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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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Praxis South YouTube channel: <https://tinyurl.com/Praxis-South>

### Affiliation

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

# 'I believe and trust in her'

IN 1998 OR 1999, when I was at University, I worshipped in the chapel on campus. Our chaplain was on General Synod and we were one of the communities selected to try out some experimental liturgy. I distinctly remember a number of services in which liturgical material was tested. Some of it, I now recognize, was stuff that was destined to become *Common Worship* text. At the time, of course, the *Alternative Service Book* reigned supreme, other than for services of Initiation where new texts had already arrived. Quite a lot of the draft texts were fairly uncontroversial, and simply tripped us up a bit as we fought against muscle memory halfway through the Creed, or in the Gospel responses. I do also remember some tentative experiments with non-gendered language for God. I have no idea whether these were part of the official bundle of experimental texts at that point, or whether they were the result of a liberal university chaplaincy and an enthusiastic interpretation of the permissions given by Canon B5 (1), but I remember those texts still. Foremost amongst them was a version of the threefold 'question and answer' affirmation of faith: 'Do you believe

and trust in God...', to which the response to the third question, about the Holy Spirit, was, 'I believe and trust in her.' That was a long time ago now, and official liturgical resources still present a highly gendered image of God. Reports are periodically written. Rumour has it that there is little appetite for this conversation in the decision-making bodies of our Church at this time. But gendering our language of God has implications.

I am grateful to two clergy of the diocese of Salisbury, Sue Hart and Solveig Sonet, for their really helpful and thought-provoking papers which form the backbone of this edition. Sue shares her recent academic research, and Solveig describes the challenges and possibilities of pastoral praxis. This edition also reports on the Society for Liturgical Study's biennial conference, and the Liturgical Commission, keeping us up-to-date on the national conversation. All the while we continue to tread the tightrope of pandemic, with all decision-making about modifications to our liturgical practice now being delegated to the local community.

✉ Tom Clammer OC, Editor.

## Liturgical language: a lethal legacy?

### The gendering of liturgical language contributes to societies that do not 'see' women or women's experiences

THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT words have power. The way that some people have been referred to as 'rodents', 'cockroaches', or 'less than human' have enabled communities and nations to enact terrible crimes upon other human beings.

When it comes to women, the great crime is perhaps not so much the denigrating of women through name-calling (although there are any number of ways women are diminished in this way), but, rather, the

expunging or disappearance of women altogether. This tendency to 'disappear' women from discourse and ritual, within both religion and wider society, has had catastrophic consequences.

The roots of the use of the term 'men' to denote the whole of humanity are found in classical Aristotelian philosophy, which argued women were inferior to men; that they were essentially defective men (Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 1985). The church and the wider world believed that males were the blueprint of humanity and therefore anyone else could be disregarded.

I refer to the lethal aspect of this approach because this disregard of women as distinct, worthwhile humans in their own right (and not just as wonky versions of men) has led to medical research being carried out predominantly on men. As a result, women

# Gendered liturgical language

are more likely to die of a heart attack than men because the treatment is designed around male physiology.

The church's continued use of male-only pronouns to speak of God, and male metaphor to speak of the divine, contributes to a culture where it is acceptable for women's experiences and distinctiveness to be ignored.

It is important to keep the macro picture in mind when discussing gendered language. There is a tendency within church circles to regard liturgy (albeit mostly unconsciously) as something divorced from the wider culture; this is not only a theologically empty position, but historically and practically incorrect. However, even if it were the case that liturgical language only affects worshippers, gendered language would still be problematic, as suggested by ethnographic research I conducted in 2017 / 2018 with a small rural parish church community.

The study, which considered the relationship between liturgical language and identity, suggested that the gendered language of liturgy adversely affects identity formation within the worshipping Christian community. The research revealed gaps and dissonances in the way the liturgy referred to human experience and the lived experiences of the research group, which was almost exclusively made up of women. This is problematic, particularly for the Church of England, which regards worship as the basis of our identity:

*Worship lies at the heart of the Christian life. It is in worship that we express our theology and define our identity. It is through encountering God within worship that we are formed (and transformed) as his people.*

This claim, found on the Church of England website, sounds reasonable, but is not as straightforward as it appears, for whose theology is being expressed? Who is the 'we' being referred to? Which voices are actually heard in Anglican liturgy?

Most authorized Church of England liturgy has been written and formulated by men. The *Book of Common Prayer* was written by Thomas Cranmer, and *Common Worship* has been primarily devised by male liturgists from source material written

by men, from Justin Martyr to David Stancliffe. Janet Martin Soskice argues that this is problematic:

*But who, in the end, speaks for women? Largely, and especially in the texts of theology, it has been men. And what versions of 'woman' is it that we get from largely male sources? (Soskice, Kindness of God, 2007).*

The male-gendered language of liturgy which does not include the voices or experience of women, is problematic – not just for women, but also for men. God is 'he', 'Lord', 'King', and the BCP refers exclusively to 'men'. The standard argument for the continued use of 'men' is that it is a catch-all for the whole of humankind. However, the term was set in place when men were openly regarded as normative humanity, closer to the *imago dei* than women, and so the term is imbued with inequality from its genesis. My view is that the term, like terms of racist abuse, cannot be redeemed as its history is too tainted.

If most of the God-images we perceive in worship are male-gendered, it must surely raise questions for women about what the *imago dei* means for their identity. I suspect that men, overburdened with carrying the full weight of the *imago dei*, will also carry a disordered, perhaps overwhelming, sense of self.

Reclaiming the language of the liturgy so that it is not just men's voices and experiences that are heard and rehearsed is not a simple matter of replacing 'he' with 'she' (although that would be a start).

A more holistic, generative, and authentic way forward must be contextual, where the stories and lives of its people are seen and heard so that 'the Church's life and liturgy are woven together' (Stancliffe, 2003).

Nicola Slee expresses this beautifully:

*Learning a new language to sing and stutter and shout all we've been aching to say all our lives. And finding how to do it as we do it, learning as we practice, making the way as we walk it. Following no blueprint, copying no precursor, we'll craft a journey unpredictable, cast a pattern asymmetrical and intricate, as delicate as it is unrepeatable, tender and indestructible, made of colours vivid, tenacious, wild. (Slee,*

*Praying Like a Woman 2004).*

✉ Sue Hart is a feminist theologian and priest in the Church of England. Her MA dissertation explored the relationship between liturgical language and identity formation. Sue is currently working on a PhD research proposal, which will explore how the language of the Church of England institution shapes the vocations of ordained women.

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## Starting the Conversation

AS A NEWLY ORDAINED ADEACON, freshly out of Theological College, full of enthusiasm, passion, and hopes, I started my curacy in 2019 in a parish that seemed by and large fairly progressive. Most congregants I met in the first few months weren't hugely outspoken about either side of the discussion on gendered language to reference God, or when reflecting metaphorically about God.

Within a few months, I wrote a very short parish magazine article reflecting on ecofeminism, comparing the treatment of our planet by humanity to the treatment of women by men, and looking particularly at the use of female language to refer to Mother Earth and how this affected our relationship with Creation. This seemed well received and started many conversations.

My first real encounter with gendered language within liturgy itself came while preparing for Christmas carol services. I suggested tweaking a few words here and there in one or two carols: the usual (or so it seemed to me at the time) swapping 'people', for instance, for terms like 'mankind' which seem so unnecessary in the 21st century. I also suggested presenting a narrative that didn't paint Mary as silent, passive, meek, and mild, by perhaps choosing pertinent poetry to accompany the several scripture readings. It felt to me that these stories and those hymns, read and sung to people who most likely come to church once a year, sound archaic and tone-deaf to the world around us, particularly as we bizarrely tend to cut out of our Christmas liturgies the most powerful bit of scripture: the Magnificat. I was met with a very mixed response. No one seemed opposed to all of it, but it

seemed the strongest feelings were attached to the hymns.

The main resistance was perhaps something most other clergy have experienced. People are very attached to words they have known their whole lives, and are reluctant to change them even if they broadly agree that the language is exclusive. As a curate this was a delicate place to navigate. Trying to find that balance between being authentically myself, taking parishioners on a gentle journey, and respecting that in many ways I am a guest in my Training Incumbent's church, I had to leave the discussion there, but it made me wonder how I will approach this myself once I am an incumbent.

I guess the main difficulty in developing these discussions, has been the lack of opportunities to explore this with the congregation, while at the same time trying to bring the fascinating academic discussion (which often feels ten steps ahead of the general public) to the heart of the congregation.

Sunday morning sermons have been the only opportunities to journey through this with the congregation, but it doesn't always feel the right place for working on this. We can offer evening debates or study groups. These, however, are rare or poorly attended in my context. Sometimes I ponder what would happen if we were to change some of the language in our liturgy, and let things take their course. Would a few people complain, and over time forget and move on? Would the next generation of Christians just assimilate this as their own 'it's always been that way'?

The point about academia having somewhat moved on and left the congregations behind is a real issue too. I have often found my conversations with clergy peers, particularly those with a foot in academia, are at a complete disconnect with where congregations are.

Another stumbling block I've faced is the prevalent bias (unconscious, mostly, but occasionally conscious) in gendered language for God. For many, it seems still inconceivable to detach male language from 'strength', 'authority', 'power', 'respect'; and female language from 'tenderness', 'care', 'fragility', and sometimes even 'purity'. This has made it difficult to encourage people to reflect on the imbalance of the language in our

liturgy. I look at a regular Sunday morning order of service, and the pages are filled with Father, Master, Lord. Even our Creed still talks about Jesus having been made 'man'. There is this strangely ingrained and persisting myth that men are stronger than women, and this seems to be reflected and intertwined in the language we use to talk about power. This is especially so when humans are trying to grapple with the ideas and concepts of a God who surpasses human strength in a way human language cannot cover. And this is very hard to untangle when we are both stuck with limited authorized forms of worship, and congregation who might sometimes be resistant to change.

In the Bible we have a God who introduces Godself in the very first few verses as He who creates, and She who hovers; and uses plural pronouns, 'let us make' this and that. We have a God who is given many names, most of which play with the ambiguity and the poetry of meanings and genders. I often wonder how we have gone from God who is named as *El Shaddai*, the God with breasts, creating humankind, making covenants of fruitfulness, God the life-giver, the protector, to translations that wipe out the incredibly feminine presence of God in the scripture!

✠ *Solveig Sonet is Assistant Curate of the Swanage and Studland Team in the Diocese of Salisbury.*

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### **Society for Liturgical Study Colloquium: 'Lost in Cyberspace' 24-25 August 2021**

EVERY TWO YEARS SINCE 1978, the Society for Liturgical Study has held a conference which has given substance to several objectives: to promote liturgical scholarship; to pay particular attention to the development of younger liturgists; to provide a forum for friendship and the exchange of ideas among liturgical practitioners, teachers, scholars, and students; and to do all this in an ecumenical environment. For some time, the College of the Resurrection in Mirfield has provided liturgical and domestic hospitality, but last year's gathering fell

victim to the restrictions ensuing from the pandemic. The conference theme for 2020 was, ironically, to have been 'The Body in Liturgy'. Undaunted by circumstances, the organising committee reconvened and formulated plans for a two-day colloquium considering the challenges to all dimensions of the lives of worshipping communities. The title, 'Lost in Cyberspace', reflects the uncharted world in which even ecclesial bodies accustomed to using a range of sophisticated technology have found themselves.

This theme prompted a number of responses arising directly out of the challenges of maintaining certain rhythms of worship under novel conditions. We heard papers from Anglicans (the Church of England, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Church of Ireland), Roman Catholics, Armenian and Finnish Orthodox scholars, and a tutor in a non-denominational Brazilian seminary which trains students from multicultural backgrounds for mission. Papers adopted approaches ranging from large surveys to case studies, covering a breadth of theological, practice-based, theoretical and digital skills, and revealing both the fascinating diversity within liturgical studies, and its active interdisciplinary engagement. The 'headline' topics which either provided the subject of papers, or arose in discussion, might be summarised thus: sacramentality; spiritual communion; formation of children; music; community; lay people, tradition and improvisation; clericalism; online and 'virtual reality' modes of worship as distinctive entities; changes of a canonical, theological and ecclesial nature which have been made on the hoof during the pandemic; and the body as having its own memory, its own acquired skills for participation in worship, and deep metaphorical significance as the 'historical', 'ecclesial', and 'eucharistic' bodies of Christ.

Some presenters asked big questions, especially in relation to sacramental practice and identity. Professor Thomas Whelan's comprehensive 'survey of surveys' inaugurated the conference and provided a splendid overview of academic research on worship (and especially eucharistic) practices during the pandemic. At the end of the first day, Professor Thomas O'Loughlin's paper returned to this subject, with a magisterial summary of



the evolution of sacramental theology, always in response to circumstance and context. He left the audience pondering the radical implications of 'virtual' participation – power without presence. No satisfactory solution has so far appeared to answer the lack of any material and embodied character in current responses to celebrating the sacraments.

Insights from Armenian and Finnish Orthodoxy explored creative responses to the continuation of an ancient tradition within the parameters of public health restrictions. We heard both of the importance of listening to the voices of worshippers and discovering the elements among such rich resources which mean most to them, and of the challenges to a theology of the eucharist which sees the sacrament itself as healing, and as a means of participation in the deified humanity of Christ. Several speakers referred in one way or another to 'spiritual communion'. This demonstrated that the concept is differently interpreted in different ecclesial communities, and differently understood by those who practise it. It is an area where a great deal more discussion would be of wide benefit. Other contributors testified to the benefit for consolidating community in forms of online sacramental worship.

A longer article would do justice to other contributions: exemplary case studies of children's liturgical fortunes and C of E ordinations during the pandemic; the remarkable parallels drawn between the experience of the anchorite and the worshipper participating via a screen; the potential of forms of music to lead worshippers to a sense of the transcendent; and the urgency of knowing not just that the body is important in worship, but how and why it is important. Happily, a number of the papers will be published in *Anaphora*, the journal of the Society for Liturgical Study, which has deliberately withheld its usual July edition this year, in preparation for a double issue in December. For more information about *Anaphora* and details of how to become a subscriber, see <https://www.studyiturgym.org.uk/>. Members of SLS automatically receive copies of the journal.

✉ *Dr Bridget Nichols is lecturer in Anglicanism and Liturgy at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, Dublin.*

## Daily Prayer: An Ancient Tradition for Modern Times?

Praxis South, 14 October 2021

This inspiring online conference was a celebration of Daily Prayer and a timely reminder of its importance. We were enabled to reflect on the pattern of the Daily Office, its history and tradition, and the rich variety of styles of daily prayer available today.

The Very Revd Dr Robert Willis, Dean of Canterbury, was the first speaker, covering 'Daily Ministry During the Pandemic'. Dean Robert recounted the unsettling experience of coming back on the London train for Choral Evensong in March 2020, only to discover that the Choir had been sent home because of coronavirus. He told the story of his commitment to film Daily Prayer in his garden through the pandemic. He was keen that this should be a place to reflect on the Scriptures and psalms in particular. He also wanted to evoke a sense of the liturgical seasons. For many, the kindly wisdom and prayerful insight of the Dean's garden became a sanctuary of Christian fellowship in lockdown and a vibrant place to enjoy the wonders of God's creation. These broadcasts provided an online connection of daily worship not only for the Cathedral community, but for worshippers right across the Church of England and the Anglican Communion. This affirms the life-giving importance of a regular pattern of Daily Prayer, continuous in Canterbury since the time of the Augustinian Mission, most definitely an ancient tradition for modern times.

The second speaker for the day was the Revd Dr Jeremy Law, Dean of Chapel, Canterbury Christ Church University. He spoke on 'Living in God's Story – the origin and purpose of the Daily Offices'. This was a theological exploration beginning with a brief liturgical history. 'If Daily Prayer is about being caught up in the life of the Trinity, then the distinction between ancient and modern begins to fall away.' Jeremy argued that constant participation in the Daily Offices over hundreds of years means that we and past generations are spiritual contemporaries, caught up in prayer together 'in God's

story of Creation, Reconciliation and Redemption, with the promise of the New Creation'.

This theological concept was reinforced by a brief history of the biblical roots on which the habits of Daily Prayer are founded. Dr Law outlined the historical evidence for the formation of the Daily Office, in writings from the Jewish Essene Community at Qumran and in the teaching of the Didache which instructs its readers to pray three times daily. These practices came together 'in the time of St Benedict when his Rule established a firm and influential pattern of prayer existing to this day'.

The third session of the day was introduced by Audio Producer James Newhook and Rachel Roberts, leaders of the C of E Daily Prayer Audio Project. James discussed the Daily Prayer Podcast, popular during lockdown particularly amongst clergy and those wanting to fit a regular pattern of prayer into a busy schedule.

The Audio Project grew from 'Thy Kingdom Come', followed by 'Time to Pray' and helped increase the accessibility of Daily Prayer as a valuable resource during lockdown. It was good to hear a little about those who lead the Daily Office, and we are grateful for their commitment and their beautiful voices. We heard about the mysteries of pop-up vocal booths and the use of 'mics' at home for recording and simulated 'reverb' giving the sense of wider space in a chapel or church. It was wonderful to hear about modern technology making ancient prayer patterns accessible to present generations. This is an exciting project and hugely appreciated.

Many thanks to the Praxis South committee members for another thoughtfully researched, relevant and well-organised online Day Conference, most effectively delivered, despite the limitations of being on Zoom. The day successfully inspired us to cherish afresh the gift of God in Daily Prayer, in all its forms, as the 'bedrock' and companion of the Church at prayer.

✉ *Deb Larkey is Team Rector of the Vale of Pewsey Team.*

## New environmental hymns

The full collection of twelve hymns selected for Jubilate's Hymns for our Contemporary World project will be launched shortly, with a recording directed by Pete Gunstone (Fountains Church, Bradford), but meanwhile some of the hymns are already available online ([www.jubilate.co.uk/page/Hymns\\_for\\_Our\\_Contemporary\\_World](http://www.jubilate.co.uk/page/Hymns_for_Our_Contemporary_World)). Two relate to the environmental crisis: 'O God of boundless hope' by Brian Davis (sung to DARWALL'S 148th), and 'You made a universe so full of wonder' by Ally Barrett (chaplain of St Catharine's College, Cambridge), whose text may be sung to FINLANDIA or to the new tune especially written for this hymn by Peter Burton.

From Wild Goose Publications comes another hymn on environmental themes. Described as 'A hymn for COP 26', Tom Gordon's 'The world is made by your creative hand' may be sung – it is suggested – to SURSUM CORDA by Alfred M. Smith, or to the less well-known CHILTON FOLIAT. A more recently composed tune, BLACKBIRD LEYS by Peter Cutts (b.1937), is also worth considering. The words can be purchased as a digital download ([www.ionabooks.com](http://www.ionabooks.com): search for 'A wake-up call').

## Advent resource

Published by the Royal School of Church Music in 2019, *Advent Pilgrimage* is described as a 'liturgical and musical resource'. For the liturgy it draws on the 2017 Canterbury Press publication *Dreamers and Stargazers* by Chris Thorpe, a vicar in the Diocese of Lichfield, and there are four sections: Hoping, Waiting, Fearing and Preparing. Each has suggested hymns, songs and anthems along with readings and times of silence. Planners can choose choral items according to the level of difficulty and the vocal resources available.

Composers represented include Mendelssohn, Paul Mealor, Jacques Berthier (Taizé chants), Stuart Townend, William Matthias and the late Richard Shephard. The whole sequence ends with the great Advent hymn 'O come, O come Emmanuel' in an arrangement by Noel Tredinnick with a soaring descant by David Iliff. It begins with the Advent Prose, as a

gathering Introit, sung to plainsong or in a choral setting (by Thomas Hewitt Jones or Palestrina), but churches with limited musical resources might prefer to go straight to the welcome and opening hymn (Bernadette Farrell's 'Christ be our light' or the more traditional 'Creator of the starry height').

## Hymnpact!

A new partnership has recently been announced between the RSCM and Let's Go Sing, a children's educational project led by Gill Fourie and David Scott-Thomas. With the support of Blackburn Cathedral, they have been working with primary schools in Lancashire to encourage teachers to sing in the classroom and to set up choirs as part of providing an exciting and enjoyable music education for children.

Hymnpact! aims to build a resource of 'intelligible, accessible and thought-provoking texts' along with well written music which should appeal both to adults and children, bridging the gap between traditional church music and the styles of music more commonly found in schools today. For more information, see the RSCM website ([www.rscm.org.uk/start-learning/hymnpact](http://www.rscm.org.uk/start-learning/hymnpact)).

## Basil Bridge (1927–2021)

Hymn writer Basil Bridge has died peacefully at the age of 94, seventy years after his ordination as a Congregational and later URC minister. He was the author of many texts, including the Communion hymn 'The Son of God proclaim' and four others to be found in the most recent edition of *Hymns Ancient & Modern*. His useful Christingle hymn, 'It's rounded like an orange', is sung to the tune of 'The holly and the ivy'. For many years he and his wife Muriel (who also died earlier this year) attended the annual conference of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland.

## Robert Prizeman (1952–2021)

Musician, broadcaster and producer Robert Prizeman died in September 2021, aged 69. He was the founder and

director of the famous London boys' choir 'Libera', while also organist of St Philip's Church, Norbury. Since 1985 he had additionally been the musical advisor for the BBC's long-running *Songs of Praise* TV programme, for which he also composed the current theme tune ('Songs of Praise-Tocatta', originally for organ). In 1990 Christopher Idle wrote a two-verse hymn for this melody – 'When we are down you raise us up', based on ideas from 1 Peter 5 – and the result was published in the 1992 collection *Worship Songs Ancient & Modern*.

In 2010 Robert Prizeman was made an Associate of the Royal School of Church Music, in honour of his work as a church musician and his involvement with the RSCM; a reviewer in *Church Music Quarterly* once described Libera as an 'alternative boy band' on the church music scene. His final recording with the choir (mainly recorded in 2020 before he became ill, it seems) was released in October 2021. Entitled *If*, it includes a track setting words by Thomas Aquinas to a theme from a Beethoven symphony ('Sacrís solemnís') and ends – fittingly, as it was to turn out – with a setting of the Requiem text 'Lux aeterna'. Short extracts from these and the other thirteen tracks on the album can be found on the Libera website (<https://libera.org.uk/music/if>).

## Sixtieth anniversary

A special sixtieth-birthday episode of *BBC Songs of Praise* was shown on BBC One on 3 October 2021. Presented by Aled Jones, the broadcast came from Westminster Abbey and opened with Timothy Dudley-Smith's 'Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided'. Guests included Pam Rhodes, who first appeared on the programme in 1987 and has presented over 300 episodes, and Scottish presenter Sally Magnusson, who spoke of the privilege of sharing in people's lives at both high and low points, and being able to demonstrate what grace is.

A congratulatory message from Her Majesty the Queen praised the programme for showing Christianity 'as a living faith not only through hymns and worship songs, but also by featuring the many people who have put their faith at the centre of their lives' – a great tribute to the world's longest-running religious

# Music matters

television programme. A contribution was also made by the choir of Westminster Abbey, who sang the setting by Ralph Vaughan Williams of George Herbert's verses, 'Let all the world in every corner sing', accompanied by Matthew Jorysz, Assistant Organist at the Abbey. Expect plenty of Vaughan Williams in 2022, the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of his birth.

In celebration of the programme's sixty years, sixty hymns were selected for the Songs of Praise website, some for baptisms, some for weddings and some for funerals (with occasional overlap: 'Lord of all hopefulness', for example, was listed for all three). For each entry, which had its own video from an earlier episode of the programme, regular conductor Simon Lole explained briefly why the hymn was a good choice and what its background was.

## Copyright reporting

Learning how to report the reproduction for worship of songs and hymns which are not in the public domain (that is, their author or composer died less than seventy years ago), can be quite challenging, especially for a church administrator who has never been in a choir or music group.

The two major licensing schemes are Christian Copyright Licensing International (<https://uk.ccli.com>) and One License ([www.onelicense.net](http://www.onelicense.net)). Each covers a slightly different range of material, but with considerable overlap – for example, the Jubilate Hymns repertoire and the songs from Resound Worship can now be reported under either licence. Both companies offer a number of short video tutorials, either directly on their website or via YouTube, such as the CCLI 'Projection Quick Guide' for those who only reproduce songs by displaying words on a screen using computer projection. Another video covers the reporting of songs used in services which have been live streamed.

## Doxecology tour

As this issue went to press, members and friends of the Resound Worship team were touring UK churches from London to Glasgow with their *Doxecology* album. The tour was planned to coincide with

the COP 26 Climate Summit and each of the ten evenings had input from A Rocha UK. The final night of worship and prayer for climate justice, on 11 November in St George's Tron, Glasgow, was hosted by the Church of Scotland and Tearfund, with their Global Advocacy and Influencing Director Ruth Valerio one of the speakers.

## Resuming choral services

Canadian-born composer and choral director Sarah MacDonald, who is based in Cambridge, wrote a simple anthem for lower-voice choirs (altos, tenors and basses) with optional trebles or sopranos to mark the return of choral services at York Minster following the Covid-19 lockdown of 2020. 'After this we will return' has now been published by Encore Publications, and a preview is available on their website (<https://encorepublications.com>). The text was compiled and adapted by the composer from Scripture, with themes of loss, return and renewal, and includes the phrase, 'May our song be renewed and brought again unto the temple'.

The anthem was first sung in early September 2020 by the adults of York Minster Choir, along with two other specially commissioned pieces (by Philip Moore, Organist Emeritus of the Minster, and Becky McGlade, who lives and works in Cornwall).

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## Sustainability

I am grateful to the correspondent who got in touch noting that our current mailing processes utilise a plastic packaging rather than the previous compostable wrapper. Whilst I ought to point out that the plastic wrapper in which your *PNOW* comes is readily recyclable at household recycling centres and the like, it is certainly true that it is less convenient to do so than was the previous solution, at a time when many local authorities have yet to roll out flexible plastic recycling to the kerbside. We continue to explore whether there might be ways to address this, and I will update you on this very well made point. [Ed.]

# Learning

*Praxis regions are making use of online learning opportunities, whilst hoping to resume in-person meetings. Readers are encouraged to keep an eye on the Praxis website [[praxisworship.org.uk](http://praxisworship.org.uk)] which will be updated regularly. Ed.*

## Praxis Yorkshire

### Online Colloquium

**Tuesday 1 February 2022,  
14.00-16.30, on Zoom.  
This event is free.**

*8 15-min presentations on current issues in Worship and Liturgy for Ash Wednesday, Lent and beyond. Each slot involves a presentation and a time for discussion. Details of topics available nearer the time.*

*To register email Canon Michael Gisborne, at [canonmichael@riponcathedral.org.uk](mailto:canonmichael@riponcathedral.org.uk)*

## Praxis Southwest

### Online Colloquium

**Thursday 3 March 2022,  
10.00-12.00, on Zoom.  
Speakers: to be announced.  
This event is free.**

**The National Church and Civic Religion:**  
*A colloquium to consider experiences of using the Church's liturgy to give expression to national events and celebrations.*

*Attendance is free, but numbers are restricted so please contact Gill Behenna ([gillbehenna@me.com](mailto:gillbehenna@me.com)) to register your attendance and receive the Zoom login link. Delegates from all Praxis regions, and further afield, are very welcome.*

### **In-person training day - Save the date!**

**Saturday 7 May 2022, 10.00-15.30, in person, venue to be confirmed.  
Speaker: Colin Lunt**

*A day focusing on and exploring the 'Celtic tradition' in worship. More details including venue confirmation in the March 2022 edition of *PNOW*. We also plan to reschedule the postponed event with Helen Bent.*



## Praxis South

*Liturgy for celebrations: being creative with diverse resources!*

**Tuesday 15 March 2022,  
10.30 for 11.00-15.00, Holy Trinity Sloane Square (Zoom back-up if necessary).  
£20 (non-members), £15 (members) and free for ordinands/those training for licensed ministry.)**

**Speakers: Helen Bent & Rebecca Swansbury**

*Helen Bent (an experienced worship trainer and facilitator and a consultant to Praxis) and Rebecca Swansbury (Schools Officer, Christian Character, Diocese of Canterbury) lead an interactive day exploring planning an event for adults and/or children effectively using Common Worship and other resources, music and creative themes in diverse spaces. The day is designed to be useful for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and other special occasions.*

To register email Peter Furber:

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

Or for those who have either paid by BACS, or are entitled to free admission, online booking is available at [http://www.praxisworship.org.uk/praxis\\_south.html](http://www.praxisworship.org.uk/praxis_south.html)

## At the Heart of Christmas

It is not too late to source your supply of this booklet by Archbishops Justin Welby and Stephen Cottrell, with guests, which provides 12 days of stories and meditations for the Christmas season. A perfect way to sustain the liturgical season of Christmas beyond Boxing Day! Each day offers a reading, a reflection and a question or action. Available from Church House Publishing ([chpublishing.co.uk](http://chpublishing.co.uk)) as singles, large print versions, and in packs of 10 or 50. How about giving one as a gift to congregations over Christmas?

## Liturgical Resources for Mental Health and Wellbeing

If you haven't found them yet, do have a look at this set of liturgical resources on the Church of England website. Click on the 'Prayer and Worship' tab, and then on 'Worship Texts and Resources'. Scroll down!

## Lighten Our Darkness: Discovering and celebrating Choral Evensong,

Simon Reynolds, DLT, 2021.

The publishing of a book about Choral Evensong after a year when pandemic restrictions rendered so many of our cathedrals and churches musically silent might at first glance seem ironic, indeed painful to those for whom the sung office is such an intrinsic part of life. However, I soon found myself embraced by Reynolds' gentle prose; the sound and space of Evensong sang out from the page and acted as a balm to the barrenness of the preceding months.

Reynolds shows his hand right away, speaking of the 'quiet but persistent revolution' of Choral Evensong, with the significant rise in numbers attending bucking the trend of overall Church of England statistics of recent decades. Reynolds places this success in the anonymous space away from pressures of modern life that Choral Evensong provides, when firmly rooted in its historic traditions and coupled with musical excellence. But a word of warning to those who have seen this success and are looking to Choral Evensong to build their numbers: any attempts to do so in a watered-down, 'user-friendly' way will only diminish what it is. It is all or nothing. As Reynolds says, 'Its language belongs more to the world of Shakespeare than Twitter.'

After a chapter covering the history of the liturgy, outlining rhythms of worship rooted in Judaism, via monasticism and dissolution, and music, with something of a who's who of choral composers (rightly giving a nod to Stephen Cleobury and his work at King's to keep the composition of liturgical music a mainstream activity), Reynolds works through the components of the liturgy, allowing a chapter for each. In doing so he provides readers with a sufficient level of understanding yet still enables them to discover Evensong's mystery and beauty for themselves.

Reynolds' chapter on Bible readings helpfully unpacks the reasoning behind the occasional 'offensive' passage by providing the context and history of the lectionary widely used today. There is a good level of thematic and textual

analysis of psalms and canticles and, as with the office itself, there is a huge focus on music throughout. In addition to a whole chapter dedicated to the anthem, covering aspects of musical traditions, language, accessibility, etc., Reynolds closes with a nod to those organisations working to preserve and uphold this great Anglican tradition.

Each chapter ends with 'words for reflection' making this not just a dry liturgical companion, but a vehicle for deepening faith and prayer. Quotations are from a wide variety of texts including early Christian writings, poetry and contemporary novels – and are complementary and thought-provoking in equal measure. This reader, for one, has already ordered at least one of the books quoted here!

If you have the language of Cranmer flowing through your veins, this book will captivate you – and will also make a great gift for those who wonder what goes on in those lofty spaces on dark, winter evenings. Reynolds' love of Evensong sings from every page and his book is beautifully formed and carefully crafted – just like the liturgy it celebrates.

✍ *Katie Etherington is a Reader at Tewkesbury Abbey.*

## How to Present Words for Worship in Print and on Screen

Mark Earey, Grove Books, W247, 2021.

The handling of texts, on-screen and printed in leaflets, can give rise to all sorts of issues which distract from the worship of God – partly because of the decline in use of service books, and partly as a reflection of the culture we live in. How can we do this well, so the people are not distracted, but are free to focus on the worship of God? This comprehensive guide leads you through the whole process, decoding jargon, highlighting common errors and giving concrete examples.

Mark Earey has been teaching liturgy to Anglican and Methodist ministerial students (and a lot of other people too) at The Queen's Foundation for the last 15 years. Previously he was a Team Rector, and National Education Officer for Praxis. [Ed.]

AFTER SO MANY MONTHS of not being able to meet in person there was a great sense of delight amongst members of the Commission at our being able to gather together at Hitchin Priory in October, especially as this was the last meeting of this quinquennium. Inevitably the meeting had something of a valedictory feel as we noted projects completed, and looked forward to some of the work handed on to the next Commission.

Listen very carefully and you will hear the rumble of the printing presses, as we expect the completed Initiation volumes to hit the shelves soon. We trust that both the new President's edition and the *Patterns* volume will be of huge assistance to those preparing Initiation services, as they draw together a sometimes bewildering range of material into simpler-to-follow books. It was also good to note that Liturgical Resources for Mental Health and Wellbeing prepared by members of the Commission are now available on the Church of England website.

We were able to comment on some of the ongoing discussions concerning the administration of Holy Communion during the pandemic – the diversity of voices in the room representing something of the diversity of current practice and experience!

To my mind one of the very valuable aspects of the work of the Commission is its ecumenical dimension, and we receive reports from the Roman Catholic and Methodist churches, as well as sister churches in our Communion. For Roman Catholics, work on the new translation of the lectionary is almost complete and ready for publication (using the *English Standard Version* and the *New Grail Psalter*) whereas the Methodist liturgists have been adapting their Marriage Service for couples of the same gender, as well as reflecting on 'on-line' celebrations of Holy Communion.

Significant work on the range of vocabulary used to speak of God in public worship, and on the provision of liturgical resources to express our concerns for racial justice, is handed on for a new Commission, and we look forward to the next phase of its life.

✠ Philip Barnes is Priest-in-Charge of Kensington South, and was a member of the Liturgical Commission.

TWO OF OUR BISHOPS have gone to Rome. One of them, Michael Nazir-Ali, though regularly labelled as an evangelical (a GAFCON supporter?), has always been a touch unpredictable, and this move confirms that. However, the other seceder, Jonathan Goodall, was Bishop of Ebbsfleet, in other words a 'flying bishop', known to fly near to Roman paths and almost required by his appointment to do so. He is not the first – indeed he has gone to the Ordinariate of which the Ordinary is none other than Keith Newton, once himself flying Bishop of Richborough. And Goodall's move raises certain questions.

This Column will not stay on what he will find on arrival. He interestingly remarked that he would enjoy the 'Anglican patrimony': the distinctive characteristic of Ordinariate life. However these ex-Anglicans rarely showed much devotion to Anglican liturgy in their Anglican days; paradoxically, it was Roman rites which invigorated them. So perhaps we should chart their new liturgical inheritance some time.

But the great paradox concerns their orders. If there is one identifiable element prized above all others by the 'traditionalists' it is their undoubted, well proven, carefully protected, wholly male, apostolic orders. They have insisted that, whatever doubts there might be about women's orders, they have, behind their glass wall alone, secured absolutely unquestionably valid orders and thus valid sacraments. However little they have valued Anglican liturgy, the one towering feature of their Anglican 'patrimony' has been their unsullied orders. When I was Bishop of Woolwich, there were seven congregations which, having passed 'Resolution C', were in the care of John Broadhurst, the Bishop of Fulham. A notable parish was St Stephen's, Lewisham, led by the remarkable Geoffrey Kirk. His people could bask in the certainty of the unsullied apostolic succession of their vicar, and consequently in the total trustworthiness of the sacraments he administered.

Yes, but wait... Each of the four traditionalists I have named has gone to Rome, each, I think, to the Ordinariate. And each has, under Rome's provisions, swum the Tiber as a layperson. The one

valued element of the 'Anglican patrimony' – apostolic orders – has had to be totally disavowed. In heaven's economy, their Anglican orders had been an illusion. Each has, in effect, stated to their congregations 'All these years I was reassuring you about the secure basis of my sacramental ministry, I was kidding you, because I was kidding myself. I was in fact, in the eyes of God, a layperson assuming a non-existent ministry. The sacraments I purported to minister were null and void.'

The change of conviction must be very painful to such people. But it is perhaps always a live possibility to anyone who functions in the Church of England on the basis that it in some mystical way belongs to the 'Western Church', and is under its authority. Each of the four must have pledged his total belief in his own orders. But if subsequent attraction to Rome entailed this retrospective nullifying of their own Anglican ministries, how can anyone be sure of the permanence as Anglicans of anyone of this vulnerability? As both archbishops are likely soon to choose new flying bishops, each will need an unprecedented gift of foresight to choose men with impeccable 'traditionalist' credentials who are nevertheless invulnerable to the claims or seductions of Rome.

And are not those to whom women minister on somewhat safer ground?

## This issue's 50th anniversary

November 1971 saw the first synodical treatment of Series 3 Communion, and thus the first discussion of contemporary English in our liturgy. Mere discussion it was not – the Synod breathed fire and brimstone at the Commission and its text. Quite apart from the Lord's Prayer (mentioned in my last column), David Frost's new prayers (of confession, humble access and post-communion thanksgiving) all caught it in the neck – attributed to 'a little flower'. The first two of these perished, the post-communion ('Father of all...') only survived because the Synod ran out of time.

✠ Colin Buchanan is a former Bishop of Woolwich.