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## What is Praxis?

See [www.praxisworship.org.uk](http://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?

# Psalms for the Common Era

If one of the four pillars of modern liturgy is the principle of participation, it is a sad fact that many Christian denominations have witnessed the demise of congregational psalm singing in recent years. This is partly due to the dominance of the parish communion movement, and partly due to musical settings of non-metrical psalms being inaccessible to all but the music specialist. Metrical psalmody is often seen as the poor relation of 'proper' liturgical psalters, but I felt that another attempt at it was overdue.

*Psalms for the Common Era* is an unabridged metrical translation direct from Hebrew. Every verse is included somewhere. Additionally, I have translated the psalms into a wide variety of metres and rhyming schemes, based on the style of the Hebrew poems themselves, rather than any preconceived plan. While Hebrew and English poetry work in very different ways, I wanted the reader or singer to experience not just the meaning of the words in accessible English, but also the emotion and texture of the psalm. For instance, some psalms are acrostic in Hebrew, and I have reproduced this in English so that the singer can experience this rather dispassionate form of poetry.

I have brought the fruits of modern Old Testament scholarship to this project. The last two centuries have seen huge strides in our understanding of comparative linguistics and mythology. I have brought out some of these insights in my translation. *El*, usually translated simply as 'God', but who appears as head of the Ugaritic pantheon and father of all the other gods, is rendered with the Ugaritic epithet, 'Father of the Years', an image that is very close to the

description of the 'Ancient of Days' in Daniel 7, reserving 'God' for *Elohim*, and 'Lord' for *Yahweh*.

I chose usually only one tune for each psalm or portion of psalm, based on the emotional flavour of the poem, but, because hymn tunes exist separately from the poem, it is quite possible to find other tunes to fit. I have even started experimenting with folk tunes like Scarborough Fair.

Psalms and hymns are quite different. If hymnody reflects who we are, psalmody reflects the content of Scripture. In hymnody we are the starting point; in psalmody the starting point is Scripture. Unlike hymnody, psalms are often quite long, especially the lament psalms, which comprise at least two-fifths of the whole. This in itself makes the psalms a hugely important resource for services which acknowledge sorrow, injustice, abuse and pain, something that is often lacking in Sunday worship, where the bleeding heart is frequently pummelled into silence by praise.

I have now embarked on a series of workshops to showcase this translation. These are a chance to come along and spend a day singing psalms in the context of fun and cake, seeing how it is actually possible to hold a completely metrical Matins and Evensong without compromising the content. More details in Events; check out the website ([www.psalmsforthecommonera.com](http://www.psalmsforthecommonera.com)). *Psalms for the Common Era* is available in paperback, Kindle and large print formats on Amazon.

✉ Adam Carlill is the Vicar of St George's and St Mary Magdalen's, Tilehurst, and teaches Bible, Old Testament and liturgy for the Common Awards Scheme.

## Resound Worship

**R**esound Worship is a collective of British worship writers who, for the last decade, have been composing and publishing new, contemporary worship songs for the Church through their website. An offshoot of Jubilate – with the heritage of Michael Baughen, Chris Idle and many others – they have carried the values of accessible style, lyrical substance, and excellence through peer-critique, into this contemporary genre.

When you form a new charity, as we did when restructuring Resound Worship and Jubilate into the Song & Hymn Writers Foundation, you have to convince the Charity Commission that you will benefit humankind. It does rather focus the mind. Who did we exist to serve? Were we trying to sell more music, or enrich the repertoire of the Church? They're not mutually exclusive, but we quickly saw that our goals could not simply be to sell more albums. Instead it must be to understand and meet the real needs of real churches. We must write from the ground up, engaging churches as partners in conversation and responding with our songs.

An early approach to this was surveying church music groups. It was very revealing. Even amongst those many churches committed to our style of contemporary worship, only two-thirds used a guitar, but almost all included a piano. The third most common instrument was flute! Quite a contrast to the instrumentation of many popular worship recordings. Our challenge, then, was to write and record a collection of songs designed for the average church, not the mega-church. Vocal ranges, rhythms, lyrical themes and instrumentation were built around this picture painted by our survey. *Songs for Sundays*, the resulting collection, is unlikely to feature heavily on the radio but it has proved uniquely useful in many churches.

More recently, we identified a crucial gap-area in the contemporary repertoire around ecology and creation. As we hear increasing warnings of climate chaos, both our culture and our churches are waking up to the crisis. But we have little to help us frame these issues within our worship. So we are working to address this with a new collection exploring issues of creation

care. Our process of group critique throughout the writing journey has been crucial, as together we've deepened our own theological understanding of these themes; and we've been greatly helped in this by our friends at A Rocha International.

While we work towards a 2019 release, we've seen an unexpected spin-off through our 12 Song Challenge initiative and monthly podcast. Over 150 writers in local churches are producing a song per month on a theme we present, sharing them with each other for encouragement and critique. In October we invited them to join us in writing 'eco-songs'. Most said they'd never considered writing this kind of song. Some said they'd never really considered the issue at all in connection with their faith. But they took on the challenge and we were fascinated to see their theological understanding develop through the process of composition and the need to articulate their thoughts. By the end of the month, not only was there an array of new eco-songs that will be sung in churches across the land, but there was a community of worship leaders inspired in a belief that these themes should be addressed within our gathered worship. This, we hope, could truly benefit humankind.

✉ *Joel Payne is the Coordinator of Resound Worship.*

[www.resoundworship.org](http://www.resoundworship.org)

## Choral Evensong.Org

**E**vensong is arguably one of the glories of Britain. It is free of charge and open to all.

[www.choralevensong.org](http://www.choralevensong.org) is a website that promotes it. The Evensong project makes it easy to search for choral evensong services across Britain and Ireland. By typing in a postcode, an enquirer can find information about the type of choir, weekly service schedules and music lists of evensongs in a local area.

The website's creator, Guy Hayward, suggests that Evensong does not demand belief or any kind of affiliation to the Church, allowing an individual to engage with it in his or her own way. The service's various moments of music, spoken liturgy, and contemplative silence combine to

create a complete experience. Music carries us beyond the limitations of human words, offering space for respite and inspiration during busy modern lives.

But if you were to ask the average person in the street, they would not know that evensong exists. The supply of evensong is well established (in Britain and Ireland nearly 700 churches offer it), but the demand is low, because it is not a known quantity. The supply is expensive, but promotion is underfunded. The Choral Evensong website's purpose is to address this, each month featuring a particular choir that offers webcasting or recordings that people can listen to online. Truro Cathedral, for example, have installed a permanent audio setup and the choir webcast frequently.

Setting up a streamable recording facility is not too expensive – £1,000 for the equipment needed for a week-long audio-only broadcast. A broadcast by the choir of St John's College, Cambridge that went out on social media recently had 88,000 views (33,000 live).

Another simple but overlooked initiative is to raise the visibility of Evensong in local media: tourist information websites, visitor information leaflets, events listings in local newspapers. Leaflets and listings that advertise historical and architectural visits to churches might also invite visitors to 'attend the free music service of Evensong'.

Evensong receptions gather locals to take part in Evensong, seeding awareness into a local community. A reception is basically an Evensong with a drinks party afterwards, to which MPs and mayors, local journalists, head teachers from local schools, hotels, B&Bs, residents' associations, universities, the local tourist offices and doctors' surgeries are invited to participate, many for the first time. The Evensong website offers a 'How to' template for this, as well as Evensong posters.

Jane Capon of the Choir Schools Association and Cathy Lamb of Lichfield Cathedral School are creating a 'Choral Outreach Online Directory' listing the teams operating from cathedrals. Lichfield Cathedral is designing a new children's evensong with a shortened liturgy adapted for children, and they are also employing a children's cartoonist to illustrate the service booklet, explaining the story of the

*Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis.*

Lastly, could cathedrals promote and advertise Evensong via a slick, punchy, viral social video? You can find an example from Southwark, where the Dean and Guy spoke about evensong. Evensong hasn't yet gone viral, so the field is wide open to be the first to make this happen. Watch the video at: <https://youtube/YOovD0kBeZs>.  
✉ *Guy Hayward is a researcher in the Centre for Music and Science at the University of Cambridge and runs [www.choralevensong.org](http://www.choralevensong.org). This article is edited from a series of presentations he has made recently.*

## Music Share – a singing outreach project

In 2003, Lichfield Cathedral and Lichfield Cathedral School began a project to take singing into primary schools, following the example of Truro Cathedral. In 2007 this was boosted by funding through a government initiative entitled Sing Up, which enabled the project to work with more schools and to set up a Cathedral Young Voices – a non-auditioned choir for local school children of primary age. In a nutshell, the idea of the projects was to work with three schools per term, taking the choristers out as an example of peer-to-peer leadership, and to end each term with a culmination concert in the cathedral. Almost every cathedral in the country undertook to create a Sing Up project and they were all hugely successful – although varying in size and style.

When the Sing Up funding came to an end, many cathedrals retained their outreach projects in some form. Lichfield's has not only continued but thrived. We now receive funding from the Arts Council via the North-West Music Education Hub, with whom we have forged a strong partnership, enabling us to work with 103 core schools in the academic year 2017-2018. We have also reached a further 150 schools through other projects such as one-off singing days and our involvement with the diocesan and Cathedral education departments for their Inspire – an open-door project that brings schools to the Cathedral over the course of three weeks.

We continue to have concerts in the

Cathedral, but we have now expanded to work with secondary schools and deliver concerts in churches around the diocese, and we are now considering 'Evensong in a day' with primary schools and even perhaps a Compline with teenagers from the area. We continue to have a Young Voices choir but we also have a Youth Voices and we are pleased to be involved in projects with the international Lichfield Festival.

✉ *Cathy Lamb is Director of Music Outreach, Lichfield Cathedral School.*

## The Revised English Hymnal – coming in 2019

It is by now an open secret that there will be a new edition of *English Hymnal* coming out in 2019. Readers will recall that in 1906, *English Hymnal*, edited by Percy Dearmer, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Martin Shaw and others, appeared in the wake of what some considered to be a disappointing update of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* in 1904. That book was not well received, and paved a welcoming way for the arrival of a book more in the 'catholic' tradition, which held sway until the mid-1980s. The same three men went on to produce *Songs of Praise* in 1925 (enlarged in 1931), but that was by no means a revision of *English Hymnal*, which by 1956 had sold five million copies. To coincide with the eightieth anniversary in 1986, the *New English Hymnal* appeared, under the editorial chairmanship of George Timms, assisted by Anthony Caesar and Christopher Dearnley, among others. *NEH* was a not *EH* revised, but a new book, very much in the tradition, so to speak. Supplements had appeared: *English Praise* in 1975, which was a stepping stone to *NEH*, and *New English Praise* was published in 2006 to mark the centenary. Now, the *Revised English Hymnal* is imminent, edited by Martin Draper (who had been part of the *NEH* team), myself, Jonathan Goodall, Simon Lindley, Christine Smith, Michael Stoddart and Huw Williams, all of us hugely assisted by Tim Ruffer. Tim, Christine and I had previously worked on the 2013 edition of *Ancient and Modern*, and it is in fact *Hymns Ancient and Modern Ltd.* who will publish the new

book, under the auspices of the English Hymnal Company, of which the editors are directors.

So what can be expected of this new book? Firstly, it is exactly that – not a revision of a previous book, but a revision of the corpus of the tradition and it would not really be true to say that *NEP* was much of a stepping stone towards it, as there was no automatic inclusion of its items. Indeed, many items have made it no further. *REH* is a new book, created from the ground up, with many new items, some new to the *EH* stable, others picked from other publications, some specially commissioned in accordance with the needs of the book. Such needs include a deliberate desire to provide office hymns for the daily round of prayer, such that every saint or devotional occasion has provision. In each case, both plainsong and metrical tunes are provided. The Church of England Calendar is followed and provided for, and there is substantial liturgical material, including several settings of the mass for congregational use. The book is structured seasonally, with a large section for the sacraments, and a dozen 'Taizé' chants, and material for eucharistic devotions, 'Benediction'. A list of contents can be found at [www.englishhymnal.co.uk](http://www.englishhymnal.co.uk).

We hope the eagerly-awaited, and - let's be honest – overdue book will reward patience while we fine-tune it, and that it will be a worthy successor to two great and much-loved hymnbooks which it will not so much overwrite, but from which it will rather inherit gifts of both textual and musical quality and integrity. Only time will tell!

✉ *Gordon Giles is an editor of the forthcoming Revised English Hymnal and Vicar of Enfield Chase.*

## Above and beyond: the power of music

We need music in our lives, and in our world. Singing and speaking together, as well as simply listening to music, affects our wellbeing at a fundamental level. Music has a profound

impact, uniting and shaping people in spiritually significant ways. The role of churches is key in offering people a chance to experience music and these beneficial consequences music brings.

It is well known that music has direct effects on physical as well as mental wellbeing: it alleviates anxiety, depression and pain in patients with physical illnesses. The shape of melody with successive tones, and harmony with concurrent tones, as well as the pattern of rhythm and pulse, have proven effects on respiration and heart rate. We 'feel' music immediately and involuntarily as the tension and relaxation of muscular tone in our physical frame.

Chant, and rhythmic singing especially, have a significant impact on us physically and physiologically. It is said that the pattern of Anglican chant with the balance of phrases, call and response, is something that is highly beneficial for those who hear: we absorb deep down each time – with each verse – that there is conclusion and resolution: even if it is a poignant chant in a minor key, the cadences resolve in a sense of completion.

Recent studies by neuroscientists have looked at the effect of meditative chant on the brain, and how this influences singers and listeners alike. One consequence of a rhythmic breathing pattern in singing or chanting is that it changes the electric information that the heart sends to the brain. So when you chant you change the physiology of the heart and that in turn affects the brain, especially the frontal lobes, making us more aware and more perceptive.

And when you have people together chanting or singing, there is a phenomenon among human beings that the signal the heart generates doesn't stop at the skin, it radiates off the body quite some distance. So when people gather together their physiology is affecting each other and you get what's scientifically called entrainment, or synchronisation between different individuals. So one of the great joys of chanting, or singing in a choir, or even speaking in unison with a large group of others, is that you feel a sense of alignment or togetherness with the people around you and this enhances the experience. Interestingly, the phenomenon of entrainment was first described by Christian Heugens, the Dutch inventor

of the pendulum clock. It happens in inanimate systems: one pendulum can bring the others into alignment; the most powerful pendulum gradually forces others to 'tick' in time with it. There is something similar going on when a flock of birds or a shoal of fish synchronise and move as one. We live in a world, a universe even, designed to help us move into sympathy with one another, into alignment and harmony – and singing, music and chant are among the best examples of this fundamental principle working in us and through us and around us.

The congregation benefits as well as the choir, drawn in by the power of the music as well as the entrainment effect which includes everyone present, even if we are sometimes not aware. Our heart rate, our breathing, our physiology are all affected as we come to choral services to offer our prayers and worship in and through the music.

Iain McGilchrist tells a lovely story of a French monastery where chanting the psalms was curtailed after Vatican II, and the monks found themselves listless, exhausted, irritable and prone to illness until the abbot was persuaded to reinstate chanting.

Music is important for spiritual health, for individuals and communities. Churches offer a vital opportunity for people to experience music together. You can see the power of singing in the football stands or chanting at a demonstration for people who don't experience the cohesive effect of music positively elsewhere. The effect of entrainment can be harnessed by some negative ideologies if we don't offer people the opportunity to find that sense of alignment and harmony with others in beneficial ways, through singing or speaking together in unison in purposeful ways.

The universe, it seems, is designed to bring people together in understanding and sympathy through this phenomenon of entrainment. Let's make the most of music and chant, as God's gifts to us, to bring harmony in our world.

✍ *Jo Spreadbury is Precentor of Portsmouth Cathedral and Chair of Praxis.*

## New RSCM Director

I am delighted, and honoured, to be working as Director of the Royal School of Church Music. Since starting work on 1 August I have enjoyed getting inside the skin of an organisation which has meant a lot to me for a long time. I have been a practising church musician for 30 years, as a chorister at school, an organ scholar, and then as an organist and choir trainer in a variety of situations, most recently as Director of Music at Derby Cathedral. In each of place, I've enjoyed working as part of a team whose role is to deliver and lead good worship. I've always enjoyed good relationships with clergy I have worked with. I have a passion for education and I was a classroom music teacher in schools for 15 years. Happily, all those things come together in my work for the RSCM. We work to educate, train and inspire church musicians and leaders, whatever their local circumstance. Of course, we have our roots in robed choirs and organs, and if that were not a continuing important strand of our work then the RSCM would not have appointed me, a Cathedral organist, to the post of Director. But I enjoy other musical styles, and some of my most satisfying work has been when I have pulled together different musical traditions.

One of the biggest challenges facing RSCM is getting word about what we do to the people who would benefit from that. Every person who is part of a church which is an affiliate member is themselves a member, and can access our online resources, magazines, enrol on courses, join events... Please help us by spreading the word; and have a look at our new website: [rscm.org.uk](http://rscm.org.uk)

I am really looking forward to meeting lots of people over the months ahead, and to play my own part in encouraging the best out of all who give their times and talents in support of church music.

✍ *Hugh Morris*

## Cambridge recordings

In October this year, Signum Classics released a CD of 21 favourite hymns from Jesus College, Cambridge: *Praise my Soul*, sung by the Chapel and College Choirs under the direction of Richard Pinel (SIGCD545). Most are established classics, but several newer texts and/or tunes do feature: the most recently written hymn is 'How shall we sing salvation's song?' by Timothy Dudley-Smith, set to music by David Manners (561 in *Ancient & Modern*, 2013). The album may also be downloaded, and samples can be heard on the Hyperion website ([www.hyperion-records.co.uk](http://www.hyperion-records.co.uk)). The majestic words of Michael Saward, 'Christ triumphant, ever reigning', set to John Barnard's stirring GUITING POWER, make up the final track.

From the Choir of St John's College, Cambridge, directed by Andrew Nethsingha, comes *Advent Live*, an hour-long Signum Classics recording, available as a digital download or a CD (SIGCD535). Full details are again on the Hyperion website. The Advent service from St John's has been broadcast annually by the BBC since 1981, and this album consists entirely of live recordings made between 2014 and 2017. Several of the pieces were commissioned for the College Choir, including 'Vigilate' by James Long (b.1987), while 'Glory to the Christ Child' by Alan Bullard (b.1947) is an example of the specifically Christmas pieces chosen each year by the Director of Music to end the service, along with the Christmas Collect.

A near neighbour of St John's, the Choir of King's College is marking a notable centenary with *100 Years of Nine Lessons & Carols*, a newly released double CD (KGS0033-D, once more available from Hyperion as a digital download). The album features new recordings by the choir, under the direction of Stephen Cleobury, and older carols from the live BBC broadcasts of the famous Christmas Eve service (some conducted by Sir David Willcocks, some

by Philip Ledger). A very interesting essay by Timothy Day on the history of this service, from its founding at the end of the First World War by former padre Eric Milner-White, is included in the CD liner notes (see also page 2 of PNOW 59) and can be read online via the Hyperion website. Four of the annual commissions are sung, including what must be the shortest, 'Bogóroditse Djévo' ('Rejoice, O Virgin') by Arvo Pärt (1:09).

## Hymn collections

Those looking for fresh inspiration in the realm of hymnody, either for congregational use or for personal devotions, may be interested in a collection of 125 new hymn texts by Martin Leckebusch (b.1962), whose well-crafted work has found its way into a number of recent hymn books. Kevin Mayhew has published *Echoes of Eternity* which, along with the texts themselves, includes a useful introduction and plentiful index material (metrical, scriptural, seasonal, thematic etc). The book bears the dedication 'For my numerous friends in the Hymn Society, with joyful thanks'.

Most hymns have three, four or five verses, with the number of lines in each verse varying. The metre and a suggested tune are printed below each text. For example, 'Teach us to walk' (11 10 11 10) could be sung to EPIPHANY HYMN. This might make a good New Year hymn, with the four verses beginning, 'Teach us to walk at a pace of your choosing', 'Teach us to walk on the road where you lead us', 'Teach us to walk in the strength of your Spirit', and 'Teach us to walk to the goal you determine'. 'Each hidden corner of this planet earth' (headed 'God unveils the mystery', 10 10 10 10 10) speaks of God's 'complex cosmos', and yet God knows us by name and calls us friends. The suggested tune is YORKSHIRE, usually associated with Christmas ('Christians awake! salute the happy morn'), so some might prefer an alternative such as SONG 1 by Orlando Gibbons.

Another collection published in 2018, by Wild Goose Publications, is Leith Fisher's *Strange Majesty*, edited by Douglas Galbraith. This provides music as well as the words of 22 hymns, 'exploring themes not easily found in the standard repertoire'. Leith Fisher, a member of the Iona Community and a Church of Scotland minister in Glasgow for many years, died in 2009. Some of the texts here are set to traditional Scottish melodies – the author apparently loved the music of Runrig and Capercaillie. A sample may be seen via the Wild Goose website ([www.ionabooks.com/strange-majesty.html](http://www.ionabooks.com/strange-majesty.html)).

Another Scottish hymn writer, Ian Fraser, died this year (on 10 April) at the age of 100. Ian Fraser was also a member of the Iona Community from its earliest days. His best known hymn is probably 'Lord, bring the day to pass', on environmental themes, written in the 1960s, around the time Fraser set up the Scottish Churches' Music Consultation in Dunblane. This was one of the significant elements in what became known as the 'Hymn Explosion' of the late twentieth century.

## Pause/Pray

Sara and Sam Hargreaves of Engageworship have begun to create a series of podcasts in the form of audio Bible reflections and guided prayers, over original music. The episodes can be heard online (<https://engageworship.org/pausepray>), and the meditations could be used for small groups as well as individual devotions.

# Events

## **Growing in Worship**

**Saturday 2 March 2019**

**10 am - 4 pm**

**Cullompton Community Centre,  
Devon, EX15 1JX**

**Praxis South West**

Speakers: Elizabeth Harper (Lay Ministries Enabler, Bath & Wells) and members of the Committee  
Gustav Mahler once said, 'Tradition is tending the flame, not worshipping the ashes.' So here is a day to encourage, refresh and inspire all those who tend that flame through designing, preparing or leading worship, whether lay or ordained.

What are the basic building blocks of corporate worship and how can we take advantage of the freedoms and flexibilities that *Common Worship* offers? Come not only to pick up ideas from experienced practitioners, but also to share your insights and experience too – a service you've designed that you're proud of, creative ways to read Scripture, use music, lead intercessions, particularly things a bit 'outside the box'.

Contact [gillbehenna@me.com](mailto:gillbehenna@me.com)

## **All Good Gifts: Liturgy, the Environment and Green Issues**

**Thursday 13th June 2019**

**10.30 am - 3.30 pm**

**St. Luke's, Chelsea**

**Praxis South**

Speakers: Richard Cheetham, Bishop of Kingston and Matthew Rushton, Precentor of Rochester Cathedral  
A day looking at liturgy as expressing God's call to be good stewards of Creation, using everything we have been given for the good of all people and challenging injustice and misuse.  
Contact [peter@furber.me.uk](mailto:peter@furber.me.uk)

## **The Complexity of Inclusion: Ensuring that all are included**

**Wednesday 30 October 2019**

**10.30 am - 3.30 pm**

**St. George the Martyr, Southwark**

**Praxis South**

Speakers to be announced.

How do we provide a welcoming environment and appropriate liturgy so that physical, social and emotional inclusion is a consistent feature of our worship? We will address these concerns through key speakers and workshops.

Contact [peter@furber.me.uk](mailto:peter@furber.me.uk)

## **RSCM Strengthen for Service Courses 2019**

**Practical guidance on managing, maintaining and developing music in the local church**

'Like a mini-retreat but with input.'

'Truly enriching.'

'Helen's evident passion and expertise was inspiring and greatly appreciated.'

'This is the best course on worship I have experienced so far.'

- Tuesday 12 - Thursday 14 February at Sarum College, Salisbury
- Tuesday 21 - Thursday 23 May at Wydale Hall, near Scarborough
- Tuesday 1 - Thursday 3 October at Foxhill House, near Chester

Day places are available for those who live locally at a reduced cost. This still includes lunch and an evening meal.

All bookings through the RSCM website: [www.rscm.org.uk](http://www.rscm.org.uk)

Further information from Sarah King, RSCM Education Administrator, 01722 424848; [sking@rscm.com](mailto:sking@rscm.com)

## **Perham-Shaped Worship:**

**A Symposium to honour Bishop Michael Perham's ministry in a praying church  
Sarum College**

**Friday 8 – Saturday 9 February 2019**

This symposium is an invitation to consider the remarkably rich and diverse influence of the late Bishop Michael Perham upon worship in the Church of England. In this public forum, speakers with first-hand experience of Michael's ministry will address issues such as nurturing worship in the parish, liturgical leadership, the formation of praying people, and liturgical revision.

Contact James Steven on [jsteven@sarum.ac.uk](mailto:jsteven@sarum.ac.uk) or visit <http://www.sarum.ac.uk/event/perham-shaped-worship-a-symposium-to-honour-bishop-michael-perham-ministry-in-a-praying-church>

## **Psalms for the Common Era Workshops**

**Saturday 19 January 2019**

**10 am - 4 pm**

**Emmanuel Methodist Church,  
Oxford Road, Reading**

An ecumenical event for the week of prayer for Christian Unity.  
[emmanuelmethodistchurch.org.uk](http://emmanuelmethodistchurch.org.uk)

**Saturday 16 March 2019**

**10 am - 4 pm**

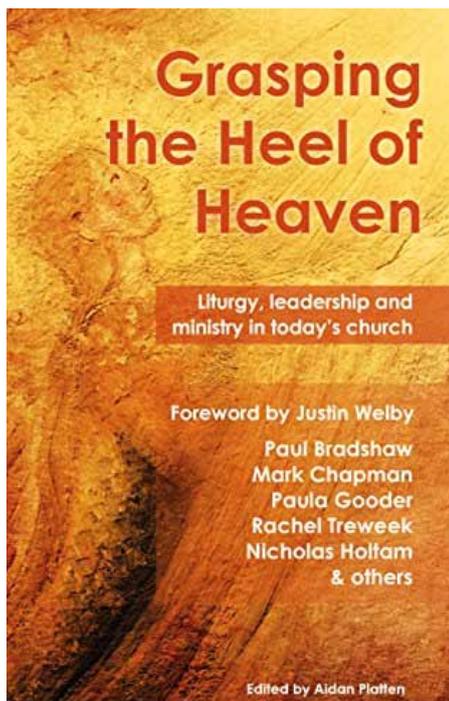
**Songs for Sighing: Psalms for Lent  
St Mary Magdalen Church,  
Kentwood Hill, Reading**

An RSCM event for Berkshire  
[rscm.org.uk/events/songs-for-sighing-psalms-for-lent](http://rscm.org.uk/events/songs-for-sighing-psalms-for-lent)

## **Thank you, Peter**

The Praxis honorary administrator and treasurer, Peter Furber, retires at the end of 2018 after many years of talented and committed service to us all. Peter is very well known to members of Praxis South, as he has worked with that committee since he retired to Winchester diocese in 2009, and he will also be well known by some Praxis Midlands members because he served that committee when he lived in Worcester diocese. In addition to all this, however, Peter has discreetly and extremely competently kept the national organisation on the straight and narrow, managing our finances, our membership and our website. His organisation, unflappable nature and ready availability have made him a joy to work with and we shall miss his support contributions hugely. Happily, Peter will continue to run the Praxis website.

Thank you, Peter, for all your work for Praxis and for sharing your gifts and wisdom so generously.



**Grasping the Heel of Heaven:**  
*Liturgy, Leadership and Ministry in Today's Church, edited by Aidan Platten, Canterbury Press, 2017*

We are greatly indebted to Aidan Platten for gathering this set of essays that honour the contributions of the late Michael Perham to the Church of England. The wide scope and influence of Michael's ministry is demonstrated impressively in the diverse subject matter of ten chapters: church governance, episcopal oversight, liturgical revision, the ordination of women and debate on same-sex relationships all jostle for the reader's attention.

The importance of the Church's worship to Michael's work is unambiguously signalled in the title of this volume. As Platten reminds us, 'grasping the heel of heaven', a phrase that surfaces regularly in Michael's writings, captures the vision of worship that Michael worked so tirelessly to communicate and encourage.

There are four essays that engage directly with liturgical matters. Paul Bradshaw, who worked alongside Michael on the Liturgical Commission, writes a typically astute and stimulating review of the misunderstandings that bedevil commonly held perceptions of the role of history in recent liturgical revision. This is an important essay for anyone interested in learning about the

nuanced way the Church of England, and Christians more generally, employ historical precedent. David Stancliffe, who chaired the Liturgical Commission from 1993 – 2005, explores the underlying theological and pastoral issues that shaped the revision of three rites: Daily Prayer, Initiation and Ordination. This fascinating under-the-bonnet analysis of the Commission's work illustrates how each rite has raised important questions of the nature of the Church, its doctrine and its pastoral practice. Stephen Platten, Stancliffe's successor on the Liturgical Commission, frames the story of liturgical revision within the now ubiquitous term 'mission', and in so doing illustrates that concerns for mission are embedded not only in liturgical texts but particularly so in matters of the performance of the liturgy. Tom Clammer, who served as the Gloucester Diocesan Worship officer when Michael was bishop of the diocese, contributes a highly insightful personal reflection on the transformative capacity of liturgy. This is an eloquent testimony to the value of striving for language and practice that best serves and stimulates the spiritual imagination of those who pray.

Readers of *Praxis News of Worship* will find these essays to be a stimulating tribute to Michael's work as liturgist. Appreciating the extent of the impact of his work upon the worship of the Church will have to wait for a future volume. However, as a pointer to this, his life as bishop is captured perfectly in a short Afterword, written by Rachel Treweek, his successor as Bishop of Gloucester. She reminds us that the man who gave so much beautiful liturgy to the Church of England was a bishop who 'appeared most fully alive when celebrating the Eucharist'.

✉ *James Steven is Director of Liturgy and Worship at Sarum College.*

### **Grove Worship W235, *Worship and Disability:***

*A Kingdom for All, Katie Tupling and Anna de Lange*

Most worshipping communities will include at least one person with some sort of disability, though it may not be a visible one. Making conscious plans for being inclusive to those disabilities is less common. This booklet is for church members and leaders, with or without

disabilities, to help them look at their worship and its context through new eyes, and to suggest easy ways of improving accessibility.

### **Grove Worship W236, *Worship in a Multi-Ethnic Society,***

*John Root*

One of the most striking descriptions of the people of God in the New Testament is that they are 'from every tribe, people and nation' – and yet there is an almost complete lack of provision and practice in the area of actual multi-ethnic worship.

This insightful study looks at the issues involved, and offers a range of resources and solutions to the challenges of conducting multi-ethnic worship in the local church.

### **Alcuin/GROW Joint Liturgical Studies, *SCM-Canterbury-Hymns Ancient & Modern***

Joint Liturgical Study 86, published in October, was by Tom McLean. *The Spirit in Liturgy and Doctrine: a liturgical-systematic dialogue in the fourth century church in Egypt and Cappadocia.*

The next will be a double-size JLS (numbered 87-88, and published in May) by Colin Buchanan and Trevor Lloyd, *The Eucharist in the Church of England 1958-2013.*

## **This issue's 50th anniversary**

1968 saw the sowing of a seed at the Lambeth Conference. The Conference did not tackle liturgy, but in its report on 'Renewal in Ministry' it opened the possibility (no more than that, see p.99) of admission of children to communion before confirmation. This caught the eye of Brian David in New Zealand and he took it as a lever to his own diocese and their General Synod, and his own children benefitted around 1970, and the rest you know (well, we hope you do [ed.].)

It came as no surprise, to the little team pouring tea or coffee to the steady stream of delegates arriving for the start of the Praxis South day in Southwark Cathedral on 31 October, that this was going to be a big event – which it was, a great success – and somewhat bigger than expected, with 180 lay and ordained people from fourteen dioceses; the maximum number allowed. ‘Liturgy in the Home and in Hospital’, was much anticipated and appreciated, particularly the input of the two speakers, Andrew Nunn, Dean of Southwark, and Hilary Fife, Senior Chaplain at Croydon University Hospital Trust, who both captivated and challenged those attending, first with their wide-ranging and thought-provoking addresses, then after lunch with well-focused and informative workshops.

Andrew Nunn, ‘Domus Ecclesiae – making the home a place of healing’,

reminded us of the pastoral impact and importance of bringing well-thought, well-prepared liturgy into domestic settings, of authenticity and simplicity, of creating conditions in which prayer and worship can flourish. He reflected on the various joys and challenges to be encountered in places outside a church building.

Hilary Fife, ‘Prayer on Prescription – Dispensing grace in hospital’, presented detailed advice pertinent to a hospital environment with particular emphasis on safeguarding matters, consent, confidentiality and good practice and, like Andrew, recommended not being endlessly novel, while being flexible and sensitive in each circumstance.

Both speakers pointed to a number of excellent and effective liturgical and pastoral resources currently available to those already experienced in, or just beginning, a ministry to the sick.

The afternoon was dedicated to

workshops facilitated by the speakers on the themes explored in the morning talks.

Not only was the attendance a record for Praxis South but a significant proportion of these were non-ordained pastoral assistants, who welcomed the very practical advice offered and the opportunity to network with others.

Organising committee members Jax Machin and John Tranter brought the day to an end with a deeply personal act of worship, which drew on Lindisfarne liturgies, and filled the Cathedral with music by the Beatles, Eric Clapton and Bob Dylan (sung by Adele). As Jax explained, ‘How will we unlock the minds of worship-free generations, who have no experience of church or its liturgies? What do we do if we only have the music and words of Kylie?’

✉ *Michael Boag is Rector of Worth.*

## Colin's column

I have very recently had published a book entitled, *Did the Anglican and Roman Catholics Agree on the Eucharist?* It is published by Wipf and Stock in Eugene, Oregon, in the USA, but it addresses a history of 50 years which is centred in England. I have reason to hope it will be reviewed in the next *Praxis News of Worship*, and I am endeavouring not to anticipate the review, while still using the liberty accorded me by my freehold in relation to this column.

One of the major points I try to make in the book is that the systematic theologians, when they deal with sacramental theology, do so in almost total divorce from the liturgical texts. And this was certainly true of the original *1971 Agreement on the Eucharist*. But it is also true the other way round – the liturgists tend to think the doctrinal definitions relating to the sacraments are recondite and even difficult, and

that it is far easier and more use to work at agreeing liturgical texts without worrying about the theologians.

Now the average worshipper who attends a Sunday morning eucharist may have a vague or a very precise notion of the relationship between the outward sign (the bread and wine in the eucharist) and the inward grace (the body and blood of Christ), but it is, I submit, very likely that he or she never discusses it – it is a private conviction which is not up for public debate. Parents may have to explain the Last Supper to their children, but once at church, if I am right, they eat and drink without much question.

However, in my book I mention that it has become a commonplace to say that every Christian believes in the ‘presence of Christ’ at the eucharist and that is a strong ecumenical bond. However, I go on to say ‘that any Anglican who is today teaching confirmation candidates, or lay

readers in training, or indeed ordinands, quickly encounters the students wrestling with whether, to use the terms of popular speech, the eucharistic bread and wine change their nature or, alternatively, retain their nature and change their use and significance.’

That ‘wrestling’, I put to you, is healthy. Of course Jesus handed us a problem (wrapped into a sacrament) when he said, ‘This is my body’, etc. We would be wise to consider what meaning could be attributed to that saying at the point where he said it, standing incarnate before them. And what meaning the use of the terminology has warranted since. There may well be a case here for healthy and charitable disagreement. But it would be good to reckon that adult worshippers know the terms of any dispute, and can enter into some dialogue about it.

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