

The Prayer Book Society of Canada

# Newsletter

Michaelmas 2020

A NEW FREE RESOURCE FROM THE PBSC COMING ADVENT 2020



Common Prayer  
Canada

DAILY OFFICE MOBILE APP

*Assist us mercifully, O Lord,  
in these our supplications  
and prayers!*

This free tool is offered with a prayer that it will make the Daily Offices more accessible both to those who know and love them and to those who are discovering them for the first time.



[prayerbook.ca/bcp-app](http://prayerbook.ca/bcp-app)



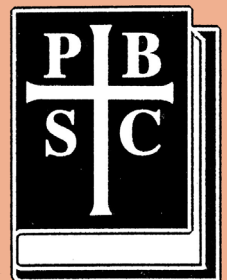
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“Covidtide”, as many are now calling it, has greatly restricted public worship, not simply in Canada, but throughout the world. Back in March when bishops and civil authorities were ordering the shuttering of parishes, there was a rush to respond by making use of digital technology to allow parishes to worship together “virtually”. During that initial challenging period, many parishes chose to forego the celebration of the Eucharist if all the people were not permitted to be present. Some dioceses chose to prohibit priests from celebrating the Eucharist as well. These circumstances led to a resurgence in prominence and a renewed interest in the Daily Offices, particularly that of Morning Prayer.



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Many Anglicans were being exposed to this service for the first time. Even more interestingly, some parishes where the principal Sunday service was from the Book of Alternative Services chose to use Morning Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer instead.

While the Offices from the Book of Common Prayer are decidedly more “user-friendly” for the uninitiated compared to those in the Book of Alternative Services, the Table of Lessons, the Lectionary, and even the Psalter might prove daunting for someone who has never read a rubric before, and is “on their own” as they seek to learn this traditional aspect of Anglican spirituality.

Some of our readers will be familiar with software applications, or “apps”, which have been released over the past few years to facilitate praying the Offices via one’s computer or phone. The Church of England’s “Daily Prayer” app is one of the most widely used, though many options for the American 1979 Prayer Book exist, as well as for other prayer books from other jurisdictions. In Canada, “Daily Prayer” tends to be the app of choice as being at least somewhat familiar. The National Council of the Prayer Book Society quickly realised that with renewed interest in the Offices and a lack of Canadian

resources, this was a prime opportunity for the Society to fulfil its mandate as set out in our constitution “to serve as a resource to those who may be unfamiliar with traditional theology, but who desire to grow as faithful, believing and informed communicants”, and to “foster rediscovery and deepen awareness of the Book of Common Prayer and the doctrine that it teaches”. Designing such an app for the Canadian BCP was seen as a cutting-edge tool for evangelism, allowing families and individuals access to the riches of Scriptural prayer in the Canadian BCP via a new digital format.

The Prayer Book Society shortly thereafter began discussions on the development of a mobile app, identifying two main requirements. First and foremost, it had to provide a user-friendly interface enabling anyone, with one or two clicks on their screen, to be praying the Office with all necessary readings, collects, etc, displayed automatically for any day of the year. Further, it was deemed important to design the app in such a way as to teach users how eventually to pray the Office themselves, using their own Prayer Book and Bible.

A subcommittee of the National Council was formed to flesh out the project and make a

presentation to Council and to the Society’s Annual General Meeting. Its members engaged with developers from around the world to work out the details of the project, taking into account our needs, and a timeline for completion. The right developer was quickly found, and the project was initiated in July of 2020, only a month after being approved at the June online meeting of the National Council.

As the development process continues, a number of features are being incorporated. The core part of the app provides the means to pray the offices of Morning, Mid-Day, and Evening Prayer, as well as Compline. The Great Litany may be prayed with Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, or on its own. Upon opening the app, users select the service they wish to pray and the date, which is especially helpful for clergy who have missed an office on a previous day and want to catch up! The full text of the service, including any applicable variable portions such as psalms, readings, collects, antiphons, sentences, etc, are displayed on the user’s screen. In time, it is planned that the Forms of Prayer to be Used in Families, at the end of the BCP, will also be included.

While the default settings of the app will allow a user to begin praying the moment the

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app is installed, advanced features will allow users to customize their experience based on the rubrics of the office, such as the use of alternate canticles, or which order of the Psalter to use. While the design principle of the app is generally to make it appear as though you are looking at a page out of the BCP, customization features will be available to enlarge the text size or switch to a high visibility mode with a dark

background and light text, which some people find easier to read, and some formatting adjustments are planned to ensure that the app is visually pleasing as well as easy to use.

The app will be available for online or offline use on your Android and Apple mobile devices (including iPads and other tablets), and will also be accessible on the web through the Prayer Book Society's website. Development

continues at this point, and features will be adjusted in time for the planned release on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2020, the First Sunday in Advent.

The Society hopes that this mobile app will encourage Christians throughout Canada to take up the discipline of regularly praying the Offices during this "Covidtide", as well as throughout the next liturgical year and beyond.

## The Revd. Dr. J.I. Packer – R.I.P.

*(The Revd. Dr. J.I. Packer was a staunch supporter of the BCP, and served as a vice-chairman of the PBSC for many years. This tribute was written by a fellow vice-chairman, the Revd. Dr. David Curry, of Windsor, Nova Scotia.)*

He was one of the giants of the Evangelical and Anglican world, like the California Redwoods which he used as an image for the Puritan theologians and pastors who had greatly influenced and shaped his life and ministry. A prolific writer of many books which spoke the Word of God in season and out of season to the contemporary world in its confusion and ignorance in Canada and beyond, his *A Quest For Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (1990) captures best

perhaps the tenor of his soul and its quest. A work admired by the Revd Dr. Robert Crouse, it shows the maturity of vision and commitment to the qualities of the spiritual life to which Dr. Packer thought we are all called and which he saw in the wider traditions of spirituality reaching back to the Fathers and to Medieval writers such as Bernard of Clairvaux, but as grounded in the Scriptures; for him, the living oracles of God. He was one of a few Evangelical theologians, like Dr. Peter Toon, who understood and appreciated the doctrinal and spiritual qualities of the Common Prayer tradition and who remained committed to its promotion and use. He was an academic pastor of souls, a teacher and professor at Regent College for many decades, whose teaching has shaped the

lives of many, many pastors and preachers. One of the Vice-Chairmen of the Prayer Book Society of Canada, his ministry reminds the Society of the richness and the depth of the reformed traditions that belong to the patterns of spirituality embedded in the classical Book(s) of Common Prayer.

The frontispiece to *A Quest for Godliness* from John Gere's 1646 work on *The Character of Old English Puritans* is a testament to Dr. Packer himself. "He was ... [a man foursquare], immovable in all times, so that they who in the midst of many opinions have lost the view of true religion, may return to him and there find it." We give thanks to God for his life and ministry. May he rest in peace.

## A Tribute to J.I. Packer – 1926-2020

(This second tribute, by Sue Careless, is reprinted from the summer issue of the “Anglican Planet”.)

One of the most influential evangelicals in the English-speaking world died on July 17, just shy of his 94<sup>th</sup> birthday. Canon Dr. J. I. Packer was an English-born theologian in the evangelical Anglican and Reformed tradition who during the last half of his adult life called Canada his home. A prolific writer of almost 70 books, he is probably best known for the spiritual classic, *Knowing God* (1973).

In its foreword Packer wrote: “As clowns yearn to play Hamlet, so I have wanted to write a treatise on God.” In his self-effacing manner, he said it was “at best a string of beads” but for millions of readers around the globe, *Knowing God* was indeed a veritable treatise on God, and a spiritual treasure. He wanted it to be a practical road map for travellers, not for onlookers on balconies only theorizing, watching pilgrims passing below.

“Thus (for instance) in relation to evil, the balconeer’s problem is to find a theoretical explanation of how evil can consist with God’s sovereignty

and goodness, but the traveller’s problem is how to master evil and bring good out of it.” The scholar believed that theology should lead to doxology [praise]: “Any theology that does not lead to



*The Revd. Dr. James Packer*

song is, at a fundamental level, a flawed theology.”

Packer was deeply influenced by the works of John Calvin and the English Puritans and brought seventeenth-century Puritan devotion to life for both his students and his readers. In 2005 he was named as one of the 25 Most Influential Evangelicals by *Time Magazine*.

One of his biographers, Leland Ryken, noted that

“Although Packer could write specialized scholarship with the best, his calling was to write mid-level scholarship for the layperson... he regarded his informal theological writings for the layperson to be his calling.”

Beginning in 1958 Packer authored no fewer than 47 books. His last published was *Finishing Our Course with Joy* (2014). He coauthored another 17 books, and published five collected works so you would need several bookshelves to hold all his tomes.

He considered his role as general editor of the *English Standard Version* (2001), an evangelical revision of the *Revised Standard Version* of the Bible, as one of his greatest contributions to the global church. He was also theological editor of the *ESV Study Bible* (2008).

Packer had a significant influence on American evangelicals since he served for more than 30 years as senior editor and visiting scholar for *Christianity Today*. When the magazine conducted a survey to determine the top 50 books that have shaped evangelicals, Packer’s *Knowing God* came in fifth.

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James Innell Packer was born on July 22, 1926 in Gloucestershire, England, the son of a railway clerk and a homemaker. He had hoped for a bicycle on his eleventh birthday but providentially, as it turned out, was given a typewriter instead.

Growing up in a nominal Anglican home, Packer attended church and was confirmed at 14. As a teen he read C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters*, and *Mere Christianity* as well as his grandmother's copy of the King James Bible. But he became a committed Christian at 18, largely through the Oxford Inter-Collegiate Christian Union and St. Aldate's Anglican Church.

He had won a scholarship to the University of Oxford, where in 1954 he obtained a Doctor of Philosophy in theology. He wrote his dissertation on Puritan Richard Baxter's doctrine of salvation. "It was the Puritans," Packer noted, "that made me aware that all theology is also spirituality."

He was ordained a priest in 1953 in the Church of England and a year later married Katherine "Kit" Mullet, a Welsh nurse to whom he was devoted. She proved a mainstay to Packer's domestic life, and a source of constant encouragement.

He served as an Assistant Curate in Birmingham for three

years but more of his professional life was spent at the typewriter or in the lecture hall than in the pulpit. He taught at Tyndale Hall, Bristol from 1955 to 1961. For the rest of the 1960s he was Librarian and then Principal of Latimer House, Oxford – an evangelical research centre established by Packer and John Stott to strengthen the theological foundation of the Church of England. In 1970 Packer became Principal of Tyndale Hall, Bristol, and from 1971 until 1979 he was Associate Principal of Trinity College, Bristol.

Although Packer did not court controversy it came his way. In 2015 he remarked, "I should like to be remembered as someone who was always courteous in controversy, but without compromise."

In 1966, the three most notable British evangelicals were the Welsh independent minister Martyn Lloyd-Jones and the Anglicans, Stott and Packer. At the National Assembly of Evangelicals in London that year, Lloyd-Jones called on evangelicals to come out of denominations in which they were "united with the people who deny and are opposed to the essential matters of salvation."

Stott and Packer clashed publicly with Lloyd-Jones, rejecting his bid for a unified British evangelical church.

They organized the first Evangelical Anglican Congress at Keele a year later, publicly committing to full participation in the Church of England. When Packer co-authored *Growing into Union* in 1970 with two Anglo-Catholics, Lloyd Jones broke formally with Packer, ending the Puritan Conferences that they had co-founded and then hosted for nearly two decades.

The authority and reliability of Scripture had been a central theme in Packer's work since he published his first book, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*, in 1958. It came as no surprise when he signed the famous Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy twenty years later, affirming a conservative position on the issue.

Packer's willingness to work with Roman Catholic Christians would lead to a clash with the Chicago Statement's primary author, R. C. Sproul, and other conservative evangelicals in 1994, when he partnered with Richard J. Neuhaus as a leader of Evangelicals and Catholics Together. The group's founding statement affirmed significant doctrinal agreement and called for cooperation in evangelism and cultural renewal in the face of a rising secularist tide.

In 1979 Packer was invited by James M. Houston, the founding principal of Regent College in Vancouver, to join the faculty. (Houston had been

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an Oxford don when Packer was a student.) Packer accepted the invitation and was eventually named the first Sangwoo Youtong Chee Professor of Theology, a title he held until he was named a Regent College Board of Governors' Professor of Theology in 1996.

He was also a key figure in the Essentials movement within the Anglican Church of Canada, which was attempting in the 1990s to renew theological orthodoxy within that denomination. Packer spoke to 700 Anglicans at the formative Essentials '94 conference held in Montreal, and his address was published as a chapter in the book *Anglican Essentials* (1995). The conference also produced *The Montreal Declaration*. Packer played a central role in its composition.

In Vancouver, Packer and Kit joined St. John's (Shaughnessy) Anglican Church, which, with 800 members, was the largest congregation in the Anglican Church of Canada. However, in 2002, when the synod of the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster in Vancouver authorized its bishop to produce a service for blessing same-sex unions, Packer was among the synod delegates who walked out in protest.

“[T]his decision, taken in its context, falsifies the gospel of Christ, abandons the authority

of Scripture, jeopardizes the salvation of fellow human beings, and betrays the church in its God-appointed role as the bastion and bulwark of divine truth.”

He also explained: “For many decades now, I have asked myself at every turn of my theological road: Would Paul be with me in this? What would he say if he were in my shoes? I have never dared to offer a view on anything that I did not have good reason to think he would endorse.”

In February 2008, the congregation voted overwhelmingly to leave the ACC altogether and realign with the newly-formed Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC). On April 23 of that year, Packer handed in his licence to Michael Ingham, the Bishop of New Westminster. The Anglican Network in Canada would subsequently join the Anglican Church in North America.

Packer served as theologian emeritus of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) since its creation in 2009, being one of the nine members of the task force that authored *Texts for Common Prayer*, released in 2013.

Packer was keen to see the North American church recover catechesis or instruction in the Christian faith. To that end he was delighted to be general

editor of the task force that wrote *To Be a Christian: An Anglican Catechism*, a 160-page document which was approved in 2014 by the College of Bishops of ACNA. He was awarded the St. Cuthbert's Cross at the Provincial Assembly of ACNA that year by retiring Archbishop Robert Duncan for his "unparalleled contribution to Anglican and global Christianity."

By late 2015, due to his failing eyesight, Packer was no longer able to continue writing or travelling. Still he regularly attended the early Sunday morning Eucharist at St John's and afterwards the Learners' Exchange, where he was often a presenter.

Just a few days after suffering a fall, Packer died peacefully in hospital with Kit and their priest at his bedside. Kit said she can't imagine life without her husband. He died on their 66<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and she commented that it was “like Jim to make things convenient for me. I won't forget which day he died!”

Just days earlier Packer had been asked which of his books was his favourite or which he considered his most influential. He replied, “I don't think about my books in that way. In all my writings I wanted to bring people to Jesus so that they could know the forgiveness of

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sin and be grateful.” Packer repeatedly returned to the theme of gratitude saying, “I want to see the world transformed by gratitude for the forgiveness of sins.”

University of British Columbia historian Dr. George Egerton considered Packer “a dear friend and mentor” and said of him: “He was famous and revered for his best-selling books, but was utterly without pretensions. He had time for anyone. If you needed an article for a journal, or a review, he was always happy to oblige. He loved conversation, and had an eager eye and ear for the absurd and comic, not least from within conservative Anglican

circles. He knew his sermons were sometimes too long and a bit dry but he could make them memorable. Once at St John's, when seeing a few too many heads nodding off, he shouted out 'sex,' and then smiled and quietly resumed, noting he now had everyone's attention.

“His Christian legacy is enormous and global, as apologist, defender of Anglican biblical fidelity, tremendous organizer, and mentor to countless readers and friends. It brings me joy to think of his entry to heaven, to be greeted by his Lord, and the Heavenly Hosts, and that great cloud of witnesses, who have gone before -- especially John Owen,

Richard Baxter and John Calvin. What a conversation!”

Alister McGrath, himself an evangelical Anglican theologian, has written a biography of Packer: *To Know and Serve God: A Life of James I. Packer* (1997) while Leland Ryken has authored a more recent biography: *J. I. Packer: An Evangelical Life* (2015).

Packer is survived by Kit; their three children, Ruth, Naomi, and Martin; and two grandsons. Regent College has established the J.I. Packer Scholarship in his honour. Packer's final work, *The Heritage of Anglican Theology*, will appear in 2021.

### ***Extending the Table of Moveable Feasts***

In the front of the Book of Common Prayer there is a table (pages xiv and xv) that gives the date of such festivals as Easter, the Ascension of our Lord, and Pentecost, for different years. Such a table is necessary because the date of Easter (which controls the dates of everything from Septuagesima to Pentecost) changes every year, which is why it is called the “Table of Moveable Feasts”. This change of the date of Easter every year in turn affects how many Sundays there will be after the Epiphany, and how many Sundays there will be between Trinity Sunday and the beginning of Advent. Such a table is useful for clergy and other worship leaders who are doing long range planning, and it is useful for consulting when a couple wants to plan their wedding for the coming year and don't want it to fall on Good Friday or Holy Saturday!

When the last edition of the BCP was published in 1962, the table gave the dates for the moveable feasts from 1951 to the year 2000. At some point the table was updated to go from 1971 to 2020, and more recent printings of the BCP have this table. We have now come to 2020 and there is some concern that the table has not been updated. This task is made all the more difficult by the fact the National Office of the Anglican Church of Canada is trying to find a new distributor for its worship books, and this has delayed the printing of new BCPs and BASs. To fill in this gap, the Prayer Book Society of Canada has made available on its website an updated Table of Moveable Feasts that runs from 2021 to 2040. It can be found under the heading “Resources.” So, if you are doing some long-range worship planning (or arranging your wedding date), the PBSC has simplified your life by making this new resource available.

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