faced with new issues.

Contact peter@furber.me.uk, 01202 296886

Music and Liturgy

Thursday 5 March 2015

10 a.m. - 3.15 p.m. Praxis Midlands

St Chad's RC Cathedral (Grimshaw Room), Birmingham B4 6EX

Speakers: Andrew Maries (Keynote Trust) & Jon Payne (RSCM)

An opportunity to explore the role of music

in supporting and communicating liturgy. Booking form at www.praxismidlands.org.uk

Contact jayne.crooks@blueyonder.co.uk

Making Way: Labyrinths and sacred moments

Saturday 25 April 2015

10.30 a.m. - 3.30 p.m. Praxis Yorkshire Wakefield Cathedral

Speakers: Andi Hofbauer, Precentor at Wakefield Cathedral, and Helen Bent, Bishop's Adviser in Music and Worship, Sheffield Diocese

Praxis Yorkshire and Wakefield Cathedral join together to offer a day of walking and praying the labyrinth in and around the cathedral and sharing ideas for creating sacred moments. Workshops will make use of the Wakefield labyrinth and give opportunity to create different sacred moments inside and outside the building. Leave with a labyrinth to go!

Contact helen@thebents.co.uk – 01709 363850

NOT all over by Christmas, Commemorating World War One: 2016-2018

Thursday 8 October 2015

10 a.m. - 3.30 p.m. Praxis Midlands St Chad's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Birmingham B4 6EX

Speakers: Michael Snape & Andrew Wickens

The day will help churches plan worship to commemorate key events from the final two years of World War 1, focusing on 'What it means to remember', 'War: Church and Clergy' and 'The Home Front'. We plan to share some local church thinking from across our region and to create an act of worship that will incorporate images and music as well as words.

Contact jayne.crooks@blueyonder.co.uk

The Walter Tapper Lecture 2014

Unthreading the Labyrinth: is the

Community Church a Tomb or Womb?

Friday 17 October at 10.30 a.m.

Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield, WF14 0BN

Bishop David Stancliffe

Contact gguiver@mirfield.org.uk
www.mirfieldcommunity.org.uk

Free Taster Day at Sarum College

Sarum College is hosting a free postgraduate study taster day on Saturday 21 March 2015 for anyone wanting to know more about postgraduate study at the college. The four programmes include the MA in Christian Liturgy which is a unique programme providing a comprehensive study of the major aspects of Christian worship. To find out more visit www.sarum.ac.uk/tasterdays or telephone 01722 424800.

Report

Transforming Worship: Funerals

Praxis South-West

We realised that there were several aspects to funeral ministry so we decided to invite the thoughts of a range of practitioners.

We began the day by taking a look at the basic Funeral Liturgy in Common Worship with Tom Clammer, the Precentor at Salisbury Cathedral. We started with some theology and then asked ourselves what we thought we were doing when we conducted a funeral, before moving on to the structure of the service and many of the practicalities when planning one.

Very popular, judging by the questions and comments afterwards, were the thoughts offered by Richard Reakes, a former funeral director in Somerset, and now a parish priest in the Diocese of Gloucester. Having been on both sides of this important relationship he helped us to understand more about the value as well as the snags that arise in this working partnership.

Our own team members, Gill Behenna and Colin Lunt, gave us their top ten tips for preaching at funerals, when it is too easy to be bland or miss an opportunity to make a real difference. Finally, Christopher Helyer, a former Head Teacher and RSCM officer, helped us to use music well as we ministered to the bereaved.

✍ *Robin Lodge is the Chair of Praxis South-West.*

Music News - Anne Harrison

Decani Music

For more than twenty years Decani Music, run from Suffolk by Stephen and Sue Dean, has been the UK distributor for the church music publications of OCP (www.ocp.org/products) and GIA (www.giamusic.com/sacred_music), including songs and liturgical settings by Bernadette Farrell, Paul Inwood, Marty Haugen and many other composers from both the UK and the USA. From 1 August 2014 they have handed over this part of their very efficient mail order service to McCrimmons (www.mccrimmons.com).

Decani Music (www.decanimusic.com) will continue to run the Calamus copyright licence for the UK and Ireland, and to sell their own publications, which include the hymn book *Laudate* and the seasonal resources *Resurrexit* and *Veni Emmanuel*. They will also continue to distribute the publications and recordings of the Taizé Community, including the annual small songbook (£3), a DVD entitled *Praying with the Songs of Taizé* and collections of instrumental parts.

Taizé Community

Next year will see the brothers of Taizé marking the centenary of the birth of Brother Roger in Switzerland (12 May 1915), the 75th anniversary of his arrival in the little French village of Taizé in August 1940 and the tenth anniversary of his death during evening prayer in the Church of Reconciliation on 16 August 2005. Young adults between 18 and 35 are particularly invited to participate in the 'Gathering for a New Solidarity' at Taizé from Sunday 9 to Sunday 16 August 2015. Young people are also being encouraged to lead a prayer in the style of Taizé around 12 May and to 'imagine an act of solidarity, to recall the memory of Brother Roger and to put into practice his call to follow Christ.' More details may be found on the Community's website (www.taize.fr/en), including dates for weeks in 2015 when school and university groups from the UK will be especially welcome. Meanwhile the

next European meeting will take place in Prague from 29 December 2014 to 2 January 2015. Several tens of thousands of young adults are expected, to sing, pray and learn together.

The Revd Dr James Steven (Dean of Studies and Director of Liturgy and Worship at Sarum College, Salisbury, also recently appointed Canon Theologian of Gloucester Cathedral) is organising two study events relating to the Taizé Community in 2015: on Wednesday 6 May a Pastoral Liturgy workshop from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. entitled 'Taizé: Liturgical Wisdom for the Church', and in late October an academic symposium on 'The Legacy of Taizé'. For further information about these and other training opportunities, visit the Sarum College website (www.sarum.ac.uk).

Music for peace

Sue Gilmurray, a member of St Mary's Church, Ely, and Christopher Idle, a retired Anglican priest and former editor of *News of Hymnody*, gave one of the presentations at this summer's Hymn Society conference. Their subject was 'Prince of peace and God of battles? – hymns and songs of peace and war'. Both touched on controversial texts, such as 'Onward Christian soldiers' and 'O valiant hearts', and on the potential problems of the metaphorical use of military imagery in hymns as well as the need for hymn texts which express a longing for real peace.

Should we reclaim, adapt or abandon the scriptural metaphors for the fight against evil found in such passages as Ephesians 6? Sue suggested that since the battle against sin and evil has to continue until the end of the age, themes of struggle and conflict will remain significant in hymnody, but that metaphors of warfare have the power to sanitise or glamorise it. She noted that the glorification of war in hymns is fading, as bellicose imagery disappears from new texts and more writers address the part Christians should play in working as well as praying for peace. Among the specific hymns mentioned by Chris were Timothy Dudley-Smith's

'Behold a broken world, we pray' and Fred Kaan's 'God! As with silent hearts we bring to mind'. He also drew attention to a Charles Wesley hymn, 'Messiah, Prince of peace!' as an unusual example of an earlier anti-war hymn (the text can be found on www.hymnary.org).

Songs for the Road to Peace is the title of a collection of six hymns by Chris Idle and six songs by Sue Gilmurray, all relating to peace and peace-making. Published in 2012 by the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship, it is available at £5 for the score, £5 for an audio CD, or £7 for score and CD together, plus £1 for postage, via their website (www.anglicanpacifists.com). You can also find sample pdf files of a hymn and a song in the Resources section of the website. At the conference Sue introduced one of her latest songs, still a work in progress, 'What did you do in the war? What will we do with the war?'

North American musician Marty Haugen has recently produced a collection for GIA entitled *Sing for Peace*. Most of the songs set his own words, or adaptations of Bible verses, but there are also settings of two texts by Mennonite writer Adam M. L. Tice and one by Shirley Erena Murray from New Zealand, 'Everything that has voice, sing for peace'. This also appeared in her 2008 collection *Touch the Earth Lightly* (Hope Publishing, available in the UK from Stainer & Bell, www.stainer.co.uk). Among Murray's earlier peace-related hymns is 'How happy you who work for peace!' Subscribers to the HymnQuest database (<http://hymnquest.com>) can read her published texts, which may be reproduced for worship by CCL licence holders.

A striking song about the consequences of war and the arms race is 'If the war goes on' by John Bell and Graham Maule, from the Wild Goose Publications 2004 songbook *I Will Not Sing Alone*. Search on www.ionabooks.com for details of this and the accompanying CD, with music from the Wild Goose Collective and the Macappella Ceilidh band (there are audio samples on the website).

Musical resources for Remembrance Sunday, for marking the centenary of the

Books

hostilities of World War One, and for praying for peace are offered on the *Sunday by Sunday* resource pages of the RSCM's website (www.rscm.com) – click on 'Sunday by Sunday', then choose 'Downloads'.

Music and justice

At the 2014 conference of the National Network of Pastoral Musicians, held in Chester in July, Bernadette Farrell gave what is described on the NNPM website (www.nnpm.org) as a 'humble and humbling' keynote address. Bernadette, a Roman Catholic musician who is an Organiser for London Citizens, spoke about 'Minding the gap': the gap between rich and poor and the gap between social action and liturgical action. She believes that both gaps have widened in recent years and that the lack of connection between liturgy and social action weakens both areas.

Among the Anglicans attending was Andrew Maries, who led a Big Sing as well as workshops on 'songs in the key of justice', as reported in Issue 42. Among the songs he used was Shirley Erena Murray's 'A place at the table', set to music by Lori True and published by GIA (G-5677). The refrain includes the words, 'And God will delight when we are creators of justice and joy.' The only recently published UK hymnal to include this is the Church of Scotland's *Church Hymnary: Fourth Edition*, also available from Canterbury Press as *Hymns of Glory, Songs of Praise*. Andrew is being honoured this year by the Royal School of Church Music at their Celebration Day in Hereford Cathedral on Saturday 4 October, when he will be awarded an honorary ARSCM to mark his contribution to musical ministry and training. Among those becoming honorary Fellows of the RSCM at the same ceremony will be Durham hymnologist Professor Dick Watson and the Director of Music at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, Dr Stephen Darlington.

The Study of Liturgy and Worship: An Alcuin Guide

Juliette Day and Benjamin Gordon-Taylor (editors), SPCK, 2013, 254pp., ISBN 978-0281069095, £25

This book is long overdue and to be warmly welcomed. An introductory overview of a broad range of liturgical topics, with contributions from multiple authors, it should quickly become an essential volume in the library of all preparing for public ministry, as well as being a valuable addition to the collections of those whose training was of a previous generation.

All its contributors are well-established scholars in their field, with most having significant liturgical teaching experience. They come from a range of traditions and backgrounds and, as such, the book exhibits a breadth which will mean that it will be useful and welcomed beyond the confines of Anglicanism.

The book divides into four sections and within each of these sections is a series of chapters, each one a concise introduction to a particular subject. The first section, 'Foundations', examines the basic building blocks of Christian worship. The second, 'Elements' explores a variety of liturgical components: from space and time to music and language. The third, 'Event', drills down to discussions of particular rites: initiation, Eucharist, Service of the Word, healing and reconciliation, marriage, and death and dying. The final section, 'Dimensions', looks outward as it explores links between liturgy and aspects of the Church's life in the world in the fields of ethics, mission, culture and ecumenism.

Each chapter has a subject-specific bibliography which, in addition to the general bibliography of 16 pages, makes the book a valuable launch pad to further, more detailed study. Those wishing to plumb further depths might lament the absence of footnotes, but the editors are keen to point out that this is an introductory text. There is always more that can be said, but here we have the essentials presented in such a way as to whet the appetite for further exploration.

The Alcuin Club is to be applauded both for initiating this project and for the way it has been delivered: in particular Day and Gordon-Taylor's clarity of organization and editorial care. In a culture in which Liturgy is fast becoming something of a Cinderella subject within the ministerial training curriculum, one hopes that this book will play a part in restoring a rightful balance.

✉ *Peter Moger, Precentor of York Minster*

The Canterbury Companion to The Book of Common Prayer Gospels

Raymond Chapman, Canterbury Press, 2013, 185pp, ISBN 978-1848255685, £16.99

This is a worthy addition to the late Professor Chapman's legacy of books of prayers and devotions. It provides stimulating devotional commentaries for every Sunday and Holy-Day gospel in the *Prayer Book*, each complemented by a helpful prayer and an apposite passage from Chapman's personal pantheon of Christian authors and preachers. All is set within the author's sensitive and illuminating appreciation of each gospel's place and purpose along the *Prayer Book's* unfolding path through the Church's year. Much to be appreciated is his wealth of simply-put but spiritually-forceful gems of expression. 'We are more like sheep in their waywardness than in their innocence' is a good example for Trinity 3.

The commentaries are charmingly written. They both challenge and encourage, and while personal in their appeal, they are not cloying. They will be of value both to individual worshippers and to preachers, and – so long as their purposes are primarily devotional – to those with a critical knowledge of the four gospels no less than to church members less aware of questions that lurk beneath the surface of a text.

The choice of authors from which Chapman takes his extracts rather indicates his personal sympathies. But overall the items selected are wide-ranging. Some will be unfamiliar to readers, but likely to prove welcome new friends, like Giles Fletcher's 'Crucify', perhaps, for Palm Sunday. Some choices are pleasantly surprising, for example the passage from Dickens's *Bleak House* for Trinity 1. However, there is no doubting that Chapman's book will be cherished by worshippers across a wide churchmanship range.

The book is exactly what it calls itself, a companion, and it is a good companion. But it is so because the author is himself such a good companion. Throughout, we know we are being helped along the gospel way by a wise, good and courteous friend.

✉ *Richard Hoyal, Petworth*

First Impressions

The joys and sorrows of 'mystery worshipping'

As a recently retired priest, I am enjoying spending Sundays seeing what other people in the diocese get up to within their worship. I've attended early morning Communion, main morning services and some evening services, in a whole variety of churches: little and large, high and low, prestigious and unassuming. I've tried to visit different types of service within churches of varying ecclesiology. And I've tried to resist the temptation to avoid churches I don't think I'll enjoy!

Ahead of my visit, I find it helpful to research on the web for service times and details as well as something about the church building, the Christian community there and the neighbourhood of the church. Sadly not every church realises the importance of a good up-to-date website to attract newcomers. It's also helpful to know something about where to park!

I've always enjoyed the 'Ship of Fools' website, so have used their Mystery Worshipper questionnaire as a basis for my notes and reflections. It suggests two or three things to do during the worship: note down the exact opening words, time the sermon and estimate the size of the congregation. This doesn't require making too many notes during the service, which can be noticed! I once 'got caught' (making notes from a good sermon) – a warden said, jokingly, at the end of the service: 'I hope you're not giving us a critical report!' I wasn't!

Most questions are best answered soon after the service. The question about pre-service atmosphere is important. When I walk into a strange church where people are all chatting away to each other ahead of worship, I fear a clique into which it will be hard to enter. I find it easier to join a congregation if, in at least the main body of the worshipping space, people are quietly praying in anticipation of worship. The hospitality factor is also important. It is encouraging to be welcomed personally by someone who smiles, but who doesn't immediately quiz you about your intentions! (Are you a visitor? Are you with the baptism party?) Another important aspect of hospitality is what happens after the service when you 'stand around looking helpless'. It too frequently feels as if our churches don't expect new people to drop in and don't know how to deal with them if and when they do. So far,

however, I've only visited one church where I didn't get any welcome at all. I was just given a rather useless piece of paper at the door and told that I was 'early'. (This was in a church which regularly musters quite a large congregation. I wondered silently 'what made all the others come?', because it certainly wasn't the welcome.)

As for the service itself, the questionnaire asks 'What did you see?' and 'How did you feel?' A question about the 'cast' is not always as straightforward as it seems: too many churches assume that 'everyone' knows the names of the president (leader) and preacher without being told. (Thank God, though, for weekly sheets, even if they don't answer all the visitor's questions. Why don't more churches produce them?) Then there's the sermon and the way in which the service is conducted. As well as noting the length of the sermon, I record, briefly, what the sermon was about. I also record whether the service contains all the elements the C of E says it should, and my feelings about the presentation of the service, including, importantly, the president's style. For me that's at least as important as the quality of the sermon. The final Mystery Worshipper questions go straight to the jugular: 'Which part of the service felt like being in heaven?' and which 'In "er .. the other place"?' I particularly enjoy answering the final two MW questions: 'Did the service make you feel glad to be a Christian?' And 'What one thing will you remember about all this in seven days' time?' Only once have I had to answer these last questions negatively. In contrast, a particularly happy memory is of a vicar preaching to an all-age congregation in a round church, seated, in their midst, on the floor, surrounded by children. Brilliant!

I've learnt a lot from my visits, but feel sad, sometimes, that I'm no longer in a position to put my findings into practice. One really important thing I have discovered is that, contrary to messages frequently given out by diocesan authorities, size of congregation isn't the most important factor. What matters most about the life and worship of our church communities is that they make Jesus' good news about the kingdom of heaven visible. Praise God that most, in their many and various ways, do.

✍ Anne Horton

The first thirty seconds

I was very struck by a conversation I once had with a church organist. With ten weeks' sabbatical leave, and finding himself for the first time in many years in the position of being able to make a choice about where to go to church, he decided on an experiment. For ten weeks he would go to a different Anglican church each Sunday, meaning that in the course of his sabbatical he would visit every parish in the deanery.

His reflection on his experience was fascinating and well worth some study because it brings home the importance of first impressions. He told me that his mind was made up about whether a particular church would be the sort of place where he could belong in just thirty seconds. If the first thirty seconds was bad, no matter what the quality of the subsequent preaching, liturgy or music, he was ill-disposed towards it. If the first thirty seconds was good, it didn't matter what disasters followed, he felt he had found a church where he could belong.

From the point of view of a priest, this is very alarming because the first thirty seconds are the period of time when we have no control of what is going on. Generally this is the time when lay people – welcome, sidespeople and so on – are at the forefront of the action. The most significant moment of a newcomer's experience of our church, and the clergy are nowhere to be seen!

The industry of evangelism has a habit of making church growth sound terribly complicated. It has invented its own language (missional, modal, sodal etc.), its own technocrats (pioneer ministers, church-planters, etc.) and its own culture (fresh expressions, new monasticism, etc.). The impact can be debilitating for an ordinary parish which feels terribly left behind by all the whizzy vocabulary and ideas. However, to a great extent, church growth is manageable and do-able for even the most humble parish as long as we focus on doing a few things well. And perhaps the best place to start is the first thirty seconds. We all have new people drifting into our churches from time to time. If they receive the right sort of welcome and feel they have found a place where they can belong, a valuable start has been made.

Here, then, is a thirty-second checklist:

Outside

If the noticeboard is out of date and the grounds overgrown then the building

First Impressions

is giving the impression of death and no-one will want to go near. A simple, attractive noticeboard, with as few words as possible, and a working party sorting out the grounds are simple steps that can make a world of difference to how a church presents itself to the community.

Inside

Solid wooden doors, long paths, dark porches, doors which don't tell you whether to push or pull, poor signage and lack of disabled access are all things that seem small to us but which can put huge barriers in the way of a visitor. Look at the building through the eyes of a visitor and make the journey as simple as possible. Remember, visitors will be embarrassed, nervous and unsure of themselves.

Welcome

The single most important factor in the first thirty seconds is the person you meet first on getting through the door. A trained welcome team who smile, who are genuinely pleased to see people, and will enquire after the names of newcomers and show them to a seat is one of the most vital groups in a church.

Words

With orders of service it is the simpler the better: one document with congregational words, readings and notices all in one place. Or you could, of course, give up on paper altogether and go for the big screen!

Atmosphere

Walking into a buzz of conversation can seem friendly to those on the inside, but for a new person it can be intimidating because they feel that everyone has friends except them! The best atmosphere is one of prayer with music playing gently in the background so that the silence is compelling rather than embarrassing. A change of pace in the music just before worship begins is a wordless indication that something significant is about to happen, creates the opportunity for a non-liturgical welcome, inviting people into prayer and stillness before the service begins.

We need to resist the tendency to complicate church growth. In many ways it is simple, indeed at times almost trivial. An audit on 'The first thirty seconds' might bear surprising fruit.
✉ Philip North is Team Rector of St Pancras Old Church in London.

Welcoming beginners

Developing an inclusive liturgy each week.

In 1998, we moved to Blackpool to a parish of 25,000 with a large number of church groups and a traditional Sunday school. Child protection issues demanded that we work out what we could safely offer, and, as a consequence of a sabbatical in the States, we were keen to explore the potential of Godly Play. The congregations explored the concept of admission to Communion before confirmation and we closed the Sunday school. With a firm belief in all ages worshipping and learning together, fed by the Word, we began to offer a series of workshops twice a year to prepare children and parents/carers for a special service of Admission to Communion. We learnt that young people have many deep insights to share.

Initially training for leadership was through themed induction days where we all learned together, and gradually congregation members became more confident in exploring themes based on Scripture. This led to people taking part in diocesan courses to develop their faith and skills further and our 11.30 Sunday service became a weekly interactive Eucharist focusing on the needs of baptism families but also mindful of older members who liked a later (shorter) service.

In 2005/6 a radical re-structure of the church building created a community resource and a flexible worship space. The six-month exile in the school hall required to facilitate the building work made us ask ourselves if the three congregations (8 o'clock, 9.15 and 11.30) might worship together. Ageing congregations meant that attendance at the two earlier services was declining and we explored joining up for a number of years over Christmas/New Year, when all congregations came together for one service. Then in 2010 after Epiphany we remained as one congregation. Following a review, the trial became permanent. We now worship in the same space, providing different stations within one service, for 'the exploration of the Word'. A team of about 12 meet every six weeks to study the Word together and, using a variety of resources, including *Roots* and a vast bank of experience, plans the service foci. When there is a baptism or festival, we share the one space for the Liturgy of the Word, when the exploration will relate to one of our established ways of sharing. Presently, these are:

- a traditional sermon or talk (but increasingly interactive);
- a reflective option with a focus on a piece of Scripture, a word or phrase, an object or a

story to ponder, the responses leading into a time of prayer;

- an interactive exploration where we do something together. We always encourage people coming for baptism preparation to engage with this option as we try to do something that can continue at home.

The weekly pattern involves listening to the readings together, with a responsorial psalm or song and a simple 'Alleluia' between the readings; a few moments of quiet for personal reflection are introduced and shared, then the options are briefly described and people disperse to three separate but related spaces in the building (not always the same space as this depends on the activity); each group pursues its option for about 15 minutes and then the congregation comes back together singing a simple chant until all are settled. This can be followed by another moment of quiet or a simple sharing or insight or offering of something created or discovered.

The service continues with one of the simpler Affirmations of Faith found in *CW* followed by the prayers led in a variety of ways, but involving all ages and conditions of people within the whole congregation. Prayers are written by the intercessors and other congregational members are involved in reading an introductory sentence. Occasionally people will quietly continue making something appropriate which will be presented during the Offertory.

Eucharistic Prayers are rotated with the seasons, with easy chant responses or simple action and, at major celebrations, ringing of bells, to engage everyone in the Prayer.

As we worship in the round, during the Lord's Prayer the congregation hold hands, joining together as a sign of our being part of the whole Body of Christ and our commitment to live out the prayer of the kingdom together. Everyone is invited to receive Communion or a blessing and every week people can receive the laying on of hands for healing for themselves or for others.

The service sheet is printed in its entirety, including hymns, to make access easier for newcomers; large print copies are made for the visually challenged. Worshipers are encouraged to take it home for further reflection. A wide variety of hymnody is vital for accessibility and so that all traditions find their place. Our main resources (though our copyright licence makes a wider range possible) are *Laudate* and *Hymns Old and New*.

✉ Ann Wren is parish deacon at St Paul's, Marton, Blackpool, where her husband, Christopher, is the incumbent.

Colin's Column

In accordance with the procedure set out on page 1 above, I made my own submission to the Revision Committee for the alternative baptismal texts. While I suspect I am old-fashioned enough to want to conserve renouncing the devil, I have to confess that there was no such renunciation in the *ASB* rites (for which I was not only on the Liturgical Commission, but also on the Steering Committee of Synod). However, the devil had not been suppressed in the *ASB*, as he appeared still as an opponent against whom the newly baptized were to fight valiantly, and that role he has now vacated. At any rate, the ins and out of the realm of the devil were not the subject of my submission. No, it was entirely about the one spoken line in the following (part of the run-up to *The Decision*):

At the baptism of infants, the president addresses the whole congregation: Jesus said, 'Let the children come to me. Do not stop them'. This is of course a direct translation (in 'accessible language' – the great criterion) of Mark 10.14. The passage has a history in both Cranmer's liturgical work and recent liturgical revision, and I could not help but wonder whether the text had been included without reference to that history.

Firstly, then, Cranmer. He inherited a reading from Matthew 19 in the Sarum liturgy, and he substituted the Mark 10 passage. He then wrote a short exposition of Mark 10 to justify infant baptism. In doing so, he seems to me to have made two outstanding errors (and, yes, one is allowed to suggest that Cranmer could nod – others have been highly critical of his eucharistic work, and at many points modern rites differ from him):

- (a) He attempted to justify infant baptism within the liturgical rite in just a few lines;
- (b) He chose to do so from the Mark 10 passage.

Both (a) and (b) play into the hands of any Anabaptist. Justifying infant baptism in a time of controversy requires several thousand words (see my Grove Booklet on it!), and attempting it in around 200 words is to yield the case. And, if it is to be attempted, then the Mark 10 passage is a hopeless text from which to make the attempt.

But secondly, until now the liturgists have been onto the error. From the first draft baptismal rite in 1958 to the last touching-up in 2006, there has been a consistent total exclusion of Mark 10 from any role whatsoever in baptismal liturgy. However tempting those verses may have been to preachers or teachers about infant baptism, the Commission, the bishops and the Synod have given them no ground to cite the passage as official C of E material proper to baptism. And not only so, but in the last 40 years there has been a clear re-locating of Mark 10 as an option within the non-baptismal Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child – a provision not only pastoral in itself, but also as ensuring a clean break with its self-defeating role in infant baptismal liturgy.

So must those with little awareness of history now muddle counsel?

And another bit of synodical business in July.

While great numbers were rejoicing at the decision in July on making women bishops (on which I need not bore you with my analysis), a lesser motion carried the Synod on a show of hands, apparently without a count. This is the motion in view:

'That this Synod call on the Business Committee to introduce draft legislation to amend the law relating to the vesture of ministers so that, without altering the principles set out in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Canon B 8, the wearing of the forms of vesture referred to in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of that Canon becomes optional rather than mandatory.'

Now there is a topic for real release of passions...

✦ *Colin Buchanan is a former Bishop of Woolwich.*

Fit for a king

Welcoming a king!

Leicester Cathedral is 'getting ready for Richard'. We've never had a royal re-burial before, so this will be something special. On 23 May 2014 the judicial review confirmed that the re-burial of King Richard III's remains should take place in Leicester. Even before then, however, cathedral and diocese had been working with city and county authorities to plan the re-ordering of the Cathedral grounds, in addition to a Richard III Visitor Centre on the site where the king's skeleton was discovered, just over the road from the Cathedral.

Garden of Life - A liturgy in the public square

Earlier, on 5 July, Leicester Diocese celebrated the opening of the Cathedral's re-ordered 'public space' – the garden in front of the Cathedral. The Bishop of Leicester, welcoming a large crowd which had gathered for the celebration, hoped that 'you all are going to feel at home here. It is your space... It is for people of all faiths. Ours is a city of all nations and we hope this place will be a place of healing.' The act of worship that followed was short and refreshing. Prayers and readings, from Christian and other faith traditions, focussed on various aspects of 'Water in the Gardens'. There was a repeated public response to the prayers: 'We celebrate life in this Garden of Life'. The Unitarian Mayor of Leicester led a prayer from St Martin-in-the-Fields asking for a vision of the world as God's love would make it. We sang 'Guide me, O thou Great Redeemer' as the Dean of Leicester sprinkled the crowd with water and finally, beside the new statue of King Richard, Bishop and City Mayor together formally declared 'these Cathedral Gardens open to the world'.

Plans for the re-interment of King Richard's remains

Events and services for the re-interment of King Richard's remains in March 2015 will observe the following themes:

- Re-instate (a procession with honour to the Cathedral from Bosworth, where the king died);
- Repose (preparation for reburial with the prayers of the church);
- Re-inter (based on a 15th century rite for the reburial of a high status person) and
- Reveal (the tomb complete and sealed, looking towards the future).

The design for the king's tomb was made public in June, Dean David Monteith describing it as 'distinctive, elegant and imbued with spirituality'. Michael Ibsen, a direct descendant of King Richard's sister and a carpenter by profession, has accepted the invitation to make the king's coffin. (Michael's DNA played a key role in identifying Richard's remains.) Work on re-ordering the interior of the Cathedral ahead of the re-burial has now begun. We anticipate with much interest the special services in March 2015, the liturgical thinking for which we hope to share with *Praxis News of Worship* readers.

✦ *Anne Horton, Canon Emeritus, Leicester Cathedral*