



From the Canon Precentor: Prayers of Love and Faith



Eighteen years after Civil Partnerships became legal, ten years after the Church of England's Pilling Report recommended that they be blessed, eight years after the first English same-sex marriage and, in response to the above, five years after the House of Bishops launched its Living in Love and Faith listening and learning process, we have the first comments from the House of Bishops and a set of draft prayers.

The headline is that it will be possible for Same-Sex Marriages and Civil Partnerships to be recognised in church with public blessing, both at stand-alone services, or in the context of a Sunday morning or “regular” act of worship. Though it has taken ten years to realise since it was recommended, this is still an enormous, and for some, seismic, development. It will be too much for some, who argue that “to bless sin” is an outrageous hypocrisy. It will be too little for others, who might have hoped for same-sex marriage to be conducted by the church, in the same way that it marries heterosexual couples. For me, as someone who is in a same-sex relationship and, who over eighteen years of ordained ministry has seen these discussions go round interminably, it is the outcome I expected, if not perhaps what I had hoped for. But it is gratifying that my relationship, and those of others in this community and city, can now be the focus of public prayer, thanksgiving and blessing.

It's important to note that the Bishops are still differentiating between heterosexual and same-sex couples, but the differences are less marked. And one very significant development has been to acknowledge that sex before or outside of marriage is a reality, where the church should be affirming that which is good in those relationships, without changing the church's historic teaching. Indeed the whole response treads that line consistently: to uphold that which is traditional, whilst acknowledging that relationships which fall

outside a traditional understanding of sex and marriage may be good (whether they are still “sinful” is not addressed).

One clear prohibition is the use of any texts from the C of E Marriage Service in the context of a same-sex blessing. So there are sample services too, for a Service of the Word and two examples of Blessing within the Eucharist. The marriage-text prohibition means familiar prayers have been rewritten to distance them from a more traditional service, and new phrases introduced. Mostly this is successful, and the language of relationships as “pilgrimage” and “journeying through life” is apt and a welcome addition. There are some unusual, but insightful turns of phrase, too:

God of love and mercy, look with kindness on your servants N and N. Give them wisdom and devotion in their life together, that each may be to the other a strength in need, a counsellor in perplexity, a comfort in sorrow and a companion in joy.

“Counsellor in perplexity” sums up just about all parties in all relationships I know – including the Chapter!

There are some disappointments and uncertainties. It is disappointing that, in the extensive suite of materials provided by the bishops for the blessing of civil partnerships or same-sex marriages, the terms “Civil Partnership” or “(Same-sex) Marriage” do not appear, suggesting some ongoing coyness, and not quite the “radical new inclusion” the Archbishop of Canterbury promised in 2017 when launching “Living in Love and Faith”. There is still uncertainty about the status of same-sex marriage within the church, particularly for clergy. Currently, if I were to marry, my licence to minister could be withdrawn. More work on clergy discipline in the “Pastoral Guidance” that will replace the current “1991 Issues in Human Sexuality” in the light of this statement is promised, and needed.

One outcome of this process is a superabundance of material that no one seemed to be seeking, but which is welcome and wholesome, nevertheless. So, alongside Prayers of Dedication and Thanksgiving for a Couple, we have Prayers for God’s Blessing, Prayers for the Sealing of a Covenanted Friendship, Prayers which may be said with or by a couple, Prayers for a relationship entering a new stage, Prayers for a Household and Family.

Finally, there is an apology “for the ways in which the Church of England has treated LGBTQI+ people – both those who worship in our churches and those who do not. For the times we have rejected or excluded you, and those you love, we are deeply sorry... We affirm, publicly and unequivocally, that LGBTQI+ people are welcome and valued: we are all children of God.” While it is welcome, it has been said before, and the proof of such statements is always in

the pudding. For example, in 2014, the College of Bishops declared that it would “Reject homophobia whenever and wherever it is found”. Yet in 2022, the Diocese of London was accused of “underlying homophobia” in the decisions made that led to the tragic death, in 2021, of Fr Alan Griffin, a regular worshipper in this Cathedral. No one has been disciplined, offered a resignation, or taken responsibility for the circumstances of his death. There is no mention, also, of the historic missionary strategies of the Church of England overseas, and the extent to which homophobia in the Anglican communion finds its DNA in the Church of England.

Nevertheless, overall, this statement and the resources provided are very significant. The bishops were never going to please everyone, let alone each other, with this work. But it is a step forward. I just wish they had felt able, in the materials they commend for our use, to name the elephants in the room: Civil Partnership and Same-Sex Marriage. It does not seem too much to ask, and it sits uneasily with their preceding apologies.

Canon James Mustard

News from the Bellringers

The Exeter Cathedral Society of Ringers met at the end of January for their AGM, chaired by the Dean. It was noted that the 33 members of the band had rung on around 100 occasions during 2022 and in addition have arranged for many visiting bands to enjoy our prestigious Cathedral bells – the second heaviest set of bells in the world.

Matthew Hilling continues as the Cathedral Ringing Master, and Paul Pascoe remains as his Deputy and Secretary to the Ringing Society.

During 2022 we hosted the Ringing World National Youth Contest, which attracted many hundreds of young ringers to Exeter and the Cathedral, as well as having demonstrations in the nave during open evenings, ringing for the sombre occasion of the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II and celebrating the Accession of King Charles III.

Plans are already well in place for ringing during 2023. During February, a full peal of over 5000 changes (or combinations of the bells) will be heard on Saturday 11th February rung by the Cathedral Society in their annual attempt. But as well as our usual ringing we will also welcome the South West members of the Ancient Society of College Youths (founded in 1637) to ring on the bells on the evening of Friday 24th February for their regional practice.

We trust that you enjoy hearing your bells being rung.

Paul Pascoe, Secretary to the Exeter Cathedral Society of Ringers

Praying the Examen

“For all that has been, Thanks. To all that shall be, Yes.” – Dag Hammarskjöld

The Examen is a way of reflecting prayerfully on your day, and may be a practice for you to consider during Lent. It was originally developed by St Ignatius of Loyola in the *Spiritual Exercises*. It may be a very short prayer, or a period of longer reflection. It may be prayed at any time, but is often prayed last thing at night.

The reflections can take many different forms.

For example, at the end of the day you could look back and find five things that have brought you joy. They may be immense, or they may be as tiny as a smile in the street. My own practice is to find at least three things I am grateful for. Sometimes this shows a difficult day in a different light. And knowing that I will be doing the Examen at night has heightened my awareness of God’s simple giftings during the day, so I can give thanks in the moment.

The Jesuit priest William Barry suggests this practice: cast your mind over the day and notice the moment in the day that provoked the strongest inner response, whether joy, anger, compassion, or sorrow. Where might God be in that moment and what might God be telling you through your feelings? Have a conversation with God about what you notice.

Another practice uses your four fingers and thumb. Note one thing that gave you energy during the day; one that drained your energy; one that brought you life; one that drained life; and one thing that brought you sorrow. Life and energy are not the same. Going for a long walk can bring life but drain energy, while getting really angry can energise but drain life.

The Examen lends itself well to the app format, helping you to pray wherever you are. Both the **Reimagining the Examen** app and **Examen Prayer App** are based on Ignatius’ Exercises.

<https://reimaginingexamen.ignatianspirituality.com/>

<https://www.theprodigalfather.org/programs-examen-prayer-app/>

Whichever practice you choose, start with a period of silence, to let go of your immediate concerns and still yourself. It’s usually helpful to write down your reflections, whether or not you ever re-read them. (Although re-reading them can give you a sense of how God is working in your life and renew your gratitude.) Finish by offering your reflections back to God and, if you are praying the Examen at the end of the day, by placing tomorrow in God’s hands. Then sleep well!

Clare Bryden



From the Head Server

On December 11th, the 3rd Sunday of Advent, also known as Gaudete Sunday, the rose vestment in memory of Tony Bulgin, who was a Server and Treasurer of the Cathedral Fellowship for many years, was dedicated during the 10am Choral Eucharist.

If you would like to make a donation to the cost of the tunicle, modelled here by Wilf Reynolds, please either put it in a Gift Aid envelope and send to the Cathedral Office, or just pop it in to the office with a covering note, or pay by BACS. The bank details are: Dean & Chapter of Exeter Cathedral.
A/C Number : 00708526
Sort Code : 56-00-49.

Whatever method of payment you choose, please mark the envelope, or add the reference "*vestments in memory of Tony Bulgin.*"

Thank you.

Caroline Prince, Head Server

The March edition of *Cathedral News*

We hope to publish the next edition of the *News* on Sunday 26th February 2023. The deadline for material is **Tuesday 21st February 2023**. Please send any contributions to hmm53@tiscali.co.uk or to any member of the editorial team; Heather Morgan, Rosemary Bethell, Jenny Ellis and Sheila Atkinson.

From the Chairman of The Company of Tapisers

What a difference a year makes!

This time last year the Tapisers began to make commemorative spectacle cases for Queen Elizabeth II's 70th Jubilee: looking back over her long and remarkable reign. Our design featured an elaborate crown on one side and her cypher and the dates of her reign, 1952 –2022 on the other side. We even sent one of our cases to Her Majesty, while all the others were sold in the Cathedral Shop.

Now, a year on, the Tapisers are beginning another 'royal' project: commemorative spectacle cases for King Charles III's Coronation on May 6th: looking forward, this time, in expectation of his reign to come. The design will include his cypher with a small crown above on one side and the date of his Coronation on the other side.

Do look out for our cases in the Cathedral Shop at the beginning of May.

Diana Symes, Chairman of the Company of Tapisers

News from the Cathedral Flower Arrangers:

By the time you are reading this the Earth will have arrived! Gaia prep has been going on for several weeks. Sylvia has been "spraying queen" as lead pillar arranger, and most of the other arrangers have been in to prepare for using either dried materials or silks to last for the whole of February. We are all using the earth colours as they appear overall from the photographs used by Luke Jerram. Please let us know what you think because we do value your comments.

I hope you have enjoyed the silks that followed Christmas – Ali was lead pillar arranger and they were simply beautiful.

We are still waiting to hear where we will move to whilst the works carry on; for a number of months we will be homeless – but no news as yet. We hope to hear soon, as our work on rotas after Easter has come to a halt. It may well be that we can plan only a month or so ahead as work progresses. I am anxious that we not only preserve our high standard of arranging, but that our lovely flower ladies all get a chance to keep their hand in, because we will lose some of our usual spots for arranging as a temporary measure. We do have some ideas for alternatives, but so much is up in the air at the moment! Hopefully next month will bring more news.

Flick Evans, Temporary Chair of ECFA

Dates for the Diary

1st-27th February

Gaia: A New Experience of Planet Earth by Luke Jerram

Thursday 9th February from 7pm-8pm **NEW TIME**

Explore the Divine Feminine: A talk by Professor Sue Gillingham

Holy Ground: Sunday 12th February at 6.30pm

The Hidden Treasures of the Creation Narratives - Annie Heppenstall

Thursday 16th February from 7pm-8.30pm on Zoom

Slow Book Group: Awareness by Anthony de Mello

A slow book group, co-led by Clare Bryden and Revd Phil Wales. To sign up please email Revd Phil Wales (phil.wales@exeter-cathedral.org.uk).

Tuesday 21st February 11.00am-1pm

All Creatures Great and Small: Cathedral Library & Archives In Focus

Ash Wednesday 22nd February

Usual weekday services & Solemn Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes at 5.30pm

Friday 24th February 7.30pm

Under the Earth: *Silent Disco*

Saturday 4th March at 7pm

Cathedral Choir Candlelight Concert

Tuesday 14th March from 7.30-9.00pm in the Nave

Bishop Martin Shaw

Lent Talk: *Music and the inner life: comfort or disturbance?*

Holy Week 2nd-9th April

The speaker will be Bishop Graham James, former Bishop of Norwich.

More details of these events on the Cathedral website and in the Weekly Sheet.

Exeter Cathedral School

From 20th to 24th March Exeter Cathedral School will be hosting an Open Week, called 'Discovery Week', for families who wish to find out more about the school. Booking a place on a Discovery Day will offer families the chance to have a school tour and meet the Headmaster.

Parents can book a place via our website here:

<https://www.exetercathedralschool.co.uk/admissions/open-days/>

From the Revd Canon Dr John Searle: Into the second year...

Christmas 2021 is fixed in my heart and mind for the rest of my life. Elizabeth, my beloved wife of 55 years, died on December 29th just a few weeks after being diagnosed with widespread secondary breast cancer. My family and I had the enormous privilege of looking after her at home with the expert support of the Hospice and Community nurses. It was the toughest and yet most precious time of our lives. So I have now passed all the one-year anniversaries. On the first anniversary of Elizabeth's death I had lunch with my immediate family, Tim, Bec, Mark and Rosie and we reflected on what the past year had been like and what the second year might look like.

One thing has been very clear to me throughout all of this. I am a doctor and a priest who has also had a special interest in end of life care and bereavement. So I thought I knew all about them. Yes, I did, in my head but not in my heart. None of it prepared me for the overwhelming onslaught of grief. So much has been written and spoken about grief over recent years, both by experts and by those who have gone through it, that may seem superfluous to add to it. And of course everyone's experience is particular to them. But for me some things were dominant in a way I had not expected.

From the moment the funeral director came to take Elizabeth away I was crushed by the realisation that she had gone, gone forever as far as the rest of my own life was concerned. The idea that, 'death is nothing at all, she was just in the next room' or 'like a ship she had just disappeared over the horizon, the limit of my sight', was cruel nonsense. I coined a new word to describe how I felt, 'goneness'. And every day since I have to face the harsh reality that Elizabeth has gone.

The things I believe as a Christian about life after death were not very helpful. It was a great comfort that for Elizabeth, there was now, 'no more pain and God had wiped away every tear from her eyes'. She was 'with the Lord' (whatever that means) but I wanted her here. The tears were not wiped away from my eyes.

I was taken aback by the physical components of grief: the frequent nausea, the headaches, the loss of appetite, the brain fog and overpowering fatigue. Mentally, decision making was very difficult. This was the first time in 80 years I had lived alone. There was nobody either to affirm or caution me. I had and do have to do everything. I rarely did a food shop with Elizabeth because she said I put things in the basket we did not need and were too expensive! Learning to shop and cook economically was a steep learning curve. Self-confidence

quickly evaporated. Life became a series of daily to do lists to be got through. I wrote almost everything down, otherwise I just forgot it

A lifetime of routine also fell apart. Regular physical activity which was a key part of my life was too much like hard work. The motivation just disappeared as it did for so many other things. I was advised to eat well which I did despite not always wanting to. Personal prayer and Bible reading seemed pointless. For many, many weeks, last thing at night I just listened to the choral singing of the Psalms from the Book of Common Prayer. This helped me. Public worship was important less for its content, and more for the kindness of those who were there.

Gradually over many months the intensity of grief lessened. It has become a quiet, long term resident which still has the ability to ambush me. Accepting that Elizabeth has gone is accompanied by profound gratitude for 55 years of marriage and all that she was, and a realisation that her wish would be that I continued my life without her, and to do it well.

So what has helped in the process? In a word, kindness, the thing that was her defining characteristic. Without the kindness of my amazing family and friends I doubt I would have got through those early months. The initial avalanche of love in letters, cards, phone calls and text messages kept me afloat during the early weeks. Some were long elegantly written, others were short with a memory of something Elizabeth had done or said. All are deeply valued. Each one has been kept.

The kindness continues with a gentle stream of messages, notes, emails, invitations, visits and offers of practical help (Elizabeth did all the practical handy stuff in our home. I am incapable of putting up a level shelf!) Of course there were things which were unhelpful – but that is for another time.

Gradually some order came back into the routine of life. I got hooked on Bake Off, and while I have no desire to emulate its participants I am teaching myself to cook and bake. The precision of baking (at least Mary Berry's) appeals to me. It is hugely calming and satisfying. I even attempted the family Christmas cake, which cannot have been too bad as it disappeared in a few days.

Where does my Christian faith fit in? Attending worship at the Cathedral, while quite often not quite scratching where it hurt, was an anchor and kept my flickering flame of trust in God burning. Gradually, what over the years had become one of the essentials of faith, took up its place again. With God nothing is lost or wasted. Everything, including all the bad times, when offered to him, are used by him to go on transforming us, so that as St John puts it, 'when we see Christ we shall be like him'. As I listened to the Psalms, I was struck by part

of Psalm 84. Reflecting on tough times and what trust in God can do, the Psalmist writes, “Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways of Zion. As they go through the valley of Baca (or misery) they make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools.”

Therein is the vocation and calling of grief.

John Searle, Canon Emeritus



Our Bishops Respond to *Living in Love and Faith* Proposals

Bishop Robert, Bishop Jackie and Bishop James have written a pastoral letter following the publication of the [Living in Love and Faith proposals](#) regarding same sex relationships.

The proposals include new prayers of dedication, thanksgiving or blessing for same sex couples. They are due to be discussed by the Church of England's General Synod, which is meeting from 6th to 9th February.

The letter says:

“As bishops of the Church of England, serving the people of Devon, we have been strongly engaged with this discernment process from the beginning and continue to be so. It is vital to find a way forward for the Church of England and we believe that these proposals offer such an opportunity.

We welcome the proposed prayers of thanksgiving, dedication and God's blessing for same sex couples. It is significant that same sex couples will now be able to have their civil marriage or partnership publicly affirmed in a church ceremony.

We recognise that these proposals go too far for some people and not far enough for others. We will offer our pastoral support to all as we continue to engage in this process and invite you to reflect on what is proposed. We pray that the College of Bishops' proposals will be received in a spirit of generosity by the General Synod and the wider church. *Living in Love and Faith* is a journey, as bishops we are committed to walking together and we invite you to walk with us as God's pilgrim people.” [Read more.](#)

Book Review – *Jews Don't Count* by David Baddiel

Published by HarperCollins £7.99

Friday 27th January was the International Day of Commemoration of the 6 million victims of the Holocaust. A day of remembering the horrors of that particular past. David Baddiel's short book offers salutary evidence of a community 'blind spot' when it comes to the current maltreatment of people with Jewish Heritage.

This short (131 pages) angry book might be a quick read, but it's certainly not a light one. Aimed at progressive people (hands up there) who, whilst priding themselves on opposing discrimination against oppressed minorities, nevertheless pay significantly less attention to current antisemitism. Baddiel states that, in part, this is because anti-Jewish racism is not really considered racism at all. It has after all a different name; one hears talk all the time of 'antisemitism and racism' suggesting racism against people of colour is different in kind to racism against Jews. The question in this book is why a difference in kind should equate to a difference in significance.

Though not an exhaustive account of modern day antisemitism, the 131 pages give examples aplenty from the current social context; from theatre, both 'serious' and musical, Television programmes, literature, to the stands at the 'beautiful game', of Jews not counting. Examples that expose how antisemitism has embedded itself in our culture. There is not a level playing field around racism/antisemitism. Modern cultural conversation about reassessing great writers from the past in the light of current understanding, has led to plays, poetry, opera etc adjusting not only some of the language, but also the casting of actors – the days of blacking up for Othello are gone and all to the good. So whilst we don't get one of Agatha Christie's plays still being called 'Ten little.....' or re-runs of the Black and White Minstrel Show, we still have an offensive anti-Jewish Fagin in Oliver, and antisemitic chanting not called out at football matches.

The problem as Baddiel sees it is that.....

"Jews occupy a socio-cultural grey area. Jews, although marginal, are not thought of as marginalised. Which means Jews can't be seen as representative of a modern Britain that is intent on shifting marginalised experiences into the mainstream" (pp37).

Baddiel has written an angry book that make uncomfortable reading. I couldn't put it down.

Anne Foreman

Compline: A contemplative journey through Lent

The ancient close-of-the-day service of Compline, with plainchant and polyphony. Hosted by Margaret Aagesen Hughes (Soprano) and Clare Bryden (Alto).

St Olave's Church, on Exeter Fore Street.

8pm on the five Thursdays of 23rd February, 2nd, 9th, (not 16th), 23rd, 30th March.

Free and unticketed, with retiring collection towards the church's upkeep.

We recommend you wrap up warm!

Cathedral Community Committee (CCC)

The CCC met on 10th January. The meeting was devoted to events and projects that we might reasonably hope to complete in 2023, taking into account the opportunities and constraints of the start of work on the development project. Our proposed list includes study days and such like, parties, and regular events including Christingle. Further discussion is needed, and details of all events will appear, as soon as they are available in the *News*, the *Weekly Sheet* and the website

We next meet on 14th February. We have already agreed to discuss ways of affirming the work and ministry of worshippers and volunteers, and how best to support the work of the Mothers' Union. Please send any other agenda items, questions etc to Ann Barwood, the Committee Secretary at [amb@exeter-](mailto:amb@exeter-cathedral.org.uk)

[cathedral.org.uk](mailto:amb@exeter-cathedral.org.uk)

Heather Morgan,
Chair CCC



On 8th January at the 10am Choral Eucharist, we welcomed eight new Eucharistic Ministers to the team. Here they are with Canon Ian Morter, who is responsible for training in this area of ministry, and with

Chris Brathwaite, who prepares the duty rota.