

THEOLOGY TODAY

A Newsletter from the Institute of Anglican Studies at St George's Cathedral, Perth
~ committed to building up a well-informed and thinking Anglican Community.

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THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER 1662: 350TH ANNIVERSARY

A Series of five Wednesday Evening sessions at 7.30pm, 11 July – 8 August 2012, in St George's Cathedral

The Book of Common Prayer is definitive of the Christian faith as practised by the Church of England. Compiled in the sixteenth century by Thomas Cranmer, and modified in 1662, the Prayer Book remains the official doctrinal standard of the Church of England, and of most other Churches in the worldwide Anglican Communion. Cranmer's memorable cadences have given guidance and illumination to generations of Christians in regular worship and at the turning points of their lives, and continue to do so.

The Prayer Book is deeply rooted in the Bible: not only does it make very full provision for the reading of Scripture, but its services are in substance and language scriptural throughout. The Book of Common Prayer is expressive of the orthodoxy, dignity and beauty of the Church's worship. Its services are reverent in honouring the power and majesty of God, accepting the reality of human sin and joyfully acknowledging the pardon given through faith in Jesus Christ.

The direct and unambiguous words of the Prayer Book have become a familiar part of our speech, to the extent that it is, after the Bible, the most frequently cited book in the "Oxford Dictionary of Quotations". The Book of Common Prayer is one of the guiding influences on our language in the English-speaking world.

THE BOOK

The Book of Common Prayer appears in many variants in churches inside and outside of the Anglican Communion, in over 50 different countries, and in over 150 different languages. Again in many parts of the world, more contemporary books have replaced it in regular weekly worship.

Traditional Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian prayer books have borrowed from the Book of Common Prayer, and the marriage and burial rites have found their way into those of other denominations and into the English language. Like the Authorized King James Bible and the works of Shakespeare, many words and phrases from the Book of Common Prayer have entered popular culture.



Archbishop Thomas Cranmer was the liturgical scholar behind the first Book of Common Prayer and its first revision in 1552. The 1662 version we celebrate bears many marks of his scholarship and devotion.

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HISTORY

The first book, published in 1549, in the reign of Edward VI, was a product of the English Reformation following the break with Rome. Prayer books, unlike books of prayers, contain the words of structured (or liturgical) services of worship. The work of 1549 was the first prayer book to contain the forms of service for daily and Sunday worship in English and to do so within a single volume; it included morning prayer, evening prayer, the Litany, and Holy Communion. The book included the other occasional services in full: the orders for baptism, confirmation, marriage, 'prayers to be said with the sick' and a funeral service. It set out in full the Epistle and Gospel readings for the Sunday Communion Service. Set Old Testament and New Testament readings for daily prayer were specified in tabular format as were the set Psalms and canticles, mostly biblical, that were provided to be sung between the readings.

The 1549 book was rapidly succeeded by a reformed revision in 1552 under the same editorial hand, that of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury. This revision never came into use because on the death of Edward VI, his half-sister Mary I restored the Latin Mass. On her death, a compromise version, largely 1552 with a few amendments from 1549, was published in 1559. Following the tumultuous events leading to and including the English Civil War, another major revision was published in 1662. That edition has remained the official prayer book of the Church of England, and its 350th anniversary is now being celebrated.

Two dates are often cited for the introduction of the Book of Common Prayer in 1662. The first is 19 May when royal assent was granted, and the second is 24 August when the Prayer Book came into use.

The House of Lords Journal records that "the Act of Uniformity was given Royal Assent on 19 May 1662. The final clause of the Act of Uniformity stated that: XXXII. Provided also, That the Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of this Church of England, together with the Form and Manner of Ordaining and Consecrating Bishops, Priests and Deacons, heretofore in Use, and respectively established by Act of Parliament in the first and eighth Years of Queen Elizabeth, shall be still used and observed in the Church of England, until the Feast of St. Bartholomew, which shall be in the Year of our Lord God one thousand six hundred sixty and two..."

11 July – The Sarum Mass

The Eucharist and Liturgy of Holy Communion in England prior to the Reformation.

The Preface "Concerning the Service of the Church" tells us "whereas there hath been great diversity... some churches following Salisbury (Sarum) Use, others Hereford, some Bangor, some Lincoln... now from henceforth all the whole Realm shall be as one." The Sarum version was held by most liturgical scholars to be the best of them all.

This was a complicated, though beautiful Order of the Mass

before the first English Prayer Book of 1549. Different books were used by the choir, clergy, and readers. There were two principal parts – the Canon or central Eucharistic Prayer, and the Ordinary which include the variable prayers of the church seasons. Tonight people can reflect on whether Cranmer and his colleagues were able to make the Eucharist easier to comprehend without losing its beauty.

On this night the music in use on the eve of 1662 will be sung.

18 July – Historical Background

In 1549 the first Book of Common Prayer was published. For the first time, it included the focus of prayer for the daily services, the Mass or Service of Holy Communion, and the Psalms and Readings used in these Services. Bishop Brian Kyme leads us through Reformation rumblings, the first liturgies in English, the first Prayer Book 1549, Protestants in the Ascendancy, the Restoration and the Church of England both Catholic and Reformed, the Prayer Book of 1662.

25 July – Archbishop Thomas Cranmer

Dr John Shepherd discusses the theology of the chief architect of the Prayer Book.

Cranmer was a man of simple and amiable character and a learned theologian. It was widely believed he had come to reject any doctrine of a Real Presence in the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine, and any implied sacrificial character of the Sacrament. But was his doctrine rather more sophisticated? Dr Shepherd explores the changes levelled against Cranmer, and assesses his enduring contribution to Anglican worship and doctrines.

1 August – Anglican Liturgy Today

Where did our 'A Prayer Book for Australia' come from?

Liturgical Scholar, The Revd Dr Charles Sherlock examines how the Prayer Book has evolved into the Service Books we have today and looks toward the future of liturgy.

8 August – The Lord's Supper or the Administration of the Holy Communion

The Communion Service (also called the Mass in 1549) reached the form in which we know it in 1662. The churches were often rearranged to suit the new ways of celebrating the Eucharist, but some things looked very much the same. This closing service gives us opportunity to reflect on the gains (and perhaps the losses) of the New Look of 1662.

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER 1662: THE HISTORICAL SETTING

When Charles II was restored to the Throne of England in 1660, the Eucharist at which his Coronation took place was according to the Book of Common Prayer of 1559, which until then had been replaced under Puritan pressure with a

Directory for the Public Worship of God. The restoration of the monarchy saw the restoration of the Prayer Book. Elizabeth I's BCP of 1559 was but a modest revision of the second BCP of 1552, which itself was a more thorough revision of the first BCP of 1549. So revision, albeit modest and infrequent, was in the nature of the Book of Common Prayer. The book was again revised under Charles II, and his 1662 edition contained services relating to the Gunpowder Plot, the Martyrdom of Charles I, and the Restoration of Charles II – things obviously unknown in 1559. The Book of Common Prayer of 1662 has, however, been subject to surprisingly little revision up to the present time. The Gunpowder service was revised in 1690 to include thanksgiving for the landing of William III, though all three above-mentioned royal services were removed in 1859. The Table of Kindred and Affinity (governing marriage) was added in the 18th century. The 20th century saw important additional rubrics allowing lay people to officiate at morning and evening prayer. But the principal texts and rubrics of the Holy Communion, Matins, and Evensong have remained largely untouched since 1662. Of course, as the Anglican Communion has grown, *translations* have multiplied: in hundreds of languages from Arabic (1902) to Zulu (1856). It is only the 1662 edition (or translation thereof), and no earlier edition, which is authorized for use in the provinces of the Anglican Communion.

The *39 Articles*, which came to their present form and number in the reign of Elizabeth I, have usually been printed with the Prayer Book and these have acted as a touchstone by which new proposed Anglican liturgies can be tested for orthodoxy. Anglican prayer books of the 20th century, such as *A Prayer Book for Australia*, are licensed in each province *in addition to* the Book of Common Prayer of 1662, not in place of it.

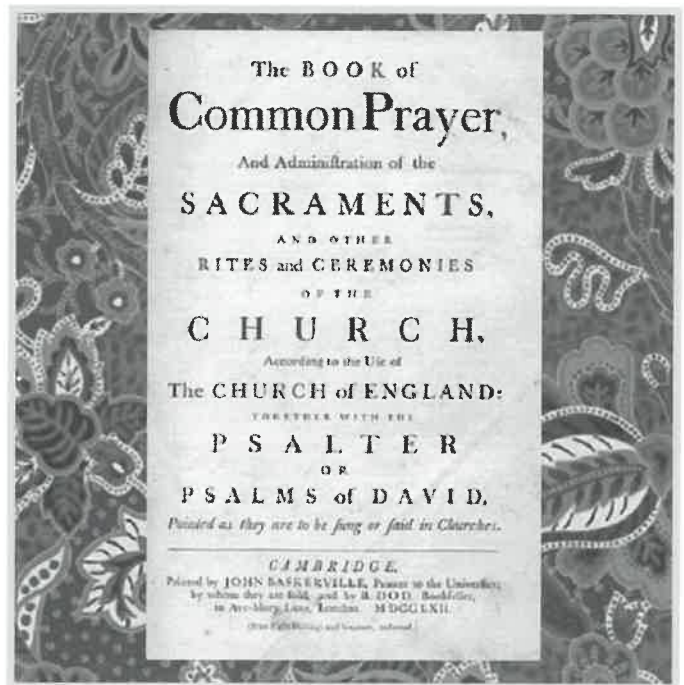
To mark the 350th anniversary, on five successive Wednesday evenings (7.30pm) at St George's Cathedral (July 11, 18, 25 and August 1, 8) the history, context, theology, and influence of the Book of Common Prayer are examined. The first and last sessions are liturgies. July 11 is a High Mass of St Benedict according to the pre-Reformation Use of Sarum (English translation is provided), with early 16th century choral music; revealing the world of worship out of which the first BCP emerged. The last is a Eucharist according to the rite of the BCP of 1662 with music from the Caroline period. Between these liturgies there are lectures on the BCP's context (Bishop Brian Kyme), theology (Dr John Shepherd), and its influence upon 20th century Anglican prayer books (Dr Charles Sherlock).

The Reverend Graeme Napier, Precentor of St George's Cathedral.

SACRED VISION

Andrew Hawes looks at the 1662 Book of Common Prayer and assesses its multi-faceted contribution to the Church of England.

There is no denying the essential contribution of the Prayer Book to Anglican spirituality and the insights and theological



method which make up our 'Anglican Patrimony'. I would suggest this contribution has **six major themes**.

The first is a vision for unity. Arising out of the tragedy of the English Civil War and the repression of the Protectorate, the Prayer Book looks to be a vehicle for community and communion and looks for this in the call to unity of Christ the Lord. The primacy of unity is the source of the 'via media'; it is also the cause for **the second 'theme' of the Prayer Book which is penitence.**

PERSONAL YET CORPORATE

The prayers of the General Confessions in the Prayer Book are among the most beautiful in terms of language, but they have the genius of being at the same time profoundly personal and yet corporate. **Related to penitence is the third theme of intercession.** The father of Catholic renewal John Keble often exhorted clergy and people not to forgo the prayers for state and church which have prominence in the Prayer Book offices. Here the vision and hope of a nation united in faith and bound by religious practice is taken up in a drumbeat of prayer every morning and evening and at every Eucharist.

The fourth theme of the Prayer Book is praise. The most striking example of the note of praise that resounds in the Prayer Book is the Te Deum which becomes part of the daily prayer of the church (not just reserved for Sundays or Feasts).

CENTRALITY OF SCRIPTURE

The fifth theme is the centrality of Holy Scripture. The lectionary of the Book of Common Prayer deliberately liberates the Bible from all liturgical constraints. It is given whole and without dilution. The Prayer Book creates a liturgical setting where the Word stands over and under all things. **Finally, the Book of Common Prayer is Eucharistic.** The Eucharist stands at the heart of the Prayer Book and the hope was that it would stand at the heart of every English community.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY – OUR NEXT SERIES

VILE BODIES? THE BODY IN THE CLASSICAL WORLD

Mondays 3, 10 & 17 September, 5.15pm-6.15pm at St George's Cathedral.

Dr Bill Leadbetter, St George's Cathedral Scholar, leads us to reflect on the distinctive Christian teaching and practice in the Greco-Roman world concerning our bodies. What are some of the implications for us in the world today?

Session I – Ideas of the Body in the New Testament World

Session II – Ideas of the Body in the Early Church

Session III – The emergence of asceticism



THE HEALING CHRIST

Thursday 18 October, 7.30pm at St George's Cathedral
(following the Eucharist at 6.30pm).

A lecture by Dr Paula Gooder, Canon Theologian of Birmingham Cathedral in the UK.

Dr Gooder will also be preaching in the Cathedral on Sunday 21 October, at the 8.00am and 10.00am Eucharists.



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St George's Cathedral Institute of Anglican Studies exists to help Anglicans become informed and thoughtful members of our Anglican Communion. We are a people on a journey.

- Bishop Brian Kyme

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