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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?

CHRISTMAS

Two hundred years of Silent Nights

On Christmas Eve this year we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the first public appearance of 'Silent Night', though the oldest manuscript dates from 1816. The text by Joseph Mohr, the priest at Oberndorf near Salzburg, was set to music by village organist Franz Xaver Gruber. First printed in 1833, it found its way ten years later into the influential *German Musical Home Treasury* and from there began its unstoppable journey into all languages, denominations and hymn books across the world. Bing Crosby's recording of it still finds a place on the second best-selling Christmas album of all time (alongside 'White Christmas')!

Schiller, in his 'On naïve and sentimental poetry' would have classified the six original stanzas as an 'idyll', a sentimental poem in which the poet feels at one with nature or tries to find a lost connection with it, offering little beyond a comfortable feeling without moral demand. In the early 19th century, German-speaking society was increasingly interested in 'romantic folk song' – simple, popular poetry usually arranged by leading poets of the time. 'Stille Nacht', with little specific religious significance and reduced to the half of its original six stanzas, became the leading song of the 'Deutsche Weihnacht', sung by people of any religious conviction or none, in times of peace or war. Without any ethical or faith demand, it could be used to reinforce social or cultural ties beyond religious affiliation.

The song didn't enter church hymn books initially. The first collections to accept it were intended for expatriate German citizens in the colonies or in the military during WWI. Thereafter, it found its way into many hymn books, but after 1945 it was omitted, since the editor of

the new *Evangelisches Kirchengesangbuch* regarded it as a folk song with no place in liturgy. During the process of selecting material for a new church hymn book in the 1990s, organists and choir leaders throughout Germany expressed strong disapproval of the introduction of 'Stille Nacht'. Even so, church leaders felt it necessary to have at least one song that people with little or no church connection would be able to sing.

Why is this carol now so loved? Why did it spread around the world to be sung on so many continents? One answer might be found in recent scientific research that demonstrates how singing not only improves health but also strengthens relationships within human society. 'Silent night, holy night' presents as a lullaby, and in singing it we are reminded of our earliest childhood, of the calming voices of parents or carers. We feel safe, like a child comforted by its parent. Breathing calmly, heart beating regularly, we are then better able to help each other spontaneously when needed. Rarely are we aware of such effects from our singing, but people feel drawn to these verses and their melody, however doubtful their artistic worth or theological depth.

In any case, this is probably the only religious song with its own dedicated museums: you can find 'Stille Nacht Museums' in Oberndorf, Hallein and in many other localities around the area where 200 years ago Joseph Mohr and Franz Xaver Gruber once brought it into being.

≈ *Dorothea Haspelmath-Finatti is a Lutheran pastor and Lecturer in Ecumenical Encounters at the Roman Catholic Faculty of Theology at the University of Vienna.*

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Nine Lessons and Carols: handle with care

I have loved the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols since I first encountered it in the candlelit intimacy of a college chapel. I still love it now, lucky to be the incumbent of a parish with fine readers and a fine choir. One of the things I love is its sense of connection with a deep Christian tradition. Nine Lessons may have been devised by Bishop Benson at Truro in the later nineteenth century, and given its present form by Eric Milner-White a century ago, but its roots go deep. And therein lies a problem.

The scheme of readings points to Jesus of Nazareth as the fulfilment of Messianic prophecies in Hebrew scripture. Of course it does. But notice the danger. It easily sets up the Jewish tradition as obtuse. Why can't Jewish readers of Isaiah 7, or Isaiah 11 (not to mention Isaiah 52-53) see that they are about Jesus? Are they blind? And so blind *synagoga* appears in mediaeval Christian art, a sad contrast to far-sighted *ecclesia*.

It is important to understand that the selection of texts embedded in Nine Lessons is a Christian selection: part of a specifically Christian reinterpretation of Messiahship in the light of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus. Leaving on one side (because there just isn't space to talk about it here) what kinds of Messiah some Jews might have been expecting in Jesus' own day, or how Jesus understood himself, Nine Lessons, like the New Testament, embeds a Christian version of what and who the Messiah is. So it's no surprise that the readings point so obviously to Jesus as the fulfilment of prophecy. I, as a Christian, stand squarely in a tradition that searches the Hebrew Scriptures – our Old Testament – to understand who Jesus is. But we need to understand better how our Jewish friends can read these texts differently, not because they are obtuse, but because they stand within different traditions of interpretation that have their own integrity. The problem is very old. As early as c. 150, Trypho the Jew – Justin Martyr's conversation partner in the *Dialogue* – complained about the way Justin was reading Isaiah 7.14, and Justin complained that Trypho just wasn't getting it.

Another Justin – our Archbishop – has compared Christian anti-semitism to a virus, constantly able to mutate and reappear in new forms. I am as struck by its persistence and continuity. I think it's like

a chronic medical condition, genetically triggered: triggered, that is, by factors embedded in the emergence of Christianity itself as a distinct religion. Prophecy-and-fulfilment is one of the triggers. So every time we celebrate Nine Lessons, we risk setting up blind *synagoga* for another fall. I still love it: but I have learned to handle it with care.

✉ *Anders Bergquist is Vicar of St John's Wood in London, and a Consultant to the Liturgical Commission. He writes here in a personal capacity.*

Nine Lessons and Carols: 1918 – 2018

While carol services undoubtedly have many origins, the annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at King's College, Cambridge, has – equally undoubtedly – exercised a significant influence on the form in which carol services in Britain and elsewhere are held today.

The history of the service is well known. In 1880, the succentor of Truro Cathedral, Somerset Walpole, suggested a carol service for Christmas Eve, and Edward Benson, who was then both Dean and Bishop of Truro (later Archbishop of Canterbury 1883–1896), devised a service of 'Nine Lessons with Carols'. In 1918, the liturgy was adapted for use in the chapel of King's College by its Dean, Eric Milner-White, and mildly revised in 1919; its structure has remained essentially unaltered since then. 2018 can thus claim to be the centenary of the service in more or less its current form.

How do cathedrals and traditional parish churches present a service which is so iconic, when they are also called, in the words of the preface to the declaration of assent, to 'proclaim the faith afresh in each generation'? How do they reconcile the tension between such a mainstay of their choral tradition and the constant cultural demand for something 'new'?

The use of newly-composed and diverse carols is, of course, one way in which to maintain interest. In Worcester Cathedral, we have also tried to bring freshness to the familiar readings through the choice of readers. We have taken the opportunity to invite 'matching' readers from the wider community. So, for example, the story of work and struggle in Genesis 3 has been read by a representative of the local business community; Isaiah 11 by staff from a peace-making charity; the annunciation by a mother; the account of Christ's birth in

Luke 2 by a midwife, a publican, or (still envisaged) a tax officer; the story of Herod has been read (until he got fed up with being type-cast) by the city's Member of Parliament; and so on.

Furthermore, it has struck us that the progression of readers, from chorister through to dean (dating from Benson's original service), is somewhat hierarchical and out-of-step with the subversive nature of the *Magnificat* which we daily recite. Accordingly, for the last four years, the climax – the prologue to John's Gospel – has been given to a member of the Sunday School, forming a 'book-end' with the opening lesson which has been read by a chorister. The return of a child reader brings the congregation back to its lost innocence, yet now in the company of the fullness of grace and truth. Our hearts have been in our mouths while this foundational text has been read by a six-year-old, and each time it has moved members of the congregation to tears. As a cathedral chapter, we have found it so powerful that we currently cannot hear it read any other way.

Small touches help to keep the tradition vigorous and alive: 'Every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old'. (Matthew 13.52).

✉ *Michael Brierley is the precentor of Worcester Cathedral.*

The birth of the Christingle

In 1747 at the Moravian Church in Marienborn, Germany, Bishop Johannes de Watteville conducted a Christmas Eve service for children in which lit candles tied with a small red ribbon were distributed. According to the church diary, Bishop Watteville explained to the children the happiness that comes to people through Jesus, 'who has kindled in each little heart a flame which keeps burning to their joy and our happiness.' He ended the service with this prayer: 'Lord Jesus, kindle a flame in these children's hearts, that their hearts may become like yours.' The account concludes, 'Hereupon the children went full of joy with their lighted candles to their rooms and so went glad and happy to bed.'

Today, the candlelight service is known in many Moravian Provinces, and people in each part of the world have adapted it for their own use. In the British Province, the practice evolved to become

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the tradition of the Christingle, with a more elaborate symbolism. A Christingle consists of an orange, representing the world; a lighted candle inserted in the top of the orange, representing Christ, the Light of the World; nuts, raisins and sweets on cocktail sticks around the candle, representing God's bounty and goodness in providing the fruits of the earth; red paper, forming a frill around the base of the candle, representing the blood of Christ shed for all people on the cross. The Christingle service is usually held in the evening on Christmas Eve or the Sunday before Christmas.

There are thirty congregations in the British Province today, with just over one thousand members, and two Moravian schools. As a minister in the Yorkshire District, I am involved in five Christingle services each year: the congregational services at Fulneck and Gomersal, as well as three services at Fulneck School. Each service is structured differently, and the Christingles have slightly different designs, but all the services conclude with the lights in the church being switched off and carols being sung by candlelight.

There is one carol that is common to all Moravian Christingle services, the first verse of which says:

Morning Star, O cheering sight!
Ere thou cam'st how dark earth's night!
Jesus mine,
In me shine;
Fill my heart with light divine.

This carol was written in 1657 by Johann Scheffler (1624-1677). He was physician to Emperor Ferdinand III before becoming a Jesuit priest and adopting the name Angelus Silesius. The carol was translated into English by Bennett Harvey (1829-1894). It is usually sung to the tune MORGENSTERN but in America the tune HAGEN is used, in which each line is sung by a soloist and echoed by the congregation.

✠ *Michael Newman is Minister of the Moravian Churches in Fulneck and Gomersal.*

Christingle in the Children's Society

This year marks 50 years since The Children's Society adopted the Christingle. The Society's John Pensom, known as 'Mr Christingle', is credited

with adapting the Moravian tradition and introducing it to the Church of England as a way of raising money for their work to support vulnerable children and young people.

The Children's Society's first Christingle service took place at Lincoln Cathedral on 7 December 1968. Only 300 people were expected but as many as 1500 turned up. Since then, Christingle has become a well-loved Christmas tradition, with more than 6,000 services held last year. Many find it is one of the most popular Christmas services, attracting children and families who don't normally attend. 'Christingle season' runs from Advent Sunday to Candlemas, which allows for some liturgical flexibility to tailor the service.

For this anniversary year, the Rev'd Ally Barrett and ordinands at Westcott House have produced a suite of all-age seasonal resources, with prayers and all-age talks for Christingle services on Advent Sunday, Christmas Eve, Epiphany and Candlemas. For children's groups, there is a Messy Church Christingle session from Lucy Moore, and a Diddy Disciples resource for under 7s developed by Sharon Moughtin-Mumby. Clergy may well be asked to lead a Christingle service for a local school, and both a simple assembly and an act of collective worship suitable for a whole school context are available.

There is no prescribed way of doing a Christingle service. Clergy and worship leaders are invited to pick and choose different elements from our menu of materials to create a memorable, magical and seasonally appropriate service that suits the local context. The resources look back to the very first Christmas, and Christ coming to earth for us, whilst looking ahead to those children and young people in need of care and support. Through the money raised at Christingle services, children who once felt alone and scared are looking forward to their first Christmas free from fear and full of hope. All resources will be available to download free from www.christingle.org from September.

✠ *Tracey Messenger is a Church Engagement Manager for The Children's Society.*

Quiet Christmases

The 'red' season of remembrance – saints and souls, and those who have died in conflict, is particularly significant this year. There are lots of resources for Remembrance Day and the Centenary of

the Armistice available, from the Church of England, Hope, The Royal British Legion and Churches Together. However, it may be that taking a broader view of the season up to Christmas could prove beneficial for some communities. Saints and souls could become a positive and uplifting theme right through the weeks of November and spilling on into Advent.

Although some churches have a tradition of commemorating All Saints and All Souls, in other places the tradition of a liturgical remembrance of the community's own kindred has been lost. This year, stories about local people who gave their lives in war will be particularly poignant, especially if some of their descendants still live in the community. When names are read at a war memorial, those they represent become a real human presence. Local heroes, philanthropists and prophets may also form part of community identity, and celebrating their contribution during this season of remembrance is a great way to engage with schools, and with other organisations.

Churches that have no tradition of All Souls or memorial services, might consider offering a 'blue' or 'quiet' service nearer to Christmas. When the rest of the world is seemingly enjoying life and preparing for the festivities, some are coping (or not) with ongoing difficulties, long-term illness, bereavement and loneliness, or just not feeling particularly festive behind closed doors. A quiet service on the Saturday before Christmas or a 'Longest Night' service on 21 December may be useful options. But a word of caution: some basic questions are really important at this stage or a significant pastoral and missional worship opportunity may miss the mark.

We must ask what is helpful and for whom. Will members of the congregation support and help this venture? 'Blue' or 'quiet' Christmas is not synonymous with 'miserable' Christmas, but it does need to match well with real needs and embrace a genuine sensitivity to those who are already vulnerable. Care should be taken to create both physical and emotional safe space. Services should be short and not wordy. The lighting of individual candles is popular and can be helpful but is not the only symbolism that can be used. Paper tears placed in a large bowl of water can be effective, or a board with sticky notes may enable people to share precious memories, and stories to encourage others.

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In Helen's parish, the annual Christmas tree festival includes a 'blue' Christmas tree. The tree is decorated with white lights, and a few card baubles carry words that people can identify with – from psalms of lament and poems – and wise words from bereaved people. Visitors are invited to tie a blue ribbon on the tree to offer their grief to God. The simple tree is much appreciated and frequently enables the bereaved to share their stories and to minister to one another without awkwardness or embarrassment.

Dana works with one of the local funeral directors to send out invitations, and other local church leaders join her to lead a short service of carols, readings, prayer and silence. Candles are lit, and messages of memory and love are tied to a Christmas tree. Some people come every year, others only once; some come with children and grandchildren, others with friends or alone. At the end there are refreshments, a listening ear, and invitations to evenings such as *Grave Talk* in the New Year.

Resources abound on the internet and here are one or two helpful books: *All Souls' Services of Remembrance*, Grove W223; *Celebration in Times of Grief and Sorrow*, Grove W234; *Together for a Season: All-age resources for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany*, CHP, which includes a 'blue' Christmas service outline on page 88; *Doing December Differently: An alternative Christmas handbook*, Wild Goose Publications, which touches on singleness at Christmas and those who find the secularisation and commercialism difficult.

✠ *Helen Bent is Head of Ministerial Training, RSCM in partnership with Praxis and Dana Delap is Vicar of Blockley and Team Missioner, Vale and Cotswold Edge.*

Marking the end of Christmas: Candlemas

Common Worship: *Times and Seasons* provides a variety of liturgical possibilities to celebrate the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, often known as Candlemas, and the festival marks the end of the Christmas season. Here Alan Cook offers some simple prayers to be used as the crib is removed from the church. This might be used at the beginning or end of a Candlemas liturgy. Different people might be invited to pick up each of the crib figures, say the relevant short prayer, and then carry them away.

Leader

At Christmas we built a crib to remind us that God sent his only Son Jesus to be born as a baby in Bethlehem. We remembered those who celebrated his birth with joy. Now that we have reached the end of the Christmas season we remember when he lived on earth and went about among us, he called his disciples to shine as lights in the world, living and sharing the Gospel as a gift that is ever-new.

So as we put the figures away until next year, we pray that their example will help us to draw closer to Jesus and to walk in his ways.

The Magi

As we remove the three wise men, we remember their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Lord, help us also to use our gifts and talents to serve and follow you.

The shepherds

As we remove the shepherds, we remember that you call the outsiders, the lowly, the humble. May we know that we can never be outside your love and that your calling is to all people.

Joseph

As we remove Joseph, we give thanks that he saved the lives of Mary and Jesus. Help us also to see opportunities to do good in your name.

Mary

As we remove Mary, we give thanks for her obedience to your call and we are reminded that she pondered all that she had seen and heard. Help us to be faithful to our own calling, taking time to think and reflect about your life in us.

The Christ Child

As we remove the Christ Child, we remember that this was the beginning of his journey. Strengthen us to follow him, to the cross, the grave and his glorious resurrection at Easter. Amen.

✠ *Alan Cook is organist at St Andrew's, Taunton.*

Report

Children and liturgy

In July the newly-invigorated Praxis Midlands committee organised a conference on Children and Liturgy in collaboration with Birmingham Cathedral. Nearly 100 people attended from across sixteen different dioceses from as far afield as Carlisle and Canterbury.

Praxis Midlands Chair, Dana Delap, and the Church of England's National Children's and Youth Advisor, Mary Hawes, opened the event and introduced a PechaKucha 20x20 session during which four different speakers shared 20 slides speaking for 20 seconds for each slide. We heard wisdom from Murray Wilkinson, Canterbury Diocesan Children and Young People's Ministry Adviser; Ally Barrett, Tutor for the Wescott Foundation in Cambridge; Nick Harding, Southwell and Nottingham Diocesan Children's Ministry Advisor and Lucy Moore, Messy Church founder and team leader.

Delegates then had the opportunity to follow up with one of the four PechaKucha leaders in a discussion about issues raised. There were also workshops on Collective Worship and Prayer Space in School with Jo Wetherall and Debbie Helme, Diddy Disciples with Sharon Moughtin-Mumby, and Godly Play with Peter Privett as well as chances to explore Making Music, Church in a Café Style, Play in Worship, and Children and Worship Beyond Singing. The day concluded with a facilitated conversation about Children and the Eucharist, covering related issues such as confirmation, discipleship and intergenerational worship.

✠ *Sarah Brush is Secretary of Praxis Midlands.*

Praxis Administrator and Treasurer

In anticipation of the retirement of Peter Furber, at the end of 2018, the Praxis Council is seeking two people to undertake the roles of Treasurer and Administrator. Peter has fulfilled both roles but each might be undertaken separately. The Treasurer and the Administrator attend the Executive which meets twice a year, as well as the Council meetings. Both roles are voluntary. For further information and details, contact the Chair of Praxis, Jo Spreadbury, canonprecentor@portsmouthcathedral.org.uk

Events

Creativity in Worship for Lay Leaders

Saturday 20 October 2018 10.00 am - 4.00 pm

**Cullompton Community Centre
Praxis South West**

This is an opportunity to return to basics in designing acts of worship, particularly with the lay leader in mind. We will cover areas such as the building blocks of worship including the many freedoms we have within the structures of *Common Worship*. These are the foundations on which we can be creative with the way we read Scripture, with music, intercessions, and even those beginnings and endings that often get forgotten. Come not only to pick up ideas but to share them: a service you've designed that you're proud of and worked well, especially if it's something 'outside the box'. Bring along resources that you have found helpful to share with the group. There will be an opportunity to hear from experienced practitioners and to contribute your own thoughts so that everyone has something to take away.

Contact gillbehenna@me.com

Liturgy at home and in hospital

Thursday 31 October 2018 10.30 am - 3.30 pm

Southwark Cathedral

Praxis South

Speakers: The Very Rev'd Andrew Nunn, Dean of Southwark Cathedral, and Hilary Fife, Senior Chaplain at Croydon University Hospital Trust

Much of the attention that we give to liturgy is about what we do inside the church. But the church is bigger than the building and, surely, it must include the home. This day will look at how we resource people for their worshipping life outside the church building, whether that be at home or when they are in hospital or care. From the marking of the seasons, to prayers around the table, from praying the Office as a family, to receiving communion when unable to go to church, there is so much that we can resource people for.

Contact peter@furber.me.uk

Apt Worship in Times of Grief and Sorrow

Saturday 17 November 2018 10.30 am - 3.45 pm

**Bridge Community Church, Rider Street,
Leeds LS9 7BQ**

Speakers: Helen Bent and Robin Greenwood

Tragedy and loss, whether sudden or expected, are what happens to other people. For some reason we never expect it to happen to us. Helen Bent and Robin Greenwood speak from first-hand experience as both worshippers and worship leaders. How do we personally find God in the face of terminal illness and death? What happens in the face of unexpected tragedy or a problem in society? What is apt worship in the face of the unthinkable? And how do we minister sensitively to people at points of crisis and on through the long path of ongoing grief and sorrow.

Contact johnfrancismoss@btinternet.com

Space, People and Ritual: The first cathedral at Salisbury (Old Sarum)

The 7th Annual Walter Tapper Lecture

Tuesday 2 October 2018 7.30 pm

Church of the Resurrection, Mirfield

Guest Lecturer: Dr John Harper

Free event but booking essential. Evensong at 6 pm, supper can be pre-booked £7.50

Contact bharper@mirfield.org.uk

Inspiring Music in Worship: exploring and engaging

Saturday 3 November 2018

10.30 am - 3.30 pm

Walthamstow Hall School, Holly Bush Lane, Sevenoaks, TN13 3UL

This day is linked to the latest RSCM book by Helen Bent and will be led by the author.

Contact: rscmrochester@outlook.com

RSCM Strengthen for Service Courses

**Tuesday 2 - Thursday 4 October 2018 at
Bishop Woodford House, Ely**

**Tuesday 12 - Thursday 14 February 2019 at
Sarum College, Salisbury**

**Tuesday 21 - Thursday 23 May 2019 at
Wyedale Hall, near Scarborough,
Yorkshire**

**Tuesday 1 - Thursday 3 October 2019 at
Foxhill House, near Chester**

All courses run from 2 pm on the first day through to 2 pm on the third day, ending with lunch, and are led by Canon Helen Bent, Head of Ministerial Training for the RSCM working in partnership with Praxis. Book on the RSCM website www.rscm.org.uk/courses/strengthen-for-service/

Strengthen for Service Lite (an abridged one day version of the residential)

**Saturday 6 October 2018 10 am - 4 pm
Trinity House, 4 Chapel Court, Borough
High Street, London, SE1 1HW**

Led by Canon Helen Bent.

Contact: ministryandtraining@southwark.anglican.org

All the details of these courses and more can be found on the new RSCM website: www.rscm.org.uk

In Flight with the Wild Goose: Worship & Resources from the Iona Community

Tuesday 16 October 2018 10 am - 4 pm

Sarum College, Salisbury

**Tutors: Frances Novillo and Jonathan
Robinson, both former Resident**

Musicians of Iona Abbey

A day exploring the appeal of Iona's distinctive worship style with guidance on how a local church could use these worship resources. £60, includes lunch and refreshments.

Contact: courses@sarum.ac.uk

Love the Stranger: Migration, the Bible and our Societies

Monday 5 - Tuesday 8 November 2018

Sarum College, Salisbury

**Tutor: Casey Strine, Lecturer in Ancient
Near Eastern History and Literature at
the University of Sheffield.**

A biblical study break looking at what the Bible says about migration, how it depicts migrants, and how it suggests migrants should be treated, drawing from Old and New Testament texts. £240 non-residential; £400 residential.

Contact: courses@sarum.ac.uk

Winning peace hymn

Nearly 150 entries were received for the Jubilate 'Hymns of Peace' competition, mentioned in Issue 57. The winning entrant has been named as the Rev'd Ally Barrett, Director of Pastoral Studies at Westcott House in Cambridge. Her five-verse hymn, 'Hope for the world's despair', was written to be sung to John Ireland's tune LOVE UNKNOWN. Verse four hints at the needs of veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, while other verses recall lives lost in war and pray for peace.

Details about how to use the hymn on Sunday 11 November 2018, or at some other act of worship commemorating the centenary of the Armistice – and about a recording – will be posted shortly on the Jubilate website (www.jubilate.co.uk). A number of other shortlisted hymns will also be made available. All will be covered by the CCL copyright licence scheme, and it is hoped they will be widely sung, not just in this centenary year.

Sarah Rodgers

Among the latest choral publications from Stainer & Bell is an anthem by Sarah Rodgers for SATB choir and organ, 'The King of Glory', which may be suitable for celebrations of Christ the King (the Sunday next before Advent). It offers an alternative to other settings of the verses from Psalm 24 which begin, 'Lift up your heads, O gates.' Sarah Rodgers, who lives in Norfolk and is a direct descendant of the family of seventeenth-century composer Henry Purcell, has been composing professionally since 1982. Her output is mainly concert music but she has also worked in the theatre and occasionally for film. Her simple setting of 'See amid the winter's snow' for upper and lower voices and piano, composed for the choir of Muswell Hill Methodist Church in 2002, was included in OUP's *Oxford Book of Flexible Carols* in 2009. A preview of the music of her new anthem can be seen on the Stainer & Bell website (<https://stainer.co.uk/shop/cn29p/>); printed copies may be ordered in the usual way, or with a special licence a single pdf copy can be downloaded and up to 35 copies made.

The Last Journey

SPCK has recently published a book-plus-CD combination called *The Last*

Journey: Reflections for a time of grieving.

The recording, which has 17 tracks, was originally made in 1996 by the Cathedral Singers of Chicago, directed by John L. Bell, who also wrote most of the words and music. The songs on the disc are choral arrangements of some of the compositions which appear in the collection *When Grief is Raw: Songs for times of sorrow and bereavement* (Wild Goose Publications, 1997). Some, like 'Who is there to understand?', are solo songs while others, such as 'Go, silent friend', are more hymn-like. The book contains the texts, along with brief reflections and prayers.

John Bell is quoted on SPCK's website (<https://spckpublishing.co.uk/the-last-journey>) as saying, 'In 1996 the material *The Last Journey* was published, but only in North America. It was a great honour over twenty years later to have SPCK ask if it could be made available in a new format in the United Kingdom.' He feels that, in times of grief, the church is at its pastoral best when not sticking to a well-worn selection of hymns and prayers 'regardless of who died and how', but honouring the uniqueness of each person, made in the image of God, in death as in life. Mourning the loss of a child is very different from losing an elderly Christian. One of the songs, 'There is a place', was written in memory of the children and teacher in Dunblane killed by a gunman in 1996.

New Taizé CD

Sixteen chants recorded in the Taizé Community's Church of Reconciliation in 2017 feature on a new CD, *Laudamus Te*. The words are in a number of different languages, and the music has mainly been written by brothers from the ecumenical community between 2012 and 2017, although track 9 (Jacques Berthier's 'Wait for the Lord') will be familiar to many in the UK. Several of the songs include instrumental and cantor parts.

Samples can be heard on the North American GIA website (www.giamusic.com/store/resource/taize-laudamus-te-recording-cd1046), while copies of this CD and many others may be ordered online directly from Taizé (<https://shop.taize.fr/index.php/cds.html>). It can also be helpful to look at the basic congregational parts of each chant or response via the 'Learning the songs' section of the Community's website (www.taize.fr/en_article10308.html).

Hymn Society conference

One of the presentations at the 2018 Hymn Society conference, held at Bishop Burton College, near Beverley, was given by Adam Carlill, Vicar of St George's and Mary Magdalen Tilehurst, who has produced a version of all the Psalms in 'modern metrical English' so that they can be sung easily by congregations.

His session gave the conference delegates the opportunity to sing a number of the texts, to familiar hymn tunes, and to hear about the rationale behind the project, *Psalms for the Common Era*. There is more information about the publication – available via Amazon – on a dedicated website (<http://psalmsforthecommonera.com>), including news of a workshop to be held at St Luke's Maidenhead on Saturday 10 November 2018, where metrical paraphrases of the Gospel canticles and the *Te Deum* will also be introduced.

A review of Carlill's book should follow in Issue 60. Other presenters included composer John Barnard, who gave an illuminating talk – with musical illustrations – on 'Hymn Texts and Tunes: marriages made in heaven?', and North American professor of worship and music Robin Knowles Wallace, who spoke about the song 'My life flows on in endless song' and its intriguing history.

RSCM summer school

Booking has already opened for the Royal School of Church Music's 2019 international summer school, to be held at Ditchingham (on the Norfolk/Suffolk border), from Monday 5 to Sunday 11 August. Belsey Bridge Conference Centre is described as a 'comfortable, homely residential base in the countryside', and the week will have a pilgrimage theme, ending with a service in Canterbury Cathedral. Lectures and workshops will include a keynote address from the new Director of the RSCM, Hugh Morris, input on leading a music group, and organ and conducting masterclasses. Composer Cecilia McDowall will be one of the visiting speakers and the Millennium Youth Choir will be sharing in some of the worship.

The deadline for bookings is Friday 12 April 2019. Note that the RSCM has a new website (now www.rscm.org.uk rather than www.rscm.com). Using the search facility

in the top right-hand corner is probably the easiest way to track down further details of the summer school or other events and resources.

Hymn writer at 80

Christopher Idle was born on 11 September 1938, and by the time PNOW has been published his many achievements in the world of hymns should have been celebrated with an eightieth birthday party and book launch in London. For many years Chris was the editor of the quarterly *News of Hymnody*, one of the forerunners of this publication. He has also been involved in editing hymn books, including *Hymns for Today's Church, Sing Glory and Praise!*

Two collections of his hymns already exist: *Light upon the River* (1998) and *Walking by the River* (2008). The third is entitled *Trees along the River* and the author anticipates it being his final published collection. Having enjoyed singing his hymns for over fifty years, I look forward to seeing what the last decade has produced.

Life Events: Mission and Ministry at Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals, *Sandra Millar, Church House Publishing, 2018*

In a vastly-changing world, many of us in parish ministry recognise the opportunity, and yet the challenge, that pastoral offices can pose to an overworked parish's mission and ministry. There have been seismic shifts in the way the general public engage and interact with the church regarding pastoral offices. Individuals come with a complex mix of needs and expectations, not all of which are easily discernible. At the same time, many churches are having to come to terms with operating under reduced budgets, reduced staffing levels and significantly enlarged populations. Those leading our local churches may be forgiven for entering into a state of anxiety and despair as they ponder how on earth they are to respond.

This book is, then, a very timely and welcome contribution to the discussion concerning where we see pastoral offices fitting into the life of our local churches, as well as how we might organise and conduct them. It draws upon many years of robust research to offer insight into the anecdotes and experiences of local scenarios and situations. It is a reminder to ordained and lay ministers alike of the welcome and 'priestliness' that sits at the core of our calling. And it explains why, when they are ordered well, these special occasional celebrations are such a wonderful opportunity to help grow the kingdom. The reader is left with more than just a glimmer of hope for the future. For those of us grappling with the multiple demands of modern parish life, this book helps lift us from the danger of seeing relentless pastoral offices as a problem into a mind set of hope and expectation for the possibilities. It cries out to the reader to make sure our approach is well-ordered and to keep trying new things. Most of all, a reminder that at the end of every phone call or email asking to book a baptism, wedding or funeral is a person who is likely nervous and unsure, and yet has approached us nonetheless. These people come because, when we get it right, the combination of our tradition, symbolism, liturgical order, professionalism, friendliness, care and concern are quite unrivalled – as though we were affording them an encounter with the living God.

✠ *Rob Parker-McGee is Vicar of All Saints', Orpington and a member of The Society of the Resurrection.*

Known Unknowns: 100 contemporary texts to common tunes,

John L. Bell & Graham Maule, Wild Goose Publications, 2018

Worship leaders wanting to introduce a new hymn to a congregation or choir often find it easier to pair new words with an existing melody,

rather than having to teach a new tune as well. This collection of 100 hymn texts, some already published elsewhere but many appearing in permanent printed form for the first time, is ideal for this purpose.

As one would expect from the scripturally based work of the Iona Community's Wild Goose Resource Group, the book includes psalm paraphrases: fifteen are listed in the index. 'Let every nation on the earth' is a version of Psalm 100, easily sung to TALLIS' CANON, with its final verse exemplifying the authors' craftsmanship with its gentle alliteration: 'Know God is Lord and God is good; / God's grace evokes our gratitude; / God's love and loyalty extend / to every age, world without end.'

The spiral-bound North American edition includes melody lines (details on www.gia.com), but the British version merely gives indications of metre and suitable hymn or folk tunes at the head of each item, along with seasonal or thematic suggestions. The index of subjects and themes on pages 136-7 includes 'Dismay and Distress', 'Creation' and 'Illness and healing'. This last category covers Bell and Maule's 'We cannot measure how you heal', now familiar to many and published quite widely, and 'We do not ask', written by John Bell alone and gently allowing the past hurts of abuse to be brought to God in sung prayer.

It may be useful to know that one can browse a sample, including the introduction and list of contents, via the Wild Goose Publications website (www.ionabooks.com). The first hymn ('God's intended joy'), visible in this sample, is one of my favourites, showing John Bell's characteristic humour and boldness in vocabulary. The book is dedicated to the Rev'd Dr Ian Fraser 'in his 101st year', but sadly he died at around the time of publication; his influence had encouraged and inspired hymn writers on both sides of the Atlantic.

✠ *Anne Harrison is a trustee of the Song and Hymn Writers Foundation and Music editor for Praxis News of Worship.*

Alcuin/GROW Joint Liturgical Studies

The Spirit in Liturgy and Doctrine: a liturgical-systematic dialogue in the fourth century church in Egypt and Cappadocia.

Joint Liturgical Study 86, published in October, is by Tom McLean.

£7.95 from SCM-Canterbury-Hymns Ancient & Modern

Resources to mark the centenary of the Armistice of 1918

From the Church of England Website

The centenary of the Armistice which ended the hostilities of the First World War is being marked across the nation. Remembering the end of what was sometimes called 'the War to end all wars', the Church of England presents a series of resources for public worship and private prayer.

These resources comprise:

- a vigil service for use on the evening of 10 or 11 November;
- a public act of commitment to work for peace, which could be used in conjunction with a civic Remembrance Day ceremony, or as part of public worship;
- a narrative called 'Steps towards Reconciliation', which reflects the need to work together for peace;
- prayers for peace, reconciliation, visiting a war grave.

Find all this at www.churchofengland.org/first-world-war-centenary

100-Days

A collaboration between Churches Together in England and Hope, 100-Days offers prayers, Bible readings, reflections and peace-making activities, available to download free from www.remembrance100.co.uk/100-days/ These include '6 Rs of Reconciliation' written by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Contributors include members and staff from the Churches, the Anglican Communion Office, and a variety of other Christian ministries.

Joint Liturgical Group

JLG offers an anthology of prayers on its website: www.jlg.org.uk/Resources/WW1-Prayers.pdf

Godly Play UK

Godly Play UK offers a reflective story for children, and adults, to foster reflection on the end of the War and its implications. www.godlyplay.uk/further-reading/

The Prayer Book Society

Some members of the Prayer Book Society have located special prayers used just six days after the end of the First World War. Now available for churches to download from the Society's website at www.pbs.org.uk/armistice, the prayers, issued under the authority of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York for use on Sunday 17 November 1918, were found among documents stored in the archives of Lambeth Palace Library.

Colin's column

A word about the ministry of the word. We usually call the central item in this part of the liturgy 'preaching'. But, I submit, this is not preaching (*kerugma*) as the New Testament uses it – that preaching is a proclamation to unbelief, a call for conversion. Our own in-house ministry is, in New Testament terms, 'teaching' (*didache*). This has implications at all sorts of levels.

Firstly, it raises questions of content. Has the address to the congregation got sufficient backbone of Christian doctrine? Does using the Lectionary serve the cause of imparting truth, and imparting it to meet the people's needs?

Secondly, it raises questions of method. The monologue sermon, though traditional and conventional, does not have to have a monopoly of communication. *Common Worship* itself recognises this – see the 'Note' on pages 27 and 332 of the main volume.

Then there is an issue of efficiency. What do I mean by that? Well, quite simply, what evidence do we ever get of people learning? There is no other teaching I have ever done that had no inbuilt check as to whether the recipients learned anything. But here, in our Sunday 'preaching', the highest evidence the deliverer of the word usually receives that the word has gone in is some quite minimal reference to the sermon by one or two worshippers when the service is over.

My own reading (certainly anecdotal) is that our Church is not only small in worshipping numbers, but is broadly ignorant, and because ignorant, is inarticulate.

I had the privilege of being vicar of a parish with 16 home-groups, meeting three weeks out of four on a mid-week evening. So good numbers learned to hear themselves speaking their faith, sharing fellowship, asking questions, discussing the answers, and bringing good lay thinking to bear upon their discipleship. Mid-week evenings are not possible for many (though short courses two or three times a year – over and above Lent – should be considered). So I raise the question

– can more be done to maximize on existing Sunday mornings?

Simple dialogue, with Q's and A's, is one step forward. Another is what Trevor Lloyd did in Wealdstone – a split morning with classes studying the faith, then coffee, then eucharist (with brief sermon), a pattern encouraging articulate participation. Some parishes (with movable furniture) work at 'café-style' seating and discussion. At Leeds Minster, where I preach occasionally, there is a discussion group, working with and from the sermon, meeting after coffee, and, in my judgment, valuable to those who come. I have myself a (partly tried) variant on this – actually planning a 45-minute teaching event to follow coffee, tackling subjects which have arisen outside of lectionary provision. I have lectured (with questions) on, for example, healing ministry; on another occasion on 'Where is the Church of England going?' Those with a 9.30 or 10 am service could easily do more with Sunday morning than I see happening – even if only once a month. Do we need some lateral thinking? What say you?

This issue's 50th anniversary

1968 saw not only the coming of modern language, but also a seminal production still in traditional language – the Anglican-Methodist Ordinal produced under the provisions of the then Scheme. The Ordinal got a 90%+ rating from the two Churches, and, drawing upon the Church of South India's rites, it became the parent of our own *ASB* and now *Common Worship* ordinals.

✉ Colin Buchanan is a former Bishop of Woolwich.