

**General Synod**  
**2010-2015 Quinquennium**  
**Report from the Liturgical Commission**

**Introduction**

1. This report sets out, towards the end of the present Liturgical Commission's five-year term of office, a brief review of its work and achievements in the last five years, and some pointers towards the tasks that await the next Commission in the period 2015-2020. It is offered to the General Synod and the House of Bishops, both for the sake of accountability, and to encourage a discussion of priorities at a time of scarce resources.
2. That the Church of England should seek to offer to God, across all its churches and chapels and places of worship, the best worship of which it is capable, would seem self-evident. It seems self-evident for God's sake, but also for the Church's institutional flourishing. Liturgy and mission are inseparable. One would expect the Church to pay close attention to what is, for those outside it, its shop window; joyful and authentic worship is deeply attractive, with a powerful capacity to draw people into the journey of Christian discipleship, as well as to sustain and encourage them along its path.

**The Commission, its members, and its working partnerships**

3. The members of the Commission are appointed at the beginning of each synodical quinquennium by the Archbishops, after consultation with the Appointments Committee. These members are drawn from both within and outside the membership of the General Synod. Up to three additional Synod members may be co-opted with the concurrence of the Archbishops, and the Chair may appoint one or more consultants.
4. Consultants are not voting members of the Commission, but they make a very significant contribution through their scholarship, experience, and specialist knowledge, and play an important part in the working groups through which the Commission prepares much of its work, as well as in meetings of the full Commission. The Commission is deeply grateful to those who have contributed generously as consultants, often over an extended period of years. The Commission's life is also enriched by the regular and active participation of observers from the Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches, and of the Editor of *Praxis News of Worship*, which publishes short reports of the Commission's work.
5. At a time of budgetary constraint, it is worth noting that the system of the Commission's meetings is in effect a way of mobilising a great deal of expertise at very low cost to the Church's central funds. The generosity of the consultants and observers translates into outstanding value for the Church, and it ought not to be taken for granted; neither should the goodwill of the parishes, cathedrals, theological education institutions (TEIs), universities, partner Churches and other institutions that make it possible for both members and consultants to do the work that they do on behalf of the wider Church. A list of the Commission's members, observers and consultants in the period 2011-2015 is given on page 9.

6. The Commission's membership is chosen to reflect the diversity of styles and traditions in the Church of England. The Commission is by custom chaired by a member of the House of Bishops (there have been two successive Chairs during the period reported on here, as well as the Vice-Chair, all three of them diocesan bishops). Other Commission members are both clergy and lay people, including in this quinquennium two Readers. Members have direct experience of ministry – ordained and lay – in parishes, cathedrals, urban priority areas, and fresh expressions of church.
7. Many members and consultants are now, or have in the recent past, been closely involved with theological education and ministerial formation, in TEIs, universities, and diocesan CMD departments. Two of the present members are examples of that now very rare breed, the person who teaches liturgy professionally in a college or university. Several members have a professional interest in the use of music in worship, and the Commission has been fortunate to have two successive Directors of the Royal School of Church Music as consultants throughout the quinquennium.
8. The Commission usually meets for three residential meetings each year, and occasionally for an additional one-day meeting when necessary to carry forward textual work. Regular worship is part of the structure of each meeting. This both places the Commission's work within a context of shared prayer, and provides an opportunity to try out new liturgical texts and musical resources.
9. In the course of this quinquennium, the Commission moved to a new and more economical pattern of holding its residential meetings over two days rather than three, and utilising those two days more intensively. A perhaps unanticipated consequence of this change is that there are significantly fewer opportunities for shared worship, and the Commission has to be additionally careful to ensure that some of its worship is according to the Prayer Book.
10. The Commission has, also for reasons of economy, given up its recent custom of holding a more extended meeting at the end of each quinquennium, in partnership with the equivalent bodies in other European Churches. In between its full meetings, much of the Commission's work is carried out in small working groups. In the period under review, these have included the Additional Eucharistic Prayers group (carried over from the previous quinquennium), the Additional Alternative Baptism Texts group, and the Liturgical Formation Group.
11. In choosing a new Commission, care is taken to ensure that there are enough synodical members to help resource the Steering and Revision committees that are part of the process for authorizing new liturgical texts alternative to texts in the Prayer Book. Hence the Commission's constitution requires it to have at least six members of Synod among its number. This process of synodical authorization has been required twice in the present quinquennium (see paragraphs 24-29 below).
12. The Commission is supported by the administrative staff of the Archbishops' Council. The Commission's Secretary deals with the administration of the Commission's work and the related synodical business. This was once a full-time job. In 2009 a decision was taken by the Archbishops' Council to combine the post of Secretary to the Commission with that of National Worship Development Officer (NWDO) into a single full-time post. In 2010, that combined post was itself turned into a half-time one.

13. It has proved possible to recruit able people to that half-time appointment; more challenging to retain them. For both clergy and lay people there is the obvious difficulty of finding another suitable half-time post to complement that of Secretary and NWDO. The Revd Christopher Woods served as Secretary and NWDO between January 2010 and July 2013, before moving to parish ministry; Mr Timothy Hone was only in post from January 2014 to January 2015 before moving to a full-time appointment at York Minster. There can be little doubt that the recasting of the post as a half-time one has had a destabilising effect on its occupancy.
14. In these circumstances, the Commission is enormously grateful to Mr Jonathan Neil-Smith (Secretary of the Dioceses Commission and of the House of Clergy of General Synod) for the support that he has given to the Commission, to Ms Sue Moore, whose long experience of the Commission's work and cheerful hard work on its behalf have been invaluable, and to Dr Bridget Nichols for generously undertaking a substantial portion of the work of Secretary, particularly during the first vacancy.
15. As Chair of the Commission during the greater part of the quinquennium, the Rt Revd Stephen Platten was a member of the Faith and Order Advisory Group (as it then was, now the Faith and Order Commission), and of the House of Bishops' Theological Group, and the Commission and Faith and Order Advisory Group shared a consultant in the Revd Dr John Muddiman until his retirement from both in 2014.
16. The Commission sends representatives to the Cathedrals' Fabric Commission for England, the Council of Praxis, the Inter-Provincial Liturgical Group (commonly known as the "Four Nations Group", this brings together representatives of the Liturgical Commissions of the Church of England, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Church in Wales, and the Church of Ireland), and the ecumenical Joint Liturgical Group. The Commission has happily supplied Anglican observers to the Liturgy Committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and to the Liturgical Sub-Committee of the Faith and Order Committee of the Methodist Church.
17. Members of the Commission represented the Church of England at meetings of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation in Canterbury (2011) and Dublin (2013), and will represent it at the next forthcoming meeting in Montreal in August 2015. One member of the Commission attended a seminar in Uppsala in 2013 to assist the Church of Sweden in its own programme of liturgical revision.
18. In the period here reported on, the Commission has also welcomed to its meetings occasional visitors from the equivalent body in the Church of Scotland, as well as visitors from Messy Church, from Moot (as a representative of new forms of religious life in the Church), from Fresh Expressions, from the authors of *Worship 4 Today* (a course for church musicians and worship leaders, developed in the Diocese of Sheffield, and now nationally recognised) and from the Transformations Group. These meetings have always been fruitful, and represent a way of working which could continue to be developed in the future.
19. The Commission has in this last quinquennium continued to strengthen its working partnerships with other bodies within and beyond the Church of England. It continues to work closely with the RSCM (whose Director is a consultant to the Commission), the Prayer Book Society, the Alcuin Club and the Group for the Renewal of Worship (GROW). There has been a particularly useful collaboration with the Archbishops' Council's Head of Projects and Development, the Revd Canon Dr Sandra Millar.

20. The Commission has stayed closely in touch with the work of the Weddings, Christenings and Funerals Projects, and members of the Commission have worked together with Dr Millar at a number of training events.
21. Her research has emphasised the large number of contacts that members of the public in England have with the established Church through the occasional pastoral offices, and the consequent importance of ensuring that the forms of service on these occasions are accessible and powerful, and competently and imaginatively led. These are important mission opportunities, not to be squandered through poor pastoral or liturgical practice.
22. Throughout the quinquennium, the Commission has continued to support fresh expressions of church in the development of diverse and creative worship. This has included discussions with Michael Moynagh (Fresh Expressions Network Director), as well as conversation with Lucy Moore (Messy Church Director), and a commitment to the Fresh Expressions/Liturgical Commission Joint Group. Meetings of that Joint Group were paused while a new leader for Fresh Expressions was appointed, and the Commission hopes to resume this structured dialogue in the near future.
23. In 2014 the Commission's annual day conference for diocesan liturgical committees explored the theme 'Windows into Missional Liturgy', and highlighted perspectives on worshipful mission and fresh expressions of church within different traditions of the Church of England. Following on from that, the 2015 conference explored the theme of 'Worship for an Outward-Facing Church'.

### **Liturgical Texts**

24. When the Commission prepares liturgical texts, it does so on the instruction of the House of Bishops – often following a debate in General Synod – and its work is submitted to the House of Bishops in the first instance. When a new or revised service is alternative to provision in the *Book of Common Prayer*, it has to be authorized by the General Synod according to the Standing Orders that govern liturgical business, and the new or revised text is introduced into the Synod from the House of Bishops. When a new or revised order of service is not an alternative to provision made in the *Book of Common Prayer*, then the House of Bishops is able to commend it on its own authority.
25. The preparation of the Additional Eucharistic Prayers for use when a significant number of children are present was well advanced at the end of the previous quinquennium. Following a period of experimental use, in which the views of children were especially welcomed (and a special form was used to collect their views), the draft texts were revised, finally approved by Synod, and authorized for use from September 2012.
26. The Commission would like to underline the value of the period of experiment. This, including the comments received from children, made a material difference to the final outcome, and it is likely that the lack of experimental use before publication of the services in *Common Worship: Christian Initiation* is one significant reason why so many clergy have reported difficulties in using them in practice.
27. Several members of the Commission have taken part in workshops to introduce and support the Additional Eucharistic Prayers, and the enthusiasm for these events and the comments made at them, suggest that these prayers are widely and gratefully used within the church.

28. The provision for baptism in *Common Worship* was among that which did not receive experimental use before publication, and dissatisfaction with aspects of some of the material were expressed in Synod. On the instruction of the House of Bishops following a Liverpool diocesan motion in the General Synod in February 2011, the Commission prepared additional alternative texts for parts of the baptism service, to make it more accessible, and these texts were introduced to the Synod in July 2014.
29. After lively debate, including discussion in *The Mail on Sunday*, on *Newsnight*, and in other public media of the question whether evil must necessarily be spoken of in personal terms in Christian liturgy, we hope that the revised texts will be given final approval by the Synod in July 2015, and that they will then be authorized for use from September 2015.
30. In addition to preparing texts for formal authorization or commendation, the Commission has prepared less formal guidance notes to accompany them, or to deal with questions that have arisen in their use. Its notes on how to deal with (increasingly frequent) requests for unbaptized persons to act as godparents, in ways which are both pastorally sensitive but conformable to Canon, and its guidance on children administering the Eucharist at (for example) school Eucharists, have been found useful.

### **Liturgical Formation and *Transforming Worship***

31. Reduction in central staff resourcing has in practice made it difficult for the Commission to continue to arrange its own “roadshows” as a direct contribution to practical liturgical formation, although “roadshows” on ordination services were able to be offered earlier in the quinquennium. The Commission has, however, continued to make a significant contribution to liturgical formation in a number of other ways.
32. In July 2013 the Commission organised a three-day national liturgical conference at the University of Aston under the title *Worship Transforming Communities*. There were 250 delegates from across the Church of England and further afield. Keynote addresses were given by Professor Edward Foley OFM (Duns Scotus Professor of Spirituality and Professor of Liturgy and Music at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago), The Rt Revd Nicholas Holtam (Bishop of Salisbury), the distinguished literary scholar Canon Dr Jessica Martin (Vicar of Duxford, Hinxton and Ickleton in the Diocese of Ely), the composer Mr Will Todd (whose ‘Call of Wisdom’ was performed for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee celebration in St Paul’s Cathedral), and the prize-winning poet Mr Michael Symmons-Roberts.
33. There were a number of workshops during the conference, which drew on the expertise both of members of the Liturgical Commission and of visiting specialists, among them the artist Ms Sophie Hacker and Mr Jonny Baker, whose work in Pioneer Leadership and alternative worship plays a significant part in contemporary thinking on Church and ministry. The worship of the conference was conducted in a rich diversity of styles, and was itself an occasion of learning. This creativity was greatly helped by the generous hospitality of Birmingham Cathedral. Responses to the conference were immensely positive.
34. The Commission has organised each year a day-conference for Diocesan Liturgical Committees, or their equivalents. These have continued to be useful opportunities to share work in progress, to receive comments that help to shape the Commission’s own

work, to encourage local initiatives in liturgical training, and to encourage DLCs to share their own ideas and best practice. In 2014, the day-conference was used to follow up the previous year's national conference; a number of delegates returned for the day, and the questions generated at Aston were pursued further.

35. Praxis has always had a special place among the Liturgical Commission's partners in its formation and training work. The Commission is one of the sponsoring bodies of Praxis. It appoints one of its members as the Chair of Praxis and another to the Praxis Council, and the Editor of *Praxis News of Worship* attends its meetings. The Commission has greatly welcomed the increase in the range and number of training events organised by Praxis and its regions over the present quinquennium; there has been a step-change in the amount of formation and training that has taken place under its aegis.
36. Members of the Commission have often been keynote speakers at these events. Workshops based on the Commission's own work on Additional Eucharistic Prayers, and on the baptism of children from backgrounds not familiar with church, have been especially well received, but by no means exhaust the range of Praxis training events. The Commission warmly welcomes the appointment of The Revd Helen Bent as the first RSCM/Praxis Head of Ministerial Training.
37. Working closely with the National Society and the Church of England's Education Division, the Commission has played a key role in setting up, and securing external grant funding for, an interactive online resource for planning worship in schools, [www.worshipworkshop.org.uk](http://www.worshipworkshop.org.uk). Since its launch in November 2011, this has been widely praised by those who have to organise assemblies or acts of worship in schools, and is in regular use well beyond the church school sector. An additional Eucharist planning resource was added to the website in October 2013.
38. In the previous quinquennium, the Commission began a sustained conversation with the Ministry Division, and those responsible more widely for Initial Ministerial Education, about the best way of equipping future ministers for their work as competent and imaginative leaders of worship. The introduction of the Common Awards system during the last quinquennium has given a particular shape and urgency to this conversation. The Commission has been able to contribute to the shaping of pathways of initial formation, and looks forward to continuing that work as the Common Awards programme is developed further.
39. It continues to be the case that there are very few specialists teaching worship and liturgy in TEIs, so that the training of the trainers itself becomes a concern. There continue to be enormous pressures on the time available for teaching and learning as periods of initial training are shortened overall, while the ground to be covered is increased.
40. The Commission believes that investment in the training of the leaders of worship is vital to a missional and growing church: Dr Millar's research, noted earlier, has emphasised the extent to which services in church, especially on pastoral occasions, are a shop-window for the Church of England.
41. The reduction of central resource over the quinquennium has been keenly felt by the *Transforming Worship* website, [www.transformingworship.org.uk](http://www.transformingworship.org.uk). A number of technical complications have been experienced with the current version of the site, and to overcome these it is due to be moved from its own platform to a place within the Church of England's main website.

42. The Commission works closely with Church House Publishing, and has been greatly helped in its work by the participation of Mr Thomas Allain-Chapman at a number of its meetings. There is close liaison between publisher and Commission over new liturgical apps, as well as over conventional publications.
43. The pastoral provision of *Common Worship* is rich, but scattered across a number of publications. In response to an expressed need for some portable selection which could easily be used at, for example, a hospital bedside, the Commission has edited a *Pastoral Ministry Companion* (CHP, 2012). The size of this publication, and the soft cover, are deliberately designed to make it easy to carry and use, and strong sales suggest that it has been found useful. A President's Edition of *Common Worship: Times and Seasons* was prepared by the Commission in response to widespread requests, and published in September 2010.
44. Many people in the church have drawn attention to the importance of shared liturgical texts in holding together Anglicans of widely differing traditions. *Words for Worship: Prayers from the Heart of the Church of England* (CHP, 2012), edited by members of the Commission, drew together a selection of texts, from both older and newer forms of worship, with a simple theological and historical commentary.
45. *Common Worship: Daily Prayer* has sold over 50,000 copies since 2005, and continues to sell around 2,000 copies a year. *Morning and Evening Prayer on Sunday* has sold over 50,000 copies since 2000, and now sells around 1,000 copies a year; *Time to Pray* has sold over 7,000 copies since 2006, and sells around 350 copies a year. It is good to know that these publications are helping the Church to pray. The strong sales of the texts for which the Commission is responsible also help Church House Publishing to operate as a commercial publisher, without the need of subsidy from central Church funds.

### **Significant anniversaries**

46. The quinquennium saw a number of important anniversaries, which the Commission was glad to support and resource in various ways. 2011 was the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *King James Bible*. 2012 was the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, and the Commission joined with the British Academy and the Prayer Book Society in various commemorative events. The then Chair and Secretary of the Commission edited the volume of essays issuing from the British Academy's day conference, *Comfortable Words: Polity, Piety and the Book of Common Prayer* (SCM, 2012).
47. 2014 marked the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. A number of institutions in and beyond the Church of England have been preparing material for the liturgical commemoration of the outbreak of the War, of various key moments in the course of it, and of the final Armistice in 1918, for use in a variety of settings ranging from Westminster Abbey to local village war memorials.
48. The Commission convened a useful seminar of interested parties in Canterbury in October 2013; it continues to stay in touch with the work of others, and has prepared – and continues to prepare – resources of its own for publication via the Church of England website.

## Looking to the next Quinquennium

49. The *Common Worship* Calendar is a liturgical text, requiring synodical authorization because it is alternative to the Calendar contained in the *Book of Common Prayer*. Throughout the quinquennium, the Commission received a steady stream of request for the inclusion of additional names in the Calendar. The Commission's consistent reply to all such requests has been to say that it is for Synod to determine when it wishes to re-open the Calendar (authorized in 1997), and that it will be best for all individual suggestions, however excellent, to be considered together then. In the meantime it does bring forward, once in every decade, suggestions for the inclusion of the names of those who were not eligible for inclusion in the 2000 Calendar because they had not then been dead for 50 years.
50. It will be for the next Commission to bring forward the names of those who died in the 1960s. The Commission remains convinced of the value of the 50-year rule (for non-martyrs), and of the ten-yearly consideration of names from the relevant decade. But it also believes that a general reconsideration of the 2000 Calendar should eventually be undertaken, and suggests that this will best be done by Synod in the quinquennium beginning in 2020. The Calendar is important in setting before the Church examples of Christian discipleship, to inspire and encourage our own journeys as disciples.
51. In conversation with members of the Transformations Group, which exists to encourage the experience and voices of women to be better heard within the Church, the Commission was encouraged to think carefully about the language that is used of God and the human community in modern-language liturgy. These are complex issues which the Commission has wrestled with even before the inception of the *Common Worship* project. Its approach has been guided by the policy set by the Synod in receiving the Commission's 1988 Report *Making Women Visible* (GS 859).
52. Broadly speaking, gender-inclusive language is used consistently of the human realm, but traditional Trinitarian language is used of the Godhead. A special and difficult case is that of biblical texts where the original intended reference may have been to human beings in general, but the text has from an early date been applied christologically. Psalm 8 is a famous instance, which is why the *Common Worship* Psalter offers two alternative translations of this Psalm. It will be for the Synod to decide whether it wishes to review the policy which has so far guided the Commission.
53. The attractive power of good worship is vital to a Church that seeks to grow in number, and the capacity of worship to draw us deeper into the mystery of God is vital to a Church that seeks to grow in depth. But the Commission continues to insist that worship is more than a means to an end, it is the end itself: 'the worship of God is the full and final purpose of redeemed human existence' (GS 1651, *Transforming Worship*, paragraph 2.21).
54. The Commission's task, in the next five years as in the last quinquennium, will be to help the Church of England to grow in both number and depth, to nourish people's discipleship, but above to do what it is most fundamentally called to do: to give praise and glory to God. And if those final words are those with which the Commission ended its last quinquennial report, no apology is needed for that: it is the most important thing of all.

## The Liturgical Commission 2010-2015

### Members

(*) Rt Revd Stephen Platten	Chair to February 2014
(*) Rt Revd Robert Atwell	Chair from January 2015
* Rt Revd Robert Paterson	Vice-Chair (Acting Chair during 2014)
Revd Dr Anders Bergquist	
Ven Dr Anne Dawtry	
Revd Mark Earey	
* Mrs Sarah Finch	
Revd Canon Perran Gay	Co-opted
Revd Canon Christopher Irvine	
Revd Canon Dr Simon Jones	
* Revd Canon Gavin Kirk	Co-opted, Synod liturgical chaplain from 2012
Revd Timothy Lomax	
* Revd Canon Dr Rosemarie Mallett	
* Canon Christine McMullen	
Dr Bridget Nichols	
(*) Revd Philip North	
* Very Revd Andrew Nunn	Co-opted, Synod liturgical chaplain 2011-2012
* Revd Dr Jo Spreadbury	Co-opted
(*) Ven Dr Timothy Stratford	Member 2011-2012, Consultant 2012-2015
Revd Paul Thomas	
Revd Gary Waddington	

\* indicates members of the General Synod for all (or part) of the quinquennium

### Consultants

Revd Dr Paul Bradshaw	
Dr Juliette Day	
Mr Lindsay Gray, Director: RSCM	2011-2012
Revd Dr John Muddiman	2011-2014
Mr Andrew Reid, Director: RSCM	from 2012
Revd Canon Dr David Scott	2011-2014
Revd Canon Angela Tilby	

### Observers

Mrs Gillian Ambrose	Editor, <i>Praxis News of Worship</i>
Revd Dr Kenneth Carveley	Methodist Church
Revd Dr Peter McGrail	Roman Catholic Church

### Staff

Revd Christopher Woods (Secretary and National Worship Development Officer, 2010-2013)  
Mr Timothy Hone (Secretary and National Worship Development Officer, 2014-2015)  
Ms Sue Moore (Assistant Secretary to 2015; Acting Administrative Secretary 2015)