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What is Praxis?

See www.praxisworship.org.uk

Praxis was formed in 1990, sponsored by the Liturgical Commission, the Group for the Renewal of Worship (GROW) and the Alcuin Club to provide and support liturgical education in the Church of England.

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

Affiliation

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

Into the Future...

The Praxis Chair writes...

IN THE 'BRAVE NEW' post-COVID world we all now inhabit, changes have taken place in the way many of us do things. Three years ago, few had heard of virtual meetings and probably even fewer of us had participated in streamed worship on either side of the camera and screen. However, today many organisations within and outwith the church are reviewing their activity and the way they carry out that activity. *Praxis, Enriching Worship Today* is no exception. The Praxis Executive recently developed a five-year strategy which involved consultation with GROW, the Alcuin Club and the Liturgical Commission. That strategy was shared with the Liturgical Commission in May. The following is the essence of what was agreed:

Worship is the only activity of the Church which will last into eternity. Worship enriches and transforms our lives. In Christ we are drawn closer to God in the here-and-now; it shapes our beliefs, our actions and our way of life. God transforms us as individuals, congregations and communities.

Worship provides a vital context for mission, teaching and pastoral care. Good worship and liturgy inspires and attracts, informs and delights. The worship of God can give hope and comfort in times of joy and of sorrow. Despite this significance, the church rarely adequately resources itself for worship.

For this reason Praxis was formed in 1990 encouraged by the Liturgical Commission of the Church of England, the Alcuin Club, and the Group for the Renewal of Worship (GROW). These three groups continue to maintain active connections with Praxis, and nominate members to the Council, helping to ensure that Praxis is able to work across the spectrum of traditions in the Church of England. The sponsoring organisations do not contribute financially to Praxis. The work that Praxis does is supported mainly by affiliation. There are almost seven hundred affiliates contributing by annual subscriptions as well as corporate members

from dioceses and training bodies. They represent both clergy and laity from across the Church of England and beyond.

The initial aim of Praxis was to offer practical guidance and inspiration:

- to enrich and inform the practice of worship, both traditional and contemporary, in the Church of England;
- to resource congregations, lay leaders and clergy in their understanding of and approach to worship;
- to provide opportunities in which different worshipping traditions of the Church can meet and engage creatively with one another.

In a meeting with reps from GROW and the Alcuin Club in March 2022 it was clear that these two sponsoring bodies were very keen for the work of Praxis to continue.

Reflection on the current situation

In recent years support has diminished across the Church with the loss of almost all Diocesan Liturgical Committees and their equivalents and now very few diocesan worship advisors in post. Anecdotally, there is concern amongst those for whom excellence in worship is important that those who are being prepared for leading worship, either as ordained or licensed lay ministers, are not being adequately trained or resourced. In addition, local lay people with no formal training or specific authorization are often called upon to lead worship, especially in a rural context. Even where training is given, the quality of teaching and preparation for leading worship and liturgy is felt to be patchy.

The Praxis Executive Committee believes that it is more necessary than ever to have a group with a national reach to monitor and assist in the provision of training in liturgical

The Chair writes...

understanding and worship across the Church of England. Praxis has continued to operate regionally since its formation. The ubiquitous use of Zoom and other meeting platforms in the last two years has opened the door to new ways of working successfully, both regionally and nationally.

It is fair to say that some of the Praxis Regions have struggled in the last five years, as training in liturgy and worship has not been accorded high importance. Praxis responded to this situation, in partnership with RSCM, by the appointment in 2015 of Helen Bent. Helen was appointed as Head of Ministerial Training within the RSCM, a post which was supported financially by Praxis and lasted for six years. Work involved networking and the provision of training sessions across the Church of England including in Training Institutions, Initial Ministerial Education Phase 2, and clergy and lay Continuing Ministerial Development for the majority of dioceses over these six years. The role also included authoring various worship publications. Following redundancy from the RSCM, Helen has continued to work for Praxis on a freelance basis leading many training sessions across the dioceses and Praxis regions. The quarterly publication of *Praxis News of Worship* demonstrates that we can offer both theological reflection on the latest developments in the parishes and accounts of good practice.

The Praxis regions are being re-established, with Praxis North and Praxis East both operational again. The remaining five regions have continued with active regional committees, embracing the new technologies. The Colloquium format has proved successful in some regions, with peer support being fostered through the sharing of examples of good practice with others. Praxis Yorkshire has an excellent track record in this form of peer support and development group. Praxis continues to offer training and reflection for those who lead worship, to encourage excellence.

The Future

Given this understanding of the situation today, the Executive of Praxis is now more convinced than ever that there is a role for the organisation within the church. It is important to note that the name 'Praxis' may not

communicate effectively what the organisation does and thought will be given to a change of name. However, any name change should not distract from a developed forward-looking strategy. As such, the Executive proposes the following five-year strategy.

'Over the next 5 years, Praxis will:

- Continue to support the Liturgical Commission to ensure that worship remains high on the national church agenda so that inspiring worship remains at the heart of what we do and offer to God as a church;
- Resource liturgical excellence and confidence among worship leaders by facilitating, supporting and maintaining regional peer support and improvement groups through the continued promotion of colloquia;
- Deliver relevant training on current issues in worship nationally through online platforms that demonstrate excellence;
- Work towards re-establishing in-person regional training opportunities;
- Explore how to develop a resource hub so that Praxis becomes a known and respected signposting service for those seeking support with 'how to' videos, both in worship basics and in new developments and opportunities.'

The Exec is excited about developing the work of Praxis in the future in this way and has developed objectives to enable the strategy to be achieved. If you would like to help Praxis in this new phase, or have any comments you would like to pass on, please get in touch with me:

✉ *Canon Michael Gisbourne is Interim Chair of Council: canonmichael@riponcathedral.org.uk*

Why liturgical education?

LITURGICAL education is not just for geeks! But do we really need to know about worship and liturgy, or do we just do it? Well, at one level the

latter is correct, at least for the regular churchgoer. As someone once said, the best way to learn a new language is to live for a while with the people who speak it every day. It becomes part of you, and the more you speak the language, the more unselfconscious you become when you speak it. Another analogy comes to mind: the Highway Code is simply part of our mental furniture as we sit behind the wheel of a car. Whether it is speech or driving, this kind of knowledge is described as 'skills and aptitude-based'; it is built up by doing it. Or, to change the metaphor again, we learn the rules of a game by playing the game. We become habituated, and the more we do it, the more it becomes part of us. So, in the case of worship, through practice we come to know how and when to stand or kneel, to sit quietly to hear God's Word as it is declaimed, to be aware of those around us, and move to receive Communion. To use the jargon of an expanding field of enquiry, this all amounts to what in ritual studies is called 'ritual knowledge': a whole pattern of behaviour that can be 'written into the bone'.

Alongside this 'how to' kind of knowledge, there is another type of knowledge. This is more intellectual than practical, although the two are closely related. This is the knowledge of the shape or structure of our worship. We could call this a sense of the liturgical order, and it consists of recognizing the different components of worship (praise, confession, intercession etc.) and an understanding of how the various parts connect and relate to each other in a way that makes an act of worship flow from the gathering to the dismissal. It is this structure that makes our worship liturgical and, as such, takes us somewhere. But where is it directed? Well, first into communion as those who are forgiven and restored, and then in our being sent out in the power of the Spirit, to be Christ for and with others. This is the constant ebb and flow of worship, and every worshipper needs to get a sense of this rhythm and to catch the beat and mood of each of the component parts. Here, of course, there are many voices. There are readers, those leading the singing, preachers, and those leading the prayers for the world and all those in need. All of us in these roles may well do them better the more we learn about the origins

Why Liturgical Education?

of these different parts of the service and how they relate to each other. And then there are those of us who have the privilege of presiding over an act of worship. We, too, need to learn how to preside in a way that facilitates the contribution of others. The art of presiding is more like curating (literally, taking care of what is given), in the placing of the elements of worship and in giving each its proper place and pace.

In short, within the worshipping community each person has a part to play, and the one who receptively listens to what is read and prayed is as vital to the spiritual health of that community as those who may have more visible and vocal roles. But those of us who do have specific parts to play in the offering of worship may well perform them better if we gain a deeper knowledge about the theology and the history of the different components and prayer texts. And here, there are vast areas of possible exploration. Knowing where a text comes from may well enhance the way we perform the text and will certainly add to our appreciation of it. Meanings are enlarged in ways that are more than just knowing about things! Worship happens in many different settings and, again, our performance of the liturgy is to a large extent influenced by its setting, and here there is much to learn about the ordering of the worshipping environment. We could go on: there is music, song, silence, and even more to explore.

Finally, as well as this 'knowing about the liturgy' there is also another, more personal kind of knowledge. In our daily conversation we may say we know *x* or *y* living down the road, but to really know a person is to have a relationship with them. And it is these relationships that can define us and make us who we are. And this applies especially when we begin to reflect on our relationship with God in Christ and through the Spirit. Worship matters, and it is especially in worship, the occasion when we gather with other Christians and are engaged by the living Lord, that we can be formed more closely into the likeness of Christ. As we pray in some of the Eucharistic Prayers 'form us in the likeness of Christ' – asking that we be made and remade into the likeness of Christ – so the end and point of worship is for us to be formed in Christ's likeness.

An exciting opportunity to grow in our knowledge of liturgy, to ask our

questions, and to enhance our experience of worship is being provided by the Mirfield Liturgical Institute as they launch a new online course, and here is some information from the Rev'd Dr Jo Kershaw, course director:

We have an exciting range of liturgical specialists teaching for us, including Thomas O'Loughlin, Christopher Irvine, and Bridget Nicholls. Courses available this year are:

Christian Worship and Human Community - Ritual Space and Language. This focuses on liturgy from the perspective of 'ritual studies', thinking about time, space, community, memory, and liturgy as part of God's gift to the world.

Liturgy and Spirituality focuses on the distinctions between 'private' and 'public' prayer, and explores how liturgical prayer is essentially corporate and embodied prayer. The role of the Spirit in liturgical prayer will be central, and students will learn how the liturgy can be a means by which God can form us into Spirit-filled, holy people. The module will also look at the place of the natural world, and the Christian commitment to care for the environment.

Finally, a module on ***Research and Reflection*** will teach students the skills they need to study and understand liturgy and worship studies at a high level.

Next year, a further set of courses will become available – we hope that these will include a course on Eucharistic liturgies, a course on the Bible and Liturgy, and a course on Music and the Liturgy. We are also hoping to offer an optional summer school, taught in person at the College of the Resurrection in Mirfield.

The full MA is a part-time programme which will be taught online and validated by Durham University through their Common Awards structure, allowing you to learn at your own pace (and in your own time zone). We also offer a Postgraduate Diploma, which has no dissertation requirement. It will also be possible to take just one or two modules for your own interest and personal development.

Students will get access to an excellent online library of electronic resources, as well as being welcome to come and use the libraries at Mirfield, whose liturgical collections are of national importance.

To find out more, please e-mail the Rev'd Dr Jo Kershaw at jkershaw@mirfield.org.uk

✉ *Christopher Irvine is a Consultant to the Liturgical Commission, chairman of the Alcuin Club, and teaches for the Mirfield Liturgical Institute and St Augustine's College of Theology. Jo Kershaw is Course Director at the Mirfield Liturgical Institute.*

Anglican Matters

HAVING realised a key task in university chaplaincy is making a case for 'being Anglican' and the 'Anglican way' (we don't, after all, think of ourselves as a historical mistake and we clearly think we should still be here), I've been looking to get a handle on Anglican identity. It didn't take long to get to our liturgy. In fact, it's in 'common prayer' that we find the most central expression (and, importantly, practice) of what it is to be Anglican. We live out being Anglican in how and in what we pray. I found the late Louis Weil's comment here helpful:

'The Book of Common Prayer is for Anglicans far more than a collection of rites. Within Anglicanism the Prayer Book is a living expression of the profound union between what we believe and what we pray; [it is] a doctrinal document, not because it may contain such didactic materials as a catechism, or historical materials of doctrinal significance, but because it is in corporate worship that Anglicans find the common ground for their profession of faith.'

Weil, I think, is making two significant points here about the connection between Anglican ecclesiology (something I often hear said we don't have much of!?) and Anglican liturgy. Firstly that we pray what we believe and secondly, that it is in corporate (public) worship that we together profess our faith. This way of 'being' and 'doing' common prayer reflects our self-understanding of what we think it is to be an expression of the catholic Church.

Looking at Anglican liturgy to see what Anglicans believe will not be new to us. Reflecting on how we 'do' this corporate

worship together, however, can remind us of our common identity as Anglicans and highlight the strength and riches of our formed practice. It may even furnish us with a solid grounding in Anglican principles of worship that can be of some assistance when looking to create new liturgies for our parishes (outdoor liturgy is a good and current example). Liturgy has been called 'purposeful prayer' and we can see why.

A short survey of Anglican worship across a range of settings will immediately make plain some defining hallmarks of Anglican liturgical identity: structure, shape, and pattern. There is a clear sense of order in Anglican worship. From the start, Anglican worship has maintained a strong liturgical character involving the use of words known to all as its way of offering prayer for all. The familiarity of set phrases and prayers reminds us of our core Christian identity. The central place of the Bible, not only in lections but also in the liturgical text of the services themselves, is particularly Anglican, with the belief too that our common prayer is best when we gather together. Cranmer's focus on Scripture as the way to advance in holiness remains a defining characteristic of Anglican liturgy and the liturgical celebration of its rites today. The regular reading and 'inward digestion' of Scripture – grounded in this idea of holiness related to Scripture – have also informed our understanding of individual piety. Here we can see the significance of the Anglican approach to, and emphasis on, Morning and Evening Prayer which, for Cranmer, was important to put in the hands of the people in a language they could read and pray for themselves. We can see this ongoing commitment to corporate daily prayer in *Common Worship* as well.

If we want to consider new ways of praying, then we need to grasp something of our present manner and way of prayer, and recognize (and treasure, I think) how this has been shaped and formed by our Anglican past. Being comfortable in our 'Anglican skin' – so to speak – is a part of this. Freely being able to move in a tradition we know well and have some confidence in can lead to creative ways to engage with new worship possibilities around us: for everything, after all, is designed to give thanks to the Creator.

Continued on page 8...

Praxis North and Praxis East Relaunches

July 2022, held online

After a dormant period, Praxis North and Praxis East were both relaunched in early July. These relaunch events used a peer support format with short presentations on Creative Worship Outside from within the areas and beyond. Initiated and overseen by the Revd Helen Bent on behalf of Praxis, there were some great ideas shared and much food for further reflection.

Two attendees have given the following event reviews:

The relaunch of Praxis North was an opportunity to share ideas about outdoor worship: from the practicalities of livestreaming from an igloo, to sage advice about understanding the quirks of the landscape context when worshipping at sunset – hills get in the way! It was a joyful gathering of laity and ordained ministers, all with some experience to share or ideas to exchange. We reflected on the theology of worship in temporary structures such as tents, and the importance of celebrating the changing seasons in the glory of nature. Musical suggestions emphasized the simplicity of well-known tunes to sing in unison, often with new words to help us reflect on our responsibility of stewardship. This being 'The North', we also reminded each other of the crucial detail of checking the weather forecast...

✍ *Dr Ce Pacitti is Continuing Ministerial Formation Officer, Diocese of Newcastle.*

Thank you for the session and for sending through all the resources; we covered a lot of ground and a wide range of topics. It was good to have the overview, including the referencing of biblical times and the nomadic nature of worship. The possibilities for outside worship were explored for both rural and urban settings, drawing on the experiences not only of Covid but also how faith has been practised outside throughout the ages.

It was also good to have the three additional practitioners offering their presentations on 'God's Tent' (Revd Canon Dr Benjamin Carter, Canon Warden, Carlisle Cathedral), 'Greening the Hymnody' (Revd Canon Michael

Gisbourne, Ripon Cathedral) and 'Developing an Outdoor Church' (Stephen Chadwick, Youth Mission Enabler, Peterborough Diocese). I found Chad's presentation on this particularly helpful for my context. Much to think about and to reflect on; thank you again.

✍ *Debbie Hill is Development Officer for Children and Families, Ely Diocese.*

A video recording of Benjamin Carter's presentation on 'God's Tent' is available on the Praxis website under Resources.

Praxis South West

'Weep with those who Weep'
5 May 2022, held online

This was another excellent day led by Helen Bent, looking at how we express grief and lament in worship. As ever, we enjoyed a session burgeoning with ideas and possibilities: just the thing we need to take away with us into our own contexts.

Helen began by reflecting on the different kinds of loss we experience: national (Princess Diana), personal (bereavement), local community loss that stays local (flooding) and the sort that becomes national (Grenfell Tower), each with their nuances and ability to affect us. We were reminded that lament is a necessary part of life and it needs expression.

Such expression could be in the form of a spontaneous vigil, often in a place of tragedy, but also a vigil in church, or a service of lament. We were encouraged to be prepared, for example in keeping an ICOT (In Case of Tragedy) box of resources ready to go as we rarely get notice of a tragedy. We also looked at the importance of place, a possible liturgical structure, along with some thoughts about the use of Scripture, art, poetry, song, prayer and shared story.

We all hope that we will never need to create a space for worship in this way. At the same time we all know how important it is to do so well when it is needed, and the pastoral power and the opportunity for healing that it brings.

✍ *Robin Lodge is Chair of Praxis Southwest.*

Training worship leaders

A few places were still available at the time of going to press for musicians wishing to study at the London School of Theology, in their Theology, Music and Worship Department.

Several undergraduate programmes are offered, including the BA (Hons) degree in Music and Worship Studies: this aims to build students' knowledge and skills in Christians worship, equipping them to 'reflect on, plan and deliver worship across a broad range of church contexts, from a theologically informed perspective' (<https://lst.ac.uk/home/courses/undergraduate-programs/theology-worship-studies>). There are also pathways leading to an award at Diploma or Certificate level.

Vocal and instrumental lessons are available, as is training in ensemble skills. Church placements form part of the programme, and the history of Christian worship and of music in the church are studied; a more unusual module, perhaps, is 'worship curation'. There has been a real dearth of opportunities in the UK for young lay worship leaders to study and train together and to find formal guidance in areas such as writing songs for worship alongside subjects including 'pastoral leadership in the contemporary church', so this should meet a real need.

The programme leader for all LST Theology, Worship and Music Programmes is Dr Rebecca Uberoi; more information about all the courses can be found online (<https://lst.ac.uk>).

Evergreen

Support for young worship leaders (lay and ordained), helping them to flourish and grow and to avoid emotional or spiritual burnout, is the aim of Engage Worship's new Evergreen project (<https://engageworship.org/evergreen>). Regular retreat days are being planned, with the desire to establish a community of worship leaders aged seventeen to thirty-five years who will grow together in leadership, maturity and resilience.

The project is led by Gemma and Timo Scharnowski, both London School of Theology graduates; they have contributed to Engage Worship's resources and write

songs together as 'The Forest Feeling'. The next Worship Leader Gathering is on Saturday 8 October from 10.00 to 15.30 at King's House, a community hub near Kings Cross station (book online).

RVW 150

English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, music editor of *The English Hymnal* (1906), was born on 12 October 1872, and the 150th anniversary of his birth is being widely celebrated. The Vaughan Williams Charitable Trust, along with BBC Radio 3 and various other bodies, has set up RVW150, a programme of events celebrating the composer's life and work.

One concert tour, 'From Pub to Pulpit', explores the folk songs which Vaughan Williams collected in the English countryside and transformed into well-loved hymn tunes such as KINGSFOLD and HERONGATE. Folk group Broomdasher are working with many other musicians, including cathedral organists, to 'raise the roof with full-blooded renditions of some of the country's best loved hymns' (www.broomdasher.com/frompubtopulpit). Venues include Chester Cathedral (17 September), Derby Cathedral (30 September) and Newcastle Cathedral (1 October), with events also booked in the south west of England and elsewhere.

The Royal School of Church Music has also designated a week (8-15 October) when churches, schools and community choirs are encouraged to 'join us in song to celebrate the distinguished contribution Vaughan Williams made to the heritage of church music'. More details are on the RSCM website (www.rscm.org.uk), where you can also read about a lecture to be given by Jeremy Summerly (Saturday 8 October at 11.00 in Winchester Cathedral) on the composer's pivotal role in the development of *The English Hymnal*. The lecture will then be available online at 7.30 pm on Monday 10 October.

The choir of Gloucester Cathedral will be among those singing a special Evensong to mark the actual anniversary of Vaughan Williams' birth on Wednesday 12 October, and at 7 p.m. on the same day a celebratory peal of bells will be rung in the Cotswold Village of Down Ampney. The composer's

father was vicar there in 1872, and Ralph was born in the vicarage; he later named one of his best loved hymn tunes after his place of birth (sung to 'Come down, O Love divine'). The choir of Merton College, Oxford, will sing Evensong in the church of All Saints, Down Ampney, at 3 p.m. on Sunday 25 September.

The full music version of the *Revised English Hymnal*, described as a 'completely new and updated edition of the English Hymnal' but subject to various delays, is now expected in November 2022.

Martin How (1931-2022)

A significant figure in the twentieth-century history of the Royal School of Church Music as staff member and supporter, Martin How died on 25 July 2022 at the age of 91. Organist, composer, conductor and teacher, he started the RSCM Chorister Training Scheme in 1956; its successor, Voice for Life, continues to foster the musical development of young singers. He had been an organ scholar at Clare College, Cambridge, while studying music and theology; his many posts included that of Organist at Grimsby Parish Church, and he was appointed MBE in 1993 in recognition of his services to music. He is much missed in Croydon, where he spent the later part of his life and was Organist Laureate at the Minster.

Martin How's compositions include the simple but deeply felt anthem 'Day by day', sung in his memory by the RSCM's Millennium Youth Choir during their summer course in Winchester; a recording is available on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ro16TEogDG4). Many tributes have been published, in print and online.

Choir Churches

The Church of England announced in July the awarding of a large grant for the setting up of twenty or more 'choir churches' in Lancashire. Children will be taught about hymns and Anglican choral music as part of new congregations of parents, teachers and the wider

Music matters

community. Philip North, Bishop of Burnley commented, 'With our Choir Church Project we aim to connect home, church and school in a fresh approach to outreach, providing opportunities in places where they may not be available otherwise.' The RSCM's Hymnpact! programme has also attracted central funding. Hymnpact! aims 'to nurture faith through singing and appreciation of hymns and spiritual songs in schools, in partnership with a range of churches' (www.rscm.org.uk/hymnpact), and seeks to bridge the gap between schools and churches in terms of sung repertoire.

The first Choir Church was set up in 2016 by Tom Daggett, Organ Outreach Fellow at St Paul's Cathedral. He works in partnership – in east London – with the Revd Canon Dr Angus Ritchie, quoted on the Choir Church website (www.choirchurch.com/our-vision) as saying, 'Community organising has been at the heart of Choir Church in Shadwell from the start. The social action campaigns led by St George-in-the-East have been shaped by the testimony of children and families on the impact of rising housing costs and poor repairs on their health. Homilies at Choir Church have helped children, parents, carers and teachers to understand why and how following Jesus Christ involves praying and acting for justice ...'

Meanwhile the Cathedrals Music Trust (www.cathedralsmusictrust.org.uk) is offering Church Choir Awards, in partnership with the RSCM, but these are for established choirs singing cathedral-style repertoire if not eligible for the Trust's main grant programme. The choirs' outreach should be seen to benefit the congregation and the wider community, perhaps by the establishment of a youth or training choir.

Hymn Festivals

The centenary conference of the Hymn Society in the US and Canada, whose first meeting was held on 19 January 1922, took place in Washington DC over five days in July, just before the UK Hymn Society's own conference at Lancaster University – in the US, delegates were able to enjoy no fewer than four Hymn Festivals. These were live-streamed for those who could not attend in person, and are now available on the North American

Hymn Society's YouTube channel (go to www.youtube.com and search for 'hymn society conference 2022').

The first Festival, organised by the Mennonite Hymnal Committee and streamed on 19 July, opened with 'Summoned by the God who made us' by Delores Dufner OSB, sung to NETTLETON. This has found its way into a number of British hymn books since the 1990s (sometimes paired with HOLY MANNA), and has a refrain which includes the lines 'Let us bring the gifts that differ/ and, in splendid, various ways,/ sing a new Church into being ...'

All participants in Washington – except those speaking at the microphone – seemed to be wearing masks, whereas most people at the Hymn Festival in Blackburn Cathedral, part of the UK Hymn Society conference, sang with faces uncovered. Canon Dr Gordon Giles (from Rochester Cathedral, and a frequent commentator on sacred music) introduced the hymns there, while the organ was played by Dr John Kitchen, Director of Music at Old St Paul's, Edinburgh.

Explorations are taking place to see if the 2023 Hymn Society conference might be held in Lincoln in July. Meanwhile, a 'save the date' message for those interested in the Christian Congregational Song Conference (held every two years in Oxford, since 2011) suggests writing 1-4 August into 2023 diaries.

RSCM Celebration Day

On Saturday 8 October in Winchester Cathedral the Royal School of Church Music is to hold its annual Celebration Day, an opportunity for a large number of choirs to sing together and for honorary awards to be presented to those who have made outstanding contributions to music and worship (www.rscm.org.uk/rscm-honorary-awards-2).

In 2022 honorary fellowships are to be presented to Stephen Layton, Director of Music at Trinity College, Cambridge, and Sam Wells, Vicar of St Martin-in-the-Fields since 2012 and much involved in the provision of online worship resources during the pandemic; his Director of Music, Andrew Earis, becomes an Associate of the RSCM.

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] 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) to register your attendance.

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.

£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.

Praxis East

Intergenerational Worship.
Tuesday 1 November 2022,
19.00 -21.00, on Zoom.

Attendance is free.

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

There seems to be some confusion over what 'Intergenerational worship' means in practice and how it relates to 'all age' worship in its various different forms.

The Preface to Common Worship states: 'Worship is for the whole people of God who are fellow pilgrims on a journey of faith, and those who attend services are all at different stages of that journey.'

How can we facilitate this journey effectively within our worship? How do we enable authentic worship with all ages? What tools can we use to ensure that worship is not so liturgy light that it ceases to be recognizably Anglican? Come with your own ideas and questions to promote lively debate.

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

Praxis North

'Safely gathered in': Gathered worship for small congregations in a rural context.
Wednesday 16 November 2022,
14.00 -16.30, on Zoom.

Attendance is free.

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

With its strong sense of community and its greater awareness of the countryside, the rural church has a unique contribution to bring to its worship. However, 'rural' can cover everything from small market town to outlying farms, coastal villages to farming hamlets usually with a number of churches clustered together in benefices. During Covid-19, the rural church proved itself innovative and able to think out of the box in order to engage with the community in meaningful ways as well as to sustain a continuum of regular worship and prayer.

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

Introduction to Eastern Christian Liturgies

Alexopoulos, Stefanos, and Maxwell E. Johnson, Liturgical Press Academic, 2022.

This is a significant, ambitious work. Readers can expect to have their sense of the breadth of the Church Catholic expanded. It offers a comprehensive introduction to the Armenian, Byzantine, Coptic, Ethiopian, East Syrian, West Syrian, and Maronite rites, with reference to ancient Jerusalem traditions when known. So it highlights not only national, linguistic, and cultural distinctiveness, but also theological disagreement. But the last is the least: true, these Churches relate differently to Christological statements from the early Ecumenical Councils; the book counters convincingly that, through attention to the liturgies, the differences are now rightly seen as variations on a common orthodox theme.

The chapters cover Christian initiation and reconciliation; the Eucharist; the liturgical year and the Liturgy of the Hours; marriage and holy orders; anointing of the sick and Christian burial. The conclusion is a pithy summary of shared ethos, trends, and challenges. It includes a warning against lazy romanticism which sees these liturgies as unchanged and unchanging, but in truth the whole book debunks that. There are no illustrations – icons are mentioned only in passing – but a wealth of tables, comparing both structures and texts.

The commentary is mostly descriptive, though with evaluative touches. Many prayers are hailed as 'beautiful'. In this context, it is surprising that a prayer speaking against 'Jewish hypocrisy' (6, cf. 114) is not named as, at that point, ugly. Nowhere is the androcentrism of all the liturgies – going way beyond grammatical gender – discussed at length. The partial Greek renewal of the order of deaconesses is treated positively (273ff). The much-abridged nature of prayers for a girl compared to those for a boy in the Coptic funeral service is candidly noted (348ff).

Be ready for surprises. It is ancient Armenian practice to keep major feasts

on Sundays. The Ethiopian Church expects clapping and swaying. The East Syrian rite makes extensive use of dust from martyrs' graves. The Cross is prominent everywhere, but always in the light of the Resurrection: the cross deals with death, sin being merely contributory.

The writers are not only knowledgeable and open, but passionate. Perhaps relatedly, the text would have benefited from tighter editing. Some sentences do not work semantically; there is some repetition in close quarters; there is even some contradiction at close quarters; some crucial information is presented *en passant*.

This book will be invaluable to any intending research in the field, including established scholars; footnotes are extensive and are overwhelmingly references. It is a great resource to refer to, as pastoral needs arise. It serves well someone wanting immersion in a new world. They may find confirmation of some prejudices: services are indeed long, and involve repetition. But any presumption that this comes from a notion that God is distant, and worshippers must work hard to attract God's attention, will be destroyed. God addressed in these diverse liturgies is intimately and lovingly involved with creation: 'who is he that will presume to contain in words the outpouring of your infinite loving-kindness to us?' (Armenian anaphora, 82).

✉ *Patrick Morrow is an Anglican Priest and Chaplain.*

'Creatintide'

In recent years we have been encouraged to consider keeping a 'Creatintide' during the period roughly between the beginning of September and our Harvest Thanksgiving, or the feast of St Francis, whichever is later. As well as the resources in *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*, the volume *A Time for Creation: Liturgical Resources for Creation and the Environment* was published by Church House Publishing in 2020 (and reviewed in PNOW issue 66), gathering together CW, BCP and several complementary new texts.

Continued from page 4...

We have so many established treasures in the Anglican tradition, most readily available to us through our worship.

At the start of COVID, it is likely that services continued along the same lines as those inside the church building. As we gained in practice and knowledge of liturgy outdoors, I've been keen to reflect theologically on notions of 'sacred space' and God's earth as the first evangelist, his 'first cathedral', when preparing and presiding over worship outdoors, while also giving thought to the Anglican character of such worship. Thinking about how liturgy works in and through the church 'architecture' and how this might transfer and connect to the outdoor space, both rural and urban, continues to be a rich area of reflection. I remember a conversation with a curate in a seaside parish on the concept of threshold and seashore. Reflecting on biblical connections to outdoor liturgy has also been fascinating. Giving thought to how 'common prayer' is 'done' in the outdoor space, and the ways such hallmarks of Anglican liturgical identity – of structure, shape, and pattern – might manifest in a worship context, brought a sense of challenge. Most important, though, was the meeting of the desire to gather together to give thanks and praise to God as his people in that time and place, with a liturgical response that would give shape and meaning to our prayers and petitions, and ultimately, make possible an encounter with the living God. Liturgy, in so far as it tells the Christian story, enables us to refocus our identity in Christ and invites us to play our part as messengers and servants of God in the wider salvation story. Certainly, during the pandemic, this was essential. In fact, as a worshipping people, we could do little else but find ways to hear and receive from God together in the midst of difficulty.

We have a rich liturgical tradition in Anglicanism. There is something important about how we are formed to be a worshipping people through the liturgy, and the many ways it makes possible an encounter with God in a corporate and shared act. Our common prayer is distinctively Anglican and we do well to treasure it.

✠ *Catherine Reid is Anglican Chaplain to the University of York.*

Grove Booklets are celebrating their fiftieth anniversary. The first ones sprang from what is today the Group for Renewal of Worship (GROW), one of the sponsoring bodies of Praxis. Grove Books was the title of the publishing house run by your columnist in his spare time. This was begun in 1967 in Northwood but in 1970 it was re-named as 'Grove Books' after The Grove, the name of the old house at the centre of the new buildings of St John's College Nottingham. The group itself had existed since 1961 (it was in those days the 'Latimer House Liturgy Group'), and had done a *ballon d'essai* in 1968, a booklet by Trevor Lloyd and Christopher Byworth entitled *Eucharist for the Seventies*. Now it developed a plan for a monthly (sic) booklet on Ministry and Worship, and the first ever, no.1, came on 31 December 1971, a commentary by Julian Charley on the Statement on the Eucharist which he had signed as a member of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), and had now to explain as an evangelical how he had done so in good conscience. The Group did indeed provide 11 booklets per annum for 1972-74, and then started Grove Liturgical Studies – four per annum with eight booklets in other months. Oh yes, and the monthly *News of Liturgy* started alongside the booklets.

For the first years the booklets cost 20p! Soon readers started to take out standing orders to receive the whole series. The publishing itself was widened in 1973 by the start of Grove Ethics booklets.

In 1976 the worship group left any allegiance to Latimer House and became the (independent) 'Group for Renewal of Worship' (GROW). In 1985 the present charitable company, Grove Books Ltd, took over the business from your (financially embarrassed) columnist, and soon after the Alcuin Club approached GROW and proposed that the existing Grove Liturgical Studies should become the Alcuin/GROW Joint Liturgical Studies. This was done and the series has now passed the ninety mark (no longer published by Grove Books).

The booklet business has gone on expanding – the worship booklets have now passed no.250 and continue strong. The Company is having a day of celebration of the fifty years of Grove

Booklets on 20 October.

Footnote:

John Chamberlin wrote in your last issue to inform your readers and me that 'auricular confession' is, contrary to my assertion in my column in the previous issue, alive and well in the Church of England's formularies. I certainly would not have said my piece without some depth of examination first, but the elucidation is lengthy (I have a 10,000-word article ready for publication), and thus not offered here. When the editor gives me space, I will provide some of those 10,000 words, enough, I hope, to change John Chamberlin's mind. For a starter, readers will notice that the frequently used terms, 'the confessional', 'auricular confession', and 'the sacrament of penance', nowhere appear in the formularies. There is indeed no definition of the procedure (apart from Roman Catholic rules), and therefore no identification of it. But there I must let it hang for the moment.

[Whilst I think that for the present I must consider correspondence on this particular matter closed, I am grateful to both correspondents for their grace and their passion. I think that a future issue on the liturgical issues surrounding how the Anglican Christian articulates their confession of sins might be really interesting. Watch this space. Ed]

This issue's (second) 50th anniversary

Series 3 communion was to receive final approval in General Synod in November 1972. One accoutrement that it included was the inter-denominational 'thematic' Sunday lectionary provision – largely devised by Charles Whitaker (and known as 'Whitaker's Almanac'). It was duly approved and in later years built into the *Alternative Service Book 1980* (and therefore ran until 2000). Excerptive Old Testament and Epistle passages broadly anticipated or echoed Gospel themes over a two-year period. Use has deemed it not very useful.

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