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**What is Praxis?**

See [www.praxisworship.org.uk](http://www.praxisworship.org.uk)  
Praxis was formed in 1990, sponsored by the Liturgical Commission, the Group for the Renewal of Worship (GROW) and the Alcuin Club to provide and support liturgical education in the Church of England.

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

**Affiliation**

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

# Unlocking

THE CORONAVIRUS pandemic continues its impact upon the liturgy and worship of the churches. As I write this editorial, one of the churches in which I offer a little ministry in retirement has eased almost all restrictions, whilst the other parish has retained most of them. Notably, despite changes to accommodate singing, capacity increases and some shared refreshment, neither parish has yet restored the chalice to the congregation. This issue of *Praxis News of Worship* offers some reflections on how our worshipping lives continue to be shaped by the events of the past 18 months. Stephen Power offers a piece on the impact of the prolonged deficit of congregational singing from a Church in Wales perspective. Natasha Woodward offers some insights on eucharistic worship from the point of view

of a parish priest moving from one post to another in the midst of the pandemic. Our final leader piece grasps the nettle of the denial of the chalice to the congregation. You will not find me swift to publish anonymous pieces, but due to the particular nature of this submission (by a currently active serving parish priest whose name and post have been supplied), you will understand my reasons. The insistence by the House of Bishops that the consecrated wine not be shared in individual vessels has struck many as a peculiar ditch to die in, particularly in a pandemic where the same bishops have enjoined us to use separate, individual wafers rather than breaking from a single host or loaf, revealing a peculiar inconsistency in eucharistic teaching.

*✉ Tom Clammer OC, Editor.*

## 0 may we soon again renew that song

### The effects of the cessation of congregational singing in Wales, and some personal recollections of the past 18 months

THE COLLECTIVE expression of faith through song, and, in particular, singing hymns, is for many people the reason they go to church. Singing binds us together, along with the common liturgies of the Church throughout the world. One only needs to follow the choir of Lagos Cathedral online to see this in action!

Hymnody has a particular place in the heart of the Welsh nation. Texts such as William Williams' 'Guide me, O thou great Jehovah' are deeply theological. Welsh hymn tunes are set very high, and thus can only be sung with great gusto, or 'Hwyl' as the Welsh put it. My recent experiences in a Welsh boarding school chapel and a Welsh cathedral confirms this!

As an Englishman in Wales, I am struck

by the great divide in the funding of the church since disestablishment and in the way liturgy has changed here over the past 100 years, reflecting the Welsh identity. It always amazes me how a town in mid-Wales (for the last three years the seat of the Archbishop, no less!) with scant transport links can maintain a voluntary Cathedral choir in the 21st century.

Now the powers of the devolved governments are being more keenly felt than ever before. The Welsh Government has, throughout the pandemic, taken a more pragmatic approach than Westminster. At first, churches were closed, but clergy, wardens and musicians could access them to check and maintain fabric and instruments. When public worship returned in July 2020, the misconception that pipe organs spread air particles in such a way as to spread COVID deemed them unsuitable for use. This was followed by a swift correction following lobbying from organists. Having by then been furloughed for four months (the scheme preserved my job and those of so many in the church music business), during which time I took the plunge and

# Unlocking - pandemic reflections

bought a second-hand digital organ for my study, organists were once again able to accompany worship, but still no singing was allowed. It was a real privilege to play organ repertoire and to improvise around the liturgy, when still nobody was allowed to sing, and the music felt more keenly appreciated than before, with there being no live music allowed outside church.

Eventually, choirs were permitted to rehearse and perform in churches, in small groups. We had tried outdoor rehearsals previously, but it really didn't work for us. Zoom with its latency issue was used only for social gatherings and theory teaching, but was a step in the right direction. It was with joy and trepidation we recorded hymns (choir only, distanced) for BBC *Songs of Praise* in October. We also recruited a chorister who had recently arrived in Brecon. Recruitment worries keep me awake at night.

With part-time furlough in place by the autumn, we were able to get singing rotas together so the choir could sing (limited to 15) at services in the run up to Christmas. This was a source of great joy for the congregation, but with the long gap in our activities, the distancing, masks, and lack of vaccines, it was a testing time for our volunteer singers of all ages. Alas, due to the 'Kent' (Alpha) variant, we had a Christmas with public worship but no carols, though the choir did pre-record a short carol service which was appreciated by those able to worship at home.

Following a fallow period in the spring, we resumed choral activities in time for Easter. It was an essential move for choir and congregation alike. We sang a few hymns at the Good Friday liturgy. It felt good!

At the time of writing, we have had two Sundays in late June with hymns sung by the congregation. There was a great buzz. We sang popular Welsh hymns which the congregation loved (other than the masks!). The following week, as dictated by the Welsh guidance, congregational singing was no longer possible. The disappointment was palpable.

The feeling now is overwhelmingly that we should put our trust the efficacy of the vaccines (and in God!), and do as much as we can to preserve the fragile musical traditions in the 'Land of Song'.

✍ *Stephen Power grew up in Gloucester, where his musical and spiritual journey began. He has been Director of Music at Brecon Cathedral since 2017.*

## The Last Supper and the feeding of the five thousand

AS A PARISH PRIEST who moved Apost in summer 2020 my experience of the Eucharist during the pandemic has varied enormously. There has been a movement between the private and the public, which has echoes for me of the difference between the Last Supper and the feeding of the five thousand. The Last Supper in that upper room, prepared for in advance, in private, where everybody's name is known. The feeding of the five-thousand in public, a bit haphazard, with crowds that really no one can number.

### *What happened?*

My first lockdown experience of the sacrament was each Sunday watching an on-screen Eucharist from St Alban's Abbey with my congregation at Holy Innocents, Kingsbury in the suburbs of North West London. Although it was not our own cathedral I chose St Alban's as it was nearby, and what they provided (a livestream of a sung Eucharist at 10am) fitted perfectly with our usual pattern. We joined together on Zoom, watching the service and afterwards having our own prayers, notices and chat. I received the ministry of the team at St Albans along with my congregation. We never knew whether the services were pre-recorded, but hoped and imagined they were live. Watching together on Zoom felt intimate, as we greeted each other before the service and chatted afterwards.

After a few months I began services in church again. A few times I livestreamed the Eucharist with those who were helping lead the service in attendance, with the doors locked. My last Sunday at Holy Innocents happened to fall just after the point where public worship with in-person attendance had become permitted. It was clear, however, that the number of people we would have been able to allow in church would be very limited. For that

last service I decided to keep the pattern of the previous weeks, and stream from within the church, with the churchwardens physically present on behalf of the congregation. I did not want to spend my last Sunday as vicar, in a community I loved, excluding people or policing social distancing, and promised to come back for a proper farewell when the time was right.

By the time I was licensed to my new church, Christ Church, they were holding Sunday services pretty much as usual albeit without singing. In the next two periods when we suspended public worship in church I eventually settled on providing a simple Zoomed 'spiritual communion' service from my home each Sunday. It was a Service of the Word, following the shape of the Eucharist with the eucharistic prayer and communion replaced by a time of silence and an 'Act of Spiritual Communion'. There are different versions of this prayer. The one we adopted, circulated by the Society of Catholic Priests at the start of the pandemic, explicitly refers to 'every altar where the eucharist is being celebrated'. This seemed important, connecting together each of us in our homes with the church throughout the world. After Christmas Day I, along with my congregation, next received communion when I presided in church on Palm Sunday. This time we did not have concerns about crowds and were able to move directly from Zoomed spiritual communion to public celebration of the Eucharist just in time for Easter.

### *Reflection*

Long before the pandemic I resolved never to preside at the Eucharist with fewer than two others, as I understand communion to require community. In the pandemic I relaxed my rule because the value of seeing the Eucharist celebrated, even online, was so clear. Of course I hated locking those doors behind me. Behind closed doors it was not the sacrament in its fulness, but it *was* the sacrament. For those watching online, some just a few hundred metres away, it was the sacrament present in their familiar church with the memory of that physical community, the reality of the online community, and the anticipation of a return. The sacramental worship I enabled during lockdown depended on other

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services which had taken place in person, or were taking place, or would take place in the future.

I knew already that the sacrament needed community, and discovered in the pandemic that there were ways of drawing on community even if we are not gathered in person, each of which can be helped by electronic communication – through memory of past gatherings, present spirit and hopeful anticipation. Through the lockdowns I made decisions that focused on keeping the existing church community connected, and in retrospect this feels like keeping to a ‘Last Supper’ image of communion. Other groups made decisions that made online worship more publicly available to vast numbers, and the communities I led depended on that. I remain intensely grateful for their ministry on which mine clearly depended. Their generosity in making public provision enabled the communities I led to hang on.

Eventually I was able to keep my promise and return to my previous church for a farewell service. Over a year after I left, on the first Sunday after most restrictions were lifted, we gathered just as we once had for a Sunday Eucharist. The angel of the lectionary smiled on me as the Gospel of the day was the feeding of the five thousand. It felt like an enormous occasion, although the number of people present was closer to 50 than 5,000. For us and, I suspect, for many congregations that were similarly blessed by the lectionary that day, it marked a moment of the eucharistic community being called to move from the private, intimate relationality of the Last Supper to the public, expansive and generous sign of the five thousand.

*✍️ Natasha Woodward is Interim Minister of Christ Church St Lawrence in the Diocese of London.*

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## Individual cups

**I**N FEBRUARY 2020, when Covid was first being spoken about rather than experienced in this country, our staff team discussed what it would do about Communion in both kinds. We knew that in previous infection outbreaks like swine flu, the decision was made for communion to be in one kind only. We all agreed

that we believed that was wrong and that an alternative could be done safely that would allow the laity to continue to receive Communion in both kinds: to use individual cups like many Free Churches do. We all believed that the ‘one shared cup’ was best, but that where that was not possible, this was a second-best option.

We discovered that recyclable plastic cups could be bought on eBay at £16 per 1,000. Trays for them were much more expensive, but we decided to make our own, having someone in the congregation who was happy to do that. Trays are necessary to stop spillage. Each tray could hold 21 cups in a well-spaced arrangement. The cups were filled before the service started and covered with a cloth. We knew we needed to think through the distribution and decided that the best thing was to take both kinds to people in their pews. Each person picked up their individual cup. In order to preserve a sense of unity, all drank at the same time. The cups were left on pew shelves and taken away for washing and recycling after the service. We have an expert in infection prevention in our congregation and were assured that our practice was safe (there was hand sanitization at various points as well).

All this was very well received by our congregation. It was only once the pandemic took hold that we were told that this was ‘illegal’ and ‘not Anglican’. So we stopped. But hoped that in time the House of Bishops would change their mind. Articles in favour of individual cups, by writers such as Andrew Goddard (on <[www.psephizo.com](http://www.psephizo.com)>) made a strong case and the legal opinion of the House of Bishops has been powerfully challenged by five lawyers. Go to <[www.thinkinganglicans.org.uk](http://www.thinkinganglicans.org.uk)> and select August 2020 from the Archive. We decided to wait in the hope that what we saw as common sense would prevail and that the use of individual cups would be permitted for congregations that desired to do so.

Sadly, the wait went on for months and our congregation kept asking when we could go back to both kinds and so in October we went back to using the individual cups. It was explained that this was not official Anglican practice and any member of the congregation who did not wish to receive in this way should feel

under no compulsion. Over 90% of our folk were happy to receive in this way and were very glad to have communion in both kinds. We continue to pray that the House of Bishops will endorse this.

*✍️ The name and current parochial appointment of the author have been supplied to the Editor.*

## Event review

### Lamenting the Past, Embracing the Future

More than 70 participants gathered online on 12 May for this Praxis South event exploring how liturgy helps us express grief and hope during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond. Speakers from hospital, parish and cathedral contexts shared their experiences of providing comfort, support and hope through liturgy and pastoral care.

The Reverend Tim Coleman, former hospital chaplain, spoke of the hospital setting during the most serious wave of COVID-19. Witnessing 1,700 deaths, of all ages and sectors of the community including colleagues, was a deeply troubling experience requiring quick adaptation. Tim spoke of how the pandemic forced members of the chaplaincy team to work alone, and tend only to the dying. They had to relay messages of love from family unable to be present or, at best, facilitate family video calls so loved ones could exchange final words. Patients died without the presence of their family. Staff died after tending to the sick. He described the chaplaincy pandemic experience as strange, frightening and tragic, with deep impacts on mental health. Tim described how ‘bedside communion’ was his communion too. Ours is an incarnational hope and the Eucharist is the obvious place for expressions of both lament and hope.

The Reverend Bryony Taylor brought to her parish experience a background as a social media consultant: a great help when being in church was not possible.

Bryony’s five principles for hybrid ministry (online and in church) are:

- Don’t compare. ‘Comparison is the thief of joy.’

## Event review

- Do one thing at a time. Avoid getting overwhelmed.
- Context is key.
- Ask who is missing? How can we include more people?
- Keep it simple. Not everything needs to be done high tech.

Her guiding principle: If we can only do online, why not do things we couldn't in the building? One example: a virtual procession on Google Earth.

Some solutions to meeting people where they are include: Dial a sermon (on MP3, for example); Chalkboard evangelism on an A-frame sign. Many spaces can be used as liturgical space, she said.

Canon Anna Macham, Precentor of Salisbury Cathedral, spoke of the symbolism of the doors of the cathedral as the threshold between heaven and earth. Having the doors closed was terribly difficult. The 800th anniversary of the laying of the Cathedral foundation stone had been planned as a cathedral and civic celebration. Completely rethinking the occasion, Anna and her colleagues designed a way for people to engage online, with liturgy and music in home celebrations. Drone footage, archived photos and special music, including recordings of children at home, were included in the online service.

Well received during Holy Week was a virtual tour of the cathedral offered as a pilgrimage, with a different member of clergy saying a prayer each day. Once the cathedral was open for private prayer in June, prayer stations were set up to enable pilgrimage. Simple prayers and reflective materials were available. (see the Praxis website.) Anna noted that Evensong, midday prayer and Compline worked particularly well online. 'Worship does not have to be grand to be transformative,' she noted. Use of the cathedral as a vaccination centre was widely and positively covered by the press. The coming together of physical and spiritual healing was memorable. The organ music added to the sense of awe and wonder, encouraging people to reflect and pray as they waited for their job.

✉ Susan Bolan is Vicar of St Paul's, Wimbledon Parkside, and an Ignatian retreat director.

## Training and learning update

### Renew and rebuild

Following the RSCM's restructuring, my previous role as Head of Ministerial Training has come to an end after six fruitful years. I am pleased to report that I leave a lasting legacy from this partnership: *Inspiring Music in Worship: A short course of guided conversations for churches* could have been written 'for such a time as this'. It is an ideal tool for churches wanting to seriously review their worship, as they explore the new normal. The new RSCM Education Plan includes a specific strand for Ministerial Training, albeit music-focused, and is intended to provide a more even balance and distribution across the country via the new RSCM Area Teams. The change enables me to focus specifically on the work of Praxis and its future development, overseen by the Praxis Executive and Praxis Council.

The worship life and patterns of every person, every church, and every diocese have been affected by COVID-19. This creates a unique opportunity to renew and rebuild, drawing on the firm foundations of our rich heritage while still making full use of the creativity that has come out of crisis. Indeed, the growth of daily offices shared online via Zoom has been significant, restoring ancient patterns to sustain discipleship in an appropriate manner for the 21st century. Praxis can play a significant part in restoring a confidence in the liturgy, which is able to sustain in times of trial.

This is also an opportune time to review what we offer, to explore new partnerships, and to develop resources and training which utilise both online and onsite to full advantage. Started by Praxis Yorkshire some years ago in person, colloquia are already proving a useful tool, working just as well if not better online. These give voice to our membership in a new way, allowing individuals to share their passions, fresh discoveries, good news stories and successes. [See this edition's *'Learning Opportunities' for a colloquium this September - Ed*]

I have found the rebuilding of the temple in the book of Ezra insightful, particularly the laying of the foundation stone in chapter 3. Like the returning exiles, this is a key moment to look back and acknowledge painful losses, but also to look forward and to embrace new

possibilities. I observe that some are looking back further in their worship history than the start of COVID in March 2020 in their quest for the stability of the 'normal', whilst others are eager for more radical change, building on lessons learnt during lockdown.

We will need to exercise a particular sensitivity within worship, including more lament alongside praise, as worshippers struggle with grief and loss (loss of loved ones, redundancy, loss of income or education) and issues of mental health and well-being. We will need 'worship that cares' for a wide range of human emotions. To this end, I will be offering various new training events: 'Apt worship in times of crisis and grief'; 'God in Fragments: Worshipping with those living with dementia', building on the work of the Liturgical Commission; 'Exploring worship in pilgrimage', exploring our journey through life but also creative ways of worshipping both inside and outside the church building. [see p. 6 to sign up for an *Apt Worship course hosted by Praxis South West - Ed*]

You may have other suggestions, as we begin to unpack some of the theological debates fuelled by the pandemic. Do let us have your ideas for training events or resources. These should be sent to the Editor at: tomclammer@gmail.com  
✉ Helen Bent is a worship and music consultant and freelance trainer.

### New Grove Booklet

#### *Worship in 1 Corinthians,*

Colin Buchanan, 2021, Grove Books.

Buchanan wrote *Worship in the Letter to the Hebrews*, and this title echoes that one. This one arose from studies in chapter 14 of 1 Cor, where he expounds that Paul is not writing about strange unknown 'tongues', but about well-known other languages. GROU did not want him to devote a whole Booklet to this, but asked him to put it into the context of a treatment of Paul's whole letter. The upshot in W248 draws upon every section of the letter, identifying and linking all the components of what we today call a 'service'. Some parts of the letter also yield new liturgical text intended to enrich our liturgical resources. £3.95, Grove Books, [www.grovebooks.co.uk](http://www.grovebooks.co.uk)

## Hymns for our Contemporary World

Twelve hymns from those submitted to the Jubilate editorial team – on subjects ranging from social justice and racial equality to mental health, the refugee crisis and the environment – have emerged as the best contributions and have been matched with tunes (some new, some well known) in the expectation that they will be sung widely in the coming months. A recording of all twelve was made in Leeds Minster early in July, with the musicians suitably distanced from each other, and the collection will be launched in September 2021 ([www.jubilate.co.uk/page/Hymns\\_for\\_Our\\_Contemporary\\_World](http://www.jubilate.co.uk/page/Hymns_for_Our_Contemporary_World)).

## Come and Sing Zimbe!

Now that group singing is possible again, Cantus Firmus Trust is organising a half-day workshop, led by Richard Hubbard, Music Development Director for St Edmundsbury & Ipswich. Richard believes this will be a great opportunity to reconnect with choral singing, as participants explore Alexander L'Estrange's *Zimbe!* (a cantata based on songs from across Africa, arranged in jazz style). The workshop is to be held on Saturday 18 September at Stowmarket URC Church, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Cantus Firmus runs an inter-church choir with groups in Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich and Colchester, and its mission is to encourage creative use of music in worship. This taster event will be the first step towards a planned full performance of *Zimbe!* in St Edmundsbury Cathedral on 26 February 2022, as part of their planned World Praise Weekend. All singers taking part in the workshop must have received both Covid jabs. They will not need to wear masks while singing, but will be asked to wear them when moving around the building. Full details can be found online (<https://cantusfirmus.org.uk/comeandsing.html>), where bookings can also be made; a donation of £12 per singer is requested.

Composer Alexander L'Estrange (b.1974) was a chorister at New College, Oxford and later read music at the same university. He is also a professional jazz pianist and bass player, and in his compositions and arrangements he combines his background in the English

choral tradition with his love for jazz harmonies and rhythms. His shorter anthems and canticles were recorded in 2016 by the choir *Tenebrae*, directed by Nigel Short (*On Eagles' Wings*, Signum Classics); the music includes settings of the Lord's Prayer and of 'God be in my head', and 'Epiphany Carol' to a text by the composer's wife, Joanna.

## RSCM news

The Royal School of Church Music recently welcomed a new member to their Senior Management Team when Dr Paul Hedley joined the staff as Assistant Director (Finance and Operations). Dr Hedley has moved to the charity from the Three Choirs Festival, where he has been Chief Executive for five years. His experience of church music comes, most recently, from his direction of the choir of All Saints, Didcot (<https://didcotallsaints.org.uk/choir-and-music>).

Hugh Morris, Director of the RSCM, will be discussing how to harness the power of music in mission with young people in an online webinar on Tuesday 14 September at 2 p.m. He will be in conversation with Stephen Hance, the Church of England's National Lead for Evangelism and Witness. For details of how to book a place (free), search for "Evangelism and Discipleship Webinars" on the C of E website ([www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org)).

The RSCM's Celebration Day service is expected to take place in Durham Cathedral on 9 October 2021, when honorary awards conferred by the RSCM Council for outstanding contributions to church music will be presented to those recipients able to be there. Portsmouth Cathedral's Organist and Master of the Choristers, David Price, and Andrew Lumsden, Director of Music at Winchester Cathedral, are among four new Fellows of the RSCM.

## Calvin symposium

Participants are expected to be able to gather in person next year for the annual Calvin Symposium on Worship, to be held in Grand Rapids, Michigan in early February 2022 (<https://worship.calvin.edu/symposium>), but certain sessions will also be available by livestream for those unable

to be there. The organisers have said that they remain ready to adapt to public health guidelines that may emerge. There may be grants available for those in the UK, including musicians, who feel that this event would support their learning and ministry.

## Tenth anniversary conference

The academic network Christian Congregational Music (Local and Global Perspectives) was forced to celebrate its tenth anniversary in 2021 online, instead of at Cuddesdon near Oxford. However, this did mean that well over one hundred scholars and students were able to participate in a remarkably well-organised event, with some sessions recorded beforehand and others happening live via Zoom. The next conference is expected to take place in early August 2023, in Oxford.

A very wide range of topics was covered by short papers, presented during the first week (26–30 July) as videos to be watched at any stage. Comments and questions posted in the Slack channel encouraged presenters to interact with other conference delegates, in a text-only format. Week Two (2–6 August) consisted mainly of plenary sessions via Zoom, timed so that most participants could take part at a reasonable hour, wherever they were in the world. There were also Zoom discussions of the short papers. An innovation this year was the inclusion of some musical activities for those attending the conference, with Geraldine Latty from the UK, for example, leading a song session which demonstrated ways of enabling singers to make music together online.

Professor Kay Norton of Arizona State University (author of the 2015 book, *Singing and Wellbeing: Ancient Wisdom, Modern Proof*, published by Routledge) was among those who addressed the impact of the pandemic on congregational song and of attempts at 'virtual' group singing. Dr Nathan Myrick, of Mercer University in Atlanta, presented a paper on 'Music and human flourishing in Christian communities'; he feels that the question of why we sing together in worship is of paramount importance, but that the relationship between music and well being remains an understudied aspect of congregational song.

# Music matters

## Ex-choristers sought

Elizabeth Preece was one of the UK presenters at the CCM conference described on page 5. A PhD student in the Sociology department at Bristol University and also a choral conductor and singer, she is carrying out research into English choir schools and cathedrals, and what impact they have on chorister education. She has already conducted a number of interviews, but is keen to contact a few more former cathedral choristers between the ages of 21 and 30 who attended a choir school, to find out about their experience of being a chorister and what they have embarked on since leaving the school.

Elizabeth asks anyone interested in taking part to contact her by email ([elizabeth.preece@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:elizabeth.preece@bristol.ac.uk)). Readers of PNOW may know possible candidates: please pass on the information.

## Singing workshop

Canon Gary O'Neill, from Blackburn Cathedral, will be leading a Singing Together Workshop at Whalley Abbey retreat house, with residential and day-only options (either dinner on Friday 16 October plus bed and breakfast with the workshop next day, or just the workshop on Saturday 17 October). There will be plenty of singing, ending with evening prayer using some of the music learned, but participants will also have the chance to explore how what we sing shapes our belief and how what we believe informs our choices when singing.

Full details are on the Whalley Abbey website ([www.whalleyabbey.org/events](http://www.whalleyabbey.org/events)), where bookings can also be made. The cost is £88 for residents and £30 (including lunch) for the Saturday only. Whalley Abbey is not far from Clitheroe.

## We will meet

Wild Goose Publications have made available as a sheet music download a moving song which has touched many feeling isolated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Adapted by John Bell from the original by Norwegian Hans-Olav Moerk, 'We will meet' begins with a verse promising to meet 'when the danger is over', 'when the sad days are done'. The

second of the four verses refers to bread and wine and to sharing the Peace. A quick search on YouTube should find a performance by Alison Adam, who used to sing with the Wild Goose Resource Group but now runs Worship Works (<http://alisonadam.urc.org.uk>).

The song was included in Radio 4's Sunday Worship on 28 June 2020, led by members of the Iona Community; churches which use the song in worship are asked to record this on their copyright licence return, whether CCLI or One License. Each download of the words and music costs £1.50 from [www.ionabooks.com/product/we-will-meet-sheet-music-download](http://www.ionabooks.com/product/we-will-meet-sheet-music-download).

## Stancliffe lecture

'Sing a Better Song' was the title of the RSCM's first Annual Lecture, given on 14 July 2021 by the Rt Revd Dr David Stancliffe. A practising musician with a particular interest in historically informed performance practice, the former Bishop of Salisbury – now living in County Durham – explored in his lecture what singing can do for us, how singing can reach the parts of us which words alone cannot, and how being deprived of singing during the pandemic has led to people thinking about why they miss it so much.

The lecture was recorded and has been made available as a download, costing £5, on the RSCM website ([www.rscm.org.uk/online-resources/annual-lecture](http://www.rscm.org.uk/online-resources/annual-lecture)).

## Save The Parish

If you are concerned about the survival of the Church's liturgy you should support *Save the Parish*. Those who minister in the well-funded alternatives to parish churches; whether in church plants, new worshipping communities, Fresh Expressions, or Resource Churches do not regard themselves as under any obligation to use forms of service authorised by Canon. Whether or not they are effective as agents of mission they have no sense that liturgy forms Christian people in ways that have lasting value. Save the Parish on the other hand aims to locate people not only in geography but in deep habits of prayer. *Angela Tilby, PTO, Portsmouth.*

# Learning

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

## Praxis Southwest

**Thursday 16 September 2021, 10.00-12.00, on Zoom.**

**Speakers:**

**James Mustard, Precentor of Exeter Cathedral**

**Elizabeth Burke, Rector of Holsworthy**

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

***A colloquium offering the opportunity to reflect on how things have changed since the beginning of lockdown easing. Reflections from a cathedral and parochial context will frame the session, together with discussion and questions.***

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***Apt Worship in times of crisis and grief***

***Saturday 16 October 2021, 10.00-15.30, in person, at Kentisbeare Village Hall, near Cullompton.***

***Speaker: Helen Bent***

*An insightful and interactive day exploring worship that cares when our lives are affected by an unexpected crisis or bereavement. Our lives have been affected by the Covid pandemic. Some have lost loved ones, some have been left with 'long Covid', some have also faced personal loss and tragedy as a result of disaster, accident, or crime. How do we personally find God in the face of unexpected tragedy or a problem in society? What is apt worship in the face of the unthinkable? How do we minister sensitively to people at points of crisis and vulnerability as well as further along the lonely path of ongoing grief and sorrow. How do we balance the need for praise and thanksgiving with the need for lament?*

*Helen Bent speaks from firsthand experience*

as both a worshipper and a worship leader, reflecting on her parish which experienced severe flooding in 2007, the loss of her daughter Anna (aged 31) in 2014, and the varied losses resulting from the pandemic.

## Praxis South

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

Thursday October 14 2021,

11.00-15.30, on Zoom.

£7 (non-members), £5 (members, and ordinands/those training for licensed ministry.)

*A day with three inputs, including from Dean Robert Willis and Dr Jeremy Law, and opportunities for discussion, reflecting on how recent experience adds to our understanding of creativity in increasing widespread appeal; the development and scriptural foundations of Daily Prayer, especially the canticles and the lectionary; and the significance of Daily Prayer in building community, physically and online.*

To register email Peter Furber:

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

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

## RSCM Online Music for Mission and Ministry Course

Tuesday 19 – Thursday 21 October 2021

Led by Revd Helen Bent and Jonathan Robinson

*Training for leaders of worship, both lay and ordained, and church musicians, now available as an online course. The course uses a 'blended learning' approach over three days, combining tutor-led sessions, supporting online media and pdf handouts. There will be opportunity to reflect on the opportunities and challenges as we move towards the 'new normal' post-Covid.*

Cost: £80-00 (RSCM Members) £96-00 (non-members)

<https://www.rscm.org.uk/courses/music-for-mission-and-ministry-online-oct-21/>  
or contact: Sarah King, Tel: 01722 424843,  
Email: [sking@rscm.com](mailto:sking@rscm.com)

## Exploring Worship in Pilgrimage

Helen Bent, 2021, Grove Books

The booklet's acknowledgement states that it was written during lockdown, with increased awareness of the 'significance of special places and the value of journey'. As such, the bulk of the text is focussed on exploring pilgrimage in worship, rather than the other way around.

Helen notes that pilgrimage 'blends the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual into one unified experience' for people of all faiths and none, urging many to travel; and in faith practices to do so to holy or 'thin' places, and Helen questions how this relates to a theology of an omnipresent God. It's a good question: is God truly more accessible in some special places, or is there something in us that travel to these places unlocks to allow us to open our hearts more easily to God's ubiquitous presence?

There is exploration of physical, travelled pilgrimage in this text, but the especially intriguing and useful reflections are for those unable to travel for any reason but still desiring to explore journeying as part of their faith. Also key is the essence of storytelling as a part of pilgrimage-worship, which I personally found essential to my own recent pilgrimage: reviewing in conversation, prayer, or writing the reasons for the journey and the experience of it.

Helen draws out details of opportunities to integrate pilgrimage into the familiar places of our worship and community, exploring pitfalls and possibilities in a useful and practical way, equipping and encouraging the reader to go further in their own context.

Naturally, music can be a really helpful tool for engaging in worship, whether that is for people to receive or join in with (an experience many have mourned over the course of pandemic restrictions) and Helen gives some helpful guidance and examples before moving on to consider non-musical resources such as poetry, art, and multi-sensory installations. These can all be similarly either received, interacted with, or even created by those engaged in pilgrimage.

Helen draws conclusions that pilgrimage and worship have long been

and still can be interwoven, and simply and clearly lays out some key pitfalls and opportunities, before leaving us with a lesson that I have found to be essential on my own pilgrimage journey: 'Learning to be adaptable is the mark of a real pilgrim!'

✍ David Gardiner is Vicar of Lydney and the Villages in the Diocese of Gloucester, and wrote this review whilst on a sabbatical walking and cycling pilgrimage in Scotland.

## Chancel Screens since the Reformation

Edited by Mark Kirby, 2020

The Ecclesiological Society

This examination of chancel screens in English parish churches since the 1530s brings together a number of papers presented at the 2019 Ecclesiological Society Conference. It is helpfully placed into a wider theological context in two initial essays: Peter Doll traces the evolution of the concept of a barrier or divide in Judeo-Christian places of worship, originating in the Tabernacle of Moses in the Wilderness, a helpful reference for the consideration given by the contributors to sacred space, liminality and changing understandings of the Eucharist down the centuries; Lucy Wrapson summarises the scene in the decades preceding the Reformation, when the creation of rood screens was widespread and well-established.

The contributions that follow testify to the fact that there has never been a single Church of England understanding of what a chancel screen is.

The construction of rood lofts declined in the years after the Dissolution and came to a halt with Edward VI's accession in 1547. A Royal Order in 1561 stated for the first time that rood lofts were to be removed and replaced by a 'convenient crest' on the upper beam. Screens, however, were to remain, providing 'a comely partition betwixt the chancel and the church', a compromise typical of the Elizabethan Church where disruptive change was avoided but devotion discouraged. This aim appears largely to have been achieved in the new screens that were built in the eighty years or so before the Civil War, several fine

examples of which are analysed by Trevor Cooper.

Although imagery was, of course, at risk, screens themselves were not necessarily removed during the Civil War and in its aftermath. Following the Restoration, however, and during the eighteenth century, the interest in having a chancel screen steadily dwindled.

Only two chancel screens were to be found amongst the 51 parish churches rebuilt after the Great Fire of London; and in his analysis Mark Kirby explains that the rare examples at St Peter Cornhill and All Hallows-the-Great were built most particularly to affirm through liturgical furnishings an understanding expressed since the Reformation that the Church of England located its origins in the Early Church.

Reflecting impassioned arguments for and against chancel screens, which drew on different understandings of ecclesial identity, the 19th century saw the construction of rood screens in many old and new churches but also the demolition of numerous medieval screens elsewhere. A particular purpose for chancel screens was identified after the First World War when there was a pressing need to provide a memorial for the fallen. While in many churches they are eschewed as an obstruction to liturgy, they have elsewhere assumed another function in response to a need in recent years to separate liturgical space from areas that might be used for a variety of community activities.

The different contributions in this richly illustrated publication demonstrate that chancel screens are a guide to the many trends in theological and ecclesiological thought over the last five hundred years, while offering the reader the opportunity to compare and contrast a wide range of examples of the genre.

✍ *Oliver Learmont is Vicar of North Bradley, Southwick, Heywood and Steeple Ashton, and a member of Salisbury Diocesan Advisory Committee.*

I HOPE I AM emerging from lockdown (though there is room for many a slip). So here is a literary procedure I employed in my long-gone *News of Liturgy* days – a liturgical diary, with a retrospect of just 18 months. Others have told their own stories, all different. This is mine.

In retirement my Sundays have usually been itinerant, as needed or invited by different churches, with intermittent appearances in my parish church. Lockdown, for me, started with receiving streaming from my daughter's parish. Then distanced seating (with masks) returned to my parish, and I got seated in the back row. I had no public ministry, save for preaching in November at a funeral (confirming what I once said here, that I would prefer not to have a lockdown funeral for myself). Our Sunday congregation has received the bread only at communion, and I have heard Jesus' words 'Drink this, all of you', with some disquiet. A respite came at Easter and once later, with worship in the car park, and we could sing and, unmasked (though still untouching), could smile in greeting at the Peace. Recently we have had the option of receiving communion by intinction and for the last three weeks or so, we have (Hallelujah) actually sung (into our masks). A welcome local twist has been interviews of lay people, to learn how individuals have used the lockdown for growth in their knowledge of God.

On 21 June, I preached at the Sunday Eucharist, my first experience of being unmasked in church, though still oddly unable to see faces. Then on 19 July, I was at the consecration of two new bishops in York Minster, with a select 100 guests comprising the congregation. The Archbishop, still observing church guidance (though on the first day that Boris had freed us), had simply two chosen bishops to lay on hands with him, but, unlike the Archbishop of Canterbury's practice, this Archbishop was not delegating the role of chief consecrator. I hope that soon all the bishops of a province will be joining again in the laying on of hands (more about this if you contact me).

Then on 1 August I presided at communion in another parish during the vicar's holiday - the first time I had presided since January last year. I had to think hard about sanitizing, distancing etc: all second nature to parochial clergy. What, however, struck me most forcibly was, as above, Jesus' words, 'Drink this, all of you'. Not only could I not give the cup, but I was myself to receive it – the first time since March last year. Any gratitude for this privilege was also balanced by that ludicrous (yet supposedly legal) banning of distribution from individual cups - for the people must receive from the 'common cup', or not at all. But what was I receiving? There was nothing 'common' about the cup from which only the president receives. Why, it might even be described as an individual cup! So I found myself all the more unhappy with this contrast between the eucharistic president and the people. It was frankly embarrassing. How are we to obey the Lord's command?

## This issue's 50th anniversary

SEPTEMBER 1971 saw a major watershed in liturgical revision. The Liturgical Commission published 'Series 3 Holy Communion'. It was the first text proposed for authorization which addressed God as 'you'. It contained the first round of 'common texts' drafted by the International Consultation on English Texts, including the Lord's Prayer with 'Holy be your name', and 'Do not bring us to the test' (see Colin's Column in the last issue), but also containing prayers, a confession, the Eucharistic Prayer etc, all in this 'contemporary English', thus disrespectful to God. The heavens did not fall in, but the synodical earth quaked not inconsiderably!

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