

Issue 1
September 2023
£2.50

Transforming Worship News

Transforming Worship

An interview with Bishop Robert, our retiring President

BISHOP ROBERT RETIRES as Bishop of Exeter, Chair of the Liturgical Commission and our President at the end of September. I met up with him to reflect on liturgical matters. In this article, Bishop Robert considers what good worship means, some issues for the current church and the future role of Transforming Worship.

A liturgical life.

Bishop Robert thinks of himself as always being ‘fundamentally a liturgical animal’. He explained: ‘I don’t come from a church-going background. I was dispatched to Sunday School by my parents and I found myself, because I could sing, mopped up into the church choir at the age of seven, and I have sort of been there ever since really. The Church of England distinctly emerged from the Reformation as a liturgical church. I’ve always valued [liturgy] and I felt very comfortable [with it]. When liturgy is done well, and I put the accent on the

In this issue

President’s reflections	1-3
Editorial	2
Transforming Worship	4-5
Membership	6
Music matters	7-10
Learning opportunities	11-13
Books	14
Colin’s Column	15-16

‘well’, then it brings the church alive and it certainly brings me alive as a Christian person.’

Doing liturgy well.

What does the Bishop mean when he refers to doing liturgy ‘well’? ‘The first thing is that that there is always a performative aspect to liturgy. It is not simply the words. [But] words are so important. Getting the words ‘right’ matters. It is really important that you have wordsmiths on the Liturgical Commission — people who can use language. English language changes and evolves. It is always going to be an ongoing process finding the right words with which people can express their love for God.’

‘Words are half the story; the other half is that [liturgy] is a performative act.

Editorial

THE PROCESS OF transforming an eight-page A4 publication into a 16-page A5 publication cannot be *that* tricky, I laughably told myself. The other side of the process of producing this edition has taught me otherwise, and I beg your patience and prayers as the pagination settles down over the next couple of editions.

What is striking as I look over this first edition of *Transforming Worship News* is that this is but the next stage in a project that has been going on for decades, under a number of titles (*News of Liturgy*, *News of Hymnody*, *Praxis News*) and editors, all convinced of the importance of keeping the rumour of liturgical excellence alive in the Church of England. I have invited previous editors to reflect somewhat on how they see the landscape at this point, and I will include their contributions in the coming editions.

Equally striking are the number of learning opportunities available to us (pp 10-13). There seems to be a head of steam building as we move further from the pandemic, and I commend those courses and training days not only to you, but also those in your communities who may also be longing for some formation. Do share the details!

This edition inevitably does a fair amount of looking back as well as forward, and that is important. Forward we go, and I welcome emails suggesting foci for future editions. Doubtless *Prayers of Love and Faith* will be a focus at some point next year. What else?

✍ Tom Clammer OC, Editor.

Bp Robert

...continued from page 1

So, when we are doing liturgy “well”, we are marrying the words with the actions. And that means it is almost as if you are a producer on stage, you have to take notice of the space in which this is taking place.’

‘Within the Church of England, we have so many different traditions and customs. You either think that is a profound flaw, or else, like me, you think it is a strength. But clearly one of the problems about that diversity is coherence.’

Considering individual worshipping communities, ‘you have to have the sensibility [of] where your community is, and therefore what makes sense with that community and how you can bring it alive for them. And I think that is the challenge. And it has been the challenge in every single generation.’

Liturgical training today.

Turning to the question of whether there are sufficient resources for liturgical training of clergy and lay leaders, Bishop Roberts responds: ‘The answer is that there isn’t and there won’t be. Because in the end, it’s money, money, money, money. And I think dioceses are so strapped for cash that I cannot see [any change]. In our TEIs (Theological Training Institutes), the curriculum is so tight and condensed as it is. I cannot see there is going to be any change there.’

‘There is absolutely a danger that future generations of clergy will not feel confident in performing the liturgy. So much weight is now increasingly put upon the three years of a person’s curacy and the hope that

Bishop Robert reflects

you can pick it up by osmosis. There is a real danger but I don't have a solution.'

Rural worship

Looking particularly at the problem of worship in multi-parish rural benefices, the Bishop refers to his ambition, often defeated by reality, that there should be an act of worship, however short, ideally, every Sunday in every parish. 'I think that rural people have a loyalty to their village church, not necessarily to the church in the next village. I wish that it were otherwise but it is often the way it is. It is one of the reasons for what is currently called Focal Ministers. In other words, who is the local pastor for a particular place? So, I think, in the end, it is incumbent on the incumbent to identify and train those people who will be competent in leading the people of God in worship, and one of the good things about the Church of England is that we do have a liturgy. Enabling them to understand it and "perform" it is important.'

The role of Transforming Worship

lament that in some quarters of the Church, the very word liturgy has become freighted with negativity. I sometimes hear comments like: "We have worship but we don't do liturgy" as if liturgy is always stultifying'. One of the things I hope Transforming Worship may be able to do is to help a wider public know how liberating liturgical worship can be in releasing people to discover the full potential of their spirituality. I think there is quite a 'market' out there to help people understand that

reality.'

Transforming Worship has a role 'in enabling a new generation of clergy and licenced lay ministers to have knowledge of the liturgy and confidence in its performance. And for them to reflect on what "doing liturgy well" means. How do we lead worship "well"? What distinguishes the Christian community from a club or leisure activity is that we gather for prayer and worship on a regular basis; so doing that well is almost the most important thing we do. We need to encourage people to understand the dimensions of the liturgy, which is a little bit like trying on your grandfather's best three-piece suit, — as a child, you put it on, and it falls all around you and you gradually have to grow up into it. And eventually you find you feel quite comfortable in it.

A second question I would ask, speaking from the Diocese of Exeter, and our rural constituency, is 'how do we enable our rural communities to worship? Who is going to lead that worship given there are not enough ordained people nor licenced lay ministers?' We must encourage other lay leaders. Who is going to do [that training]? Given the poverty of resources that are in most dioceses, Transforming Worship could offer to be available to help beleaguered rural dioceses in training up a new generation of, to use the current parlance, Focal Ministers, when they are called upon to preside at worship.'

✍ *Interviewed by Paul Kingdom, rector of rural parishes in the Exeter Diocese and treasurer of Transforming Worship.*

Transforming Worship

AS I WRITE, ELON MUSK has announced a rebrand of his social media platform. Twitter is now to be known as 'X'. 2023 has also seen the rebrand of Pepsi with a new 'pulse' motif; Kraft cheese singles have rebranded with bold colours and easier-to-open packaging; Stella Artois have changed their market to focus on casual diners and Peloton Gym have revamped their brand to become more accessible. I am left trying to find a balance between the words of the hymn 'Abide with me', 'change and decay in all around I see' and the oft used marketing phrase, 'new and improved'. The heart of it really, from a theological point of view, is resurrection. Resurrection is at the heart of the Christian faith. The resurrection of Jesus changes everything.

The Council of this organization, once regarded by many as the training arm of Church of England's Liturgical Commission, have gone through a process of seeking a rebrand and a renewing for a new day. As of the 1st September the organisation formerly known as Praxis will be called Transforming Worship. Regular readers may be delighted to learn that this edition is being offered free of charge to those who are currently in training for ministry, and I would like to draw ordinands' attention to the final paragraph.

For those who are not aware of the history, it was in the early 1990s that 'Praxis: Enriching Worship Today' was established and, as I said above, regarded by many as the delivery arm of the Church of England's Liturgical Commission. The roll-out of the *Common Worship* suite

of resources saw much activity as Praxis played a major part in helping Clergy, Readers and Lay Worship leaders become familiar with the new resources and the freedoms that were now allowed by Canon after the 1980 *Alternative Service Book* ceased to be authorized. It is fair to say that in recent years, Praxis has played a more minor role in worship and liturgical training linked in some ways to the change in focus across the Church. Anecdotally, concern has been expressed that training today in worship and liturgy is not as strong as it could be, and that a focus on excellence in worship, that enables worshippers to encounter God in word and sacrament, is sometimes lost. This is evidenced by the demise in Diocesan Liturgical or Worship Committees and the reduction in training through the theological colleges and courses in worship and liturgy.

I was once asked in an interview to describe how worship and liturgy could be used to enhance the delivering of a strategy for mission. I was provided with documents outlining a strategy and then objectives that would help the delivery of that strategy. I responded by asking, 'which is the most important leg in a three-legged stool?' I answered that rhetorical question by saying that the most important part of the stool is not a leg at all, but the seat that you sit on. The seat holds the legs which in turn support the seat. Similarly the worship holds the strategy which in turn supports the worship. Worship is at the heart of the mission of the church, the shop-window, as it has often been called, and there must

Transforming Worship

therefore be a striving for excellence.

The Executive of what is now Transforming Worship have recognized that there is still a major role to play in preparing worship leaders to lead effectively, and they have spent some time thinking of how to engage with this issue. In conversations it was acknowledged that the name 'Praxis' perhaps no longer communicated, whereas the name 'Transforming Worship', known as a Liturgical Commission project some years ago, did. So, the change begins. As I said earlier, from 1st September the new name will be used and new logos have been produced. This quarterly publication will be called *Transforming Worship News* and a new website is being developed at the domain name <transformingworship.news>. It is important to say that this rebrand is the first step of a longer journey and new resources to support those in the wider church will be rolled out in the coming months.

A word to those in training: We wish you well whether you are beginning training this Autumn or are excited to be looking for a Title parish. As you prepare for ministry, please carry with you that message, articulated well by Bishop Robert in his interview, that worship is the heart of what we do, and that we all have a responsibility to lead well in a way that enables people to encounter God. Transforming Worship seeks to enable both ordained and lay leaders to be confident, comfortable and demonstrate excellence. Please become a part of this organisation and allow us to walk alongside you as you

journey on. You will find an note about this below. Membership is free to those in training.

✍ *Michael Gisbourne is Chair of Transforming Worship, and Canon Precentor of Ripon Cathedral.*

Free membership for those in training

As a 'one off', 50 copies of this edition of *Transforming Worship News* are being sent to each Theological Training Institution, with the hope that every new ordinand or Reader-in-Training will receive a copy this September, and hopefully other students will get one as well. This offer also extends to those training as Lay Worship Leaders.

Those in training are entitled to free membership for the duration of that training. That not only includes membership of the organization itself, and copies of the quarterly journal, but also free attendance to all training events, both on-line and in person.

We would love you to join us in our aim of promoting excellence in worship in the Church of England, in all of its wonderful variety.

To join either visit the website <www.transformingworship.news> or, to make it even easier, use the simplified version of the application form reproduced overleaf. Just tear off the page, fill it in, and pop it in the post.

Membership form

Your details

Title: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

I am joining Transforming Worship as an ordinand/Reader-in-training/LWL in training and so I understand that **my membership is free until I am ordained, licensed and admitted, or authorized.**

I understand that from the time of my ordination/admission/authorization, the annual subscription of £15 will apply.

I understand that I can cancel my membership at any point.

I expect my training to conclude in _____(month) _____(year).
Please use these dates in the next column as well.

Please send the completed form to:
Transforming Worship, c/o The Rectory,
21A King Street, Silvertown, Exeter,
EX5 4JG.

Standing order

(which will only apply from the point when I leave training).

This cancels any previous mandate made in favour of Praxis.

Name of bank: _____

Sort code: ____ - ____ - ____

Account in the name of :

Your account number :

Address of your bank: _____

Praxis bank details:
Drummonds, Royal Bank of Scotland, 49
Charing Cross, London SW1A 2DX

Sort code: 16-00-38 Account Number:
00244055 Reference: Praxis

Please begin to debit my account by £15 on the FIRST day of _____(month) 202____(year) and by £15 on the anniversary each year thereafter, or until further notice in writing.

Signature _____

Date _____

Music Matters

Singing Evensong

One of the most recent publications from the Royal School of Church Music is *Come & Sing Evensong!* – a collection of responses, canticles and anthems for the increasingly popular events when singers gather (often from more than one church) to form a choir to sing Evensong together on a single rehearsal.

Simon Lole, who has been Director of Music at cathedrals, a Cambridge college chapel, and parish churches, compiled and edited the collection and provides guidance on how to organize an event (including the all-important refreshments), along with performance notes for all the music in the book. Based at St Mary's Church in Swanage, Dorset, since 2010, he holds a monthly 'Come and Sing Evensong!' there.

One set of canticles, by Philip Wilby, is sung in unison, while the level of difficulty of the others is quite varied. The anthems include a setting by Joanna Forbes L'Estrange of famous words from 1 Corinthians 13, entitled 'Faith, Hope and Love', and Mozart's familiar 'Ave verum' is also included. To see what the whole book is like, visit the RSCM website (www.rscmshop.com/features/come-sing-evensong) and follow the link to flip through the pages online.

Celebration Day

This year's RSCM Celebration Day event will be held in Chester, with a special

service of evensong in the Cathedral sung by affiliated choirs from the region; other singers are also welcome to take part (www.rscm.org.uk/whats-on/celebration-day). The massed choir will be conducted by Tansy Castledine, Director of Music at Peterborough Cathedral since September 2018 and a trustee of the Church Music Society as well as of the RSCM. Chester Cathedral's own Director of Music, Philip Rushforth, will accompany the service on the organ, in music to include Stanford's *Te Deum* in B flat and evening canticles by Joanna Forbes L'Estrange (the King's College Service, published by the RSCM in 2019 and originally written for Ben Parry and King's Voices, the mixed-voice student choir which sings on Monday evenings in the chapel of King's College, Cambridge).

The afternoon rehearsal for singers will begin at 1.30, with the service (which will be live-streamed via the Cathedral's website) starting at 5 pm. Evensong will also include the presentation of this year's RSCM honorary awards.

REH update

The latest news on the much-delayed *Revised English Hymnal* (following in the tradition of the 1906 *English Hymnal* and the 1986 *New English Hymnal*) is that publication of the full music edition is scheduled for September 2023, with further editions to follow. An online and printed sampler is promised 'soon', and the book's Preface has been made available

Music Matters

on the publisher's website (<https://reh.hymnsam.co.uk/introduction>). The websites of some booksellers, including Blackwell's, suggest a publication date of 29 September 2023 (the Festival of Michael and All Angels).

Like *NEH*, the book will have a liturgical section to provide, for example, for the Liturgy of Good Friday and of the Easter Vigil, along with some Eucharistic settings.

2024 anniversary

A friend recently pointed out that 2024 will see the fortieth anniversary of *Mission Praise*, initially published under the title *Mission England Praise* as an ecumenical resource for Billy Graham's Mission England rallies held in various UK cities in 1984. The National Director for Mission England, Gavin Reid (later Bishop of Maidstone), was among those who felt strongly that a new collection of music was needed, bringing together traditional hymns and more recently written, less formal songs. This would be used both by Christians preparing for the mission and by churches welcoming those new to faith afterwards, as well as at the rallies themselves.

Mission Praise 2 appeared in 1987, and a supplement two years later was followed by *Mission Praise Combined* in 1990 and *New Mission Praise* in 1996. *Complete Mission Praise* joined the series in 1999, and an even larger book with the same title was published in 2005. The ordering of

hymns and songs was alphabetical (with the odd exception to minimise awkward page turns), but to avoid confusion among musicians and congregations using more than one edition (and presumably also to limit editorial and typographic costs) the numbering of each edition remained the same from 1990, with newer material added in its own alphabetical sequence at the end of each volume. In general there was no pruning of material from previous editions, and a common complaint was that the editorial process seemed rather random and favoured contemporary songs over recently written hymns. By the time the 2009 version of *Complete Mission Praise* became available (the 'New 25th Anniversary Words Edition' had a Foreword by Gavin Reid), the numbering went up to 1,250.

The thirtieth anniversary was marked by HarperCollins with an expanded (again!) collection of hymns and songs under the back-to-basics title *Mission Praise* (compiled for 2014 but first available in 2015). Edited, like its predecessors, by Peter Horrobin and Greg Leavers, the full music edition is in two volumes, making it more convenient for music stands. Its foreword is by Cliff Barrows (1923-2016), a close colleague of Billy Graham and member of the original Mission England music team, who wrote, 'I welcome this new edition of *Mission Praise* and hope and pray that many thousands more voices will join the crowds that I remember thirty years ago, who came together to sing God's praises!'

For the last fifteen years or so it has been

Anne Harrison

possible to subscribe to 'Mission Praise Online' (<https://missionpraise.com>) and to download sheet music and words, with a search facility which can be tailored to particular themes. Material published in *Carol Praise* and *Junior Praise* can also be accessed this way. Since so many churches now display the words sung in worship on one or more screens, the publishing environment for a potential new fortieth-anniversary edition in print may not seem very encouraging (at least of words-only books) – but watch this space, and if there is any news you will read it here!

Alan Gaunt (1935-2023)

Hymn writer and URC minister Alan Gaunt died on 19 July, following a short illness, at the age of 88. His ministry was based entirely in the North of England, and he had retired with his wife Winifred to the Wirral in 2000, remaining active in leading worship until earlier this year.

He had been a committed member of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland, serving as its Executive President between 2002 and 2008, and many who met him at the Society's annual conferences will remember his kindness, humility and sense of humour. Over 500 of his hymn texts were published, though mainly in single-author collections from Stainer & Bell (<https://stainer.co.uk/composer/alan-gaunt>), and in 1998 Manchester University awarded him an honorary MA for his hymn writing. He was not afraid to write

about war, grief or doubt, as illustrated by a number of his texts included in *Ancient & Modern* (2013).

Most of his hymns can be sung to existing tunes, but he also set some of his own verses to music, including the song 'As the king stood on his palace roof in Babylon', based on verses from Daniel 4 – a novel way to tell the story of Nebuchadnezzar's pride, fall and restoration.

London to Iowa

At the end of May this year Geraldine Latty and Carey Luce, her husband of ten years, let it be known that – having stepped down from their teaching roles at the London School of Theology – they had accepted the offer of employment as Interim Directors of Worship at Dordt University in Iowa (www.dordt.edu). They will be part of the Campus Ministries team, with oversight of student worship teams and a role in teaching and caring for the various worship ensembles. The University describes itself as 'an institution of higher education devoted to the Reformed Christian perspective'. Among the courses offered is a degree in church music.

Geraldine and Carey are no strangers to Iowa: in the autumn of 2021 they spent a term as 'worship artists in residence' at Dordt. They now rejoin former colleague Dr Jeremy Perigo, who spent six years leading the Department of Theology, Music and Worship at London School of

Music Matters

Theology before becoming Professor of Theology and Worship Arts at Dordt. Dr Perigo's Worship Theology podcast (<https://worshiptheology.podbean.com>) may be of interest to some readers – one episode last year, for example, was a conversation with Carey Luce about creative musicianship in worship.

Remembering NOH

I had the privilege of editing *News of Hymnody* (the pink quarterly publication) during the last year of its life. Issues 85 to 88 appeared in 2003, before the birth of *Praxis News of Worship* the following year. Durham's Pratt Green Collection of Hymnody holds a complete set of NOH, published by Grove Books.

I remember feeling daunted at following in the footsteps of the scholarly Robin Leaver and distinguished hymn writer Christopher Idle, but I also recall learning an enormous amount and becoming increasingly fascinated by all the activities of those who studied or wrote hymns and tunes, or who just enjoyed singing them in and out of church.

It seems no less important now to champion the cause of contemporary hymnody and the cherishing of traditional repertoire alongside the new.

✍ Anne Harrison.

Upcoming Seasons

Although neither of them are technically formal seasons of the Liturgical Year, coming up are both ***Creationtide*** and the period between ***All Saints' Day*** and ***Advent***, which continues to be informally referred to as the 'Kingdom Season', despite that term never appearing in any *Common Worship* publication.

A period of particular focus on the natural world, ***Creation***, the Environment, and issues of sustainability and stewardship is encouraged for roughly the period between the beginning of September and the Feast of St Francis on 4 October. This is of course flexible, and may include the Harvest Thanksgiving/Festival. Resources are provided in *Common Worship: Times and Seasons*, in the recent rather fine production, *A Time for Creation* (Church House Publishing, 2020) which draws together a number of resources including material appropriate to use with BCP, as well as on the C of E website.

Alongside the resources in *T&S*, and in the black 'Core Volume', we might consider whether ***the four weeks of November*** offer an opportunity to preach on some of the traditional Advent themes that tend to get squeezed out. The Four Last Things: Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell are profound and important foci, and might find a more natural context in November than December now. Those who still have a copy of *The Promise of his Glory* on their shelves might be interested in the liturgical resources supporting the preaching of the Four Last Things (pp 102-11), which might perfectly appropriately be translated into November. [Ed.]

Learning Opportunities

Readers are encouraged to keep an eye on the Transforming Worship website [www.transformingworship.news] which will be updated regularly. [Ed.]

Transforming Worship South West

Exploring Worship in Pilgrimage.
Saturday 7 October 2023, (rescheduled from May).

***10.00 - 16.00, The Jubilee Rooms,
Castle Street, Stogursey, Bridgwater,
TA5 1TG***

Speaker: Helen Bent.

Refreshments, including a light lunch, will be provided.

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

Pilgrimage has been growing in popularity in recent years for those of faith and those with none. This ancient tradition resonates with the deep searching of the human soul and the human need for spiritual meaning in an increasingly unpredictable world. Both journey and destination can be significant, but what turns a walk into a pilgrimage? How does a physical pilgrimage relate to a spiritual journey of faith or the journey of life? And where does worship fit in?

Come and experience worship in pilgrimage for yourself and discover resources to create a 'worship pilgrimage' round your own church or community. The day will include a short

pilgrimage walk to St Andrew's Well, St Andrew's Church and the remains of an old Celtic Cross with worship connecting with Stogursey's medieval pilgrim past.

Please note that access to the Jubilee Rooms and St Andrew's Church is via mobile ramps, and there is no level access to St Andrew's Well. Informal arrangements for parking for the disabled can be made by contacting us beforehand.

Helen Bent is author of Grove booklet W244, 'Exploring worship in pilgrimage'. She is a respected author and speaker, who combines her love of worship with her knowledge of the Bible and church history. She also has a passion for mission and finding new ways of engaging with those on the margins of the church.

*Please contact Paul Kingdom
(revpaulkingdom@gmail.com) to register your attendance.*

***Thursday 16 November 2023,
10.00 - 12.00, on Zoom.***

Speaker:
***Canon Dr Tom Clammer OC, liturgist,
spiritual director and educator.***

Revisiting Initiation.

An opportunity, following the publication of Patterns for Baptism and the updated Common Worship: Baptism and Confirmation Services, for input, small group conversation and sharing of best

Learning opportunities

practice around 'doing initiation' in the parish or other worshipping community. Tom teaches sacramental theology and liturgy at Sarum College and at Ripon College Cuddesdon, as well as exercising parochial ministry in a number of contexts in retirement.

Attendance is for a £5 donation. Please contact Paul Kingdom (revpaulkingdom@gmail.com) to register your attendance and receive the Zoom login link. Delegates from all Praxis regions, and further afield, are very welcome.

Transforming Worship East

Offering regular peer support and training each term.

Environmentally Aware Worship.

Thursday 28 September, 19.00 - 21.00, on Zoom (postponed from June due to a bereavement).

Liturgy and worship practitioners across the eastern dioceses are invited to come together. Using a peer-led discussion on Zoom, clergy and lay ministers can share experience, ideas and expertise. Six to eight topics will be considered under a broad heading by means of short presentations (7-10 mins), each then followed by discussion as a whole group or in smaller breakout rooms.

Ecology, conservation and climate change are all frequent topics in the news. As environmental concern has grown, Christians

have been adding their voice too, but how is this worked out within worship? And where do we look for suitable materials?

'How long, O Lord?' Exploring the Worship of Lament.

Thursday 23 November, 19.00 - 21.00, on Zoom.

Lament can be individual or corporate. We all face personal difficulties at times, but there is also much to lament within society and the wider world. This is a timely opportunity to explore a vital subject from different angles.

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

Transforming Worship North

Offering regular peer support and training each term.

Exploring Worship in Pilgrimage

Monday 16 October, 19.00 - 21.00, on Zoom.

There has been a growing fascination with pilgrimage during the 21st century. Many pilgrim routes link cathedrals or lead us to the resting place of particular saints with visits to other churches on the way. Alternatively we might engage in a local pilgrimage around a benefice or deanery. Two key elements are held in tension: journey and place. But where does worship fit in?

Come and discover ancient and contemporary

Learning opportunities

Pilgrim liturgies, 'Green' pilgrimage in the Isle of Man, and explore worship from a different perspective.

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

Sarum College, Salisbury

Revisiting Advent and Christmas

Thursday 23 September, 9.30 - 12.30, on Zoom. £35 (or redeemable against Salisbury CMD accounts).

As we reach Harvest, our minds will already be turning to how we will observe Advent and Christmas in our parishes and communities, and in our own devotional life.

This half-day online course will seek to revisit the distinctive themes of this wonderful period of the Christian year, focusing particularly on Advent and Christmas, but noting also how this season is connected to those that immediately precede and follow it.

Advent and Christmas have distinctive liturgical opportunities, theological and doctrinal themes that emerge through the Scriptures which we read as we move through the season, and perhaps more opportunity for pastoral engagement than any other time of the year in church, school, home, and the civic environment. It can seem overwhelming as well as wonderful, particularly given the busyness of ministry in our current age. How might we sift and arrange all of these

opportunities to deliver an Advent and Christmas that has the potential to really connect?

In half a day we won't be able to plumb all of these depths, but there will be opportunity for input, reflection, conversation, and the sharing of best practice.

*Book directly through Sarum College:
<<https://www.sarum.ac.uk/short-courses/revisiting-advent-and-christmas/>>*

Joint Liturgical Group

**Liturgy as Proclamation of the Gospel.
Thursday 28 September, 11.00 - 17.00,
Llandaff Cathedral. £30 (£15 students).
Keynote Speaker: Dr Rowan Williams,
previous Archbishop of Canterbury.**

A day exploring Liturgy and Worship as a way that many people hear the Good News, and deepen their journey of Christian discipleship. Lunch and refreshments included.

Book at <<https://jlg.org.uk/events/liturgy-as-proclamation-of-the-gospel/>>.

Books

Shaping the Assembly: How our buildings form us in worship

Thomas O'Loughlin (ed.), *Messenger Publications, 2023, Alcuin Club Collection 98, 279 pp., pb £23.*

This is an excellent volume of 18 enjoyable illustrated chapters exploring the design and use of space for liturgical celebration, including a reprint of Richard Hurley's gem of an essay on the Eucharist Room at Carlow. Other examples abound. Together the essays remind us that all space is theologically freighted and we are shaped by the spaces we create and curate. Space is experienced. Moreover, our theologies presume spaces of one kind or another, and these essays explore Christianity's ambiguous relationship to worship buildings.

'Form follows function' is the architectural dictum, which is made complex when the function is liturgical: the making present of the Paschal mystery and the formation of the Body of Christ. So essays explore how space allows for and shapes the movement, action and behaviours that form us in body, mind and spirit. Form is not utilitarian. It is a qualitative concept about mood, tone, encounter, relationship, value, the human. Our spaces need to invite and foster participation not spectatorship. Light as a theological and architectural theme recurs, as do explorations of transcendence/immanence, the sacred and the profane, liminality, embodiment. One of the more theologically rich essays is on dance in

worship.

This would be a super workbook for parishes and religious communities wanting to think about how the process of designing liturgical spaces can itself be inclusive and formational, with plenty of insights about what matters and lots of concrete ideas. It's an ecumenical book, heavy on Catholic articulations of Vatican II's theology in architectural form. A fear of clericalism recurs, rightly so, though it would be good to see an apologia for *ad orientem* that explores how the spaces it presumes may too form us well as an ecclesial body. It's inevitably focussed on space used for liturgical and, supremely, Eucharistic worship and a companion volume could look at how other worship traditions curate space.

✍ *Matthew Bullimore is Chaplain of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.*

Grove Booklets

Several Grove Booklets in the Worship series have been published in recent months, including:

W255, ***Church of England Worship: a basic guide for those who need to know***, by Mark Earey.

Rather than a focus on one aspect of worship, this booklet surveys the umbrella of Church of England worship, identifying its common core. This would be an excellent gift for a parish to give to any

What is Transforming Worship?

See www.transformingworship.news

Transforming Worship (known until recently as 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.

Transforming Worship News is copyright © Transforming Worship 2023.

Material for inclusion should be sent to the editor,
Canon Dr Tom Clammer OC, at:
editor@transformingworship.news

We reserve the right to edit material and make no guarantee to include material submitted. The views expressed are not necessarily those of Transforming Worship or the Transforming Worship Council.

For general enquiries, affiliation and programme information, contact:
Transforming Worship,
The Rectory, 21A King Street,
Silverton, Exeter, Devon EX5 4JG
admin@transformingworship.news

Transforming Worship South YouTube channel (which also hosts some recordings of national events):
<https://tinyurl.com/@TransformingWorshipSouth>

Affiliation

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

Books

and all who find themselves with some responsibility for organising worship, perhaps members of a PCC worship subcommittee, those training as Lay Worship Leaders, or those who have begun worshipping at an Anglican church having come from another denomination and who have questions about what they are now experiencing. It would also form the basis of a Lent or Advent refresher course for any and all, looking at 'why we do what we do.' *Ed.*

Colin's column

THERE IS ONLY ONE liturgical matter in the news as I write – *viz* the prayers which the House of Bishops provided to General Synod in February, drafts known as *Prayers of Love and Faith* (PLF). They were intended to be used to provide some kind of blessing of same-sex marriages. The Synod was reassured that the Canon defining marriage as between a man and a woman was not being amended. 32 years after *Issues In Human Sexuality* (of which I was a signatory), these prayers belonged to the new 'guidance' replacing it.

From my own stout column I report that the February resolution in Synod provided no firm ground for erecting some new unshakeable edifice. For note:

- (a) The bishops themselves made it clear the texts and guidance were provisional; some of them thought they had been premature in publishing what they did.
- (b) The Synod approved the resolution: Bishops 36-4 (2 abstentions); Clergy

Colin's column

111-85 (3 abstentions); Laity 103-92 (5 abstentions). The resolution was highly controversial.

(c) The text of the resolution looked forward to the House of Bishops 'commending' the texts for use.

If (a) and (b) of this triad undermined the foundations, then (c) demolished first attempts to build on it. How so? Well, my *News of Liturgy* carried news in 1984-85 of the origins of the House of Bishops' 'commendation'; on the Liturgical Commission we produced enriching liturgical materials for Lent, Holy Week and Easter. The Bishops were going to have the Archbishops authorize these texts under Canon B.4. On the Commission, we protested – for such authorization would have deprived parish clergy of any power to devise liturgical material for, say, Good Friday, other than the official texts. The liberties under Canon B.5 only exist where nothing has been ordered under B.2 or B.4. So 'commendation' enabled the texts to be available, simply as options alongside any other local materials. It gave the texts no official standing in the Church of England, but it did enable them to be published as C of E materials. The key factor today is that they were commended as non-controversial, i.e. as not needing full synodical scrutiny.

The House of Bishops seems to have picked this up, because they then said they were 'weighing up' using Canon B.4. But then they would have to define more closely what the texts were and for what purpose they were to be used – and they would still be highly controversial

and still avoid synodical scrutiny. Could the Bishops get away with such a murky process? Well, a little bird lurking near an archiepiscopal residence tells me the Bishops now seek a third recourse, namely Canon B.5A. This allows archbishops to give a limited licence to texts with a view to bringing them to Synod under full Canon B.2 rules; but they go to specifically designated parishes for experimentation for a specified time period. If it comes to that, how shall the parishes be chosen, and what conclusions would be drawn if up to half the parishes declined to use them, and if, among those that did, there proved to be no couples as candidates for the blessing? What would the Synod do with a House of Bishops' report which said that only 40% of the designated parishes had sent in their evaluation and these parishes were 100% delighted with the material?

This Issue's 50th Anniversary

I mentioned in the last edition that Series 3 Holy Communion had no Collects. It did, of course, have modern biblical texts, but it had no modern liturgical psalter. David Frost, who wrote the new prayers of confession, humble access and post-communion in Series 3, now went to work with two Cambridge Hebraists to provide, in Coverdale style for chanting, a full modern liturgical psalter. Its text is in the ASB, where copies of that still exist.

✍ Colin Buchanan is a former Bishop of Woolwich.