

Issue 46 June 2015

£2.50

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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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Contact praxis@praxisworship.org.uk

For general enquiries, affiliation and programme information, contact Praxis, 19 The Close, Salisbury, SP1 2EB, 01202 296886, praxis@praxisworship.org.uk

Affiliation

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Richard III - lessons in liturgy

When charged to come up with liturgies around the re-interment of King Richard III, the first difficulty was to find a starting point. Reburials of medieval human remains happen frequently – building works in medieval towns and cities constantly uncover human graves, particularly around churches or former churches. This happened several times around the creation of our Cathedral Gardens and in each case the human remains were re-interred with a very short service in the former graveyard around St Martin's Cathedral Church.

Obviously something more elaborate was needed for the King Richard re-interment and luckily we had access to a medieval precedent discovered by Dr Alex Buckle in the British Library in 2009, describing in detail how human remains of particular status were re-interred in the 15th century. This was quite popular in the 15th century as it allowed people who had come to wealth and status to give enhanced status to their family of origin – thus increasing their own status further in the process. Richard III organised re-interment services for members of his family and would have immediately recognised the contemporary liturgical pattern.

The surprising fact was just how much of that medieval rite we could use for the re-interment service in Leicester Cathedral. Not only did we take the pattern of reception, lying in repose (whilst the normal pattern of daily prayers continued) and re-interment, but we were able to use the shape of the re-interment, its prayers and psalms for our service. The biblical narrative underlying the service of the Israelites taking the bones of Joseph into the Promised Land came

directly from the medieval service, as did the idea to finish with a glimpse of resurrection celebration at the end of the re-interment service. What we added was to go into fullness of joy the following day with a celebration, making the point that unlike a funeral, these events were not about mourning and separation, but about finding and welcoming.

One of the more creative ideas was to begin the week with the reception of the human remains with a service of Compline. Many people commented on how well it fitted the theme of death and dying. Considering that 'Compline for the Dead' unlike 'Vespers of the Dead' is not a traditional combination, it was astonishing how well this worked. I am sure that we will sing Compline more often in our Cathedral in the coming years – this service in particular enabled us to pray in the most stressful period imaginable and it lent itself incredibly well to the events and helped to set the tone of the entire week.

We tried hard to write modern services for a 21st century audience by going back to the time of Richard III and much further into the past by using ancient patterns (Compline, Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer) and entrusting ourselves to the organically grown wisdom of these services. The events of this week have reaffirmed what a keen sense of continuity and connection with the 'rock from which we were hewn' that provides.

✠ Johannes Arens is Canon Precentor of Leicester Cathedral.

Christian Initiation Additional

These alternative texts which may be used for baptism services are due to receive Final Approval of the General Synod at a debate scheduled for Sunday 12 July Synod. As long as they are approved, the aim is to have them available from 1 September. The texts are printed in full below, together with the Guidance Notes. Note that this is not (as some press commentary has sometimes suggested) a new Baptism service, but simply some additional texts to be used in circumstances to which they are appropriate.

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 loves *them* and welcomes *them* into his Church. So I ask you all:

Will you support *these children* as they begin *their* journey of faith?

All **We will.**

Will you help them to live and grow within God's family?

All **We will.**

The president then addresses the parents and godparents:

God knows each of us by name and we are his.

Parents and godparents, you speak for *N* and *N* today.

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 loves them and welcomes them into his Church.

Will you support them on their journey of faith?

All **We will.**

The Decision

The president address the candidates directly, or through their parents, godparents and sponsors

We all wander far 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 do.

Do you reject evil?

I do.

The candidates, together with their parents, godparents and sponsors, may turn at this point.

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

I do.

Do you trust in him as Lord?

I do.

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 his 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.

All **Stand bravely with him against all the powers 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.

All **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 passed through the deep waters of death

and opened for all the way of salvation.

Now send your Spirit, that those who are washed in this water may die with Christ and rise with him, to find true freedom as your children, alive in Christ for ever.

All **Amen.**

OR

We praise you, loving Father, for the gift of your Son Jesus.

He was baptized in the River Jordan, where your Spirit came upon him and revealed him as the Son you love.

He sent his followers to baptize all who turn to him.

Now, Father, we ask you to bless this water, that those who are baptized in it

may be cleansed in the water of life, and, filled with your Spirit,

may know that they are loved as your children,

safe in Christ for ever.

All **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 discipleship

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 discipleship
- The call to share God's love

GUIDANCE NOTES

A set of draft Guidance Notes follows.

These notes are intended to complement the liturgical texts with suggestions for making the rite more accessible when actually performed. The notes emphasise movement and symbolism as important components in conveying meaning. Unlike the texts, the Guidance Notes do not require Synodical authorization.

GUIDANCE NOTES Introduction

These texts are all alternative to the existing provision in *Common Worship: Initiation*. Any one of the sections may be substituted for the equivalent section in *Common Worship:*

Texts in Accessible Language GS1958B

Christian Initiation. It is not necessary to use all the alternative sections together: an alternative Prayer over the Water could be used, for example, while retaining one of the forms of Decision from *Common Worship: Christian Initiation*. Where one of the alternative sections is used, that section should be used in its entirety: existing and additional provision should not be combined within a given section.

To make a baptism service accessible to those who are not used to being in church is to think seriously, both about the texts that are to be used, and about the way the whole rite is articulated. A rite is made up of more than words: movement, action, silence and gesture are also of primary importance. These notes complement the provision of additional texts with suggestions for their use in practice.

1. The Decision

The Decision includes two pairs of questions.

- The first pair represents a movement of separation from the old order of sin and death, from the old Adam.
- The second pair represents a turning towards newness of life and an adherence to Christ.

This separation and turning can be well expressed through a physical movement of turning. The articulation of the movement will depend on the layout of the church. The first pair of questions might typically be answered facing away from the east end, and the second pair after turning to face a symbolic location of new life in the risen Christ, such as the font, holy table, or the Easter Candle. (Ministers should think carefully about where they themselves stand at this point, so that the symbolic turning does not appear as a turning towards the minister).

2. Signing with the Cross

When the Signing takes place immediately after the Decision, the minister may trace the sign of the cross on the candidate's forehead with olive oil (also called the oil of catechumens). The roots of this anointing lie in the enrolment of catechumens at the beginning of the preparation period for baptism. Parents, godparents and sponsors may also be invited to sign the candidate with oil. There is rich biblical symbolism associated with anointing. It is an image of cleansing, of blessing, of consecration to God's purpose, of preparation for athletic contest which is itself an image of the struggle of the Christian life (cf. 1 Sam 16.13, Psalm 23.5, Psalm 45.7, Psalm 133.2).

Anointing with the oil of chrism may accompany the prayer after baptism, possibly by pouring the oil over the crown of the candidate's head. Alternatively, if the Signing with the Cross takes place after baptism (rather than as a response to the Decision), oil of chrism can be used for it. Chrism is a fragrant oil, evoking the presence and joy of Jesus Christ, and the blessings of the Holy Spirit.

Many parishes use oil which has been blessed by the Bishop. This underlines the fact that each individual baptism is an act of the whole Church.

3. Prayer over the Water

Given that water is essential to the performance of a baptism, and that the symbolism of water is central to the meaning of the rite, it is worth drawing attention to the water. It can be poured into the font from a jug, visibly and audibly, possibly by a godparent, before the prayer over the water.

4. White robes

Immediately after the baptism, the newly baptised can be wrapped in a white scarf or shawl, symbolic of being clothed with Christ.

5. The Commission

It is intended that the minister (or other suitable person) will talk directly and simply in his or her own words to the parents, godparents and congregation, or to the newly baptized in the case of the baptism of those able to answer for themselves, covering the topics listed in the bullet points. Some ministers may find it helpful to speak from notes held in the hand, but it is desirable to avoid giving the impression that a written text is simply being read aloud. As an example, the address might be something like the following:

Parents and godparents, we are glad to have welcomed you here for the baptism of *N* and *N*. Today *they* have joined us on our Christian journey. Baptism unites us with Christ and to his whole Church, on earth and in heaven.

Here, we shall do all that we can to ensure that there is a welcoming place for you. We will play our part in helping you guide these children along the way of faith.

Bringing up children as Christians has its challenges. *N* and *N* will need to discover the story of Christ's birth, death and resurrection, the pattern of his loving life, and the teaching that he gave. We pray that they will come closer to God as they grow in faith, explore the Bible, and make their baptismal promises for themselves when

they come to confirmation.

As well as worshipping with the church, Christians follow Jesus by standing up for truth and justice, and showing compassion to those in need. They are to be faithful and loving. The example that you give by prayer and the life that you lead will affect *N* and *N* for their whole life. Remember to ask for God's help, and pray for them often, as we now pray for you.

Or, at the baptism of those able to answer for themselves:

N, we are glad to have welcomed you to (*name of church*) for your baptism. There will always be a place for you here. Your baptism joins you to Christ and to his whole Church, in every part of the world, in the past and in the future, on earth and in heaven.

Even before today, God began his work in you, but it will take the whole of your life to complete that work. There will be moments when the journey ahead is a delight and there will be times when it is hard, but you will never be alone. You will always have the support of other Christians. There will be many milestones on your journey: confirmation will be one of them.

Remember that in Jesus heaven has touched our world. Belonging to him will change your life and, through reading the Bible, you will learn more deeply the story of God's love. Through worship, prayer and caring for others you will grow more and more like Jesus. Stand up for fairness, truth and kindness.

God's love is for you, and for everyone. Share with other people the good news of his love.

6. The Giving of the Candle

The candle given to the newly baptized is appropriately lit from the Easter candle in churches which use one, and will itself often be a miniature copy of the Easter candle. It needs to be clearly explained that the candle is for the family to take home. They can be encouraged to light it at future birthdays, on the anniversary of baptism, or other special occasions.

7. Welcoming a child into the wider congregation

Where a baptism has taken place at a separate service, the family can be invited to return at a main Sunday service for the child to be welcomed by the wider congregation.

Taking Funerals Seriously Conference

Moving on from the Wedding Project, Sandra Millar headed up a conference on the Church of England's response to funerals which had the most enthusiastic response from those attending of any that I can remember. But what effect it has depends on the message getting through to the vast majority of CofE clergy and funeral ministers.

The basic message is very simple: a generation ago the local vicar was the default person to take a funeral, and the service was fairly standard. Now there is an open market, with humanist options and civil celebrants, who will cater for a wide range of viewpoints. Many of these are very highly trained and bring considerable expertise to their work. The CofE still takes the funeral in a third of cases in England, and engages with 200,000 people a week in doing so. But we are going to have to work hard to maintain that level. Current statistics showing the decline in the numbers of those identifying with the Church of England speak for themselves.

The message of the conference was that we should join fully in the public conversation about matters of death, not just in controversial issues but at a personal and local level – *GraveTalk* (see *Books*, p.8) is a typical initiative; that we emphasise being pastoral and personal, in our relations with the bereaved, in our focussing the funeral around the departed as an individual, and also in building positive and creative working relationships with funeral directors; and that we engage in clear communication so that people know what the CofE can offer in its funeral ministry. There was much talk about what might be our USP ('unique selling point' for those not drilled in sales talk). Apart from a theology of hope, the main asset is probably the Church community which is there for people, not just the individual minister.

The Conference concentrated on mission and on pastoral and professional relationships: there were no plenary sessions on liturgy as such. (Dorothy Moore Brooks led a deeply impressive workshop on childrens' funerals.) But liturgical questions inevitably came through. The assumption of many at the conference seemed to be that one could take a very selective approach to the CofE *Funeral Service*. In conversation, Sandra Millar said the most neglected words

in the book are 'may' and 'or in similar words'. But I suspect that disguises a real problem: that the *Funeral Service* does not always include those words in its rubrics, and if clergy are trained in the service with an eye to what is technically permissible they will offer something more rigid than mourners might hope for. Professor Douglas Davies called for new texts, in particular for cremations, woodland burials and for assisted deaths.

Other liturgical aspects offer easy opportunities: the importance of giving mourners space to grieve, so often denied in the 'Celebration of the life of...' style funeral; and remembrance of the dead around the year, not just on anniversaries and at All Souls commemorations, but included at Christmas and Easter, Mothering Sunday and Fathers' Day. More radically there was talk of licensing special funeral ministers to specialise in this work alongside clergy and readers. Apparently many civil celebrants are active Anglicans so, not for the first time, the institution may be following the charisma. If parishes throughout the Church take up this initiative it will transform our funeral ministry. But everyone needs to do it.

Further information is available on www.churchsupporthub.org (for ministers) and www.churchofenglandfunerals.org (for the public). Papers from the conference will be published in due course, and there is a wide range of template publications for parishes to give people.

✉ *Gordon Jeanes is Vicar of St Anne's, Wandsworth.*

Romanian Orthodox Liturgies in English

The Cambridge-based Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies aims to provide good parallel texts for the ethnic Orthodox Churches in Britain. A Romanian / English text is the first project of the Institute. David Frost notes in his introduction that, as Romanian Christians are used to having services in a modern vernacular (unlike, for example, the Church Slavonic of Russian Orthodoxy) having a translation into modern English seemed most appropriate.

To that must be added that having this expertly-crafted English version produced by the author of the beautiful *CW* post-communion prayer 'Father of all, we give you thanks and praise....' has given us a text

which speaks directly and movingly to the worshipper.

It has been a great joy to experience the use of this Romanian and English text at St Giles' Church, Cambridge so this is a report of how the book is used. The beautiful unaccompanied singing is enhanced by the wonderful acoustic of the church. The prayers include our nation and our Queen. The rubrics make the liturgy accessible, and with language moving seamlessly from Romanian to English by priest, choir, or the whole congregation, everyone has a feeling of true participation. The attractiveness of the worship has also drawn Orthodox Christians of other traditions. The book has enabled ordinands from other parts of the Cambridge Theological Federation to come to an understanding and appreciation of Orthodox liturgy.

The rite of St John Chrysostom, a fourth century Archbishop of Constantinople, is that most used by Orthodox Churches. It is poignant to recall that its origins lay in West Syrian liturgy, from which lands Christians have now become refugees, and developed in Cappadocia in central Turkey, which was purged of Christians in the 1920s.

The English text enables us to appreciate differences from our own Eucharistic order. It is instructive to modern Western Christians to discover why *The Peace* appears to occupy such a strange position in our Eucharist. People often ask 'Why don't we begin the service by greeting each other?' or 'Why do Roman Catholics share *The Peace* just before Communion?'

The more ancient Orthodox liturgies reveal the origin of *The Peace*: the opening of the service is open to all, who are join the prayers and hear the gospel proclaimed. But then catechumens leave, after prayers for them. They are told 'As many as are catechumens depart.' The doors are ceremonially closed before *The Liturgy of the Faithful* begins. It is only the Faithful who share 'The Peace'. The Creed then follows, because it expresses the faith of the baptized, recited before the Eucharistic Prayer. It is very moving to see that Communion in St Giles' is truly inclusive, babes in arms receiving.

In the Christian West the Roman rite was imposed. This pattern guided Reformation and Counter-Reformation rites and hence our new rites in the 20th century. But in the Diocese of Milan an ancient 'Ambrosian' rite is still used, and this retains the same feature that the saying of the Creed by the faithful

Reports

follows *The Peace*. A similar surviving rite, commonly called Mozarabic, is permitted in Toledo and León in Spain.

The rite of John Chrysostom used today in modern Romanian and English recalls a Church in which similar rites were celebrated through practically the whole of Christendom from Iberia, through Romania, to the Byzantine Empire.

There was within that unity a great deal of local variation and something of that continues in Romania today. David Frost notes that there is no single authorised version of the Liturgies in Romanian. Both his original and his translation have only the authority of their usability. But what he has produced has been taken to heart by the Cambridge congregation which has made it their own. And with this model the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies has demonstrated that it is a resource for churches which increasingly find they have new worshippers whose first language is English.

The Divine Liturgies of Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Basil the Great, translated by David L. Frost: Aquila books 2015 ISBN 978-1872897-17-2 and Dumnezeiasca Liturgie a Sfântului Ioan Gură de Aur: The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom; Romanian and English parallel texts; Aquila Books, 2015, ISBN 978-1872897
✦ *Tom Ambrose is an assistant priest in the Parish of the Ascension, Cambridge which includes St. Giles' Church.*

A Year in a Day

A reflection on a remarkable event in Wells Cathedral on 31 January 2015.

One of the aims of the Bath & Wells Diocesan Liturgical Advisory Group is to showcase best practice in liturgy and worship. That seems a tall order in itself but to cover the whole year in one event was a challenge indeed. It was a challenge set by Jane Tibbs, the Diocesan Children's Adviser, a member of our group and a producer of a wide range of imaginative resources. We settled for 12 hours in Wells Cathedral on the eve of the Feast of the Presentation.

It was cold and crisp as we set up for a Vigil for Advent, effectively our Morning Prayer for the day. We wondered who would come at such an early hour, but were delighted when quite a number of the Cathedral community turned up to join us. The day continued with a wide variety of worship styles: stories from the Innkeeper over breakfast for Christmas, followed by a Meditation with Messiaen; a *Common*

Worship stational liturgy for the Baptism of Christ with the Bishop of Bath & Wells, Taizé for Lent in the Undercroft with a labyrinth at the back of the Nave. We had a shared meal for Passover and celebrated an Easter Eucharist with the now retired Bishop of Taunton, including a rendering of the 'Hallelujah Chorus'. The Gospel Choir from Churchill School took us through Ascensiontide with readings, and came back to begin an Extravaganza Praise for Christ the King. With all this to oversee, our team was glad to sink back into the Choir stalls to enjoy Choral Evensong led by the Dean and the full Choir who kindly allowed us to use their daily service to keep the Day of Pentecost as the sun dipped beneath the horizon.

The Group met shortly afterwards to reflect on the day, thankful for all the support we had received, not least from the Cathedral Virgers, who had coped unflinchingly with our varied needs. Would we do it again? Of course! But probably not until 2017! Perhaps we'll see you there.

✦ *Robin Lodge is Chair of Bath & Wells DLC.*

All-Age Worship for All: Is it possible?

It's not enough to say children are welcome! Churches of all guises seek to make children welcome, but the 100 or so delegates at the recent Praxis Northwest event were seeking ideas as to what more they could do. The provocative title attracted clergy and laity alike, all eager to take something away to put into practice in their own situations.

Michael Gisbourne got the day under way with an act of worship modelling an example of liturgical collective worship appropriate in a primary school setting. This was followed by Gill Ambrose's excellent overview of the developments over the years. The morning continued with Susan Witts, Children's Work Advisor for Blackburn Diocese. This session offered a plethora of ideas which would engage children and their families in worship. Before lunch, a team from St Paul's, Marton, Blackpool, modelled an act of all-age worship for Palm Sunday, using an activity based on a palm cross, that they have developed over a number of years.

The afternoon session offered individuals the choice of attending two out of four workshops: an overview of resources offered

for all ages and all styles by *Roots*, the widely-available lectionary resource; 'All age worship when only a few children are present'; 'Music for children and young people' and 'Godly Play'.

The Praxis Northwest vision for the day was to offer a wide variety of ideas for delegates. Not every idea would work in every church, but from feedback it became clear that everyone had picked up at least one idea to try out in their own parishes.

All-age worship for all: is it possible? Well, it may take planning and hard work, but the answer, from this event at least, was a resounding yes!

✦ *Michael Gisbourne is Chair of Praxis North West.*

Act Justly...

We tend to associate events involving Bernadette Farrell purely with music and singing. No wonder, her work is at the heart of modern hymnody by virtue of its sheer quality and thoughtfulness. At this Praxis Southwest Day Conference on 25 April, the focus was the theology of social and community action.

Bernadette spoke fluently of her own experiences of helping the needy. This is at the very heart of the gospel. Worship and the pursuit of justice were inseparable, an agenda set by Christ himself when reading the extract from Isaiah in the synagogue and declaring that today that prophecy had been fulfilled in their sight. The heart of the Eucharist was people sharing bread and wine together, the assembly being the key sign rather than the elements themselves. The assembly as celebrant ministers among itself and brings about changed hearts.

We also heard from Martyn Goss, Director of Church and Society for Exeter Diocese, who spoke about our identity as human beings created in God's image and defined justice as the ability to participate in the life of the community. Our third speaker was Mary Conway, Peace and Justice Adviser for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth, among whose ideas were images of social justice alongside the traditional words of the Stations of the Cross.

It was a thought-provoking day in the well-appointed and newly-built Cullompton Community Centre, to which, I suspect, we shall return. And as you can imagine, with Bernadette Farrell amongst us, there was more than a little singing too!

✦ *Robin Lodge is Chair of Praxis South West.*

Reports

Liturgy for the unchurched: developing an authentic faith journey through worship

Southwark Cathedral held the 120 people who attended this fascinating day on 8 May 2015. As well as clergy, there were many Readers, ordinands and other people in training for various form of authorised ministry present.

Jessica Martin told us that everyone believes in something. It might be that the dead speak to us from beyond the grave, it might be in guardian angels. We live in a culture where going to church is slightly unusual. Those who don't attend have all sorts of mixed-up messages about what actually goes on. Jessica mentioned greeting a baptism family at the door of the church who were reluctant to enter further because of fear of 'zombies'. Jessica felt that music can be a way to share an experience of worship with people who have little understanding of church. It can do away with much of the formality, and different styles of music can be helpful. What we sing matters to those present more than what we say. Doing things together matters, corporately, and so draws people in and makes church attractive.

Dave Tomlinson challenged us to be more missional inside our church buildings. He, too, emphasised the importance of the need to be inclusive but relevant; plenty of interactivity is a good way forward. People want to be spiritual, but not religious. Church should offer something different. 2.5 million people listen to *Morning Worship* on Radio 4, so there is obviously a great need in people that we need to address.

We had an act of worship before lunch, which reflected the anniversary of VE Day and we held a two minute silence with the rest of the nation at 3.00 p.m.

In the afternoon there were four workshops, a choice of two for each person. This enabled us to be more interactive. In the first one I attended, 'Simple ways to make our usual worship more accessible', we discussed in small groups ways in which we could make our churches more friendly to those on the outside. There was some discussion in my group that had been sparked by Dave Tomlinson about the Eucharist. He had said that traditionally the Eucharist is a believers' service, reflecting the last supper Jesus shared with his disciples. But Dave thought this view was too narrow and that we should think more

in terms of Jesus' mission which was to share with everyone who welcomed him. From this there emerged many good ideas for outreach, but we agreed that just being 'nice' wasn't enough to bring people through church doors.

The second workshop, 'Liturgy for the Unchurched: Focus on Music', we sang around the piano to tunes old and new. We experimented with singing in rounds, and a group of tourists walking round the Cathedral complemented us on our performance! The other two workshops were 'Liturgy for the Unchurched, Looking at Language' and a follow-up to themes from Dave Tomlinson's talk in the morning. The day ended with a useful plenary session.

✉ *Ann Critchley is a Reader-in-training from Rainham, Kent.*

Is preaching to the choir enough?

Ed Foley (Duns Scotus Professor of Spirituality and ordinary Professor of Liturgy and Music at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago) also took the theme of the unchurched at his lecture in St Michael's, Cornhill, on 2 June, arranged by the Rt Revd Stephen Platten. He drew on *Evangelii Gaudium* and Pope Francis' discussion of public theology – interpreting the life of a people in the light of a transcendent reference. He urged us to see hospitable worship as a potent evangelising agency and drew examples from his own church, Old St Patrick's, Chicago. Broadening the range of musical styles was one key element.

✉ *Anne Harrison*

The Liturgical Commission

The Liturgical Commission held the final meeting of the quinquennium at Lincoln, using the time to look both backwards and forwards. An 'end-of-term' report, offering an account of its work over five years, was approved, and priorities for the future were identified. Obviously it will be for a new Commission, to be formed after the election of the new General Synod, to accept and build on these, finding ways to take them forward.

There was a short consultation with Church House Publishing about the provision of stand-alone booklets for *Morning Prayer* and *Evening Prayer*, which

might support places where these services are offered from time to time mid-week but in groups for which *Daily Prayer* is not appropriate. Everyone rejoiced in the arrival of the additional baptism texts at Final Approval Stage. It will be a fitting conclusion to the Commission's work over five years.

Consideration was also given to how to reformulate the vacant post of National Worship Development officer and a press advert has now been placed for a part-time post of 12 hours a week. Meanwhile Sue Moore, long-time Assistant Secretary of the Commission, becomes its Administrative Secretary. Many readers will have encountered Sue through her efficient and friendly administration of so many liturgically-focused events over more than ten years and will be delighted to know that she will be further involved in this work.

✉ *Gill Ambrose, Editor of Praxis News of Worship, is an observer on the Commission.*

TEAR Fund poll of favourite songs

TEAR Fund recently conducted a poll of favourite Christian songs. 'In Christ alone' was the clear favourite; '10,000 reasons' ('Bless the Lord, O my soul' by Matt Redman) also appeared: it has been sung by Australians facing firing squad in Indonesia.

Responding to the short shelf-life of worship songs

This article (<http://worthilymagnify.com/2015/03/23/shelf-life/>) on the blog of Jamie Brown, *Worthily Magnify, Helping worship leaders lead well*, is both reassuring and cautionary. The writer recognises that the amount of new material is overwhelming, and congregations are being asked to learn more new songs than they can manage. He suggests that we should aim to build solid repertoire, not a cool playlist; and being a late adopter will ensure that other people have tried out, and abandoned, what is not worthwhile.

✉ *Anne Harrison*

Reports

Praxis South relaunched

In spring 2013, at a meeting in Southwark Cathedral with Gilly Myers, Precentor of Southwark, in the chair, and with Jo Spreadbury, Chair of Praxis, alongside, an enthusiastic group of volunteers formed the beginnings of a virtually new committee for the southern region. I became the treasurer and Jax Machin became our secretary.

The first task was to plan an event. We decided upon *Commemorating the First World War*. This was held at the end of October 2013, with over 60 people attending. This, we felt, was a promising start. The first full year of the revived Praxis South saw us put on three events. *All Age Worship for All: is it possible?* was an event first put on successfully by Praxis Midlands, who had 110 people attending. The event was so popular (we had around 160 people attending) that a follow up was requested with 50 people attending in a smaller area of Southwark Cathedral. Our second scheduled event, *Funerals and how to improve them*, was also very popular, with over 100 attendees. This year we have already held *Liturgy for the unchurched*, with Jessica Martin and Dave Tomlinson. This time over 120 people attended at Southwark Cathedral. Our next event, *Make a splash! Jumping into the waters of Baptism!* is on 5 November with the new additional Baptism texts due to be available by then. This day will be held at St. Michael's, Cornhill, in London, which is the church of Bishop Stephen Platten, former president of Praxis.

The secret of success

We put our success down to subject matter and strong publicity. The publicity goes not only to members of Praxis, but also to those who have previously attended our events. We further arrange publicity within our member dioceses to their clergy, Readers, ordinands and others in training. Free entry given to ordinands, Readers and others in training is popular (with perhaps 10 per cent of attendees falling into this category), and encourages them in an on-going interest in liturgy, and in Praxis. Our committee is a good mix and we aim to have two people representing each diocese. We are currently looking for representation from Salisbury diocese. If any reader is interested, please contact me via the Praxis e-mail address on the front page.

✉ Peter Furber is Treasurer of Praxis and of Praxis South.

Events

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

Thursday 8 October 10 a.m. - 3.30 p.m.
Praxis Midlands

*St Chad's RC Cathedral House,
Birmingham B4 6EU*

Speakers: Professor Maggie Andrews, University of Worcester and historical consultant for the Radio 4 Drama Home Front; Dr Mike Snape, Reader in Religion, War and Society, University of Birmingham; author of *The Clergy in Khaki*; Revd Andrew Wickens, parish priest and advisor on the BBC TV show *Rev*. To help parishes envisage and plan worship to mark key church and community events from the final two years of World War 1. A KS2 assembly idea leads into talks on 'Women, Families and the Home Front'; 'What it means to remember'; and 'War, Church and Clergy'. Delegates are invited to share ideas/plans from their local communities. The worship will incorporate images and music as well as words. (Delegates: please, ahead of the event, email us local/personal images we can display during worship, as well as info about events being planned where you are. Your contributions to rahorton@outlook.com) Contact jayne.crooks@blueyonder.co.uk

Leading Worship Well: the art of liturgical presidency for worship leaders ordained and lay

Thursday 21 October Praxis Southwest
Appropriately in this Silver Jubilee year for Praxis our speaker will be Bishop Michael Perham, our first Chairman. We're still working on a venue but expect this to be in the Exeter region.
Cost £20 including lunch
Contact gillbehenna@me.com

Liturgical Change: Fresh Perspectives

Thursday 22 October 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Praxis Northwest

William Temple Church, Wythenshawe

Speakers: James Steven and Tim Harle
Proposed changes to liturgy, whether forms of service or liturgical space, provoke strong reactions.

Fresh insights from psychology enable us to understand how different people find security in times of uncertainty. This day will explore such insights and offer practical approaches which encourage positive

communal engagement with liturgical change.
Contact Michael Gisbourne, vicar@stpauls-scotforth.org, 01524 32106

Make a splash! Jumping into the waters of Baptism

Thursday 5 November
10.30 a.m. - 3.30 p.m. **Praxis South**
St. Michael's, Cornhill, EC3V 9DS

What does a baptism mean to a family that brings a child to church to 'be done'? The Baptism Project, followed on from the highly successful Weddings Project, and Sandra Millar will talk about its progress. Anders Bergquist will detail the thinking behind the new baptismal texts and how they are designed to make the service more accessible.

Contact peter@furber.me.uk, 01202 296886

Sing well and pray twice

Saturday 29 August, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
*St Augustine's Catholic Church, 55
Fulham Palace Road, London W6 8AU.*

A summer day of music, prayer and fun with international Roman Catholic composer Christopher Walker. Advance booking from Individual and parish groups is required (020 8748 3788 or staugustineshammersmith.eventbrite.co.uk)

Worship in Holy Week and Easter

4 February 2016

Venue to be confirmed

St Albans Diocese with Praxis East

Speaker: Bishop Stephen Cotterell

Worship Matters: the importance of worship for the mission of the Church

October 17 2016

Southwark Cathedral

A national Praxis event

Speakers to include Mark Earey and Angela Tilby

Books

The Bright Field: Readings, reflections and prayers for Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity and Ordinary Time

Martyn Percy (ed.) Canterbury Press, 2014, pp.224, £15.90

If you are looking for an imaginative range of meditations, readings, sermon-starters that give a comprehensive flavour of Ordinary Time, buy this. The wide selection of writings, penned by names like Martyn Percy, Jim Cotter and Rowan Williams, partners similar volume *Darkness Yielding* which reflects the other 'half' of the liturgical year. *The Bright Field* reads like a relaxing walk in a large garden with its many portions and styles as if you round the corner from one article to another to find something surprising, sometimes even bringing a smile to your face.

Of course, there's nothing ordinary about Ordinary Time, declares Percy. It simply means, 'ordered,' Paul Gooder reminds us in the preface. Yet God often starts with what we take to be ordinary. A reflection on the wedding at Cana points out that it took an ordinary couple to fall in love and appoint a resourceful master of ceremonies to organise this great big Jewish wedding that ends up proclaiming the kingdom. In the same way the feeding of the five thousand would never have happened unless a small boy's mother had not made him his packed lunch.

There are biblical reflections too, some of them almost poetic, and prayers to go with them. These balance the fruits of the spirit with themes such as risk, go easy on yourself and a shocking blessing. You may wish to use these alongside Jim Cotter's orders for night prayer that appear at the end of the book, although he provides plenty of thoughtful material within them as well.

Ordinary Time includes its festivals. Petertide, St Matthew, Mary Magdalene are there, alongside contrasting occasions such as Remembrance and even International Nurses' Day! Our walk reveals a garden with more colour and variety than we might expect at this time in the church's year, and one that leaves us both marvelling and inspired by our encounter with the extraordinary in the ordinary.

✍ Robin Lodge is Chair of Praxis Southwest

The Challenge of the Funeral Celebrant: a mission opportunity for the Church

Grove booklet W224, Alan Stanley

For many years the Churches' ministers have been the default option for families looking for someone to conduct a funeral service. However, this is changing, and changing fast. Just as with the decline in church weddings, the cause is as much to do with wider choice and lack of church background as with dissatisfaction with what has been offered. There is still, however, a significant depth of spiritual awareness in the lives of many who do not connect with their local church. This booklet explores how a Funeral Celebrant who is a Christian (but not a lay or ordained minister) can help people to interpret their experience in a tentatively Christ-centred way. It presents a new and imaginative mission opportunity in the rapidly-changing funeral world.

Gravetalk: a café space to talk about death, dying and funerals

Brenda Davies, Church House Publishing, 2015

These conversation cards designed to get people talking have been generated as a result of the Funerals Project and offer thought-provoking questions. There are five colour-coded sections: Life, Death, Society, Funerals and Grief. For more details visit www.gravetalk.org

Colin's Column

This year seems to be a year of centenaries. WW1 commemorations continue and Gallipoli is this year's centenary. But we also have Magna Carta (1215), Agincourt (1415), Waterloo (1815), and even the first Jacobite rising against the Hanoverians (1715).

From a liturgical history point of view 1915 might just rank as a date of note – for it is the year of the last recorded action of the Advisory Committee on Liturgical Questions, a body which had been formed by the Archbishops in 1912 and was then asked questions of very minor significance (while the real action towards 1920, and ultimately 1927-28, was happening in the Convocations and their committees). After its adjudication on some liturgical mint and anise, in Geoffrey Cuming's words 'it passed into oblivion'. Perhaps it was never disbanded, and the members simply died one by one without agenda coming their way. But forget centenaries – 2015 does awake other anniversaries at ten-year intervals as follows:

1945 came Gregory Dix and *The Shape of the Liturgy*. My history tutor at Oxford used to say 'Make your sources work for you' – I think he must have learned that from GND.

1955, the first Church of England Liturgical Commission was formed, chaired by Bishop Colin Dunlop, the Dean of Lincoln. It was formed in the hope that machinery to authorize liturgical revision would soon exist. It didn't, until –

1965 the Prayer Book (Alternative and Other Services) Measure went through Parliament, and was to come into force on a date the archbishops should name, which proved to be 1 May 1966. So the pressures finally came upon the Commission, now chaired by Ronald Jasper, and these ended its days as a dons' dining club. Geoffrey Cuming and Charles Whitaker joined the Commission that autumn; and the first draft *Series 2* services were published in December.

1975 the successor to the Alternative Services measure, the Church of England (Worship and Doctrine) Measure 1974, came into force on 1 September. The new Declaration of Assent (with its preamble) began its life, and, as Synod could now authorize alternative services for any length of time, or in an open-ended way, the decks were cleared for the coming of hardback, enduring, worship books – the *ASB* in 1980, and *Common Worship* in a great phalanx of books from 1998 onwards.

It would be hard to make any English liturgical event of **1985** look memorable, though possibly the inaugurating in Boston, Mass., of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultations should have a profile. The Boston Statement called for the admission of the baptized to communion, without reference to age, intelligence or confirmation. In England the secretariat refused to circulate it to the Synod which was to consider the Knaresborough report, *Children and Communion*, on the same subject. (And the kiddies in England got their permission 21 years later – but no longer as kiddies.)

1995 has its part in liturgical history, as a new Synod was elected. Through extraordinary (or was it ordinary?) dilatoriness on the part of the House of Bishops, six alternative eucharistic prayers had reached the semi-final stage (without damage) before the election. But the newly elected House of Laity threw them out.

By **2005** I had retired and probably did not know sufficiently what was going on. But readers will remember.

✍ Colin Buchanan is a former Bishop of Woolwich