



THE LAMP



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

INAUGURAL FORUM ON GROWING PRAYER BOOK PARISHES IN TORONTO WELL ATTENDED

Youth, music and education were the topics of discussion as representatives from several Toronto parishes that use the BCP shared information and ideas to grow their churches.

St. Olave's in Swansea, Toronto hosted the morning-long event held on April 27 that was attended by representatives of five parishes and by some executive members of the Toronto Branch of the Prayer Book Society, including Diana Versegny, branch president.

"In this modern world it is a continuing challenge to attract people to church, so we at St. Olave's thought it would be a good idea to host a forum that would allow people to discuss ways to grow their parishes," said forum chair Paul Scrivener.



Revd. David Burrows of St. Olave's led the discussion on young peoples' ministry. Noting that youth needs a strong social ministry to deal with issues such as bullying, promiscuity, drugs and alcohol, he has found the BCP to be a useful tool in helping young people cope with these challenges.

St. Bartholomew's in Regent Park, Toronto has developed its own curriculum for kids aged 8-12. Fr. David Brinton said that children want teaching that imparts substance since they are often very inquisitive and keen to probe new ideas.

Revd. Rob Mitchell of St. Thomas's, Toronto, remarked that it is important to try and involve youth in the running of the church. For example, St. Thomas's has a very successful acolyte program.

Noting that music brings people to church, William Cowling told the forum that St. Olave's has developed a strong music program in support of the Prayer Book liturgy. St. Olave's is well-known in the community for hosting recitals and other musical performances around the church's Evensong services. Recently, St. Olave's found the money to hire some paid leads that have strengthened and grown the choir.

On the topic of education and the BCP, Diana Verseghy said that the Prayer Book Society is working on developing an easy-to-use teaching tool that will build on the comprehensive three-part series *Discovering the Book of Common Prayer*, written by Sue Careless. This resource will take the form of small booklets similar to those produced by the national Church in the 1950s and 60s, *In his Presence* and *God's Family*. Diana said that the Society welcomes other ideas on how to educate people on the meaning and use of the Prayer Book.

The forum plans to meet again at St. Olave's in the fall. If you wish to become involved, please send an email to Paul Scrivener at stolaves@stolaves.ca.

A PROFILE OF PROFESSOR JESSE BILLETT

(Professor Jesse Billett was recently appointed to the Faculty of Divinity at Trinity College, Toronto. The following article was written by the Revd. Bob Bettson.)

Jesse Billett doesn't have the sort of background you might expect for a new assistant professor who has just completed his first year at the Trinity College Faculty of Divinity.

Trinity Divinity's first tenure track academic in years describes himself as a "fiery evangelical" when he attended Grenville Christian College in eastern Ontario as a youth.

Now his research is focussed on the history of the divine office during the medieval period in the church's history. He was a choral scholar for the prestigious Choir of King's College, Cambridge.

Billett's faith journey almost led him to become an Anglican priest in the Diocese of Ottawa. However, when the Trinity College opportunity came up, he jumped at the chance.

"It's a wonderful place to be", says Billett. "It feels like I won the lottery." He teaches courses on the history of Christianity in the middle ages and the Reformation, as well as a doctoral course in medieval liturgy.

He also joins other Trinity staff in teaching a course in principles and practices of worship. Billett is now working on preparing a course on the Book of Common

Prayer (BCP).

Despite his Protestant background – once viewing the Anglican Church and its liturgy as obscuring the Gospel – it is the BCP and its order and discipline in structuring worship which turned him toward the Anglican Communion. He was received into the Church of England and confirmed in 2002, while working on doctoral studies at the University of Cambridge.

Billett met Jill Aitken in England. They were married in Jill's hometown in Newfoundland, then set up house in married students' accommodation at Cambridge. Aitken has a Ph.D. in Zoology. The couple have three children: Margaret, aged 6, James, aged 4, and William, aged 20 months.

Billett was looking at ordination in the Church of England. However, the couple decided instead to return to Canada where Billett worked on a post-doctoral fellowship at the Centre for Medieval Studies, and Aitken began work in Ottawa as a civil servant.

Billett also took part-time theology courses at St. Paul's University and took steps for being a postulant in the Diocese of Ottawa. "I was contentedly preparing to disappear into obscurity as a country parson", he says.

The Trinity offer was a surprise; something Billett felt he had been preparing for all his life.



Professor Jesse Billett

What prompted a young student who loathed the Book of Common Prayer as “incomprehensible” when he first encountered it to now design a course on it at an Anglican theological college?

Many parishes have abandoned the BCP for the Book of Alternative Services and its modern rites, although the BCP is still the official prayer book of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Billett was attracted to the BCP as a high school student because it is a highly predictable system of worship, which connects us to our Anglican heritage, as well as to the post-Biblical church. Now he values the BCP because it is “beautiful and true”.

Billett became interested in medieval church history through medieval music. He started at Harvard for his undergraduate studies in mathematics, but had switched to sacred music by the end of his first year. Medieval history came later at Cambridge.

His undergraduate thesis was on the thirteenth-century Franciscan daily office, and his interest in the office turned his attention to the observance of saints’ days. “I was quite unprepared for the power of the witness of the saints”, he says.

When he moved to England, immersion in a worshipping community that observed the daily office led to his decision to become confirmed.

Billett’s master’s and doctoral work was on the liturgy of the Anglo-Saxon church. His research and teaching interest is on the continuity between medieval and reformation periods in English Christianity – despite the efforts of the reformers.

At Trinity, Billett has already become immersed in the community life of the Faculty of Divinity. He is on the committee that will select a new Provost. He is supervising doctoral students and taking part in chapel worship. He has visited many parishes in the Diocese of Toronto.

Billett hopes to be part of a community that confidently proclaims Christian teaching, and moves forward in its mission to train leaders to go out into the church. “We focus so much on marketing that we’ve forgotten we have a product.”

The Divinity Faculty must emphasize its strength as a residential community, and find ways of making daily worship part of lived reality, he says.

(The Revd. Bob Bettson is a priest and journalist who has served on both Toronto and Calgary PBSC branch executives. Ordained in 2001, he served parishes in Calgary, Brandon, and Huron Dioceses before taking early retirement in 2012 to return to Toronto for family reasons. He is now a member of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene and continues ministry on a part-time basis in the Diocese of Toronto, as well as contributing to “The Anglican”).

GRAND VALLEY BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Grand Valley Branch of the PBSC will hold its Annual General Meeting on Saturday, October 5 at the farmhouse of Bill and Becky Creese, near Holstein, ON. Lunch will be served at 12:30 PM, followed by the meeting at 1:30 PM. Elections of branch officers will be held, and the president’s and treasurer’s annual reports will be presented.

The meeting will be followed by an afternoon programme (details TBA), then a service of Holy Communion or Evensong at about 4:00 PM. There is accommodation available at the farm for any who would like to come the night before; phone Becky Creese at 519-334-3602 for more information after September 24.

Fuller details may be had from the branch president, Brian Munro, at 519-756-3053. E-mail: brian.a.munro@rogers.com.

ONTARIO REGIONAL CYCLE OF PRAYER, OCTOBER-DECEMBER

(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.)

OCT.	6	<i>Trinity XIX</i>	St. George's Memorial Church, Oshawa
	13	<i>Trinity XX</i>	Christ Church, Bobcaygeon
	20	<i>Trinity XXI</i>	St. Alban's Church, Delhi
	27	<i>Trinity XXII</i>	St. Anne's Church, Toronto
NOV.	3	<i>Trinity XXIII</i>	St. George's Church, Guelph
	10	<i>Trinity XIV</i>	St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Toronto
	17	<i>Trinity XV</i>	St. John's Church, Norway (Toronto)
	24	<i>Next Before Advent</i>	Christ Church, Brampton
DEC.	1	<i>Advent I</i>	St. Bride's Church, Mississauga
	8	<i>Advent II</i>	St. John's Church, Cambridge
	15	<i>Advent III</i>	Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto
	22	<i>Advent IV</i>	St. James' Church, Fairmount
	29	<i>Christmas I</i>	St. Paul's Church (Bloor St.), Toronto

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 quarterly in the months of March, June, 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:

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