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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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# When in our music...

THE PROCESS of the ‘unlocking’ of worship following the restrictions of the last two years continues. Decision-making is now firmly devolved to the local context, which, interpreted at its most generous, allows each worshipping community to set the conditions around worship that feel most appropriate for that place. Local decision-making has, of course, traditionally been seen as one of the key hallmarks of the Church of England. Differing practice in different places did, however, lead me, over Holy Week, to arrive to join an act of worship in a building where I had not worshipped for several months, only to find that facemasks were still required for all. I didn’t have a facemask either about my person or indeed even in my car!

The resurgence of music-making in all of its various forms prompts this edition of *PNOW* in which three practitioners reflect on their own experience and process. A cathedral organist, a parish director of music, and a music therapist provide fascinating and complementary insights into what happens ‘when in our music God is glorified’ (Fred

Pratt Green).

The substantive ‘book review’ in this edition is actually a retrospective on the 2006 Grove Booklet which addresses confession in the *Common Worship* provision, developing the conversation encouraged by Bishop Colin in his column in the last edition. My thanks to Bishop Colin and to John for inspiring us to get our juices flowing about this.

Cause for great celebration are the number of regional events advertised and reviewed in this edition, requiring extra column inches for the first time since I took on the editorship! We see the return of some ‘in person’ events, which I really do urge you to consider supporting, alongside online provision, and I’m sure that each of the regional Chairs would want me to stress that all are welcome to any of these events, regardless of regional affiliation. Breaking news, which just slid into this edition, of a new liturgical qualification (see page 4) all combine to encourage us that the rumour of liturgical excellence is still alive!

✉ *Tom Clammer OC, Editor.*

## Significant organ repertoire: connecting with the worshipper

ONE OF THE GREAT JOYS of the Anglican choral tradition is the wide range of contexts from which our great inheritance is drawn, and the variety of music one might encounter during the daily round of worship in our cathedrals, chapels and churches. There is music written not only for the Anglican tradition as we know it, but church repertoire taken from Catholic or Orthodox traditions, from broad denominational, liturgical, historical and political contexts. This variety is no less apparent in the organ repertoire – over five centuries of it – which forms the backbone of the Opus Dei. The organ music usually blends in, the organist responding to the liturgy through appropriate voluntaries and improvisation. Now, it would be inappropriate for the organist to strike up

with one of Olivier Messiaen’s organ works from the 1960s after a standard Evensong of Renaissance choral repertoire. Nevertheless, in a worship space with a good pipe organ and a receptive congregation, it may be advantageous to bring to the fore some of the more daring works of the organ repertoire, unabridged, as part of a specially constructed act of worship.

In this article I focus on repertoire from twentieth-century Paris, a hugely fertile period for some of our greatest ever organist-composers. The large-scale devotional works of Olivier Messiaen or Maurice Duruflé (to give just two names) appear frequently in organ recitals, yet their incorporation into acts of Anglican worship is difficult to achieve without distorting the shape, mood and balance of a typical service.

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Duruflé's *Prélude, Adagio et Choral Varié sur le Veni Creator* lasts around twenty-five minutes, longer if a plainsong choir is deployed to interpolate sung verses of the chant in the variations. It does not work to split the *Prélude* from the *Adagio*, so perhaps inevitably, one ends up playing the final variations alone: something of a compromise.

In their entirety, Messiaen's luminous organ cycles cannot be shoe-horned into conventional acts of worship. But in the right environment this music (born out of Messiaen's devout Catholic faith, his study of the patterns of birdsong and Indian rhythm, and his unique harmonic and modal vocabulary) can transport listeners to another world. A cathedral carol service might reach a dazzling, blazing conclusion if the final movement of Messiaen's 1935 organ cycle *La Nativité du Seigneur* is played, but fine judgement is required. Music which has the power to unveil its transcendent beauty in the right context is wasted when separated from title and translation, scriptural reference, and the silence and the space in which to reflect upon the theology. If this kind of repertoire is misplaced, particularly at Christmas, we run the risk of puzzling worshippers at a time of year when many families may be reconnecting with their church.

Each movement in a Messiaen organ cycle is, on some level, a response to a passage of Scripture which has been laid out in the title (or in a separate quotation). This resulting music is an abstract landscape, setting a scene just as liturgical improvisation is intended to do. Whilst not an immediately obvious pairing, I have sometimes included George Herbert's more abstract poetry alongside Messiaen's music. Herbert so often seems to evoke the random imagery, the stirring of the senses, and the wandering of the mind recognizable in one's own attempts to come to prayer. For many of us, it is often the details which Herbert describes – the colour of stained glass, the opulence of the incense, sounds from another world – which afford space for contemplation in holy spaces.

I am reminded of a serendipitous combination of circumstances on the Eve of the Feast of the Ascension in 2018, when during a late service of

'Organ Compline' at Salisbury Cathedral, Messiaen's 1934 organ cycle *L'Ascension* was paired with appropriate scriptural readings. In the twilight, with the Paschal candle as a focal point, a recent installation by Michael Pendry – *Les Colombes* – took the form of a great flock of paper doves zig-zagging its way through the nave. (It is well worth searching online for an image of this installation.) Messiaen's own birdsong patterns emanated from the organ as the candlelight danced around the doves, and at the close of the service, after sunset, the light on the paper creatures dwindled as the music itself died away, leaving the worshippers in profound silence.

This year at Salisbury we are trying a different approach, by featuring some pieces of significant organ repertoire as a prelude to Sunday Evensong in a slot entitled *Sunday Organ Music*. It will be interesting to note how this is received by the congregation. For musicians, it is important to think critically about how new presentations of music might work for a particular time, place, and group of people. It is the vastness of the repertoire, the endless possibilities for creativity in music and liturgy, and the pondering over how best to connect with a congregation which make the occupation of a cathedral organist so rewarding and fulfilling.

✍ John Challenger is Assistant Director of Music at Salisbury Cathedral.

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## Where is Jesus?

### Checking the lyrics just in case...

Listening to some contemporary Christian music not long ago, I was struck with one piece in particular. A Chris Tomlin track, 'You lifted me out' turned up on shuffle from his 2008 album *Hello Love*. I'm a fairly 'low-candle' Anglican, and certainly inclined to include modern worship songs where I can see the relevance. So I started the track again, listening to the form and the structure, working out how the song functions and trying to pin down the key elements that sound so uplifting. On a third listen, I opened up the *Worship Together* website to pull down the lyrics and began to think about how to arrange it for my own

circumstances.

The aftermath of lockdown had given me ample opportunity to incorporate new music or arrangements. My church congregation is a forgiving and deeply lovely group of people and I'm soon told politely if I wander too far from the reservation. I found the chorus, noted the scansion and compared it to the track, thinking about how to bring the song to life.

It was only at this point I scanned the lyrics for key words. Nowhere in this song is Jesus mentioned. Not even as a metaphor ('Fruit of the mystic rose, as of that rose the stem', etc) and it appears Almighty God doesn't make the cut either, not even as a parent figure. There is no reference to the Holy Spirit. Salvation makes a brief appearance in verse two, and is implied in the whole song, but nowhere do we find what the singer is being saved from. That is, unless you are already familiar with the idiom of the contemporary charismatic evangelical church. In 2008 these images and metaphors were sharp and clear in the minds of the writers and the congregations they were writing for. Writing credits run to Tomlin himself, Jesse Reeves (over 200 writing credits on *SongSelect*), Louie Giglio (Baptist Pastor, founder of the Passion Movement), Matt Gilder - whose keyboard skills are evident in a considerable body of Tomlin's work - and Matt Redman, who probably needs little introduction. These are heavyweights of their genre and industry. It's like hearing that Rutter and Arnold have collaborated to set a newly discovered Saward text and Tim Dudley-Smith is overseeing production.

Despite this I wonder whether (like many songs written for the church across the centuries) this one may have seen its best days already. I'm reminded that of hundreds of thousands of hymns from scores of published books, many churches have an active hymnody of fewer than two hundred. Over time, the cream has risen to the top and been placed with love and care into more modern collections alongside the best new material for the next generation to explore and sing together.

This Tomlin song may be rousing and invite the elevation of the singer and the listener alike, but I can't in good

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conscience ask my congregation to sing it. The lyrics, once devoid of their original context, aren't relevant to my people and don't articulate the faith they profess and hold dear. We have plenty of other songs that can serve, from a range of writers both still alive and long since departed. I am happy to use those songs.

The proliferation of 'professional' worship song-writing in the last century and the advent of Internet distribution have coincided to provide the avid listener with more material than they could possibly consume in their waking hours, and still the natural selection of material continues. Perhaps I've never heard 'You lifted me out' in a church service because it is an early casualty from the majority of contemporary church music that will be gently discarded in time.

I wonder what my children will sing for the generation that follows them? Perhaps they will dig out a website from when their Dad was a middle-aged Director of Music and give voice to a song they recall from their formative years. Or perhaps they'll reach further back, into the eighties, or the sixties. Or the 1860s. Whatever happens, I shall be content provided we continue to examine the lyrics to which we commit our hearts and voices.

✍ *Andrew Clayton is Director of Music at St James' Church, Mere Green.*

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## 'Naked' singing

AT MY FIRST MORNING PRAYER as a team vicar in North Lambeth, I was delighted that we were to sing. Automatically reaching towards the piano to offer accompaniment to the hymn, I was gently discouraged, because 'we're fine with naked singing'. I grinned, feeling at home in a place where singing was understood to be prayerful, regardless of musical skill. At Chelmsford Cathedral, I was equally delighted that said Morning and Evening Prayer (on non-Evensong days) incorporated 'naked' sung canticles and a hymn. A recent straw poll of cathedral precentors revealed that few other cathedrals (Derby, Wells and Portsmouth being exceptional) incorporate much sung material into said Morning or

Evening Prayer, other than (sometimes) an office hymn. Perhaps this is because at Evensong singing is more 'clothed'. As a teenager, I had always struggled with Choral Evensong, feeling 'redundant'. My epiphany dawned when the Precentor at Christ Church quietly explained that 'in Choral Evensong we pray through the choir as they sing'.

This tension - between involving the worshipping congregation as singers and offering a quality and variety of musical offering which lifts the soul to God - is familiar to all privileged to serve in any kind of musical ministry. It is as real for the worship group leader as it is for the choral conductor. During the pandemic, this tension increased significantly, as only those deemed 'professional' were legally permitted to sing at all during worship. This drew a visceral response. (Did the collective memory of our forebears hear the voice of Cromwell...? On the plus side, criminalizing singing had the unexpected benefit of upping chorister street-cred...) The self-aware amongst our congregations recognized the antipathy towards choirs returning to worship as containing at least an element of envy.

As a music therapist, I have a natural bias towards the intrinsic value of participation. In twelve years of clinical work, I never met anyone who did not in some way relate to music, for all of us have musical qualities. Our breath in and out; the timing patterns, speed and fluidity of our movements. Much music therapy translates this into musical improvisation, based on the wordless pre-verbal dance familiar to anyone who has experience of babies and their care-givers.

That music reaches places in us that words leave untouched is oft said: think of Saul, David and his harp. Yet, in our Western culture, we often delegate music to the professionals. We have commodified music, both within and outside our worshipping communities. Those recognized as 'being musical' are encouraged into the choir or the orchestra. This is no bad thing; few of us can reach the top C of Allegri's 'Miserere' or knock up a Palestrina mass or a setting of Psalm 103 which draws as many worshippers to God as does Matt Redman's '10,000 reasons'. We need professional musicians as much today as the Israelite community did when singing the psalms. Yet we run

the risk of alienating those who are 'not musical', ultimately reinforcing a divide between 'musicians' and the rest of the congregation. I was heartened to hear our Master of the Choristers at Chelmsford, James Davy, say of a potential chorister whose enthusiasm far outweighed his capacity to hold a tune: 'Just give me a month or two. We'll soon sort that out'. He did.

St Augustine's oft-quoted 'he who sings, prays twice' is probably more accurately translated as 'he who sings *well*, prays twice'. This only seeks to reinforce anxiety. Yet I wonder whether 'naked singing' offers a middle way. Amongst those who prayed the office in North Lambeth and the Cathedral were those who were untutored in singing. Yet, over time, they all grew more musically confident. Muscle memory improves most skills and singing is no exception. When restrictions eased and the Dean and Canons were able to resume singing the Benedictus once more to our familiar 4-part plainchant I was moved to tears. In lockdown we had continued our tradition of singing the Benedictus online but unaccompanied. Alone, on screen, this was sometimes too vulnerable (or 'naked'). The Dean's solution of self-accompaniment on the guitar was much enjoyed.

Anyone wanting to experiment with 'naked' singing of the Daily Office should not be discouraged by the lack of ready-to-go versions, containing familiar sung canticles and psalms (although if you are prepared to try plainsong, more are available). Start simple: find a version of the Benedictus or the Magnificat that you like and stick with it. Most hymn books contain a few examples, although they are not always well indexed. Other useful resources include: music from the communities of Iona and Taizé, *Psalm Praise* (Falcon: 1973), *Sing Praise* (Hymns A&M/RSCM: 2010) and the excellent *Psalms for the Common Era* <<http://psalmsforthecommonera.com>> also provides sung versions of each psalm, including newly specially-composed material. Singing might make us feel naked, but there's a good Biblical precedent in Eden for that.

✍ *Alison Kennedy has served in parish and cathedral ministry for 23 years, prior to which she worked as a music therapist in a variety of educational and healthcare settings.*

# Event Reviews

## Praxis South

Liturgy for celebrations: being creative with diverse resources!

15 March 2022

This event held on Zoom certainly lived up to its title! For example, anyone who was wondering how to prepare the Queen's Jubilee now has plenty of ideas for this and any other celebratory event, as the principles remain the same. Those who missed the day can catch up by viewing a recording of the day on our YouTube page <<https://www.youtube.com/c/PraxisSouth>>.

The engaging talks from Helen Bent and Rebecca Swansbury were interspersed with comfort breaks, time to create some liturgy on our own and break-out rooms for discussion in small groups. Helen spoke on planning events, focusing on the Queen's Jubilee and how to decide what music to use, while Rebecca covered principles of leading worship with children and planning celebration worship with them. Importantly, she reminded us of the different learning styles: Word, Emotion, Symbol and Action.

Here is a list of some of the questions worth asking ourselves as we prepare events:

- Who do we need to put this together? (Consider recruiting people with different perspectives, especially marginal ones: an adolescent, for example, or a newcomer; consider recruiting someone from your 'target' audience, if this is designed for the wider community; and so forth.)

- What/Where/Who are the connections that need to be made? *A question informed by thinking clearly about:*

- What exactly are we celebrating? who is this about? and what are we trying to achieve?

- What framework are we looking to use (Eucharist/Songs of Praise/Evensong) and what is necessary to that? *Which may in turn inform / be informed by*

- Where is this to take place? if it's not 'our' place what extra permissions / courtesies do we need (e.g. insurance, copyright, particular invites given) and what freedoms does this give us? *and*

- Do we want to do something new or something traditional?

- What resources are available? e.g. Texts (e.g. in the case of the Jubilee, books like *The Servant Queen and the King she Serves* (Paperback – 2016 by Catherine Butcher), Mark Greene's forthcoming booklet; key passages of scripture e.g. coronation psalms; *Common Worship*/ BCP / liturgy from the wider Commonwealth), Music (HM's favourite hymns; jubilee anthems – newly written & classic), People (local choirs, music groups, drama groups, artists etc).

- What else is going on both locally (street parties, events by ecumenical partners or Anglican neighbours), nationally (on TV, for example, or national campaigns, or wider concerns such as war, plague or shortages), and liturgically (e.g. Thy Kingdom Come, Pentecost, Harvest, Remembrance) with which we should work, or with which we need to avoid clashing / duplicating?

- If we think of people having preferred spiritual modes, as we do learning styles, how do we cater for these?

No doubt there are other aspects to think of, but these will give us all a good basis for planning our celebratory events. We hope that this will be our last on-line event and that our next event will be in person at Holy Trinity, Sloane Square on Wednesday 5th October, when we shall be looking for 'Hidden Gems in *Common Worship*'  
✉ *Peter Furber is vice-Chair, Praxis South.*  
*Lindsay Llewellyn-MacDuff is Bishop's Chaplain, Canterbury.*

The recording of the above event (with minor edits for copyright reasons) is now available to view on-line, alongside other recordings from Praxis South:  
<<https://www.youtube.com/c/PraxisSouth>>  
You will be able to view it in its different sections, using the links below the recording (click "show more" to access them all). [*Peter Furber*].

## Praxis South West

National Church and Civic Religion  
3 March 2022

Our most recent online colloquium was an opportunity to draw together the Church's liturgy and national events or celebrations.

First, we heard from Canon Martin Poll, who spoke about his ministry as Chaplain of St George's Windsor, involved as he is in national acts of worship – such as the funeral of the late Duke of Edinburgh – and being the pastor to the whole of the Windsor Castle estate. There was a balance to be struck between what some would call 'folk religion' and the need to offer a prophetic voice. The question of 'Who does the liturgy belong to?' was a moot one. There needed to be something for everyone. One live issue for the times was how to include a multi-faith element in national acts of worship.

Our second speaker was the Very Revd Mandy Ford, Dean of Bristol, who spoke of cathedral life in the heart of a major city, as it happens, next door to the city council offices! Dean Mandy felt that the Cathedral had a regional and a local role. There was a role ministering into the issues raised by history, for example, how best to serve both the Merchant Venturers as a key body in the city with the Black Lives Matter campaign. Key formal events reflecting national life and structures competed with services for a wide range of organisations such as Pride, charities for the homeless, ecumenical and other community occasions for time and resources in Cathedral life. Underpinning all these, and of equal value, were the Daily Offices and prayer with and for visitors, whether coming as a tourist or simply to light a candle. The recent visit of the Exhibition of the Moon had been a valuable opportunity for a service about Creation.

All of this gave us much food for thought and discussion about liturgical and pastoral practice, challenging all who ministered in their own communities to bring together the life of the nation with the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a creative and imaginative way.

✉ *Robin Lodge is Chair of Praxis Southwest.*

## Breaking News: New Liturgy Degree

The University of Durham has approved what will be a largely online taught MA in worship and liturgy. The programme will be managed under the umbrella of the Mirfield Liturgical Institute, and further details should be available fairly soon.

## Scottish scholarship

Issue 65 of PNOW (2020) included a note on a new MLitt course in Sacred Music beginning at the University of St Andrews. Now a scholarship is offered to assist a postgraduate student taking this course from 2022 to 2023.

The Cookie Mattheson Scholarship in Sacred Music (£10,000) will be awarded to a student who applies for a place by 1 July 2022; all applicants will be considered, with the decision made on the basis of the candidate's application materials. The MLitt course is designed for those wishing to follow a career as a church musician or anyone already active in this field, including clergy.

The charitable trust behind the new scholarship supports 'causes which promote education and the practice, enjoyment and appreciation of the musical and pictorial arts in Scotland' ([www.voluntaryactionangus.org.uk/cookie-matheson-charitable-trust](http://www.voluntaryactionangus.org.uk/cookie-matheson-charitable-trust)). St Andrews is offering one of the few opportunities in the UK for advanced study specifically related to sacred music.

## Bob Chilcott

A little early for harvest thanksgivings this year, composer Bob Chilcott's sequence *The Song of Harvest* (OUP, 2021) is nonetheless worth noting. It was written for the 2019 Royal School of Church Music Celebration Day, held at Durham Cathedral in October, and can be performed as a concert piece lasting around twenty-five minutes, celebrating the earth and its riches.

However, the work is structured around five well-known hymns of praise, for which the composer has written new melodies, simple enough for a congregation to learn but also suitable as individual choral items. The hymns are 'Come, ye thankful people, come', 'For the beauty of the earth', 'Pray that Jerusalem may have / peace and prosperity' (from the 1650 Scottish Psalter), 'Through all the changing scenes of life' and 'Now thank we all our God' – only the first of these would be odd to sing outside a harvest context.

For sample pages go to the OUP website (<https://global.oup.com>), choose 'Printed Music' from the Education menu, then search for 'song of harvest'. Copies may be

purchased there or through the RSCM's online shop.

## Jubilate Big Sing

The latest in a series of Big Sings will take place at St Augustine's Church in South Kensington on Saturday 18 June 2022 between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Places for singers should be booked via the Jubilate website ([www.jubilate.co.uk/events](http://www.jubilate.co.uk/events)) before 6 June, after which further details and instructions will be sent out.

The aim of the day is to record a new collection of Christmas music (looking ahead a little!), with Noel Tredinnick conducting voices, organ and other instruments. There is no charge to take part, but donations are invited to cover the expenses of the event. The new pieces to be recorded are a mixture of choral and congregational music on Christmas themes.

## Westminster and Yale

It was announced on 26 April that James O'Donnell, Organist and Master of the Music at Westminster Abbey since January 2000, will leave London at the end of this year to take up a new post in the USA. He has been appointed as Professor in the Yale School of Music and Yale Institute of Sacred Music, an opportunity described by him as unparalleled, allowing him to draw fully on his skills and experience built up while working in churches and cathedrals, but in the very different setting of 'one of the world's great universities'.

Dr O'Donnell, born in Scotland in 1961, is currently Visiting Professor of Organ and of Choral Conducting at the Royal Academy of Music in London. After studying music in Cambridge (while Organ Scholar of Jesus College where he is now an Honorary Fellow), he was appointed Assistant Master of Music at Westminster Cathedral in 1982, then Master of Music in 1988. In 2000 it was seen as highly unusual for a professional musician brought up a Catholic to move from a Roman Catholic to an Anglican cathedral; some will remember that at more or less the same time Martin Baker, Sub-Organist and then Acting Organist at Westminster Abbey (1992-1999), moved to Westminster Cathedral.

A Fellow of the Royal School of

Church Music, James O'Donnell holds an honorary DMus from the University of Aberdeen, awarded in 2013. He has already done some teaching and given organ recitals in North America, and will be joining a thriving and well-funded community at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music (ISM). The Institute, 'a crossroads for ministers and musicians, scholars and practitioners', is linked with both Yale School of Music and Yale Divinity School. As well as teaching, Dr O'Donnell will direct 'a newly formed professional liturgical vocal ensemble that will serve as a model and a vehicle for study for students preparing for careers in church music and liturgy' (<https://ism.yale.edu>).

Many royal occasions have been and continue to be marked at Westminster Abbey; on 29 March this year James O'Donnell directed his own singers and the Chapel Royal choir at the Service of Thanksgiving for the Duke of Edinburgh, during which two of the hymns were sung and accompanied in his own arrangements. Recruitment for the role of Organist and Master of the Choristers at the Abbey should already have begun by the time this issue is distributed, and it is hoped the successful candidate will take up the post in January 2023.

## Thomas Troeger (1945-2022)

Distinguished North American hymn writer Thomas Troeger died on 3 April at the age of 77. Also a priest and a teacher of homiletics, his biography on the HymnQuest database quotes him as saying he had 'a passion to encourage contemporary church composers to produce choir and congregational music of the highest quality'. His many publications included *Wonder Reborn: creating sermons on hymns, music, and poetry* (OUP, 2010) and *Borrowed Light: hymn texts, prayers and poems* (OUP, 1994).

Three of Troeger's hymn texts are in the 2013 *Ancient & Modern*: 'We need each other's voice to sing', 'Above the moon earth rises' and 'Our Saviour's infant cries were heard'. His 2009 text, 'God, you made all things for singing', provided the title for one of his books of poetry. His Advent hymn, 'View the present through the promise' (with its emphatic declaration 'Christ will come again' three times in each

# Music matters

verse), is found in the Church of Scotland's most recent hymnal (2005) with a tune by American composer and Professor of Choral Music Roy Hopp (b.1951). The text has also been paired with traditional Welsh tune AR HYD Y NOS.

## Lambeth Awards 2022

On 7 March the Archbishop of Canterbury presented this year's Awards, which included the Alphege Award for Evangelism and Witness given to Karen Gibson MBE, founder and conductor of the London-based Kingdom Choir (the gospel choir who sang at the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle), and the Cranmer Award for Worship given to Dr Andrew Earis, Director of Music at St Martin-in-the-Fields, in recognition of his 'extraordinary musical ministry during the pandemic'. Dr Earis sourced and recorded music for the Church of England's weekly online services, also curating selections of music made available to parishes for their own online worship, 'helping many hundreds of churches to continue with musical ministry during the Covid lockdown'.

Another recipient of the Thomas Cranmer Award was Geraldine Latty, honouring 'her significant contribution to music in Christian worship, as a singer-songwriter, worship leader, choir director, teacher and recording artist'. She teaches in the Music and Worship Department of the London School of Theology. Her own songs include the very moving 'Lord, you hear the cry of the widow weeping' (which can be found on the Resound Worship website, with access to words, music and a lyrics video); her own website is <<https://geraldinelatty.com>>.

## Musical Litany

BBC Radio 3 broadcast Choral Evening Prayer from Buckfast Abbey in their usual Choral Evensong slot on Wednesday 16 February 2022. The choir of Gonville and Caius college chapel, Cambridge, was directed by Matthew Martin, and the service (recorded in December 2021) was led by the Revd Dr Cally Hammond, College Dean and Director of Studies in Theology. Dr Hammond's books include *The Sound of the Liturgy: how words work in worship* (SPCK, 2015).

The music at the service included John Harper's imaginative setting of the *Common Worship* Great Litany for choir and organ, with spoken petitions; in places the choir sings 'Kyrie eleison' rather than 'Have mercy upon us.' Where the minister prays 'By the mystery of your holy incarnation...', the plainsong melody associated with the words 'Angelus ad pastores' appears in the organ part; later a Passiontide chant is quoted, and when the text speaks of 'those who have died and are in your keeping' the vocal soloists sing 'Requiem aeternam', again to Gregorian chant. Sometimes the choir is divided into two, so the whole setting has a variety of textures and colours.

The college chapel's Lent Term Card indicates that John Harper's Great Litany was also used on the Second Sunday of Lent, during a Sequence of Readings and Music for Lent. Something for cathedral and other college choirs to explore?

## Platinum hymns

The Church of England's Liturgical Resources for the celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee include five hymn suggestions (along with the National Anthem) found in most hymn books:

- All people that on earth do dwell
- Be thou my vision
- Come down, O love divine
- Lord, for the years
- Now thank we all our God

Readers with access to HymnQuest may also be interested in a hymn by Alan Gaunt found there, written on 2 June 2012 to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. 'Our gracious God, this year of jubilee' is sung to the well-known tune WOODLANDS, and the words may also be accessed via the CCLI's SongSelect resource.

## A quick response

Shortly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, Andrew Pratt (a Methodist hymn writer) responded with a new text which can be sung to the melody KING'S LYNN. 'We hear the news with anguish' has been recorded for YouTube and made available by Andrew's regular publishers, Stainer & Bell ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=psA\\_Ndj5vfU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=psA_Ndj5vfU)).

# Learning

*Praxis regions are continuing to make use of online learning opportunities, whilst planning 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

### *Celtic Spirituality*

**Saturday 17 September 2022,**

**10.00-16.00, St Andrew's Church Hall, Taunton, TA2 7SB.**

**Speaker: Colin Lunt.**

**£20, £15 (affiliates), and free for ordinands/those training for licensed ministry.**

*Celtic Spirituality can indicate all sorts of things. What is the range of things covered by the idea of Celtic Spirituality? In this event, 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.*

*Please contact Gill Behenna ([gillbehenna@me.com](mailto:gillbehenna@me.com)) to register your attendance.*

## Praxis East

***Creative Worship Outside: a Praxis East relaunch event.***

**Thursday 7 July 2022,**

**14.00 -16.00, on Zoom.**

*Attendance is free.*

**Speakers: Peer-led with short contributions from Praxis East members.**

*Covid-19 restrictions forced us to explore worship differently. Many churches have been experimenting with worship outside, but what does this look like? From 'Pimms 'n' Hymns' to 'Wild Compline', how do we worship in an outdoor space? What form does worship take? And how does this relate to our concern for the environment? This is an opportunity to share experiences and find out more in time to enjoy further experimentation over the summer in your own context.*

*Please contact Helen Bent ([helenbent99@gmail.com](mailto:helenbent99@gmail.com)) to register your attendance and receive the Zoom link. Everyone is welcome.*

# opportunities

## Praxis North

*Creative Worship Outside: a Praxis North relaunch event.*

**Tuesday 5 July 2022,  
19.00 -21.00, on Zoom.**

*Attendance is free.*

**Speakers: Peer-led with short contributions from Praxis North members.**

*For description see the Praxis East event on the previous page.*

*Please contact Helen Bent (helenbent99@gmail.com) to register your attendance and receive the Zoom link. Everyone is welcome*

## Praxis Yorkshire

*Two online gatherings:*

**Praxis Yorkshire gathering - focusing on the theme of Creationtide**

**Tuesday 21 June 2022,  
14.00 -16.00, on Zoom.**

*7-8 liturgists talking for seven minutes on their chosen subject, followed by a similar period for questions, comment, and discussion. It's imaginative, informative – and succinct!*

**Praxis Yorkshire gathering - focusing on the liturgical seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany**

**Tuesday 18 October 2022,  
14.00 -16.00, on Zoom.**

*7-8 liturgists talking for seven minutes on their chosen subject, followed by a similar period for questions, comment, and discussion. It's imaginative, informative – and succinct!*

*In either instance, or both, to register email John Francis Moss: <johnfrancismoss@icloud.com>*

## Praxis South

**Hidden Gems in Common Worship  
Wednesday 5 October 2022,  
10.30 for 11.00-15.00, Holy Trinity Sloane Square, SW1X 9BZ.**

**Speakers: Jo Spreadbury and Dana Delap.**

# Books

**£20 (non-members), £15 (affiliate members) and free for ordinands/those training for licensed ministry.**

*A day to explore the range of what's currently in Common Worship, and what may be added in the future. Presentations and workshops will introduce some of the 'hidden gems' which are less frequently used, and help us think about how they may enhance our prayer and worship and that of our churches.*

*To book please contact Peter Furber: peter@furber.me.uk*

*Or online booking is available at <[http://www.praxisworship.org.uk/praxis\\_south.html](http://www.praxisworship.org.uk/praxis_south.html)>.*

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## **To Proclaim Afresh: Declaration and Oaths for Church of England Ministers**

*Faith and Order Commission, Church House Publishing, 2022.*

In most of my Sacramental Theology or Liturgy classes at the various colleges at which I teach, the course begins with examination of the Declaration of Assent, because it is so central to the Church of England's understanding of what it is that our liturgy (the historic formularies) is doing in relation to our doctrine. I always bewail the fact that there is not a recent brief guide to these core texts. I can no longer do that! This 35-page booklet, with a forward by the Archbishop of Canterbury, describes its main aim as to 'help those making these promises - especially those doing so for the first time - to grasp more fully the depth of significance and the richness of meaning contained in the Declaration and Oaths.' The study treats the Declaration of Assent first, followed by the Oaths of Allegiance and of Canonical Obedience, providing history, commentary and analysis. There then follows a chapter exploring 'the significance of the repeated and public use of the Declaration, the power of language, liturgy and symbol, and the relationships they create'. A useful and timely guide for oathmakers new or old! [Ed.]

## Re-examining Confession

Colin's Column (*Praxis News of Worship*, March 2022) raised an interesting question. It is not a new one and has, for example, been explored in a Grove Book:

*W 187 Common Worship Reconciliation and Restoration: A Commentary (2006).*

In this book Phillip Tovey (who edits), David Kennedy and Andrew Atherstone explore the provisions made in *Common Worship* for the Ministry of Reconciliation.

Phillip Tovey sets the scene in his preface. The second chapter, by David Kennedy, presents the Liturgical Commission provisions and explains their rationale. The third chapter is by Andrew Atherstone who considers that some of the provisions are good but that those for auricular confession go against 'Reformation Principles'. The final chapter, by Tovey, examines the pastoral opportunities arising from the commended material, basing it partly on his own experiences. He refers to the similarities between the Methodist Class Meetings and Fellowship meetings in East African Anglican Evangelicalism.

However, the point that Colin was raising in his column, and that Andrew Atherstone also raised in chapter 3 of *Common Worship Reconciliation and Restoration*, specifically concerns auricular confession and posits that '...the "confessional" has no place in the Church of England's formularies...'

Starting with BCP 1662, the First exhortation in the The Order for Holy Communion ends with a paragraph that clearly suggests that a person who '... cannot quiet his conscience...' may seek absolution and spiritual advice. A similar provision is made in 1552.

This was consolidated in Canon CXIII of 1603(4) which ended, '...Provided always, That if any Man confess his secret and hidden Sins to the Minister for the unburdening of his Conscience, and to receive spiritual Consolation and Ease of Mind from him: We do not any way bind the said Minister by this our Constitution, but do straitly

charge and admonish him, that he do not at any time reveal and make known to any Person whatsoever, any Crime or Offence so committed to his Trust and Secrecy (except they be such Crimes as by the Laws of this Realm, his own Life may be called into question for concealing the same) under pain of Irregularity.’ This remains unrepealed. On 29th April 1959 this was declared by the Convocations of Canterbury and York to be ‘an essential principle of Church doctrine’.

Canon B29, of the current Canons of The Church of England is entitled ‘Of The Ministry of Absolution’ and provides for auricular confession when requested. In BCP (1662) The Order for The Visitation of The Sick similar provision is made.

The Ordinal, annexed to The Book of Common Prayer, says, in the Ordering of Priests, ‘...Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained...’. Not all reformers were against auricular confession. It is true that there were those of Geneva and Zurich, who influenced Cranmer, and who were against the procedure. However, Martin Luther favoured auricular confession and was disappointed that, with the abolition of compulsion, attendance fell.

Auricular confession was reviewed in the 1938 report, *Doctrine in The Church of England* (pp 189ff). Their conclusion may be summarized in the Anglican principle, ‘all may; some should; none must.’ A further review has just been completed; *The Report of the Seal of the Confessional Working Party* (2018) which reviews the seal and makes suggestions for the future.

✍ *John Chamberlin is a retired priest in the Diocese of Newcastle.*

Readers might note that the entire text of the last report referenced in John’s contribution is available in full, together with what is described as an ‘Interim Statement on the Seal of the Confessional’: <[www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/news-and-statements/working-party-report-ministry-confession](http://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/news-and-statements/working-party-report-ministry-confession)> [Ed.]

What part of the liturgy impacts you least? I offer a sporting bet that an honest answer would be the epistle. And I reflect on that as a contrast to my experience as a curate many moons ago. We were a strictly BCP Morning and Evening Prayer parish, with congregations larger in the evening than in morning (the teenagers came then), and we preached for 35 minutes and the congregation loved their Bibles, had them open on their knees, and followed the sermon in and through the text. We may have sat loose to the lectionary, but the Bible was there at the centre of our worship; and in the New Testament the Gospels had no necessary priority over the Epistles – St Paul had a very good innings. If, of course, we had given attention to the lectionary in the 1662 communion service, we would have faced a random selection; and the coming of the parish communion (round the country, that is, rather than in Cheadle) meant that the 1662 provision would ill serve the purpose. Rome of course went over to the three-year lectionary with much sequential reading of scripture; the Old Testament arrived at the eucharist; the sermon came from after the creed (do you remember that?) to follow the Gospel immediately; and we all found ourselves accepting both the priority of the Gospel over the other readings, and the logic in reading the Gospel and immediately preaching from it. And the subtle sub-message was that the Epistle was read in the service because, like the procession or the candles, it was a ‘given’ that was integral to the event being a service, but did not have to be there to convey any particular message. I think the two-year ‘thematic’ lectionary we had in the ASB (also a faint memory now?) meant that the sermon on the Gospel could refer to the Epistle as saying something relevant to the Gospel theme, but each week presented the Epistle as a useful fragment, rather than as part of the developed teaching of Paul or Peter or John. So with *Common Worship* we went to the Roman pattern, where the Epistles are read in sequence from one week to the next, but any connection to the appointed Gospel is fortuitous (or imagined).

So we still have the Gospel pressing the preacher to preach from it; and the preacher, knowing in any case that the

congregation will start a long way back if the sermon is to come from the Epistle, succumbing to the pressure. And the nature of the epistles favours this solution, for the apostles did not write their letters in self-contained pericopae, such as we find and use liturgically in the Gospels. Even if a courageous preacher goes for the Sunday-by-Sunday sequenced use of one of Paul’s letters, and expounds and applies it week by week, even so, each week will require some catching up on the previous week, and is dependent upon the regularity of the congregation’s attendance and attention. My experience (in addition to my hunch) is that, in a high proportion of parishes centred on a Sunday morning eucharist, the people have subconsciously settled for the Epistle as being simply part of the liturgical wallpaper – and often even the person reading it sounds as though the reading is done without expectation that anyone will want to learn from it.

So how in parish life are all these vital books of the New Testament to be opened to believers?

## This issue’s 50th anniversary

While Series 3 Holy Communion was undergoing its trials in General Synod, the Commission was busy in 1972 on Series 3 Funeral Services. There was of course division about prayer about the departed (the draft Series 2 funeral had itself gone into limbo in deadlock over just this), and we tried to handle it by reticence (‘Here suitable prayers may be used’). The lawyers, however, told us any text to be authorized as a service had to contain within it every word that would be uttered in use. We took a strong stance – if the Synod approves a text as an authorized service, it is an authorized service and beyond the negation of any lawyer. We won – and the freedom has proved liberating.

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