

**Issue 73**  
**March 2022**  
**£2.50**

**In this issue**

Non-parochial Worship	1-3
Event reviews	4
Music matters	5-6
Learning opportunities	6-7
Books	7
New Chair of Praxis	8
Colin's Column	8

**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.

*Praxis News of Worship* is copyright © Praxis 2022. Material for inclusion should be sent to the editor, Canon Dr Tom Clammer OC, at: [tomclammer@gmail.com](mailto:tomclammer@gmail.com)  
We reserve the right to edit material and make no guarantee to include material submitted. The views expressed are not necessarily those of Praxis or the Praxis Council.

Contact [praxis@praxisworship.org.uk](mailto:praxis@praxisworship.org.uk)

For general enquiries, affiliation and programme information, contact Praxis, The Rectory, 21A King Street, Silvertown, Exeter, Devon EX5 4JG  
[praxis@praxisworship.org.uk](http://praxis@praxisworship.org.uk)

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?

# At all times and in all places

This issue takes a wander through a number of non-parochial worship settings. Whilst the parish remains, at least in theory, the backbone of the Church of England's provision of ministry and the heartbeat of its ecclesiology, we all know that worship takes place in manifold settings. Our three principal contributors share some of their experience of planning worship in distinctive non-parochial contexts. Michael Gisbourne, our new Chair (more about that on page 8) offers fascinating insights into occupying the role of Chaplain to General Synod. Pete Gunstone reflects on the distinctive ministry of the Music Director at Lee Abbey, and Sue Wallace of the Transcendence Trust offers some really useful and inspiring starting points for anyone charged with organizing and planning worship outside their usual parish context. My thanks to all three contributors for a feast of reflection and food for thought. Elsewhere in this issue you will find an update on COVID-restrictions, information

about resources for Lent and, particularly pleasingly, lots about Praxis regional events both past and forthcoming. Regions are really getting cracking again as we emerge from this phase of the pandemic, and that is to be celebrated.

The liturgical life of our communities is a treasure to be cherished and nurtured, reflected upon, taught, and passed on. One of the joys of the Church of England is that we are at liberty, indeed encouraged, to talk about our doctrine and theology, our liturgy and our worship. I find that one of the most energizing aspects of the teaching that I undertake in theological colleges. Whilst it feels a bit as if liturgical formation has slipped from the forefront of the Church of England's national priorities at present, let's ensure that it does not slip from ours. Bishop Colin, as ever, offers us both inspiration and provocation in his column: be inspired, be provoked, and keep the conversation going!

✉ Tom Clammer OC, Editor.

## Melting pot of traditions

*Pete Gunstone has ministered for much of his life at the intersection of music and worship, and of diverse Christian traditions. Here, he writes about his experience of preparing and leading worship at Lee Abbey Devon, a melting pot of the worshipping traditions of its international community and its interdenominational guests, and its implications for liturgical leadership in an age of global migration.*

IT WAS A GREAT JOY to be Music Director at Lee Abbey, Devon, from 2005 to 2008. Although perched on the remote Exmoor coast, the continual evolution of its international community and the constant ebb and flow of guests meant that it was as much a bustling global city as it was an isolated English retreat. Whilst in one room candles might burn and incense waft to the

gentle singing of Taizé chants, the merest chink in the seal of the kitchen door would release a cosmopolitan carnival of music (often with Latin or African roots) that animated the preparation of food and the endless stream of washing up. The Lee Abbey Community were the hardest-working and hardest-partying group of people that I have ever had the privilege of being counted amongst, all under the banner of 'sharing Christ through relationships' through 'being God's welcome' and 'building community', in order to 'renew and serve the church'. My task was to realize that strategic vision in the liturgical space of daily worship. On the one hand the task was simple: practising hospitality by welcoming and making space for the musical worshipping traditions of individuals and groups; building community by encouraging

# At all times and in all places

and enabling cross-traditional cultural curiosity; and renewing and serving the church by sharing the product of these endeavours. Yet, on the other hand, the task required the careful navigation of the complexities of communities and their cultures. For example, although in one encounter I rejoiced to receive a song in a local language from Congo, in the next I was puzzled to hear that a small rural church in Bhutan exclusively used music from Hillsong, Australia, in their worship. Furthermore, whilst my collection of material from different liturgical tribes and tongues enabled me to offer visiting individuals and groups one of the richest and most varied diets of musical worship in the UK, if not the world, careful discernment was necessary to gauge what guests might or might not be ready to engage with. For example, although some individuals and groups came eager to experience new forms of worship and new material for worship, for others, their prior experience and expectations meant that they found this alienating, or threatening, or simply disappointing. Whilst advance conversations with group leaders might offer some clues, the fluid nature of group dynamics meant that reading the mood of the room at dinnertime was often the most effective means of gauging what might be possible in worship.

This experience gives rise to questions about the eternal and contextual nature of worship. Revelation depicts 'a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages' (7.9, NRSV) engaging in an act of corporate devotion. Here we see the culture of the whole cosmos, redeemed, gathered up, and expressed as the worship of the "the ones who have come out of the great ordeal" (7.14). In the face of the bad news of the contemporary cultural wars, the community that Christ gathers into the heavenlies is not characterized by the false peace of dull conformity, but by a multicultural catholicity that reflects the kaleidoscopic reality of the eternal word taking cultural form in the particularities of context.

If my experience at Lee Abbey was a foretaste of what it might be 'on earth as it is in heaven', what questions might arise for local church communities who aspire

to do likewise and facilitate intercultural worshipping spaces for our contemporary world of global migration? Here are three:

[1] The multicultural tapestry of heaven is only possible because of the particularities of individual cultures. The aim is not to produce a monoculture of worship through the homogenisation of many cultures into one blended form. It is important to affirm the worshipping cultures of particular communities and to give them space.

[2] Where a particular community chooses to adopt the traditions of another culture (e.g. the Bhutanese church that sang Hillsong songs), this is a decision that needs to be treated with respect: true intercultural curiosity is wary of even informed cultural presupposition.

[3] Inter-cultural worship is so much more than the programming of some songs or prayers from the 'global church'. Intercultural worship takes our oneness in Christ seriously and practises radical hospitality based on the pattern of Christ (Philippians 2). Inter-cultural worship offers established churches the opportunity to become a new expression of what it means to be a diverse community of 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism' (Ephesians 4.5, NRSV).

In an age of global migration, the development of inter-cultural worship may be an important action if we are to avoid the liturgical cultural segregation that characterized so much of the twentieth century.

✍ *Pete Gunstone is Assistant Curate of Bradford City Centre Resource Church.*

---

## Synod Chaplaincy

SURELY THE MOST IMPORTANT thing we do as a Synod is that we come together to pray and to ground our debates and deliberations in prayer. Being the broad church that we are allows for a variety of worship but as a consequence,

the person responsible for delivering it doesn't have an easy task.' So said the Archbishop of York as I stood down from my role as Chaplain to the General Synod of the Church of England after 6 years in the post. Facilitating that space for worship and prayer after heavy debates and sometimes heated moments has been both a privilege and a challenge.

When planning large services, as I do now as Canon Precentor of Ripon, I am always aware of the fact that we are a broad church. Each Christian has a style of worship in which they feel most comfortable and whilst other styles may be familiar, very few, if any, are as comfortable with a charismatic praise band as with a chasuble and thurible! When I first introduced myself, and my role, to Synod members in November 2015, I underlined the fact that worship is not a spectator sport. It is something we all join in together. And we do it together because the focus ultimately is God, not us. I drew on some words of wisdom from an experienced individual as I began my football refereeing career. 'Just remember lad, whatever decision you make, eleven people will agree with you, it is just the other eleven who will let you know they don't!'

How did Synod worship develop during my time as Chaplain?

- There were a couple of outings of a newly formed Synod choir in York one year although changes in Synod membership and COVID meant that the choir became unsustainable in the short term.

- A change in time of the daily Eucharist in York from 7.30am to 7.00am tripled attendance from around 20 to around 60. This was because Synod members could attend a Eucharist, and still get to a breakfast meeting.

- The use of Psalmody was developed with metrical psalms often used in both morning and evening worship, drawing on recently published material.

- Continued development of the Continuous Praying Presence was developed further as people from a variety of church traditions both lay and ordained committed to praying for Synod as they gathered, debated and made decisions.

- Worship occasionally focussed on a specific area of mission and led by those

# At all times and in all places

working in that particular area was also well received (for example, the Church of England Youth Council and members of the Archbishops' Commission on Racial Equality.)

- Resources from the Iona Community, Resound Worship and the Northumbria Community were used.

Standing in front of Synod for the first time to lead an act of worship was daunting. But I took comfort from the fact that, probably, 50 bishops, 200 clergy and 200 experienced lay people all thought they could do a better job than I was doing, but that they were glad it was me and not them leading.

Chaplaincy work at Synod has also involved pastoral support for staff and members. This has rarely been used over the last six years, with many Synod members receiving support from friends and colleagues.

As the Archbishop of York brought the July 2021 Synod to a close, just before the elections last Autumn he said to the Synod: 'At the end of each day when many words have passed our lips, our worship is a chance to recognise that we are sisters and brothers together on a journey, and united we can join our voices together in the words of scripture and in the words of praise and worship. Called to love one another and to serve this world with the Good News of Jesus Christ it is our worship that has bound us together.'

I pray that my successor, Rev'd Andrew Hammond, the Chaplain of St John's College Cambridge, is able to develop the worshipping life of the General Synod even more.

✠ *Michael Gisbourne is Canon Precentor of Ripon Cathedral and Interim Chair of Praxis.*

---

## Beautiful and Daunting Freedom:

Planning worship  
in a Non-Parochial Context.

THROUGHOUT MY LIFE'S journey I have had some wonderful times planning worship in a non-parochial setting. The largest of these

was Communion for eight thousand at Greenbelt, but I've also organized many large-scale events in cathedrals, notably in Winchester where I was Canon Precentor for five years. Not all the non-parochial worship has been large-scale. I have also organized worship for retreats and clergy conferences. They have ranged enormously in musical style and in 'churchmanship'; encompassing the formal and the informal, the charismatic and the contemplative, the sacramental and the technological, embracing those small and intimate gatherings of people seeking refreshment and healing.

Planning an act of worship in a non-parochial context can be immensely liberating. I have often said that the greatest restrictions placed upon our liturgical creativity are not boundaries of canon law, but rather the cultural and musical expectations of the local worshipping community. Organizing worship freed from these restrictions can give us the opportunity to explore little-used resources from the *Common Worship* suite, as well as enabling us to explore and play with 'other suitable words'. Using screens and multimedia can also give those planning worship the opportunity to explore the interaction between the screen and the spoken word. Some texts may not be spoken at all but used as images or commentary upon those other texts which are spoken. I would always advise those new to creative liturgy to think about their environment and aim to plan an act of worship which appeals to all the senses in some way, an act which becomes experiential, where participants are enabled to undertake an emotional and spiritual journey. The lighting, seating, temperature and layout of the space all have a part to play in this journey and we are often free to re-configure the worship space itself to suit our worshippers. This freedom can, however, also be rather daunting, particularly if we are working with a new group of people. Where do we even start?

A question I have always asked myself (which I gleaned from Jeremy Fletcher when he was Canon Precentor of York Minster) is: 'What will most lead this particular group of people into the presence of God?' For some people this may be the poetry of the Prayer Book, for others it will be the repetitive rhythms of progressive house music. It might even be

possible to use both of these at the same time. A few years ago I gleefully composed a set of Evensong responses used at a clergy conference which were basically set to synth pop. Outside our home context it is possible to explore new possibilities, or stretch the imagination, but this needs to be done in such a way that we do not break the flow of an act of worship, or take people into an uncomfortable place where they do not feel safe.

There are many starting points when planning. If a service is being designed to mark a particular event or anniversary then the starting place is very clear, but normally my first task (after a heartfelt prayer for inspiration!) would be to seek out a piece of scripture and a theme. A clear unifying theme can give shape to a bespoke liturgy, and bind together contributions from multiple artists. I often look at lectionary options for a particular day, festival or season, as it can be tremendously powerful to enter into a journey that we know Christians elsewhere are also undertaking. At a recent conference (which took place within the Epiphany season) I explored some of the highlights of the season, setting a service of healing within the context of the Baptism of Christ and using 'A Thanksgiving for Holy Baptism' as the initial framework. I also designed three prayer stations for a separate contemplative prayer space to mark the Wedding at Cana, The Baptism of Christ and the Coming of the Magi. At the same conference I planned a Eucharist around that wedding, writing a litany around the old 1990s dance tune 'I lift my cup' and giving empty silver goblets to the participants to hold. Strongly rhythmic music tracks can undergird spoken litanies beautifully and give a sense of energy and urgency. To set these plans into cultural context I also knew that many attendees of this gathering still hold a fondness for the dance tunes of the 1990s.

Track vocals:

'Oh Lord we come before you as  
humble as we know how  
And how we need refilling for our  
lights are almost out.  
I lift my cup. I lift it up.'

Litany Extract:

Kyrie they have no wine.  
Kyrie they have no hope.

## Event Reviews

Kyrie they have no cure.  
Kyrie they have no help but you.  
Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)  
Kyrie they have no future.  
Kyrie they have no faith.  
Kyrie they have no energy.  
Kyrie they have no resources but you.  
Christe eleison (Christ have mercy).

Referencing ancient prayers and ancient liturgical forms within a creative act of worship can give a sense of depth and continuity to a new liturgy. We are singing the next verse of a song which has been sung for a very long time. This referencing can also give reassurance to those unused to liturgical experimentation. Finally, do not be afraid to play, to share your experiments with others and to work with a team who can help and advise wherever this is possible. We worship a wonderful and creative God who called the universe itself into being, and who loves our creative offerings.

✉ *Sue Wallace works for the Transcendence Trust, helping churches with their worship and creativity.*

---

### COVID-19 Guidance and Lent

The most up-to-date Coronavirus guidelines issued by the House of Bishops COVID-19 Recovery Group, dated 25 January 2022, note that there are now no legal restrictions upon activities in church and that, 'places of worship may decide to bring in optional precautions based on their own risk assessment.'

For the avoidance of doubt, then, in 2022, and at the time of writing, there are no restrictions, legal or ecclesiastical, upon the performance of traditional Lent and Holy Week rites such as the Blessing and Distribution of Ash or Palms, or the Washing of Feet. Local communities are strongly advised, however, to consider levels of risk locally and act accordingly. It would also be hoped that if there are significant changes to the 'usual' liturgies planned this year, this would be communicated to the Faithful in a timely manner. [Ed.]

### Praxis Southwest Colloquium

16 September 2021

It was good to gather online once again to hear and reflect on the different ways parts of the Church had responded to worship during the pandemic.

In the second of two colloquia, we first heard from Canon Alison Kennedy, Precentor of Chelmsford Cathedral, who spoke about her experiences of offering worship online. She had been surprised by the numbers of people that had been reached, but also by the mixed reactions as they found their feet with the technology!

We heard again from the Revd Elizabeth Burke, Rector of Holsworthy, a mixed benefice of market town and rural village. She too spoke about online worship and the new opportunities it brought, including more variety of style in a strong eucharistic setting. Social media had also been used for prayer, while the mixed ecology of online and in person worship had influenced a better rota across the five churches.

An excellent format for a shorter, more informal meeting and worth repeating!

✉ *Robin Lodge is Chair of Praxis Southwest.*

### Praxis Yorkshire Colloquium

1 February 2022

The most recent colloquium hosted by Praxis Yorkshire attracted seven speakers and a total of 19 participants. This was more than would normally traverse the Ridings to Leeds so, despite some reservations about sound quality, the Zoom format is recommended.

Speakers explored the suggested theme – Ash Wednesday, Lent, Passiontide and Easter – in ways ranging from the imaginative: the imposition of ashes in a primary school setting, and using solar fairy lights as a safer (and more environmentally-friendly) alternative to candles; to the practical: putting the order of service on mobile phones (using QR codes) allowing people to read in a darkened church, and lighting the Easter Fire in a wheelbarrow so that it can be moved around; to the

doctrinal: questioning the role of the confessional in the Church of England, and issues when the atonement theology in worship songs is at odds with that expressed in *Common Worship*. Another reviewer may well have chosen completely different examples for a huge amount of liturgical expertise was shared in two hours – in terms of recommended resources, creative ideas, and considered opinion.

The next on-line colloquium hosted by Praxis Yorkshire is planned for June: e-mail [johnfrancismoss@icloud.com](mailto:johnfrancismoss@icloud.com) if you would like to join in.

✉ *John Francis Moss is Secretary of Praxis Yorkshire.*

---

### Live Lent: Embracing Justice

'This Lent we are called to reflect on the injustices of the world and to ask what God is calling us to do about them. Over forty days, we step into God's work in the here and now - and in doing so we move from brokenness towards wholeness.' So say the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, introducing the 2022 #LiveLent booklet.

The booklet consists of reflections, prayers, scriptural passages and an accompanying picture arranged in eight sections covering Ash Wednesday and the following days, the six weeks of Lent, and finally Easter Day. The daily reflections have been written by Isabelle Hamley, theological adviser to the House of Bishops. The booklet, which would enhance the keeping of Lent by individuals, or indeed small groups or whole congregations, is available at [www.churchofengland.org/livelent](http://www.churchofengland.org/livelent), or direct from Church House Publishing, where a booklet especially designed for children is also available.

## Francis Jackson (1917-2022)

A number of newspapers, including *The Times* and *The Church Times*, carried obituaries for Dr Francis Jackson CBE, Organist Emeritus of York Minster, who died peacefully in York on 10 January at the age of 104. He was Organist and Master of the Choristers at the Minster from 1946 to 1982, but had also sung as a chorister there from 1929 under Sir Edward Bairstow, whom he was to succeed. Current Director of Music at York Minster, Robert Sharpe said that 'he remained active as a superb organ recitalist into his tenth decade and, as a composer, into his eleventh.'

One of Dr Jackson's favourite compositions, according to the writer of the *Times* obituary, was his *Impromptu* for organ, written for Bairstow's seventieth birthday in 1944 as the composer was on military service in Italy. Congregations may chiefly encounter his work as they sing the tune EAST ACKLAM, named after the Yorkshire village where the composer spent his later years. Garry Humphreys, writing in *The Church Times*, relates that the tune was originally composed for the evening hymn 'God that madest earth and heaven' (most frequently sung to the Welsh AR HYD Y NOS); the occasion which prompted EAST ACKLAM's creation was an Old Choristers' reunion in 1957. Thirteen years later the Methodist hymn writer Fred Pratt Green wrote his harvest hymn 'For the fruits of his creation' to go with Jackson's tune, and its popularity spread. Published in the Roman Catholic collection *Praise the Lord* in 1972 and in *More Hymns for Today* in 1980, it has been included in many hymnals since, and can be successfully paired with David Mowbray's Pentecost hymn 'Gift of Christ from God our Father' (see the Jubilate website, <[www.jubilate.co.uk/songs/gift\\_of\\_christ\\_from\\_god\\_our\\_father](http://www.jubilate.co.uk/songs/gift_of_christ_from_god_our_father)>) as well as the two texts already mentioned.

## Platinum anthem

A short choral piece, 'In our service', has been commissioned by the Royal School of Church Music from Thomas Hewitt Jones (b.1984) to mark Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee this year. The Queen is the RSCM's Royal Patron and it

is hoped that honour will be paid to her, especially in early June, by many varieties of choirs singing this anthem: in cathedrals and churches most obviously, but also in performances by chamber choirs, community choirs, choral societies and schools. The text, by the composer, is based on speeches given by the Queen.

An extract from Hewitt Jones's composition can be heard on the RSCM website (<<https://www.rscmshop.com/features/platinum-project>>), where a digital download can be purchased, allowing the printing and photocopying of scores for all singers and accompanists. Rehearsal and backing tracks (organ and piano) are also available. In due course there will be a full symphonic orchestration for those with ample resources!

## News from Cambridge

It was announced in October 2021 that women and girls are to sing alongside men and boys in the chapel choir of St John's College, Cambridge: a first for any Oxbridge chapel choir (<[www.sjcchoir.co.uk/news](http://www.sjcchoir.co.uk/news)>, 15 October). The move has been spearheaded by Andrew Nethsingha, who has directed the choir for fourteen years. It will be interesting to see if other chapel choirs follow suit. The sound of the current choir (consisting of about twenty choristers aged eight upwards and sixteen adult choral scholars) can be heard via webcasts of recent services on the choir's website (<[www.sjcchoir.co.uk/listen/webcasts](http://www.sjcchoir.co.uk/listen/webcasts)>).

St John's already has a number of pieces by women composers in its repertoire, including 'Peace on Earth' by Belize-born Errollyn Wallen, a setting of her own text – a prayer for light and hope and peace – which they included in their Epiphany carol service in January (and which was one of the last pieces recorded by Stephen Cleobury with the choir of King's College, Cambridge). It is likely that the musical training and opportunities given equally to both male and female singers through membership of this chapel choir will produce still more composers able to enrich the music of the Anglican choral tradition.

## CCLI Top Songs

A newish feature on the website of Christian Copyright Licensing

International (<<https://songselect.ccli.com/search/topsongslists>>) is the facility to access with ease the 'top hundred songs' from the UK, the USA, Australia and Canada – as calculated from the copyright returns of churches with CCL licences in each area – and even to compare them with the equivalent lists from recent decades: 'Be still for the presence of the Lord', for example, has retained a high position in the UK charts since the 1990s.

Obviously these lists do not give a complete picture of what is being sung in mainstream churches, since they don't include material in the public domain (where free reproduction is allowed after the seventieth year from the writer's death), but occasional 'older' items appear, notably 'How great thou art' and 'Great is thy faithfulness' – the former appearing in the most recent lists from the UK (at number six), America (24), Australia (21) and Canada (23).

Many recent songs are credited to more than one musician rather than a single songwriter: for example, number one in the UK is '10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)' by Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin, followed by 'In Christ alone' (Stuart Townend and Keith Getty) and 'I cast my mind to Calvary (O praise the name of the Lord our God)' by Benjamin Hastings, Dean Ussher and Marty Sampson, published by Hillsong Music.

The CCLI lists are updated twice annually, the amount of common material being one indication of the influence of the international 'worship music industry' (including the commercial arms of churches like California-based Bethel) on contemporary sung worship. The website is undoubtedly fertile territory for anyone wishing to pursue research into the musical repertoire of many churches, here and elsewhere.

## Carlisle Cathedral 900

The celebrations to mark the founding in 1122, nine hundred years ago, of what became the cathedral in Carlisle, will include a special service of Choral Evensong on Friday 18 March at 5.45. A drinks reception after the service will be followed at 7.30 pm by a lecture given by Melvyn Bragg, Lord Bragg of Wigton. His title is 'The Journey to English' and he will explore the work of William Tyndale,

# Music matters

whose remarkable translation of the Bible into English helped to shape the language in ways we still recognize today.

Later in the year there will be a concert, 'From Pub to Pulpit', given by folk musicians and the cathedral choir, to celebrate the 150th birthday of Ralph Vaughan Williams. Details of these and many other events in this special year for Carlisle can be found on the cathedral website (<<https://carlislecathedral.org.uk/900years>>).

## Conferences

Organizations are again beginning to plan in-person rather than online conferences, as the threat posed by coronavirus (COVID-19) appears to have diminished. The Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland, for example, expects that its (normally) annual conference will be able to take place in late July this year, at the Preston Leyland Hotel in Lancashire (Tuesday 26 to Friday 29 July). Some members are also hoping they will be able to help the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada to celebrate their centenary in Washington DC (Sunday 17 to Thursday 21 July); that conference will be 'hybrid' so that online participation is also possible.

The National Network of Pastoral Musicians has booked the Hayes, Swanwick, in Derbyshire, for its twice-postponed conference, 'Behold, I make all things new'. This will take place at the very end of July 2022 (Friday 29 to Sunday 31 July), which means that in theory one could attend straight after participating in the Swanwick Hymn Society event! Details of speakers will be posted online and emailed to members in due course (<<http://nnpm.org>>).

Getty Music's vast worship conference 'Sing! 2022: Christ our Hope in Life and Death' is being planned for Nashville in September. Online viewing passes with also be on sale.

## Songs of lament

The Church of England Evangelical Council (<<http://www.ceec.info>>) has produced material for worship in contexts where lament is the only possible response to issues of sexual abuse. There are several survivor stories as well as a worship

outline, with suggested readings and ideas for singing. The texts of traditional hymns (such as 'Be still my soul' and 'Abide with me') and more recent songs (including 'Faithful One, so unchanging' by Brian Doerksen and 'There's a time for tears' by Sam Hargreaves) are set out in the resource material pdf, with links to YouTube clips so that users can hear the music.

## Church music lectures

The Royal School of Church Music decided to resume its free Friday lunchtime online lectures this year. On 4 February 2022 Jeremy Summerly was the speaker, followed a fortnight later by Dr Gillian Warson, whose chosen subject was 'Shake off dull sloth', looking at what she has designated as 'vintage hymns' (see also her book on the subject, published by Sacristy Press). On 4 March Martin Baker was due – at the time of going to press – to speak about George Malcolm and his musical legacy at Westminster Cathedral.

Links are provided on the RSCM website for watching live (<[www.rscm.org.uk/online-resources/lunchtime-lectures](http://www.rscm.org.uk/online-resources/lunchtime-lectures)>) and for catching up on previous lectures, which began in November 2020.

## Hymn podcasts

Due to be posted in February or March on the Jubilate website are podcasts of thirty hymns by Christopher Idle, introduced by him, read by performer Lance Pierson (who sadly died of cancer in October 2021 before the project was complete) with his wife Sue, followed by a clip of music.

## Alcuin Club Festival

This year's Festival, Lecture and AGM take place on **Thursday 19 May 2022**, 12 noon - 4.00pm at St James's Church, Sussex Gardens, Paddington, London W2 3UD. The speaker will be Dr Bridget Nichols, on the subject: '**Who needs gendered language for God? What liturgists can offer to the question**'.  
12 noon: Eucharist followed by buffet lunch. 2pm: lecture followed by AGM. All welcome. Please email John Collins, [alcuinclub@gmail.com](mailto:alcuinclub@gmail.com), to register your interest.

# Learning

*Praxis regions are largely continuing to make 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 Southwest

### Online Colloquium

**Thursday 3 March 2022,  
10.00-12.00, on Zoom.**

#### Speakers:

**Canon Martin Poll, Chaplain of the Chapel Royal, Windsor.**

**The Very Revd Mandy Ford, Dean of Bristol.**

**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. Both of our speakers have extensive experience of ministering in the 'civic space', and will share their insights on this fascinating area of ministry. There will be opportunity for group discussion and questions.*

*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.*

**Thursday 5 May 2022,  
10.00-13.00, on Zoom**

*(including a 30-minute screen-break).*

#### Speaker:

**Helen Bent**

*For more about Helen see overleaf (p7)  
£7 (non-members), £5 (members) and free for ordinands/those training for licensed ministry.*

### **Weep with those who weep: Exploring the power of lament in worship**

*An insightful and interactive morning exploring how we can meet with God in the face of unexpected tragedy or a problem in society. What is apt worship in the face of the unthinkable? How do we lament appropriately as a community? How can we minister sensitively to people at points of crisis and vulnerability as well as those*

# opportunities

further along the lonely path of ongoing grief and sorrow?

*Helen Bent speaks from first-hand experience as both a worshipper and a worship leader, reflecting on local tragedy and disaster, the varied losses resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the loss of her daughter in 2014.*

*Please contact Gill Behenna (gillbehenna@me.com) to register your attendance, pay your fee, and receive the Zoom login link. Delegates from all Praxis regions, and further afield, are very welcome.*

**Saturday 17 September 2022,  
10.00-16.00, St Andrew's Parish Hall,  
Taunton.**

**Speaker: Colin Lunt**

*The origins of Celtic Spirituality will be delved into, and modern day expressions, especially in the context of community life and worship, will be explored, with some practical examples to join in with. More details in the June edition.*

## Praxis South

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

**Please note that this event has been moved online.**

**Tuesday 15 March 2022,  
09.30 -15.30, on Zoom.**

**£7 (non-members), £5 (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*

*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)>.*

# Books

## **Crowning the Year: Liturgy, Theology and Ecclesiology for the Rural Church**

*Tom Clammer, 2021, Norwich, Canterbury Press*

Just as the battle between 10,000 lay-led congregations or Saving the Parish began to shape General Synod election manifestos, a book that looks creatively at the possibilities offered by an imaginative approach to the rural parish appears on the shelves of our (probably mostly digital) bookshops.

Raised in rural Gloucestershire, and originally a geographer, Tom Clammer offers innovative considerations into the multidiscipline that is ecclesiology. He contends that as human beings, we experience God's eternal love contextually, and he proposes seven ways to explore this: physical and social geography matter; small churches are distinctive; learnings from cell church and the monastic tradition can help; confidence about strengths and honesty about weaknesses are important. Rural churches are generally grouped into benefices and Clammer suggests that in this context, each local church might be likened to a cell, working and focused locally but definitely part of a greater whole. 'What might it add to our rural ecclesiology if each village, each small church and its diminutive congregation was seen as a cell, not only in terms of the cell church model of living cells in a body, but also the stone cells in a monastery: each an individual powerhouse of sustained prayer, clustered around the cloister of a united benefice, group or deanery, in the same way that the individual cells of each monk or nun are sited around the cloister of an abbey or priory?'

In an essentially practical book, the second chapter looks at the way in which rural context must be one of the factors to be considered when working with the elements to be blended in the creation of an act of worship. Clammer offers ideas and a tool for planning worship – 'the heartbeat of the rural church' – to inspire small communities, and yet to be sustainable. His Liturgical Analysis Matrix offers three columns – liturgical texts, liturgical action(s) and theological truths. The first and second columns

consider relevant texts and action in relation to local context while the third provides a kind of outcomes check. A worked example over three pages draws on provision for All Souls Day.

The rest of the book, from which the title is drawn, considers the Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter cycles, together (importantly in the rural context) with the agricultural year. In the dilemma in which the world finds itself at present – I write during the COP26 Conference – even those in more urban contexts might find helpful wisdom in this latter chapter.

This book should have a wide reach. Those new to liturgical planning will find many fundamentals in accessible form; those new to the rural situation will find wisdom distilled from a great deal of reading (the bibliography in such a relatively small book is very comprehensive) and those who don't fit either of those categories may still learn about organization in the face of a complex and time-consuming schedule – the example lists for organizing Holy Week in a multi-parish benefice are just awesome.

*✉ Gill Ambrose is a former editor of Praxis News of Worship.*

## **Public Worship with Communion by Extension**

*Phillip Tovey, Grove Books, W249, 2021.*

The sharing of Communion by Extension remains a controversial rite. On the one hand, there is a strong argument for its pastoral need. On the other, it is easily confused with the regular service of Holy Communion, and should only ever be a temporary provision. This authoritative guide explores the issues, explores the texts carefully, and offers clear guidance on good practice. It will be a vital handbook to all those making use of this provision. *Phillip Tovey is Director of Reader Training, Diocese of Oxford and Liturgy Tutor, Ripon College Cuddesdon.*

*[I found this booklet provoking and intriguing in equal measure. The author grasps the nettle of widely varying permission for the use of this service contingent upon the standpoint of the Diocesan Bishop. Ed.]*

## New Praxis Chair

Our Chair, Jo Spreadbury, stood down at the end of the General Synod Quinquennium. On behalf of the entire membership, as well as the very many other people whom Jo's dedicated and effective ministry as Chair of Praxis has benefited, I want to express our gratitude to her for her years of service, and our very best wishes to her in her ongoing ministry. Thank you, Jo!

The Chair of Praxis is formally nominated and appointed by the Liturgical Commission. As the new Liturgical Commission is as yet unannounced, we are delighted that Michael Gisbourne is willing to take up the role of Interim Chair, and we welcome his hand on the tiller beginning immediately.

Michael Gisbourne, ordained in 1992, has ministered in a variety of parishes across the Northwest; been a University Chaplain at the University of Cumbria; and is now Canon Precentor at Ripon Cathedral. A fascination with liturgy was initially piqued at theological college and then through the conversations with the Rt Rev'd Michael Perham as *Common Worship* was being prepared. Michael has clerked Blackburn Diocesan Liturgical Committee, chaired Praxis Northwest and now Praxis Yorkshire and served as six years as Chaplain to the General Synod. He has prepared worship for Deanery, Diocesan and General Synods. He has been on the Praxis Exec since 2015.

This might be an opportune moment to remind members that Praxis is sponsored by three bodies: the Liturgical Commission, the Group for the Renewal of Worship (GROW), and the Alcuin Club. Elsewhere in this edition you will find details of the 2022 Alcuin Club AGM and Festival, to which all are welcome, and which interestingly picks up on the themes of issue 72 of this publication, exploring gendered language as used in relation to God.

I encourage you to bookmark the website of the Alcuin Club <[www.alcuinclub.org.uk](http://www.alcuinclub.org.uk)> and to look out for the regular publications of GROW, both in the Grove Worship series published by Grove Books, and the Joint Liturgical Series which may be ordered from the Alcuin Society website. [Ed.]

## Colin's column

I HAVE TWICE in the last ten years done some reflecting around confession and reconciliation. The first in 2013 (issue 39) when I was questioning the value of renaming the erstwhile 'confessional' as 'the ministry of reconciliation', not least because, when the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation in Dublin was addressing this, Bishop Harold Miller came from Northern Ireland to tell us that reconciliation should be handled on a much larger canvas, such as two communities were facing in his part of the world. The second occasion was in 2019 (issue 61) when *Church Times* had published an article from Bishop Philip North regretting the lack of training in hearing confessions from which the trainee curates in his diocese seemed to be suffering. The editor of *Church Times* was reluctant to publish an answer to the article, so I let my controversial response overflow into this Column.

I go back to it now because I have been very conscious of the interest in the 'seal of the confessional' which figured in the 2016 document, Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy, and gave rise to the weighty report of the specially convened working party on the topic, published in 2019 (and digitally accessible). The concern has come not so much from liturgists as from safeguarding persons – the hypothetical nightmare being that a confessor, having heard of a penitent's trail of child abuse in the confessional, would then have to stand by in self-imposed total silence when seeing the same person inviting a young child into the passenger seat of a car the next day. So what force has 'the seal'?

The straight answer undercuts the question in one stroke. For the simple fact is that 'the confessional' has no place in the Church of England's formularies. And if the confessional does not so exist, by definition neither does its seal.

The major implication is equally obvious. In a one-to-one private interview, the terms of confidentiality upon which the two speak with each other do not exist in a 'given' mode, such that, once such an interview is termed a 'confession', certain church regulations apply. The convention has been that, on the assumption such regulations applied, then either party could later say, possibly in protest or regret

'but we were speaking under the seal of the confessional'. Not so. It was well registered with me recently when a prison chaplain told me that, if he is approached by a prisoner who wishes to make a confession, he begins with a warning that any mention of contemplating suicide will not necessarily be kept *in pectore* by him. Of course in circles where 'making one's confession' (ie before an ordained minister) is regular practice, the terms and conditions may there be taken for granted; but in less regular circumstances, and to avoid misunderstanding and hurt, then the two persons concerned should agree their terms at the outset. There is no pre-existing external 'seal' binding a cleric who 'hears confessions'.

Informally, I doubt whether the regular practice of 'the confessional' is at all widespread. But personal counselling and spiritual direction are thriving. My own judgment is that they are of greater promise for the church's health.

Oh, and do write in if you disagree with me.

## This issue's 50th anniversary

IN FEBRUARY 1972 Series 3 Communion completed its first revision stage in General Synod. Somehow the Synod had quietened down. There was of course still disquiet at the modern Lord's Prayer (especially re: 'Do not bring us to the test'), but an acceptance of David Frost's post-communion prayer 'Father of all, we give you thanks and praise', for the retention of which many remain grateful today.

✍ Colin Buchanan is a former Bishop of Woolwich.