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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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Affiliation

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Open to all?

AS I COLLABORATE THIS ISSUE we are still in lockdown. At the third time of asking, churches have not been closed by law. Some have remained open, seeking to be beacons of hope and sources of the sacraments. Some have closed, sensing that to support and uphold the lockdown is the right way forward. Once again we pray, and we confront deep questions of sacramental and liturgical theology, ecclesiology and mission. These questions are no less keen now than they were in March 2020. I recognize that there remains keen appetite for discussion and later in the year we will return to some of these questions in a more worked-out way. There are questions around the sustained withdrawal of the chalice. There are questions about the nature of pre-recorded worship, as opposed to 'live' acts of worship, whether live-streamed or using social media platforms. Deep and taxing questions are still being asked about the efficacy of a Eucharist at which no congregation is present. These questions

poke at the core of what it means to be Anglican, and in due course we will return to them. For the moment we recognize the very high likelihood of keeping another Holy Week and Easter in a way unlike that to which we are used. Some resources are signposted below.

This issue focuses on questions of accessibility in worship, and whether our liturgy is genuinely 'open to all'. Lockdown has re-integrated many isolated and housebound congregants into the principal acts of worship from which disability of various kinds has excluded them. I am grateful to our three contributors for offering not only of their expertise but also their personal stories of liturgical participation.

Finally from me, we mark and mourn the passing of Jane Sinclair, member of the Liturgical Commission, inspiration and friend to many. I am profoundly grateful to David Hebblethwaite for his words of remembrance and thanksgiving.

✉ Tom Clammer, Editor.

Worship without words

WE OFTEN TALK ABOUT accessibility in our worship. Making our buildings accessible with step-free access. Installing hearing loops. Maybe even providing large-print material or Braille books. But for many people there is one fundamental issue that excludes them from fully participating in worship: our dependence upon printed text. It is not uncommon for those arriving for worship to be presented with multiple books and news and information leaflets: a pile of text that will need to be negotiated and processed during an act of worship.

I am blind and have been ordained for 26 years. In that time I've dealt with and processed many millions of words, providing hundreds of sheets and leaflets that I expect people to read during worship. For me, of course, none of the text has ever been written down. It has only ever been sound generated by the screen reader on my computer. Sound which I feed into my ear and allow my brain

to process as I speak.

I was recently challenged to think about why I, as a person who cannot process printed text, expect my congregation to do just that week by week. Many people struggle with printed material and find it an obstacle rather than something that enables participation. The challenge came when an Eritrean Orthodox community joined us in worship and shared a little of one of their liturgies which is rooted in the ancient Coptic liturgical tradition. Suddenly our 'book-based' church was caught up in an act of worship in which people listened, responded and sang without a book in sight, each sharing equally in their corporate offering. Apart from the wonder of being part of something rare (if not unique) – the fusion of such diverse traditions – I took away from this the thought that I need to move away from worship that is so dependent on text to something that is more inclusive and corporate.

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The BCP tradition at the heart of Anglican worship was designed to be accessible to all no matter what their level of literacy. Although a book, the BCP comes alive through repetition and rote learning. It comes alive when the liturgy becomes ingrained and spoken from the heart rather than read from the page. In our contemporary liturgies variety and options have become central. Variety and options which mean that negotiating a service today often involves poring over the printed page and walking through unfamiliar texts, before considering songs with strange metaphors and imagery and difficult language. Not that variety is bad. I am the first to look for variety in worship and kept my fingers and toes firmly crossed when I promised to use 'only those services authorised or allowed by Canon.' But our liturgies do demand quite a high level of literacy and the ability to process text in order to participate fully: a very specific skill that many people struggle with for a variety of reasons. So I was challenged to develop services that require no books and no words on a screen. Liturgies that enable response and participation without demanding that people have their faces in a book throughout. Liturgies that mean people can look up and out in their worship as their minds and spirits are freed from the task of processing printed text.

In 2018 and through 2019 I began to experiment with a number of 'Services with no Books', using responsive liturgies with easy, memorable, repeated responses and simple African and Celtic songs and chants that had been introduced to us by John Bell at a weekend away. We moved the pews into the round to bring everyone together in a more inclusive way and to enable leaders to be more a part of the congregation. The most important thing was that as people walked in, they were not handed the usual pile of books and pieces of paper. They came in with empty hands, went to their pews with empty hands, worshipped with empty hands and left with empty hands.

In many ways the jury was still out on the experiment when March 2020 and lockdown came along. As we closed our buildings my first thought was that the experiment would have to be paused, but a few weeks into lockdown I began to realise that 'services with no books' was exactly

what we were offering. We offer recorded worship for people to access at home. They may be sitting down and listening, cooking Sunday lunch, or even out for a jog. People are accessing worship in a variety of contexts, none of which include books. The liturgies have to be responsive to enable participation, but guiding people through the service and enabling those responses has to be built into the liturgy rather than printed on a page.

I think all of this has challenged me to think about what worship really is. In many ways we have managed to make our worship complex, requiring physical and intellectual processes that are demanding and challenging for many people. I've had to question myself as to why I organise and lead worship from which I would be excluded if I turned up as a member of the congregation. Of course exclusion manifests itself in different ways for different people. Without BSL interpretation many who are deaf or have hearing impairments rely on printed text to follow a service. A 'Service with no Books' is a planned liturgy, and although its aim is to be accessible to as many people as possible without the need to follow text, the text can still be provided for those for whom this would increase access.

My intention post-pandemic is to make at least one service a month bookless and develop a number of responsive liturgies that can become familiar to the congregation. Alongside this I intend to develop our repertoire of chants and African songs that I hope will become spontaneous, congregation-led responses to worship. The core aim is to increase accessibility and give every member of the congregation the opportunity to participate fully and equally regardless of their level of literacy or ability to process printed material. To make liturgy what it should be: an 'offering of the people' in which every person can offer the best of themselves without barrier or constraint. If 2020 has taught me anything it has been the importance of our worship being able to meet people where they are. In remote worship in their homes. In our gathered worship, in the personal space that we each bring with us, shaped by our understanding, perspective, mental and physical shape, joys and anxieties and so

much more. My personal insight is to no longer contort myself to the expectations of others and deny my own experience, but to let this be an asset and creative spark in the worship that I lead.

✠ *John Beauchamp is Vicar of St Stephen's, Canonbury.*

'Hello, I'm your new choirmaster. I'm profoundly deaf.'

HELLO, I'M YOUR NEW CHOIRMASTER. I'm profoundly deaf so I can't hear what you're singing, but that doesn't matter. Let's get on with it!

Those were the words I used many years ago when I took on the role of organist and choirmaster at St Cuthbert's Church in Huddersfield. I've used them several times since and it's always interesting seeing how people react.

I was born deaf, and without my hearing aids hear nothing at all, yet music and the church have always played a vital part in my life. I sang in my local church choir from the age of seven, started learning the organ when I was 12, got a music degree from Wadham College, Oxford – where I was the Chapel organist and choirmaster – and have made a career of two seemingly paradoxical things: music and deafness.

I suppose that because of my skills and knowledge I've always been valued within the Church, but being accepted is different. As an institution the Church hasn't always been good at welcoming those who are different, marginalised, who upset the status quo; ironic when you consider the person upon whom the Church is founded and who welcomed and embraced all.

Being in a position of leadership does have its advantages, of course, and being a natural performer helps too. In addition to choosing and leading music I am fortunate in being encouraged to devise and create liturgies and services and lead them. It has been suggested over the years that I become a priest, and I did eventually start the process, but quickly withdrew when General Synod had one of its periodic, 'What shall we do about gay people?' moments. Yes, I'm gay as well as deaf

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which, for some, can be a kind of double whammy.

I both speak and sign. For deaf people who are sign language users the Church is not an easy place to be. Communication is very hard indeed and, despite the willingness and commitment of sign language interpreters, separate Deaf Churches are often the only real solution. There members can communicate easily in their own language, using liturgies, formats and resources that match their own lives and experiences. When a Diocese removes a Chaplain for the Deaf or seeks to shut a Deaf Church then that church will often die. Forced integration is not a solution.

During lockdown, when we are unable to sing in church, I have been teaching my congregation some signed songs, hymns and chants, as well as signing some items myself. People appreciate the opportunity to join in with worship rather than be spectators, and often comment on the power of a visual image compared to reading or listening to words.

You can say a prayer or sing a hymn for years and years, but how often have you stopped and really thought about those words? When translating something into BSL you have to focus on the meaning and the emotion and then convey it. We know that a picture can say far more than words, so let's explore the visual elements of worship rather than fill our services with words, words and more words. Silence is also good!

I dream of a church where everyone is welcomed and loved, irrespective of their background, skin colour, gender, ability or disability, etc. A church where there is a desire to learn and share; not to build barriers but dismantle them. A church where we can celebrate diversity and difference, reflect the infinite variety of humanity that God created, yet all be one in Christ Jesus, sharing in bread and wine. God welcomes all, but does the Church?

I'll finish with a prayer of W. L. Wallace, in Geoffrey Duncan's marvellous anthology *Courage to Love* (DLT 2002), that I've sometimes used:

I am a lovable, creative person
made in the likeness of God.
I give myself permission to enjoy being
myself
to love without fear of rejection,
to create with imagination,

to change without dread of the future,
to use my power responsibly,
to work for justice and peace
and live as a singer and dancer
within God's all-embracing being.

✉ *Paul Whittaker, OBE, is organist and choirmaster at St Cuthbert's Church, Huddersfield.*

Only say the word and I shall be healed?

I'M PRIVILEGED MOST OF THE TIME. I can walk into most churches, sit in the pews, join in the singing and the liturgy. Even when I am walking up to receive the Eucharist people would never know I'm disabled. Unless I trip! I talk about my disability a lot and I'm open about how it affects me. This is because I believe God has called me to be a priest with a disability. Disability is part of who I am and part of my gift to the church, whether or not that gift is well received.

It has been noted that if I didn't disclose my disability, most people would not even realise I am disabled. The question that I often ponder is, is it right to pretend or even hide who I am? After all, how can we hear and experience God in our encounters with one another if those encounters are based on, at best, half-truths? I'm not going to pretend I'm not biased in my response. I have always felt that my call is integral to who I am and part of who I am is my disability. It is only one part, but an important part. It informs how I relate to people and to God.

I suspect that when the Church appears unwilling to engage with disability theology, this is driven by fear and a reluctance to examine prejudices. With this in mind, how should the church respond to disability? Disabled people are not problems to be solved or dealt with, they are a full part of the community of faith. Normally, the question of disability and the Church is considered to be an issue about the 'accessibility' of a physical space. This is, of course, important. I strongly believe, however, that physical accessibility is only part of the story that we need to explore if we are going to be safe welcoming spaces for all.

If someone were to ask you if your church is accessible, I wonder how you would respond? Churches can be welcoming but if, when we are sitting in the pews, we hear language that states otherwise, or the teaching is not relevant to our experience, then is it still a welcoming church? How many are using the language of 'when we get back to normal' in relation to the pandemic? Will we continue to live-stream or pre-record our services, or will that all go by the wayside once the majority of people can access church buildings once again? Back to normal for some might mean back to the margins for me.

How often do we consider accessibility in terms of our theological language and thinking?

When we are explaining creation, if someone lives in a body that is a body of pain, can that be described as a good creation? I have had cerebral palsy from birth. Did God create me with cerebral palsy or was that a complication pre-, or post-, birth?

Consider what it might feel like to be asked to make the response, 'Lord I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed' if you live in a body or a brain that is classed as abnormal? What exactly is in need of healing?

Leaders of God's Church have to consider these matters, not because it is the 'PC' thing to do, but because we must speak into the worldview of the whole people of God. Disabled people are part of God's creation and yet sometimes what is described as 'good' creation is a narrow view of the world, perhaps through the eyes of someone with little experience of living with a disability.

More than that, the majority of the people who are disabled are not disabled from birth. How do we understand things like sickness or accidents in theological terms? If we consider that 'disability theology' is something for a niche group of people, we neglect the lived experiences of many.

The experience of disability is not always a negative one. Many people with disabilities have copious gifts that the church needs. For those gifts to be truly released, we need better and consistent thinking around the issue of theology and disability. Until this happens, the Church will be the poorer. To make this happen,

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we need to become advocates, and in some cases strong allies, for those within the Church who have disabilities. Then we will be that bit closer to understanding what it means to be 'The Body of Christ' - disabled and all.

✍ *Liz Brown is Pioneer Minister of Becontree South Team Ministry in the Chelmsford Diocese.*

Holy Week 2021

This edition of PNOW goes to print at about the same time as the much heralded government announcement which purports to describe the way out of the lockdown. What seems evident, however, is that although public worship over this Holy Week will be permitted, it will certainly be subject to social distancing restrictions, reduced numbers, and almost certainly both singing and the administration of the chalice will still be prohibited. The Church of England has produced some specific guidance and suggestions for observing Holy Week this year, which can be found at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

The guidance is cautious, perhaps unexpectedly, but permissive, and covers specific questions: particularly focussing upon the traditional and distinctive elements of the Holy Week liturgy. It makes clear that with the proper precautions the use of Palm Crosses is permitted, as is baptism on Easter Day or at the Vigil. Any Veneration of the Cross must not involve the worshippers touching or kissing the Cross, so alternative provision must be made. There is a particularly useful note about the reservation of the Sacrament on Maundy Thursday for distribution on Good Friday. If this is to be done, the Sacrament which is to be reserved must have been placed into a sealed ciborium at least 48 hours prior to the time of its distribution (i.e. sometime on Wednesday) and the ciborium must not be opened at any point prior to distribution on Friday. We are reminded also of the prohibition on open-air services anywhere other than the churchyard, which will have implications for many. *Ed.*

Jane Sinclair

Jane Sinclair and the Liturgical Commission

Jane Sinclair (who died on 14 January, aged 64) was a member of the Liturgical Commission from 1986 to 2000, the period which took the Church of England from the ASB to *Common Worship*. She was one of the 'core' members who served continuously throughout that period. When appointed, she was moving to be a lecturer at St John's College, Nottingham; from 1993 she was Canon Precentor at Sheffield. She brought experience of ordinand formation and cathedral ministry into the Commission's work from bases in the industrial and manufacturing north.

Whilst fully engaged in all aspects of the Commission's discussions, she had particular involvement in two areas. By the late 1980s it was apparent that the ASB had 'missed the boat' in engaging with increasing concerns over gendered language, and many piecemeal and ad hoc adaptations were being made 'on the hoof'. The report *Making Women Visible* (1988) suggested ways in which authorized texts might be adapted with minimal upset and, more importantly, laid the basis on which the Commission's new work would take account of that issue among the many other concerns to be held in balance. Jane had much input into that work.

Towards the end of the period it was decided to make use of the American Episcopal Church's psalter in *Common Worship*, rather than the ASB psalter. That American psalter needed anglicizing as well as to be checked for inclusivity. Jane was in the lead in sometimes acrimonious controversy, defending the Commission's decisions in public synod debate.

Users of *Common Worship* have much to be grateful for to Jane through her input to the Commission's work.

✍ *David Hebblethwaite was Secretary of the Liturgical Commission from 1984 to 2002.*

David supplied a delightful anecdote from his time working with Jane, which you will find on page 8. Ed.

Event Review

Praying Daily – A day to explore how our practice of praying daily may be renewed and enriched

On the 20th October 2020, Praxis South held its first online conference – a day to reflect upon the rhythms of daily prayer and how they may be enriched. The technological aspects of the day were managed excellently, especially for a first dipping of the toe into the world of online conferencing. Much praise goes to all who worked to make the day such a success.

The day itself was split into three sections. First, Canon Richard Peers SMMS spoke about the development of the Daily Office and the importance of praying the Psalms daily as a 'window into Christ'. Then Fr Peter Allan CR helped us to see the enriching effect of singing the office, no matter how confident (or not) one may be. Finally, Sue Wallace gave us licence to try new ways of supporting our praying by adding symbolic depth through technology and especially contemporary music.

As you might expect from such a talented and insightful group of speakers, the audience was introduced to a plethora of delectable delights that both challenged and encouraged us in our routines of daily prayer, with excellent tips for enriching daily practice. They drew on much ancient wisdom whilst also providing more contemporary insights. There were many enriching things to be taken from the day, but one that especially sticks in the mind was the call to simplicity in our prayer. All three speakers conveyed this in different ways. Our internal longing to communicate with God is desperate to find some form of outward expression. That impulse is met in 'praying daily'. Fr Peter probably captured it best: 'when we sing (in prayer), what is inside us comes out.'

✍ *Rob Parker-McGee SR is Rector of the Box River Benefice.*

Jubilate and Resound

Joel Payne of Resound Worship has written and recorded a simple, reflective musical setting of 'Lord, have mercy' which could be useful during Lent and Passiontide, but also in connection with prayers to remember the victims of the pandemic and the ongoing struggle to have large numbers of people around the world vaccinated. The words, melody and chords may be downloaded and copied freely under the terms of a CCL copyright licence. You may buy a backing track, choir score etc, and churches with a streaming licence may also use the lyrics-video recording for online worship. The song can be found on the Resound website (www.resoundworship.org/song/lord-have-mercy-kyrie). Another potentially helpful song, available from the same source, this one longer but with 'Lord, have mercy on us' at the end of each verse, is Geraldine Latty's 'Lord, you hear the cry of the widow weeping'.

Exciting news from Jubilate is the launch of a project encouraging hymn writers to grapple with themes of justice, struggle, truth, and other contemporary issues. The organisers of 'Hymns for our Contemporary World' aim to end up with ten to twelve texts, selected from all the hymns submitted, which can resource churches seeking material for congregations to sing which brings 'a Christian perspective to the key issues of the moment'. Details of the project, including guidance for those wishing to write one or more hymns, have been posted online (www.jubilate.co.uk). There you can also find resource suggestions for Holy Week and Easter.

Margaret Rizza

Eamonn Dougan, a distinguished choral director (from the choir The Sixteen), has joined forces with vocal and instrumental group the Gaudete Ensemble to record new music by Margaret Rizza, now in her 90s. Much of her previous music has become widely known through its use in meditative prayer and reflective worship, including simple chants which congregations can sing, often with instrumental descants. *Ave Generosa*, her new CD and collection of choral music (published last year by RSCM), is subtitled

A Musical Journey with the Mystics and sets thirteen texts (prayers, psalm verses, hymns and antiphons) by writers including Hildegard of Bingen and Thomas Merton. Four tracks on the CD were recorded in 2010, while the rest date from February 2020 – not long before the pandemic made it difficult for choirs to rehearse and perform together.

Most of the music is probably too demanding for parish church choirs (even supposing they were free to sing again), and texts such as 'O speculum columbe' may not have an obvious place in regular Anglican liturgy. The final piece, however, seems well worth exploring as a closing sung benediction at various acts of worship. The words of this 'Trinity Blessing' are described as a 'Celtic Prayer' and are very similar to the final blessing in the Northumbria Community's Holy Communion Liturgy, also included in Brendan O'Malley's 1998 collection, *Celtic Blessings*.

Margaret Rizza was recently widowed: her husband George (whose obituary appeared in the Church Times at the end of 2020) had suffered from dementia for a number of years. Both were professional singers for part of their careers and they met at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, in the 1960s, while both were singing in the chorus of Ethiopian slaves for a performance of Verdi's *Aida* (Margaret using the surname Lensky at that stage). In 1973 George Rizza was appointed managing director of Novello & Co, founded in 1811 by Roman Catholic Vincent Novello in order to publish his own editions of church music. The company still publishes sacred choral music, including *The Novello Book of Music for Lent and Easter*, seasonal anthems and hymns for mixed voices choirs selected and edited by conductor David Hill.

Worship symposium online

The annual large-scale liturgical and musical training event entitled the Calvin Symposium on Worship, usually held in Grand Rapids, Michigan each January, moved online in 2021, with over 7,000 registering to participate from around the world. Worship based on Romans 8 was a strong feature and

included services streamed from Fuller Seminary in California and Heliopolis Evangelical Church in Cairo, a sermon preached from Beirut, and classical instrumental music as part of an act of worship from the chapel of Duke Divinity School in Durham, North Carolina. Videos of these and of many of the other sessions, such as a panel on 'Preaching and singing the resurrection' and an interview with Christian climate scientist Katherine Heyhoe, have been made freely available on the website of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship (<https://worship.calvin.edu/symposium>).

'All Creation Groans', the session on worship and the environment, explored ways in which worship practices – including thanksgiving and lament – can help heal our broken relationship with 'the more-than-human creation'. It took the form of a conversation between Katherine Heyhoe and Debra Rienstra, a Professor of English at Calvin University; she shared with her husband Ron in the writing of *Worship Words: Discipling Language for Faithful Ministry* (Baker, 2008). Her blog post 'Singing the Eden Call' (16 January 2021), responded to the Doxecology material produced last year by Resound Worship in the UK, which she describes as 'a welcome contribution to ecology-themed resources' (<https://blog.reformedjournal.com/2021/01/16/singing-the-eden-call>).

Kevin Mayhew RIP

Kevin Mayhew, who founded the Christian publishing house of the same name in 1976, died on 14 January 2021; he had suffered from Progressive Supranuclear Palsy for a number of years. In his publishing he said he intended to serve the entire Christian community, and the many Kevin Mayhew hymn books are certainly widely used across Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.

Born in Essex in December 1942, Kevin was a chorister at Westminster Cathedral under George Malcolm, discovering a love of books and church music, and when the Second Vatican Council transformed Roman Catholic liturgy by the introduction of the vernacular, he composed a Mass setting in English. In an interview for the *Church Times* in 2006, he recalled that two Roman

Music matters

Catholic publishers had rejected it, saying it wouldn't sell, so he decided to self-publish (having worked in the publishing world after leaving school at 16, and knowing how to contact churches). After selling 100,000 copies very quickly, he had enough money to launch his own business.

As well as publishing music by others, Kevin Mayhew composed a number of songs for worship himself, including 'Peace, perfect peace, is the gift of Christ our Lord' which appears – according to the HymnQuest database – in more than forty books, mostly Mayhew's own publications including fourteen variations of *Hymns Old and New* (collections arranged alphabetically rather than thematically, which is a mixed blessing). In 2006 he was quoted as saying, 'Despite the use of overhead projectors and the internet, hymn books seem to go on and on. It's a bit like the view that TV would kill radio. It didn't. Sales of our most popular hymn book were up by 20 per cent last year. Who knows what will happen in a generation's time, but there is still a traditional love of holding a hymn book.'

Jane Sinclair and music

Canon Jane Sinclair's love of music was evident from the organ music and hymns chosen for her funeral on 1 February in Holy Trinity Church, Bradford on Avon. Before the service began, five pieces of organ music were played, all composed by musicians who had been organists at Westminster Abbey where Jane had served between 2014 and her retirement in 2020. At the entry of the coffin, the organist played a piece associated with the Orkney islands which she loved: 'Farewell to Stromness' by Peter Maxwell-Davies.

Each of the three hymns, which, for obvious reasons, could not be sung ('Be thou my vision', 'The Lord's my Shepherd' and 'Let all mortal flesh keep silence'), was replaced by an organ prelude based on the relevant hymn tune, with the text of the hymn provided in the service booklet, and Geoffrey Burgon's 'Nunc dimittis' was played during the Committal. A Bach Prelude and Fugue followed at the end of the service.

Jane Sinclair was a member of the Archbishops' Commission on Church

Music which produced the report *In Tune With Heaven* in 1992. In her essay 'The Training of Clergy and Readers' in *The Renewal of Common Prayer* (ed. Michael Perham, SPCK 1993), she urged that those who were to lead worship 'should always be encouraged to discover why ... musical forms ... developed in the way they did historically and theologically, in order to understand something of the inheritance within which the Church worships and works today'.

Lockdown playlists

Since March 2020 Graham Kendrick has been posting resources for lockdown on his website (www.grahamkendrick.co.uk). Among these is a Spotify playlist, 'Songs of Comfort and Hope', with lyric videos which can be used by individuals and churches via Facebook or YouTube for worship and reflection. The songs are by Kendrick himself, selected from his many recordings: his first songs were written as long ago as the 1970s. One striking song, 'No need to fear', first appeared in 1999 as part of his Millennium Chorus and has more recently been very beautifully recorded by Sylvia Burnside with New Irish Arts.

Mark Thomas, Student and Worship Pastor at St Thomas, Swansea, must be among many other Christian leaders who have been collating playlists with titles like his: 'Songs for Tough Times'. Mark's choices begin with 'He will hold me fast'/'When I fear my faith will fail', a hymn by Ada Habershon (1861-1918) revised and set to music by Matt Merker (www.mattmerkermusic.com). Recorded by Keith and Kristyn Getty for their 2016 album *Facing a Task Unfinished* (with an instrumental introduction based on 'Finlandia' by Jean Sibelius), they have also included it in one of the recordings of worship from their 2019 'Sing!' conference. Among the remaining 45+ songs on Mark's list are 'You give rest to the weary'/'I will say of the Lord', performed by Lou Fellingham (one of the song's creators), and 'There's a time for tears', a song of lament, mourning and comfort by Sam Hargreaves of Resound Worship.

Learning

With uncertainty hovering over the nature and timing of the unlocking of society most Praxis regions are making use of online learning opportunities, whilst planning tentatively for in-person/mixed-mode meetings resuming. Readers are encouraged to keep an eye on the Praxis website [praxisworship.org.uk] which will be updated as the lockdown easing progresses. In the meantime, see below for opportunities correct at the time of printing. Ed.

Praxis Southwest colloquia

Thursday 18 March 2021, 10.00-11.30
&

Thursday 16 September 2021, 10.00-11.30, both hosted on Zoom.

Speakers:

James Mustard, Precentor of Exeter
Elizabeth Burke, Rector of Holsworthy

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

An opportunity to join in an informal and interactive conversation reflecting on the effects of lockdown upon our liturgical life. Each colloquium will be facilitated by members of Praxis Southwest, and will include some input, group discussion time and plenary. Part of the experience will be seeing how our thinking develops between March and September.

Praxis Midlands

A series of 3 FREE evening conversations facilitated by PraxisMidlands via Zoom: ***Access to God, Access to Each Other in Worship: Theology & Practice for Access to Worship in a time of pandemic and beyond.***

The first session will be on **Monday 15 March, at 7.30pm with Tom Clammer** exploring theological issues around accessibility, particularly in relation to the last year.

Future dates: 19 April & 17 May, including conversation with **Kt Tupling.**

To register email:
praxismidlands@hotmail.com

Music for Mission and Ministry Courses in 2021

Led by Revd Helen Bent with Jonathan Robinson

Music for Mission and Ministry is designed primarily for Anglican clergy, Readers and Lay Leaders, but is open to anyone who wants to deepen their understanding about the use and management of music in worship. It is a carefully targeted course, providing practical guidance for parish music situations of all types, since the principles are generic and the application of them is part of the topic of the course.

In late September 2020, we ran Music for Mission and Ministry online for the first time. The online course covered the same topics as the in-person course, delivered in a different way. We also considered the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the worship of our churches. Restrictions permitting, we are planning to run both online and 'live' courses in 2021.

Online Course:

Tuesday 19 - Thursday 21 October
8 sessions plus worship on Zoom spread over three days

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

Residential Course: COVID restrictions permitting.

Tuesday 4 - Thursday 6 May
Wydale Hall, Yorkshire

Cost: £350-00 (RSCM members)
£376-00 (non-members)

£270-00 (non-residential including lunch and evening meal)

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For more details, see:

<https://www.rscm.org.uk/start-learning/music-for-mission-and-ministry/>
or contact: Sarah King, Tel: 01722 424843,
Email: sking@rscm.com

Praxis South West - 15 May 2021

A day with Chris Thorpe exploring the themes of his recent book *Ploughshares and First Fruits*. See the website for developing news, as lockdown restrictions become clear.

Digital Ecclesiology: A Global Conversation,

ed. Heidi A. Campbell, pub. 2020, Digital Religion Publications

<https://oaktrust.library.tamu.edu/handle/1969.1/188698>

This collection from theologians and religious media scholars from around the world seeks to identify and address the deeper theological issues emerging from the churches' current experimentation with digital worship, primarily motivated by the COVID19 pandemic. A major premise of many of these essays is that the 'new normal' will mean a continuing dependence on digital technologies and several writers argue – rightly – that we need to reflect on how that changes our ecclesiology and identity, especially around how we can truly worship together while physically apart.

The editor calls this 'a diverse collection of essays', but I'm afraid it is not as diverse as promised, in terms of content at least (I do applaud the fact that more than half the contributors represent the global South or minority voices from the West, often overlooked in theological discourse). Generally there is too much repetition of the same themes across the collection, although one or two essays stand out – interestingly probably those with least connection to online worship! Chief among these are 'Life Together, Apart' by Roland Chia which argues that the disruptions the pandemic has brought about cannot diminish the Church's authentic worship or identity as the Body of Christ; along with Florian Höhne's essay 'The Vision After' exploring how can we talk about the promises of God for the future. I would have liked more exploration of digital Eucharist (currently preoccupying the Church of England), although more than one writer quotes Pope Francis' warning that the Church cannot truly exist without physical sacraments or the gathered people of God.

An interesting final question, perhaps, to consider is whether you really believe that 'church' can exist in a digital format – if you don't, then these essays are unlikely to persuade you otherwise.
✍ Rosie Woodall is Chaplain to the Bishop of Leicester.

Scottish Presbyterian Worship: Proposals for organic change, 1843 to the present day

Bryan D. Spinks (St Andrew Press 2020)
£25, 320 pages)

What does it mean to be part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church? How do attitudes to ecumenism, nationality, theology and sacraments shape our understanding of worship? How does any denomination come to a mind about the need for liturgical change, and what that change might look like? All these themes and more have their place in this fascinating study.

The book begins in 1843 with the 'Great Disruption' which resulted in the creation of the Free Church of Scotland, and continues to an examination of responses to the coronavirus pandemic and the challenges of online worship: in this case 'the present day' of the title means what it says. Liturgical developments are mapped on to wider cultural shifts including romanticism, modernism and postmodernism. The evidence for liturgical change itself is carefully examined through reference to service books and hymnals, collections of prayers for local use, reports of kirk sessions and even Queen Victoria's diary, which gives a surprisingly full account of a Communion service at Crathie. Changing attitudes to music in worship provide a barometer for theological and cultural difference, from 'lined-out' metrical psalms to robed choirs on the one hand, and the worldwide influence of the Iona Community on the other.

Throughout the book, the principle of *Lex orandi lex credendi* is applied in some depth to liturgical texts and their use, as also to the resistance in some quarters to using set texts at all. The metaphor of organic change and evolution is used throughout the book to highlight the fact that churches are living organisms, and liturgy is a measure of that life. 'To attempt to fossilise liturgy is akin to attempting to stop evolution (and time)' but in some denominations, including some of the smaller Scottish Presbyterian churches examined here, that's precisely the point: the very concept of evolution implies adaptation to context, which

some find contentious. A number of case studies of different services during 2015 reveal that 'liturgical coelacanths' are still happily swimming in some churches alongside newer species.

Spinks does not hesitate to point out that the relationship between evolution and devolution takes on a particular resonance in the light of current issues of Scottish identity. The relationship between local, national and supranational catholicity is one of the major themes of the book. The influence of Zwingli and Calvin on the Church of Scotland is discussed alongside Puseyite 'Scoto-Catholics' in the later nineteenth century. Theologies of atonement in baptismal liturgies, approaches to biblical criticism and the desire for 'pure' scripturally sanctioned worship, are all given detailed attention, together with the nature of sacraments and the emergence of a range of perspectives on the Eucharist. Those whose only contact with the Church of Scotland's worship has been through the music of John Bell may be in for several surprises, but the questions raised here are of importance to anyone who cares about what makes for good worship.

✉ *Rowan Williams is Precentor of Peterborough.*

Canon Jane Sinclair

The Liturgical Commission was booked to meet from 15 to 17 March 1994 at Launde Abbey. Earlier that month the women priests legislation came into effect, and bishops were organizing large-scale priestings of (women) deacons. David Lunn of Sheffield 'bit the bullet' early and organized three ordinations on consecutive days – 15-17 March – at short notice. Jane, as Canon Precentor, began with the Commission on the Monday, but left at tea time to precent the first ordination – as a deacon – that evening. She returned from Tuesday morning and left in the afternoon to be a candidate at the Tuesday evening ordination. We re-scheduled the usual pre-breakfast eucharist on the Wednesday and replaced it with a 12.30 mass of St Patrick, which was Jane's first celebration. That evening, after the Commission, she precented at the third rite in Sheffield.

✉ *David Hebblethwaite*

WHEN I BEGAN TEACHING liturgy 57 (*sic!*) years ago in a residential college, the 1662 BCP was the sole syllabus. This was not because the Prayer Book Society had imposed its beneficial will upon the college – no, it is because in those golden days the whole Church of England was (at least in theory, and actually in examinations) the Prayer Book Society. The syllabus I inherited ran for two years, one for all liturgical history and background down to 1662, one for careful exposition and understanding of each service in the BCP in turn. I don't think hymnody figured in it (it was all A&M-type anyway) – in teaching, the BCP was totally unrivalled. I suppose I had 70-80 classroom hours in total, and two years of examinations.

Well, it all changed, and I confess I had my own hand in changing it. To keep abreast of the events which I chart each month as their 50th anniversary comes up, the syllabus moved along behind the changes. But in the 1970s, ordinands had usually some experience of 1662 (good or bad) and reference back and comparison with it could helpfully be made. However, by the time the single-issue Prayer Book Society was pressing the bishops to require the colleges to use the BCP in the 1980s, the students had largely been 'formed' in the days of alternative services, and giving them Cranmer was like attempting to tie fallen leaves back onto their trees.

So the syllabus moved on with the texts. And then in 2000-2006 came *Common Worship* – available in eight or so large printed volumes, or instead on the web. And in the last two decades more and more liberty has been granted to colleges and courses to decide where to put their own weight. It is not only that liturgy modules have shrunk in length (or even morphed into more generalized 'ministry' categories), nor only that the last 55 years have conferred this vast load of successive new texts upon us, but also that planning and preparation of acts of worship have (very rightly) taken more place in the agenda, a great expansion of musical resources has thrust its way into our hearing and into view, all-age worship makes its demands, and freedom is sought

to conduct worship independently of any liturgical tradition. These changes may hardly affect any one parish from one year to the next, but a large proportion of ordinands and would-be lay worship-leaders – the very people being trained on our courses – actually come from the more *avant-garde* parishes, and have been formed existentially rather than by developed Anglican cultural traditions. Will *Common Worship* leaves tie onto these trees?

So the question arises as to whether teaching re Hippolytus, or Cranmer, or 1662, or even Ronald Jasper or David Stancliffe should figure in the training. Do sacramental theology, Anglican history, or *Common Worship* texts need entrenching in any way in courses advertised as teaching worship? What of Bible and history do worship leaders need to know? Whether for ordinands or non-ordinands, I would be very interested to see what limits there are, what are maximal and minimal Anglican contents that are offered in courses preparing our worship leaders for tomorrow. So please send me details (up to one side of A4 or its equivalent) of how these are handled where you are. I shall hope to report back. [cobdleeds@btinternet.com]

This issue's 50th anniversary

One controversial element in liturgical revision was being sorted out by the Liturgical Commission in early 1971. The Doctrine Commission had just published (as a result of division over liturgy) *Prayer and the Departed* (SPCK, 1970), and the Commission was busy incorporating the irenic recommendations of the Doctrine Commission into Series 3 eucharist and Series 3 funeral rites. The results are visibly continued in the descendants from those texts.

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