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## What is Praxis?

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.

## Affiliation

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

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# What the General Synod did right

Did anything good come out of last autumn's General Synod? According to one member's experience, some good things happened, despite what press coverage would have us believe.

The reporting of last November's General Synod has been concerned almost exclusively with the defeat of the legislation concerning the ordination of women to the episcopate: and as a General Synod member sitting through that rather bleak debate, my own memories are inevitably coloured by an experience of the synodical process at its very worst. All that will be a great pity if it is allowed to detract from the other significant business that made up the Synod's agenda, and in particular a development which, in its own way, could have a more profound effect on local church life and worship than the admission of women to the episcopate.

## *The Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham motion*

The Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham brought to Synod a motion calling for changes to Canon B12 – the canon that deals with the distribution of Holy Communion and who may properly be involved in it. It was a composite motion that, among other proposals, was to make provision for the authorization of Eucharistic ministers to be delegated by the Bishop to the parish clergy. But the most innovative proposal brought to Synod was to change the rules so that: 'The Holy Sacrament may be distributed by any authorized regular communicant (including children admitted to the Holy Communion under the Admission of Baptised Children to Holy Communion Regulations 2006)'.

In its written submission to Synod, the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham reminded the Synod how it had admitted children to Holy Communion before confirmation after a long journey and very positive experiences in a number of 'experimental dioceses'. It commented that the fruits of that Synod decision had led to more children and young people being fully involved in the life of the church and

developing their own ministry gifts before coming to confirmation at a time more appropriate for them and their individual spiritual development. The experience of children and Communion had been widely positive, with no lack of reverence but rather a clear demonstration of the grace of God for us all. It seemed right to those proposing the motion that some of these young people should now to be able to assist in the distribution of Holy Communion. Such a development would allow a much fuller sense of participation by children at a school Eucharist,

when until now, having been actively involved in the Liturgy of the Word, they have been largely passive during the central act of the distribution of Communion. It would also allow children to minister in this way to adults within a Sunday Eucharist in the parish church, so recognising their unique gifts and ministries, and no doubt having a profound effect on the spiritual formation of the children taking part in this way.

After a good and full debate, the motion was passed by a significant majority, and the proposed legislation sent on to the next stage of its synodical journey. It was an important moment, not only for its implications for the wider Church, but also for the Synod itself. Although some members had reservations, the votes both for and against the motion crossed the usual party lines. The new developments had clearly captured the Synod's imagination and had given us a vision of the kind of Church we wanted to be, a Church in which children and adults can minister to each other, and in doing so recognize one another as equals within the Body of Christ.

✠ *Perran Gay, Precentor of Truro*



# Reports

## The Liturgical Commission

The Liturgical Commission met in Sheffield for 48 hours in the middle of October. Most members and consultants were able to attend, and there was a balanced agenda of updates on work in progress, reports of what is happening in other churches and meetings with those who are pushing the boundaries of worship. As always when a group of liturgists meet there was a solid framework of worship and much singing in multiple harmonies ... but, for some reason, we said all the psalms slowly and very quietly.

Among the updates on work in progress were some draft additional texts for the Initiation services. Some helpful responses had been gained from the recent DLCs' day and the sub-group offered their latest drafts for the Commission to trial: we were variously the parents and the god-parents and the subgroup was the priest. We were joined by one member who was with us on Skype from California: I mused about what use Cranmer could have made of Skype (obviously nothing from California). The Decision, before the Prayer over the Water, the Profession of Faith and the Commission are all being worked on, as is emergency baptism and baptism of older children and adults.

Roddy Hamilton, an invited guest from the Church of Scotland, brought examples of work from their Mission and Discipleship Council. We received 'goody bags' of examples of their online publications and liturgies – including a text of their baptism liturgies and some seasonal suggestions which we enjoyed.

The Commission spent important time learning of the Ministry Division's current work on the new curriculum for Common Awards for ministerial training, hoping very much that the module writers will take on board some of our careful suggestions for the scale and content of liturgical formation in this new curriculum. Plans for liturgical formation across the dioceses were received and online updates to *Worship Workshop* noted, together with a pleasing increase in membership of Praxis.

The second evening was spent engaging with Ian Mobsby, priest in charge of St Mary Aldermary in the City of London, and Ben Gordon-Taylor, liturgist at the College of the Resurrection. They were talking about MOOT, a Fresh Expression

and new monastic community. What we heard was profound and heartening, especially that there had been several vocations to priesthood, although, Ian said, the psalms were not always helpful to theological growth among members of MOOT.

The 'foot washing' ritual introduced into the diaconal ordination services was considered. Where is the best place to express servanthood in this service – at the beginning of the rite or just after the ordination? Does it draw too much attention to the bishop's act of servanthood and, practically, how is it managed? – And I worried about who reminds the ordinands to wear socks!

✦ *Christine McMullen, Lay Canon of Derby and Reader at St Peter's, Buxton*

## Weep with those who weep: a day on lament

'My soul is bereft of peace;  
I have forgotten what happiness is;  
so I say, 'Gone is my glory,  
and all that I had hoped for from the Lord.'  
*Lamentations 3.17-18 (NRSV)*

How do we enable people to relate faith to experience, especially when that experience is of loss and grief? How do we encourage not only the emoting of praise, but also the emoting of lament? These were the questions which were explored at a Praxis Midlands day on Lament held in Birmingham Cathedral on 20 September 2012. We were uniquely privileged to have as our speakers Bishop Gordon Mursell, now retired but a former Provost and Dean of Birmingham Cathedral, and John Bell of the Iona Community.

The Psalms proved a rich source of lament language, encouraging as they do the baring of feelings before God. We recognised both personal and corporate grief; lament by an individual at a cancer diagnosis; or of parents at the loss of a much wanted child; but also when a nation or community comes together when tragedy strikes. Our midday worship took the form of an abbreviated version of a service used in a parish church to commemorate the tenth anniversary of 9/11, an occasion of corporate lament for all that has happened in the world since. We listened, we were moved, we sang songs from the heart.

There is at the heart of lament in the Judaeo-Christian tradition both the depth of despair and anger at the tragedy that has overtaken us, but also that glimmer of

hope that the one in whom we have put our faith will not in the end abandon us for ever. How do faith and experience come together? Is it in honestly laying who we are before God so that God can honestly lay before us all that we may hope for?

'The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,  
his mercies never come to an end;  
they are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.

'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul,  
'therefore I will hope in him.'

*Lamentations 3.22-24 (NRSV)*

✦ *Priscilla White, Chair, Praxis Midlands*

## Annual DLCs Day

The annual day for DLCs, which focused on baptism, stands out because it was characterised by a welcome degree of theological rigour, underpinning both the theoretical dimensions of the day, and the more practical elements.

Anders Bergquist began with a striking paper which examined the archaeology and anthropology of baptism. It challenged many lazy assumptions about the practice in the patristic period. It also provided aspects of the contemporary discussion about infant baptism in parishes (e.g. the 'accessibility' of the rite, the confused expectations of those who request baptism, the general antipathy of the 'gathered church' towards non-church families who bring their children to be baptised) with the rooting necessary to understand how we have arrived at the present situation.

We then heard about the next phase of the *Listen to England* project. Partly modelled on the *Weddings Project*, it is conducting research among non-church families (in the dioceses of Blackburn and Rochester), probing people's experience and expectations of baptism, with the aim of enabling the Church to respond more appropriately to those seeking this rite for their children. The notable raw data to emerge revealed how the families consider (a) baptism to be the 'real thing' and a thanksgiving liturgy second-best; (b) that water is symbolically important; (c) that the 'ritual technician' is a significant factor – i.e. they want a priest (d) that there is huge anxiety as to whether, as non-church people, they qualify or are considered 'good enough' by their local church; (e) there is a strong need for blessing/protection for their children coupled to an awareness that they are born into a world fraught with danger.

John Muddiman provided a paper about the place and function of baptism within the overall theology (or theologies?) of the New Testament. He suggested that baptism is not an end in itself, but a means of expressing the Church's understanding of atonement, ecclesiology and eschatology. This undergirded his claim that infant baptism became (essentially) an uncontroversial reality by the end of the 2nd century (with whole households being baptised together). His approach was particularly helpful in resourcing contemporary 'mission' anxieties when uncommitted families, who appear to be ill-informed about the significance of that request, request baptism for their children – and are not aware of the commitment which is a consequence of it.

The afternoon was largely devoted to the 'Liverpool Motion' (the request for more accessible texts in the baptismal rite). Angela Tilby and Tim Stratford, as members of the Commission working group, presented some example of work-in-progress – notably alternative forms of the Decision and the Prayers over the Water. It was acknowledged that the baptismal rite was the only element in CW not to have been road-tested; that its shape and content reflected a somewhat rose-tinted view of patristic practice and assumed a decline in the numbers of infant baptisms from non-church families, as well as an increase in committed adult initiation. Self-evidently, this has not been the case! We heard drafts of new texts but despite the quality of the crafting, I was left wondering whether, if you're not familiar with the culture of the Church, any text which respects the integrity of the theology of baptism is going to be challenging. I remain to be convinced that the problem is actually a textual one. Might it not be that a lack of adequate liturgical formation and falling levels of theological literacy among clergy has brought us to a point where many baptismal presidents lack basic confidence in the capacity of the rite to communicate at different levels? My own experience is that, if a quality 'experience' is offered to those who come for baptism, I am less diffident about implying that this rite is strange/challenging/unexpected, but could make a profound difference to your child and how you see the future!

✉ *Simon Reynolds, Vicar of Darton, Barnsley*

## Making a Splash: Praxis South West re-launched

Sounds a good title for a launch event doesn't it! When liturgical officers from

Bristol, Bath & Wells, Exeter and Truro dioceses met to find ways to work more closely together, it made perfect sense to become Praxis SW.

'Making a Splash' took place at Exeter Cathedral on 4 September. Our subject: 'Refreshing Initiation'. Most parish clergy are frustrated with the *Common Worship* baptism rite as they struggle to reconcile the Church's understanding of the sacrament with the expectations of the community they serve. We were also mindful of the motion by the Liverpool Diocese in General Synod asking the Liturgical Commission to revisit the texts in the light of pastoral experience. Tim Stratford, the new Archdeacon of Leicester, spoke with practical common sense about his experience of an edge of city estate with around 180 baptisms each year. He suggested areas where more simplicity was needed: the Decision, the Prayer over the Water and the Commission. Clearly baptism ministry for him was as much about mission as pastoral care. A panel responded to practical questions. The afternoon was a complete contrast, as Perran Gay showed us a way to present baptism and confirmation where there is plenty of space. We walked through the rite as used in Truro Cathedral, dwelling at each 'station' stage by stage culminating in the sending out of the newly confirmed.

We plan to offer two or three events each year. Watch out for publicity about a day with Gill Ambrose on 4 May considering worship with children and young people, and later on an opportunity to hear Paul Bradshaw on his recent work on eucharistic prayers. All of us on the Praxis SW Committee are grateful for all the guidance, support and encouragement we have received as we get established.

✉ *Robin Lodge, Chair, Praxis South West*

## The BCP in the 21st Century

Like other Praxis events I've been to, this day on 10 November in Winchester was well organised, and highly stimulating. Its full title was *The Book of Common Prayer and the English Soul in the 21st Century*. The two speakers, Angela Tilby from Oxford and Cally Hammond from Cambridge, provided some useful input and questions allowed them to address some other angles. One predictable question concerned difficulties with language: I remember being taught that only two substitutions were permissible in the *BCP* Communion service: 'impartially' for 'indifferently', and 'living' for 'lively'. Cally Hammond's view was that intelligent young people with a

heart for worship would soon grow to know and love the words, even – or especially? – the archaisms.

Both speakers emphasised that they were not 'preservationists', determined to use the *BCP* simply for history's sake; both justified its continuing use on other grounds. Cally Hammond says that using the *BCP* 'connects us with our past and points us to our future'. This is highly subjective and I saw two interconnected tensions emerging. Am I a master or a servant of the liturgy? For example, shall I colloquialise the 'difficult' bits, to make them more accessible and more relevant to this particular context/occasion? Shall I choose a psalm to suit the theme, or shall we simply use 'the Psalms in order as they are appointed'? Cally commented that the latter option allows new connections to emerge – if I dare to trust that the Spirit is at work whether I am 'in control' or not. She drew attention to the priest's ego as an issue: with *Common Worship* I need to do a lot to make it work – 'it's all about me' – whereas with the *BCP* it's simply about not getting in the way. Angela commented that leading *BCP* liturgy involves minimal eye contact with the congregation (especially with an east-facing Communion), which reminded me of Godly Play, an unusual contemporary example of deliberately minimal eye contact, often with very powerful effects.

A second question emerged for me: which is more important in liturgy, novelty or predictability? Angela characterised today's worship as 'obsessed with stimulation, novelty and excitement' – the all-age service is perhaps the supreme example of a 'performance', the minister appearing as more of a continuity-announcer than a facilitator of true worship. Yet the familiar may be treated with contempt – liturgy is associated with boredom, the enemy of consumer-led worship. Cally quoted Kierkegaard, who thought that 'willed repetition is the highest form of human freedom', and her second session was all about the rhythm, the pattern, the symmetry, the sound of liturgy. Some of her examples of effective rhythm came from *Common Worship*, including: ... 'we thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you.'

The day included two 'model' acts of worship according to the *BCP*: a midday Eucharist and a closing Evening Prayer. Participation demonstrated even more eloquently than the speakers that the *BCP* is still fit for purpose in 21st century liturgical worship.

✉ *Sally Dakin is a priest in the Winchester Diocese.*

# Praxis Events in 2013

Praxis events are open to all. Their aim is to enrich our worship, to serve God's people, and to provide a forum for the worshipping traditions of the Church to meet and interact. Members of Praxis can attend events at a reduced rate. For further details of each event listed here please check the website, [www.praxisworship.org.uk](http://www.praxisworship.org.uk) or the contact given in each case.

## **Now thank we all our God**

**Monday 28 January 2013**

**Diocese of Ely / Praxis East**

A day looking at the new Additional Eucharistic Prayers for use when children are present

Bar Hill Church Centre,  
Cambridge CB23 8EH

Speakers: Anders Bergquist and Gill Ambrose

Contact Jo Spreadbury, 01923 263 013,  
[jo.spreadbury@tinyworld.co.uk](mailto:jo.spreadbury@tinyworld.co.uk)

## **Creation in Worship**

**Thursday 28 February 2013**

**Praxis Midlands**

Birmingham Cathedral

Christians need worship that praises God as Creator, shows a great heart and concern for God's creation and the environmental challenges the world too often denies and provides words and symbols to transform worshippers. Does our Church of England liturgical provision for *Times and Seasons* rise to these real challenges?

**David Kennedy** shows how we might make more creative use of the *Times and Seasons* authorised material to enable contemporary communities, industrialized and rural, to worship and respond to God our Creator.

**Chris Polhill**, believing that worship enables the change of heart that is needed for the care of creation, encourages the writing of new material for contemporary worship to inspire that change.

Come and join in the conversation and share your own practice and passion for 'Creation in Worship' and its liturgical expression. (You may like to bring copies of liturgies and prayers you have created and would like to share.)

Contact Janet Chapman, 0121 262 1840  
[canonliturgist@birminghamcathedral.com](mailto:canonliturgist@birminghamcathedral.com),  
[www.praxismidlands.org.uk](http://www.praxismidlands.org.uk)

## **Now thank we all our God**

**Tuesday 12 March 2013**

**Praxis Yorkshire**

A Praxis training day for all who plan or lead worship with children on the

Additional Eucharistic Prayers and other aspects of good practice  
10am – 3pm at Oxford Place Methodist Centre, Leeds LS1 3AX.

Cost: £5 per person with a maximum of £15 for multiple bookings from the same church The day will include keynote addresses, practical workshops and a Eucharist using one of the new prayers.  
Speaker: Dana Delap  
Contact Helen Bent, 01709 363 850,  
[helen@thebents.co.uk](mailto:helen@thebents.co.uk)

## **Worship and Mission: Making Connections**

**Saturday 27 April 2013**

**Praxis North**

A day at St Mary's, Heworth NE10 0UT.  
Speakers: John Sinclair and David Brooke  
Contact John Chamberlin, 0191 2530022,  
[johnchamberlin@btinternet.com](mailto:johnchamberlin@btinternet.com)

## **Engaging Children in Worship**

**Saturday 4 May 2013**

**Praxis South West**

A day at Exeter Cathedral  
Speaker: Gill Ambrose  
Contact Gill Behenna 01454 202483  
[gillbehenna@me.com](mailto:gillbehenna@me.com)

## **All Age Worship for All: is it possible?!**

**Thursday 3 October 2013**

**Praxis Midlands**

A day at Birmingham Cathedral  
Speaker: Lucy Moore of Messy Church  
Contact Janet Chapman, 0121 262 1840,  
[canonliturgist@birminghamcathedral](mailto:canonliturgist@birminghamcathedral)

## **Now thank we all our God**

**Thursday 17 October 2013**

**Diocese of Winchester / Praxis South**

A training day on the Additional Eucharistic Prayers and other aspects of good practice for all who plan or lead worship with children.  
Speaker: Mary Hawes

# Colin's

**A**FTER 'AND WITH YOUR SPIRIT' (in the last issue of *Praxis*), I am on to a couple of different liturgical responses this time. Both come in the baptismal services, and both are intended to underline or intensify meaning, as opposed to the *Dominus vobiscum* stuff, where I was trying to play down the meaning. The baptismal rites are undergoing re-revision, so there might even be a point of impact.

Indeed my first point arises from rumours or leaks from the people doing the re revision, whereas my second doesn't seem to have occurred to anyone. I did offer a comment in the past that agitation about the rites would best be confined to the length and weight of the prayers over the water, and caution and restraint were needed when complaints were addressed against most other parts of the baptismal order. I stick with that, but –

Well, the rumour has it that not only shall the alternative vows (p.168 in the 2006 edition) be made more prominent and accessible, but that the projected response to the questions would be 'I do'. And that is not well.

I can still hear Edward Ratcliff saying 45 years ago that 'I do' belongs to Hollywood (all film or fiction references to marriage vows do tend to cite a non-existent 'I do' as the marital consent), and that the *Prayer Book* and healthy practice gives a response that echoes back the verb in the question – so 'Will you...?' (or 'Wilt thou...?') is answered 'I will' and, in the baptismal rites, 'Do you repent...?' is answered 'I repent...'. Even the 'strong pastoral reasons' three questions on page 168 (where I fear the rubric is mostly interpreted as meaning 'when the minister prefers ...') still retain their *ASB* form with the strong responses 'I turn to Christ', etc. So let not revisers let this go slack and 'Hollywoodise' the liturgy.

My other concern is to add something where nothing currently exists ('what', I hear you saying, 'and make it longer still?'). Quite simply, we need a cued enthusiastic response straight after the moment of baptism. I find myself at adult baptisms at intervals, and the rite so easily goes flat at that very moment. There should be a forceful congregational

'Amen' to the baptismal formula, but what follows that? If there is another candidate, that next candidate steps up to the water (whether for pouring or submersion), and the first one, duly baptized, is silently marginalized unnoticed, perhaps muttering 'Can I have the towel please?' Signing (as 1662), oiling, clothing, candlering or backslapping them may or may not lead to a cued liturgical response, but the occasion demands more. I have myself encountered:

- a round of applause (this was recent and triggered this writing, but it makes it difficult to have applause at the Welcome, and that then feels flat);
- a text of Scripture addressed specifically to the particular candidate (e.g. 'Faithful is he who calls you...' but perhaps individual to each individual)
- a use I found at All Saints, Peckham Rye (ten or more years ago) whereby each candidate chose a favourite chorus which was sing as each neophyte surfaced for the third time and climbed up the steps out of the water – a kind of signature tune specifically to and for the emerging Christian, a meaningful and powerful process.

However, those things noted, my own interpolation has been different. I lift one of the hands of the newly baptized high in the air with my hand and shout to the congregation 'Praise God for Susie's baptism into Christ' and the congregation acclaim back 'Alleluia! Amen!' Then resort to the towel may be had, while the next candidate is asked 'George, is this your faith?'

What would you like to do?

✉ *Colin Buchanan is a former Bishop of Woolwich*

## Musical News

is unfortunately missing from this issue owing to illness.

## Events Card

Two copies are enclosed with this issue so that one can be passed on.

## Three Years of Kyries

In *Common Worship*, the option is explicitly provided to use the *Kyrie eleison* as the act of confession in public worship. *Kyrie* confessions can make this important part of our service more easily accessible to those who are unfamiliar with Christian worship. They also make it possible to be both varietal and consistent at the same time when crafting liturgy.

All the *Common Worship* volumes that provide for crafting Sunday or festival liturgies include sample *Kyries* that are a good way of getting started, but it soon becomes apparent that there are shortcomings in those provided. They tend to be quite generic and not necessarily as penitential as one would like for a corporate act of confession. By way of example, see the first *Kyrie* confession in the main *Common Worship* volume on page 133. None of its sentences is a statement with which a Christian would argue but they don't 'feel' particularly penitential and this suggested set of sentences is far from atypical. Those that are provided specifically for particular seasons in the Church's calendar have a parallel problem in that they tend to carry a generic sense of what that season is about (which in the case of Lent, does at least mean they are more obviously penitential). Whilst not a negative point, churches following the Lectionary will find that this provision does not directly connect with the readings and preaching week-by-week.

*Three Years of Kyries* was born out of my appreciation of the concept of the *Kyrie* confession, dissatisfaction at those provided and desire to allow the liturgy to be a powerful communication medium. When complete, it will provide a sample *Kyrie* confession for each Sunday and festival in all three years of the *Common Worship* Lectionary, based on the set Gospel reading. It also provides inspiration for liturgically-minded ministers to write their own *Kyries* that connect with the passages of Scripture being used in their regular preaching.

When writing these confessions, a diversity of translations is important for two reasons. First, it avoids the possibility of 'skewing' the confessions towards a particular translation's model of interpretation. Secondly, the way a passage is rendered across different Bible translations opens the door to a wider range of words from which to build the poetry of the confession. Where possible, it is a good idea for the themes of the confession's sentences to be ordered in the same way as

they appear in the text, ensuring we pray with the grain of Scripture.

As part of a diverse liturgical diet, *Kyrie* confessions can be a wonderful opportunity to flex our creative muscles as ministers. I hope *Three Years of Kyries* inspires you to do just that and write your own *Kyries* for your congregations to use. Find them at

<http://kyries.jamesthevicar.com>

✉ *James Ogley, Vicar of St Francis, Luton*

## Lamentation in Lent

The classical Anglican spiritual discipline is the daily office, in which we hear Scripture interpreted by a framework of psalms and canticles and respond in prayer. It is noteworthy that there are more Psalms of Lamentation than Psalms of Praise: there is an unsettling honesty and realism about the Psalter. This throws down a challenge to those of us for whom worship is more often celebratory than sorrowful.

Thankfully, the calendar is there to help us! There is a whole season in which to learn to lament: Lent. It is worth considering what worship resources we might use during Lent to help the people of God to make the most of lamentation.

The way the Prayers of Penitence are handled might be key. *Common Worship* allows the creation of *Kyrie* confessions, and there is no reason why these could not sometimes be incorporated in a period of sung worship – for example, by using Joanne Boyce's 'Show mercy to us, loving Father', followed by an authorized absolution.

Lamentation is broader than penitence. It also expresses desire, and will be important in the prayers of intercession. Here, the stanzas of Anne Quigley's hymn 'There is a longing in our hearts' could introduce periods of prayer for the world, the Church, the sick, and the local community respectively, the refrain acting as a 'prayer response'. Other sung responses might include short songs from Iona or Taizé, or the Brazilian 'Merciful Lord, in your loving kindness', which is, helpfully, in a wistful E minor.

Lent might also be a time for focusing on the sadness of others, perhaps using a display of appropriate stories from a local newspaper in the place used for daily prayer. For those of us for whom it is not our tradition, a candle stand might make a seasonal appearance. By the end of Lent, we might be more confident in our lamentation, and better able to rejoice in the Easter mystery.

✉ *Liam Beadle, Assistant Curate, Enfield Parish Church*

# Book reviews

## **Worship that Cares**

Mark Earey, SCM, 2012, ISBN 978-0-334-04411-6, 264pp., £19.75

If I had to choose one book for trainee Readers, worship leaders, or stuck clergy, I would choose this one! Mark Earey is a compelling teacher, an unstuffy liturgist and he has worked as an ordained minister in an ecumenical setting before he turned to theological education. The book is not an in-depth study of new insights into obscure aspects of pastoral liturgy but a lively summary of the pastoral possibilities in Sunday worship and pastoral services. It uses the work of many respected practical theologians and liturgists such as Paul Bradshaw, Elaine Graham, Gail Ramshawe, Michael Perham and David Stancliffe, Fraser Watts and John Westerhoff as well as the anthropologist Arnold van Gennep (with a feminist critique of his work).

The first three chapters set out an overview. Sunday worship is helpful because in telling God's story in readings and intercessions, it provides a map for the journey of life; we learn that we are known and loved; we see in the stories people whose lives have been turned upside down – and they survive; and we meet symbolism 'powerful enough to embrace the most intractable event'. Sometimes, of course, people with profoundly different needs meet in Sunday worship and the vigilant pastor has to look for ways of helping them separately.

The next chapter includes the list of life-events for some of which the church has a liturgy ... and some for which it doesn't – a rite for divorce? For same sex marriage? The later chapters look in detail at birth, marriage, healing and funerals, and little is omitted! All the chapters have case studies or theories or 'to think about' boxes, plus summaries and full bibliographies.

Finally, Earey offers a toolkit – some basic principles and resources. Traditional theories of liminality and faith development are here alongside the power of words, as poetry, symbol, or timeless phrases.

✉ Christine McMullen, Reader, St Peter's, Buxton

## **Using the Book of Common Prayer: A simple guide**

Paul Thomas, Church House Publishing, 2012, ISBN 978-0-7151-4276-9, 144pp., £9.96

There is much to-do these days about the status of the *Book of Common Prayer*. I was ordained in the last twenty years of its gentle demise, and ordained into the new world of *Common Worship*. To be up-front about it, the change for me was 'neither hot nor cold'. It was as it was and I always felt that the words were never just the heart of it, however numinous. Yet for some the change was volcanic, distressing, and a cause for walking out into the desert of a lost language. Time has moved on and perhaps now we feel safer to experiment and explore the range both of ancient and modern.

*Using the Book of Common Prayer* is a gem of graceful, accessible scholarship. The book is divided into two parts: an historical introduction, and guidelines for good practice. History is far from bunk in this case. In fact, it is just what many people will find really helpful; particularly those who have paid lip-service to the historical underworld of prayer, which may seem, in its sixteenth-century guise, more a matter of monarchy than of prayer. I usually have to get my pencil out to stay awake through such worthy 'How to' books, but I found myself wanting to pencil the margin because it was all making so much sense in an historical way, yet letting the history impact with reality. For example: 'Cranmer's intention was serious and devout; he was earnestly and evangelically working to create a Christian society, one that he believed would come about when "the very pure word of God" was brought to the people of England' (p.9).

The text moves from pure history to praxis; and yet, because the nature of the text, we inevitably get involved in the way history presents itself on the page, and the task of making sense of the book in the hand, and its elements in action: 'Finding your way.' This modest and simple guide opens up things we know well, and things we may have been puzzled over for years, and answers are given.

✉ David Scott is a member of the Liturgical Commission

## **Making the most of your child's baptism: a gift for all the family**

Ally Barrett, SPCK, 2011, ISBN 978-0281064618, 32pp, £3.74

For several years I have been looking for a suitable book to give to parents and godparents of infants being baptized, with no success. I even started planning to write one myself, but now that I have found this, I will postpone my project! It covers lots of key points, including the idea that baptism is about belonging to the church family and taking part in its life.

There are excerpts from the *Common Worship* baptism service, assuming the shorter form of the decision, and the 'believe and trust' profession of faith; though a note on page 3 explains that there are local variations to the service. The background to the writing of the book, as well as 'top tips for clergy', can be found at [www.spckpublishing.co.uk/archives/making-the-most-of-your-childs-baptism](http://www.spckpublishing.co.uk/archives/making-the-most-of-your-childs-baptism). The booklet is imaginatively laid out, with lots of colour. My only grumble is that the text is too small for easy reading; a bolder typeface, or a slighter larger size, would make it much more accessible.

✉ Ian Tarrant, Vicar, St Mary's Woodford

## **How to celebrate Holy Week in a real church**

Charles Read, Grove Book W212, 2012, ISBN 978-851748372, £3.95

Enabling your church – and the community around it – to be touched by the critical themes and events of Holy Week, one of the busiest periods in the Church calendar, can be a challenge. This guide provides a practical approach to making Holy Week meaningful for everyone who passes through the church doors. With sample services and activities for making the most of every day from Palm Sunday to Easter Day, it also includes realistic approaches to help design your week to meet the needs of church-goers, and the need for mission.

## Common Worship: A Pastoral Companion

Church House Publishing, 2012, ISBN 978-0715122037, 176pp., £19

### An introduction...

Variety and flexibility are two of the great strengths of *Common Worship*. Mindful of the diversity of settings in which ministry in the Church of England is exercised, *Common Worship* seeks to provide liturgical resources which are faithful to our Anglican heritage and, at the same time, sufficiently flexible to meet the various needs of those among whom we serve. Comparing the rites of *Common Worship* with those of the *ASB (1980)* and the *Book of Common Prayer*, nowhere is this enrichment more visible than in the provision of pastoral services and, in particular, the pastoral care of the sick, dying, bereaved and those unable to attend public worship.

There is no doubt that *Common Worship: Pastoral Services* is widely used and appreciated. Practically, the large green volume works well for weddings and funerals, but feedback suggests that many find the vast array of texts contained within its covers difficult to navigate, and its size too unwieldy to use in many situations. Hence, the *Pastoral Companion*. In designing this new resource, the main concern of the Liturgical Commission has been to produce a slim, durable, easy to use, pocket-sized volume which contains the essentials for pastoral ministry. And, for the increasing number who would like to use this material on an iPhone or Kindle, an electronic version is also available.

The *Pastoral Companion* contains liturgical material for:

- Ministry to the Sick (including a selection of prayers for use with the sick and their families)
- The Reconciliation of a Penitent (from *Common Worship: Christian Initiation*)
- Emergency Baptism
- Ministry at the Time of Death (with resources for use when a child has died)
- Ministry to the Bereaved (including a collection of prayers for use with the bereaved and a fully worked-out order of service for those unable to be present at a funeral).

In addition, so that it can be easily used without any supplementary resources, the *Pastoral Companion* also contains an appropriate selection of psalms (printed in both *Common Worship* and Coverdale versions) and biblical passages. Above all, this material has been chosen and arranged with the practical needs of ordained and lay ministers in mind. Whether it is used in day-to-day ministry, or to respond to

an emergency situation, it is hoped that this new volume will soon become an indispensable resource to support and enrich the vital work of pastoral ministry in the Church of England.

✠ *Simon Jones is Chaplain of Merton College, Oxford and a member of the Liturgical Commission*

### ... and a review

My training vicar taught me that when ministering in crisis one has to communicate peace and calm. There is that moment when a minister is called out, a few precious minutes to collect one's thoughts and prepare what might be needed. Does this book give the minister easy access to resources at such a time?

The book contains Ministry to the Sick, Reconciliation of a Penitent, Emergency Baptism, Ministry at the Time of Death and Ministry to the Bereaved, along with 35 pages of psalms and Scripture passages. The material is nearly all extracts from the *CW Pastoral* and *Initiation* volumes (a few new prayers?) but they are presented in a much more accessible and usable form. Inevitably not all the options are included, but it works as a stand-alone volume; for example an 'everyday' collect is provided in Holy Communion. A reading is generally given in full rather than just the reference. There is a good selection of *Prayer Book* material. Ministry at Time of Death is set out in a much more convenient way than in the *Pastoral* volume, and there is good material well set out for occasions before and after the funeral – a relatively inexperienced person could easily lead prayers with this book (but how will those present know how to say the congregational bits?).

The volume is slim but has large pages. It can be squeezed – just – into a jacket pocket but sticks out ostentatiously, and there are times when one does not want to display everything one has brought! You will need the two ribbons because the book will snap shut as you anoint or administer communion.

The material was been well thought out and presents a mature version of the *Common Worship* material. For equipping a minister at that critical moment, and for giving confidence to someone less experienced, it does the job and it will be the tool I pluck from the shelf.

✠ *Gordon Jeanes, Vicar of St Anne's, Wandsworth*

## In praise of the ordinary

So often we make special mention of the 'out of the ordinary' – the anniversary concert, the festival service, the new commission. For many in church life this is on top of the week-by-week, day by day, regular worship. And without this 'ordinary worship' we would not be able to deliver the special. Whether you are reading this from the back pew of a village chapel or in a raised stall in a Cathedral, just pause for a moment and think how many people are involved in the delivery of your services – the welcome, the music, the flowers, the readings and intercessions, the administration of communion, tidying it all away and getting it ready for the next time. All those rotas and all those names on them – each one a fulfilling of the ministry of the baptised.

These ministries should never be underestimated. For those involved in church choirs you will be aware what this means:

- constantly being regular and punctual for rehearsals
  - folders always organised, black shoes always clean, slick at changing into cassocks etc.
  - keeping alert in services so ready to jump up and sing and also lead the congregation in their spoken parts.
- Behind all this, Directors of Music and Organists are busy selecting appropriate music and planning the rehearsals for each and every service and concert. These are no mean tasks and are highly time consuming. It is similar for everyone else in charge of a rota!

Without all the ordinary, the extraordinary could never happen. What strikes me is the dedication of everyone in this, many doing this on top of a busy day-job, home responsibilities and community tasks. Yes, it can get tedious and exhausting at times. But this isn't training like that done by athletes – the tedium of the morning run or work-out with the target of the race some months ahead: our every day round of worship is a taste of heaven in itself. Whether a quiet solitary Morning Prayer, a glorious cathedral Evensong or the Sunday Parish Communion in Ordinary Time, this is Heaven in the Ordinary.

May God continue to bless all our ministries, ordinary and out-of-the-ordinary.

✠ *Janet Chapman, Canon Liturgist Birmingham (St Philip's) Cathedral*

# Ring out wild bells to the wild sky....

*'Ring out wild bells to the wild sky ...  
Ring out the old, ring in the new!'*

That was Tennyson's message offering a rare clearing of the gloom in his epic lament *In Memoriam*. In one sense, it was a poetic elegy on 'tradition and change' as Tennyson mourned the premature death of his friend Arthur Hallam. Tradition and change describes the warp and weft of the liturgy. Tradition is the substrate and innovation offers new mutations of an age-old pattern. These last few months have seen plenty of evidence from the Liturgical Commission of this tension within its work and within worship. Even our publicity offers ample evidence of this.

Back in the earlier part of this year, *Words for Worship* offered a unique collection of texts from the treasure chests of the Church of England's liturgical tradition. In September the new Eucharistic Prayers for Use with Children appeared in printed and

electronic form; we are about to reprint! Not long after, *A Pastoral Ministry Companion* was published. It is an enormous asset to all clergy as they minister to people in home or hospital – a sort of portable liturgical vade mecum. Finally, in November, and supported by the Commission, appeared, *Comfortable Words: Polity, Piety and the Book of Common Prayer*. Celebrating the 350th anniversary of the 1662 Book, and partly resulting from a symposium at the British Academy, this brings together chapters from some of the finest historians and liturgical scholars of our day.

Praxis, at this point, also mirrors both tradition and change. At a time when the Liturgical Commission continues with its focus upon formation – indeed with formation at the heart of its agenda – Praxis reminds us that it was there at the start. In terms of the world of formation, the Commission is 'a child of

Praxis!' But Praxis, too, has a new 'spring in its step'; membership is growing and activities and courses are multiplying. Some of the regions have effectively been reborn.

All this comes together in July this year with the national liturgical conference, *Worship Transforming Communities*. Here Praxis and the Commission will cooperate together to offer a sumptuous feast. Usually taking place every five years, this time we've had to wait for seven years for this national gathering. If you have not signed up yet, do please do so now and bring others too. There are still places, but they are being taken up very swiftly – all the booking details are included on this page. So ring in the old and ring in the new – do both together – this July in Birmingham.

✉ +Stephen Wakefield, Chairman of the Liturgical Commission and President of Praxis



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