



THE LAMP



"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119)

THE PRAYER BOOK: OUR "PRICELESS POSSESSION"

*A study series to be held on the Wednesdays in Lent 2016
at St. Olave's Church, 360 Windermere Ave., Toronto*

Ash Wednesday, February 10: **Dr. William Cooke** will give the introductory talk. Dr. Cooke is a retired university lecturer in early English language and literature, and a freelance editor, writer, tutor and speaker.

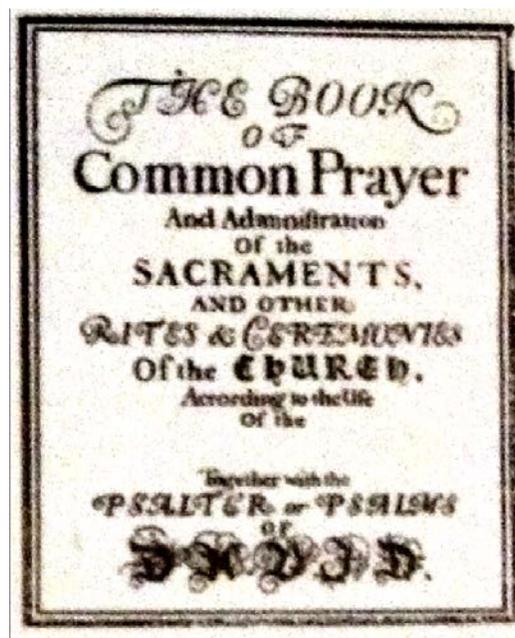
February 17: **Dr. Jesse Billett** will speak on the mediaeval roots of the Prayer Book. Dr. Billett is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Divinity at Trinity College, Toronto.

February 24: **Dr. David Neelands** will survey the development of the Prayer Book from its first appearance in 1549 to 1662 when it attained its classic form. Dr. Neelands is the Dean of the Faculty of Divinity at Trinity College.

March 2: **Jonathan Lofft** will speak on the two Canadian Prayer Books of 1918-21 and 1959-62. Mr. Lofft is a Doctoral Fellow in the Faculty of Divinity at Trinity College and an adjunct instructor in the Toronto School of Theology.

March 9: **Sue Careless** will speak on the use of the Prayer Book in private devotions. Sue is a freelance writer and journalist and is the senior editor of the *Anglican Planet*.

March 16: **Peter Scotchmer** will conclude the series (topic to be determined). Peter is a retired English teacher living in Ottawa, and is the brother of Desmond Scotchmer, past National Chairman of the PBSC and past president of the PBSC Toronto Branch.



*Each talk will begin at 7:00 PM after a sung service
of Evensong at 6:00 PM and a light supper at 6:30.
For further information, contact Dr. William Cooke
Phone: 416-760-7445 E-mail: wllm.cooke@gmail.com*

THE PRAYER BOOK IN THE NORTH

(Excerpts from the talk given by the Revd. Chris Dow of the Diocese of Saskatchewan to the Toronto Branch of the PBSC on October 17, 2015.)

The Diocese of Saskatchewan comprises the northern two-thirds of the civil province of Saskatchewan. About sixty per cent of our members are Cree indigenous people – and that percentage is increasing. The Diocese has been bilingual from its outset; and its worship has always been primarily from the Cree and English editions of the Book of Common Prayer.

I have been asked to speak to you this afternoon about ‘the challenges and joys’ of ministry in my context; and I’ll focus primarily on First Nations ministry, as this is where I’ve experienced my greatest joys, as well as some unique challenges.

As this is the Eve of the Feast of St. Luke the Evangelist, I will present my reflections using Luke as my guide. Luke has a special place in the hearts of Prayer Book Anglicans like ourselves; and that’s because he occupies a central place in the Book of Common Prayer. Three of the Daily Office canticles are from Luke’s Gospel: the *Magnificat* and the *Nunc Dimittis* from Evening Prayer and the *Benedictus* from Morning Prayer. When we prayerfully proclaim these canticles, our voices become one with Mary (in the *Magnificat*), with Simeon (in the *Nunc Dimittis*) and with Zacharias (in the *Benedictus*); and when our voices join with theirs in prayer, their words become our words and so become true for us.

So, like Mary, we believe that there will be a fulfillment of what is spoken to us from the Lord; and because the Word of God became flesh in her womb, there is a secondary sense in which the Word also becomes flesh in the hearts of those who believe, so that the Word may be embodied in our lives. And then like Simeon, we receive and *take up* the Word, bless God and give thanks for the *salvation* that comes to us and to *all people* through this Word made flesh. And then, awaking the next morning, refreshed by ‘the priceless gift of sleep’, we prepare once again to serve Christ as His friends and as forerunners of His second coming in glory. At Morning Prayer, when we say the *Benedictus*, we are speaking not so much to God, but to one another, reminding ourselves of our common ministry and mission. These three canticles from Luke’s Gospel – the *Magnificat*, the *Nunc Dimittis* and the *Benedictus* – are central to our Christian devotion and formation in the

Prayer Book tradition. By saying these canticles day after day, these words become part of our very being, as we are shaped into bearers, presenters and heralds of the Word-made-flesh

With all of that in mind, I would argue that the *Magnificat* can be read as a prophetic description of what is happening right now in the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous people in our country and in the Anglican Church of Canada. I believe that First Nations people are being *exalted* by God to a position of authority and influence after centuries of ‘cultural genocide,’ to borrow a term from the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the recent report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

In our national church in recent years, Native ministry and reconciliation have become high priorities; and for this our current Primate deserves much credit. We have taken real steps towards indigenous self-determination with the establishment of the office of the National Indigenous bishop and the Spiritual Ministry of Mishamokweesh in Northern Ontario. There are exciting developments in theological education for Native clergy and laity. Native leaders and perspectives are becoming more and more important in our national church life, as they ought to be.

The experience and faith of First Nations Anglicans offers us an essential insight into the Gospel of Jesus Christ that we would not otherwise have. They remind us of key tenets of Christianity that we are at risk of losing or have already forgotten. As Bishop Mark Macdonald has said repeatedly, it amongst our aboriginal Anglican brothers and sisters where the Holy Spirit seems to be at work in some of the most powerful ways; and I believe that Christ is calling us not just to take note, but to get on board and allow this to change and transform us.

So with that, here is a story of God’s work with one of our aboriginal sisters that I have been privileged to witness and that has changed me. I should mention that the details of this story are already publically available in local newspapers and other sources, so I’m not airing anyone’s dirty laundry or sharing any secrets from the confessional.

Last year, I officiated at the funeral of a forty-six year old woman from the Muskoday First Nation named

Lana. Lana suffered from a host of health problems, including AIDS, which she acquired during her 28 years on the street as a sex worker and IV drug user. She had also been in prison for long periods of time for various offenses.

During her years of suffering, long before I met her, Lana had a conversion experience and came to trust in the love and healing power of Jesus Christ. Her life was turned around and she became an advocate for AIDS victims and a Christian evangelist. She shared her story openly and it's publicly available on the website for C.A.T.I.E. – 'Canada's source for HIV and Hepatitis C information'.

Speaking of her ministry, Lana said, 'I spent a lot of time on the streets and I want to make up for that. My prayers are now answered. I am on my healing journey. Thank you, Jesus.' Like Mary, she received the Word-made-flesh into her heart and through the Holy Spirit, bore fruit abundantly.

In talking to Lana several months before she died, I think she understood that for her, physical healing would take place in the Resurrection of the body on the last day. In the final years of her life, God worked in her a deep emotional and spiritual healing that allowed her, like Simeon in the *Nunc Dimittis*, to *depart in peace*, in the sure and certain hope of that blessed end.

What moved me deeply about Lana, in addition to her powerful witness, was the liturgy used for her funeral. The Book of Burial Offices for the First Nations People of the Diocese of Saskatchewan includes the BCP burial service and Holy Communion propers, as well as a number of other wake services and prayers that are written in the same language, spirit, and theology as the Book of Common Prayer.

One of the beauties of the idea and practice of Common Prayer is the equalizing effect that it has: standardized, common prayers for everyone, regardless of your station in life or your worth in the eyes of the world. Lana - former sex worker, prisoner and drug addict - had basically the same funeral as you and I will have one day, even the same funeral that Her Majesty the Queen will have one day. The Queen's funeral might be more dressed up, but the prayers will be identical and that's all that matters. From what I know about our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth and her strong Christian faith, I imagine that she would see this as being good and true.

Jesus Christ, the King of kings, redeemed Lana from one of the poorest situations in which it is possible to live in

this country. By His grace He made her a member of His royal priesthood. This is made beautifully evident by the Book of Common Prayer and its language of nobility. From the underused Acts of Praise on p. 62: *Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.*

Finally, just a few words on confirmation, which, like baptism, is in high demand on reserve. The catechism in the Book of Common Prayer has been a very valuable tool for me. It is conveniently accessible in the Prayer Book and I have found its question and answer format to be a helpful way to start conversations with the youth. As soon as they or their parents or grandparents express an interest in confirmation, I take out the Prayer Book, give them a copy and start the catechesis right there on the spot, because I know that there is a very good chance that I will not see them again before the confirmation, if indeed they end up coming back at all.

Teaching confirmation class in this haphazard and incomplete way is challenging and often frustrating, but also a great joy. I have found the youth and their families to be remarkably open and I have learned much in teaching them.

When I take them through the threefold renunciation of the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world and the sinful desires of the flesh, they know exactly what I'm talking about, share their own experiences with those things and are eager to renounce them. That both we and the world have fallen from the Creator's design and are in the grip of personal evil force is self-evident to First Nations people, in my experience.

In contrast, when I try to do baptism and confirmation teaching off-reserve, I am met with an uncomfortable silence, blank stares and a deer-in-the-headlights look. As you may know, the Church of England has responded to this challenge by making a new baptismal liturgy that removes (or at least waters down) the traditional threefold renunciation. Though perhaps well-intentioned, I believe this innovation to be a grave error born of *darkened understanding* (Eph. 4:18), for the devil's greatest victory has been in convincing us that he does not exist. I pray that the Anglican Church of Canada will not follow suit and I thank God that the Book of Common Prayer and you, the Prayer Book Society, preserve the truth - it saves souls and lives, because it holds up for us unashamedly the Way, the Truth and the Life, Jesus Christ our Lord, who reigns victorious over sin, death and the devil.

ONTARIO REGIONAL CYCLE OF PRAYER, JANUARY-MARCH

(Over the coming months, please remember the following parishes in your prayers. You might consider using for this purpose one of Prayer #8 or #9, found on pages 43 and 44 of the Book of Common Prayer, or the prayer "For the Parish" found on page 736.)

JAN.	3	<i>Christmas II</i>	St. Peter's Church, Erindale (Mississauga)
	10	<i>Epiphany I</i>	Church of the Resurrection, Toronto
	17	<i>Epiphany II</i>	St. Mark's Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake
	24	<i>Septuagesima</i>	Little Trinity Church, Toronto
	31	<i>Sexagesima</i>	St. Barnabas' Church, St. Catharines
FEB.	7	<i>Quinquagesima</i>	St. Thomas's Church, Toronto
	14	<i>Lent I</i>	St. Paul's-on-the-Hill, Pickering
	21	<i>Lent II</i>	St. John the Evangelist's Church, Port Hope
	28	<i>Lent III</i>	St. John's, St. Brice's and Christ Church, North Bay
	MAR.	6	<i>Lent IV</i>
13		<i>Lent V</i>	St. Paul's Church, Kanyengeh (Six Nations Reserve)
20		<i>Palm Sunday</i>	St. Olave's Church, Toronto
27		<i>Easter</i>	Parishes of PBSC members outside of Ontario

The Prayer Book Society of Canada was founded in 1986 by Anglicans who were alarmed at the erosion of classical Anglican doctrine, worship and spirituality that was proceeding alongside the adoption of new liturgies. The Society's aim is briefly to support the continuing use of the Prayer Book for all who value it as their preferred medium of worship, preserving as it does faithfulness to Holy Scripture and adherence to the orthodox Anglican doctrine of the Christian faith. The Mission Statement of the Society, adopted in 1995, is: "To promote the understanding and use of the Book of Common Prayer as a scriptural system of nurture for life in Christ".

The Society operates on two levels: the national level and the branch level. The National Council is responsible for setting policy and direction for the Society, and for overseeing activities with a national scope. All branch presidents are *ex officio* members of the National Council. The branches are individually responsible for organizing local activities and initiatives in their own geographical areas, in support of the aims and objectives of the Society.

The Ontario Council of PBSC Branches is an informal coalition of branches in southern Ontario, formed in 1994. It serves as a forum for the planning of joint activities, and provides a network of support for the branches. It publishes this newsmagazine, "**The Lamp**", which appears in the months of March, September and December. Opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the Society as a whole. Contributions of articles and news items are welcome, and should be sent to the editor (see opposite).

Branch contacts within our region:

Grand Valley: Mr. Brian Munro, 508-258 West St., Brantford, ON, N3R 6N1. Tel. (519) 756-3053
E-mail: brian.a.munro@rogers.com

London: Mrs. Patsy Allison, RR #2, Ilderton, ON, N0M 2A0. Tel. (519) 666-0394

North Bay: The Revd. John Stennett, 115 Turner Dr., North Bay, ON, P1A 4H5. Tel. (705) 498-6549
E-mail: jamlisnb@cogeco.ca

Toronto: Mrs. Diana Verseggy, 12 Sherbourne Dr., Maple, ON, L6A 1G8. Tel. (905) 303-4490
E-mail: diana.verseggy@sympatico.ca

Windsor: The Revd. Gordon Maitland, 1983 St. Mary's Gate, Windsor, ON, N8Y 1J8. Tel. (519) 254-2901
E-mail: grmaitland@sympatico.ca

Editor of "The Lamp":

Mrs. Diana Verseggy, 12 Sherbourne Dr., Maple, Ontario, L6A 1G8. Tel. (905) 303-4490
E-mail: diana.verseggy@sympatico.ca