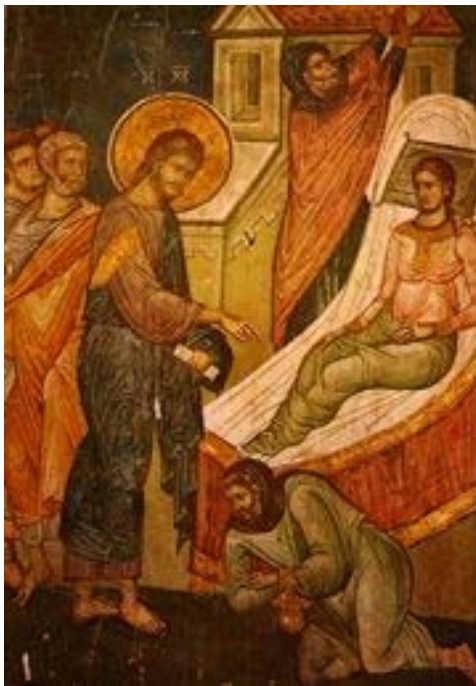


Repentance as The Way to a Blessed Life In the 21st Century



Christ Healing the Canaanite's Daughter
Decani Monastery, Serbia. 14th c.

A Retreat....

Led by
The Rev. Dr. Gary Thorne
St. George's Round Church, Halifax

February 13 to 15, 2004

At the
Bethany Centre, Antigonish

Cost
\$75.00
(\$55/students)
includes accommodations & meals

For more information
Contact Lynn Edmonds at
lynnedmonds@accesscable.net
or 827-3830
Please register by Friday, Feb 6th



The Prayer Book Society of Canada
Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island Branch
PO Box 8292 C.S.C., Halifax, NS B3K 5M1

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Branch page: www.stpeter.org/pbs.html
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Candlemas 2004

The Poetic Life of Common Prayer

A Society dedicated to the use of *The Book of Common Prayer* understands perfectly well that our worship is anchored in the recitation and repetition of words which are as fitting to the awesome character of their object as we can make them. Hence our commitment is to the exactness of language, and to the musical rhythms, which represent our earthly attempts to realize the heavenly harmony of praise which is the obligation of all God's creatures. It is by means of words that we seek to worship the Word, that Word that "was with God" and that Word that "was God". (John 1:1).



Our Book of Common Prayer is a kind of poetry, and in seeking to understand it better perhaps we should also undertake to read it more "poetically". The German Romantic poet Novalis (1772-1801) suggested that every book implies a kind of life, and that, conversely, each and every life is a kind of book. For Novalis, the link between the two is obvious: every life has a title, a motto, a publisher, a preface, an introduction, a body of text divided into chapters, an epilogue and endnotes. Perhaps, in the Prayer Book Society, we should think of our own lives as actually reflecting the organization, the divisions and the development of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

❖ Thus, we would begin immediately with the title: "common prayer"; that is to say, this is a book for "all estates" of mankind, humble and noble, rough and smooth, low brow and high brow. And our prayer can never be "common" unless all are *included*, and none are excluded.

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❖ Then, we move on to the “Table of Contents” which gives us a kind of overview of the totality of our lives, starting from the “Preface”, the beginning of our lives, that care of God by which we are chosen “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4). The “Table of Contents” begins before the beginning and ends after the end in “Family Prayer”, the life that carries on after our days have reached their allotted span.

❖ Next comes the actual “Preface” in which we are reminded that “the Book of Common Prayer is a priceless possession of our Church” (p. vii); it is clearly, therefore, our duty as Anglicans to preserve it. We are offered “the mission statement” of our Society, if you like.

❖ The next page contains the “Solemn Declaration” of 1893, by which we are all brought into a public assertion that “we are determined by the help of God to hold and maintain the Doctrine, Sacraments, and Discipline of Christ” (p. viii). This, according to our book is our Motto and Rule of Life.

❖ Now the Calendar, the Days of Fasting, the Moveable Feasts, the tables for the appointed Lessons and Psalms, both for the regular unfolding of the year, and for “Special Occasions”. We have affirmed our Rule of Life, now we are given the tools whereby we may bring it into actuality.

❖ Next Morning, Mid-Day and Evening Prayer, by which the scheme just given in outline is brought into the concrete business of our daily living.

❖ All of the above is then beautifully summarized in “The Litany”, with its appended “Prayers and Thanksgivings”; every day, we should seek the grace of God, and make our supplication “to bless and keep all thy people” (p. 33) in Common Prayer.

❖ Now the heart of our Christian community and the centre of our lives: “The Holy Communion” with the Scripture readings appointed for the whole Church year and equally the individual feasts. “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” reads the Sentence for Ascensiontide, “for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (p. 74). It is in the Holy Communion that we are enabled “in heart and mind thither” to ascend (p. 201), which is our highest Christian vocation. In the Holy Communion, there is the possibility of the summary of every human desire and aspiration, here made perfect in “this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving” (p. 83).

❖ This same insight is strengthened by “the Psalter”; see Psalm 119, Verse 164, for instance: “Seven times a day do I praise thee”; or Psalm 90, Verse 13: “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom; or Psalm 121, Verse 6, which assures us that “the sun shall not burn thee by day, neither the moon by night”; and finally Psalm 23 with its profound assertion that we shall, all of us, be carried to a place we have no desire to go (John 21:18), that is, “the valley of the shadow of death”.

Institute

Saturday, 6 March 2004

**Saint George's (Round) Church
corner of Brunswick and Cornwallis Streets, Halifax, NS**

Mr. Christopher Snook

Teaching Fellow of the University of King's College

Theme: "David, Poet-King of Israel"

Lenten Addresses at 11am and 1pm

Please bring a bag lunch; coffee and tea provided.

ANN

Do you have e-mail? Consider subscribing to the Diocese's weekly **Anglican Net News**, an electronic newsletter. (There is no cost.) All NS & PEI Prayer Book Society events, along with many other events, are advertised. To subscribe e-mail your request to:

office@nspeidiocese.ca

Help Us Keep In Touch

Please send us your new postal or e-mail address, or phone number.

Know someone we should add to our list? Please let us know. Our front page has details on how to contact us.

PBSC NS&PEI Branch is always thankful for your financial support, even when lack of space prevents us from saying so in a big way. Thank you!

❖ In a wonderful economy, we now rehearse this complete journey of life from baptism, and catechism (i.e., Christian schooling), through adolescence (the order for confirmation) and young adulthood (solemnization of matrimony) and child-birth; then the inevitable decline of our adult lives in sickness, and the final conclusion of all sickness expressed in the most profoundly moving service in the whole *Book of Common Prayer*, the incomparable “Order for the Burial of the Dead”. The sentence from Deuteronomy 33 says it all: “underneath are the everlasting arms” (p. 592).

❖ The remarkable thing about the “Burial Office” is the way in which it is simultaneously an expression of the profoundest grief and the greatest consolation, exhorting us, as it does, to “the comfort of a reasonable, religious, and holy hope (pp. 599-600). As if to confirm this very teaching, the Prayer Book then moves on to the contrasting Penitential Service for Ash Wednesday and Thanksgiving Service for the Blessing of Harvest, grief and joy apparently now united, in the only true expression of what it is to be human. Happiness and sorrow, comedy and tragedy are equally our lot, and we cannot be whole or really know the character of the one without the other.

❖ After the Blessing of Harvest comes the renewal of the earth in the eternal spring of our children: “An Order of Service for Young People” -- and as if speaking to every parent’s anxiety and deepest worry, this is followed by Prayers “to be used at sea”. We pray that our loved ones may not be drowned in the vast unknowable ocean of life, without a pilot, without a compass, without direction, without a lifeboat, tossed to and fro in the unending “storms” (p. 635) and tempests of life.

❖ The body of any church is known as the “nave”, which comes from the same Latin root as our words “naval” and “navy”. All refer us to the concept of a ship, and in this view, the Christian Church is like Noah’s Ark, a place of safety from the floods, a refuge and shelter from the storm-tossed sea. But this Ark, this ship, this haven, needs a pilot, a navigator, and a captain, which is why the “Ordinal”, the forms of service for the making, ordination and consecration of deacons, priests and bishops follows directly. In a chaotic world, faced with an infinite horizon, we pray that we may never be left rudderless: without compass, without charts, without an anchor by which we can survive “the perfect storm”.

❖ This is, of course, logically followed by the establishment of our individual parishes through the induction of rectors, the laying of foundation stones, and the consecration of churches. Here we are offered a kind of re-iteration of the whole life of the Church, now in its physical aspect just as much as in its living stones (1Peter 2:5), our stewards and ministers, “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets” (Ephesians 2: 20).

The Prayer Book Society of Canada
Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island Branch

Calendar of Events

Mark your calendar now, and look for more details in this and subsequent newsletters:

Sunday Feb 1st. 7:30 p.m. **Evensong, Candlemas Ceremonies, Procession and Benediction** at St Peter's Cathedral, Charlottetown. See the musical details at <http://www.stpeter.org/music.html>

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Monday, February 2, 7 p.m. **Candlemas with Procession in the Round Church (The Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Presentation of Christ in the Temple)**  
Preacher is **The Rev'd Canon Dr. Susan Moxley**, Bishop Suffragan Elect for the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.  
Music by Palestrina and Gibbons

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February 6
Deadline to register for Retreat in Antigonish

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February 13-15  
**Retreat in Antigonish:** see detail in newsletter

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King's College Chapel, Halifax
Choral Evensong with the Chapel Choir
Sun. Feb. 15, and Mar. 21 all at 5:00 PM

~~~~~  
March 6, 11am  
Saint George's (Round) Halifax  
**PBSC NS & PEI Branch INSTITUTE:** see details in newsletter

~~~~~  
June 27 to June 30, 2004
2004 Atlantic Theological Conference
"Multiculturalism and Religious Freedom"
Fredericton, New Brunswick

continued from previous page...

❖ As we approach the end of our volume, there is one final recapitulation of the entirety of our tradition in the so-called Athanasian Creed, with its central assertion that it was Christ “Who suffered for our salvation” (p. 697); this is immediately followed by the peculiar English expression of these same universal truths in the historic “Articles of Religion”, here given greater gravity by the inclusion of the original Prefaces, works of inordinate precision of language “in a tongue... understood of the people” (p. 707).

❖ “Then cometh the end” (p. 596), and everything achieves its consummation and conclusion in *Compline*, which prepares us for “the silent hours of this night” (p. 727). “Abide with us, Lord, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent...” (adapted from Luke 24, *BCP*, p. 187).

❖ But, of course, the night is only a moment in eternity, and can never represent the end of Christ’s all-embracing, universal religion. It is true that Christ did “at this evening hour ... rest in the sepulchre” (p. 727); our Lord and Master did, indeed, give his life “for the sheep”, but He did this only so that we might have life, and have it more “abundantly” (John 10: 10-11). And so, in true conclusion, we come back to the eternal springtime of all life that we discover in our children and our families. The renewal of life and of the earth, the cycles of nature, of generation and corruption; the eternal springtime of humanity as expressed with intense immediacy in the concluding “Family Prayer”, new life for a “brave new world that has such people in’t”. Our *Book of Common Prayer* has so much affinity with the English of the incomparable Shakespeare.

❖ And, in the end, we turn to the very bottom of the very last page of the whole of our *Common Prayer* (p. 736). Is it really so surprising that we should discover there that the very last word comes once again from Holy Scripture? Our future is finally to be secured by the recitation (and re-animation) of the unsurpassable words of our awesome (and living) past. Here Ephesians, chapter 3 (verses 20 & 21): “according to the power that worketh in us... throughout all ages, world without end. *Amen.*”

Rev'd Dr. Thomas Curran is President of the
Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island Branch
of the Prayer Book Society of Canada



Discovering the Book of Common Prayer: A Hands-On Approach

At last, a user-friendly guide to the Book of Common Prayer!

The Prayer Book Society of Canada has commissioned well-known journalist Sue Careless to write an introduction to the BCP for those unfamiliar with it, whether long-time or new Anglicans, young or old.

Co-published by the PBSC and the Anglican Book Centre, the first book of the two-volume series, on "Daily Prayer", has now been produced and is available for order. The second volume, on "Sacraments and Occasional Offices", is scheduled to appear in late 2004 or early 2005.

This book begins with a brief introduction to the Prayer Book and its background, and takes the reader on an engaging tour first of prayer in general, then of easy patterns of daily prayer drawn from the BCP, finally culminating in the full discipline of the Daily Offices. Issues that sometimes puzzle newcomers, such as the language of the Prayer Book and the use of lectionaries, are dealt with in clear and accessible terms. Practical tips are given for embarking on a rhythm of daily prayer, and for weathering dry periods. Three useful reference sections are appended: a brief historical overview of Anglicanism and the Prayer Book, an index of collects and prayers for various occasions, and an explanation of unfamiliar words, including a comprehensive glossary.

Two years in the making, the book has gone through three drafts and has been vetted by a panel of twenty-odd reviewers from across the country, comprising men and women of a variety of ages and including both clergy and lay members.

How to Get a Copy

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OR

Anglican Book Centre, Toronto
Phone: 1-800-268-1168
Cost: \$19.95

