

The Report of the National Chairman of the Prayer Book Society of Canada
To the Annual General Meeting of the PBSC

28 May 2022

As we slowly move out of pandemic restrictions and ease our way back to something resembling normalcy, it cannot be doubted that many things have permanently changed as a result of that pandemic. For those who are still working it is now incredible to imagine someone who has never heard of ‘Zoom,’ ‘Go To Meeting,’ or some other kind of online software that facilitates the gathering of work colleagues and the hosting of business meetings. This has been just as true of the Prayer Book Society of Canada. Over the course of the pandemic our National Council meetings and our Annual General Meetings have shifted to the Zoom format. Even though we can now meet together again in person, we are still having a hybrid AGM format that allows people from across the country (and beyond) to be present electronically with those of us who have physically gathered together. This speaks to the fact that the PBSC is an organization that can adapt to changing times, and for this I am extremely grateful.

However, before talking about changing times, I want to begin by expressing my thanks and praise for all those who have made my job as National Chairman of the PBSC a rewarding experience. I want to begin by thanking Diana Versegby for all the outstanding work she does for the Society. In addition to editing our newsletter and interviewing candidates for our bursaries, she is on a number of National Council subcommittees that do important but largely unseen tasks. Her long involvement with the PBSC means she often provides a living memory of the struggles and accomplishments of the Society over past years, and this wisdom is of value to everyone. Closely working with Diana is our Web Custodian and Facebook Administrator Kerry Dickson, whose work to refresh our website and renew our Facebook page has been of incalculable value and for this I am most grateful. I want to thank our National Secretary, Ron Bentley, for all his efforts to keep minutes of our proceedings and to remind me of the things that I have forgotten to get done. I want to express my gratitude to Anne Chisholm, our Treasurer, who does so much work to keep our finances matters in order and our financial statements up to date. Related to Anne’s work are the tireless hours spent correcting and updating our database of mailing addresses done by our Membership Secretary, Archdeacon Richard Spencer. I am very thankful for his diligence in this regard. I want to thank the Very Reverend Chris Dow, now Dean of the Diocese of the Arctic, for his ongoing work with our Prayer Book App and for his many other labours behind the scenes. I am grateful for all those members of National Council, especially Dr. Jesse Billet and Benjamin von Bredow, who serve on the various subcommittees responsible to for moving forward our various projects. I want to thank those Branch Chairmen who keep our few remaining local chapters running. Finally, I am very thankful that Bishop Michael Hawkins of Saskatchewan continues to be our Episcopal Visitor despite the many challenges he has faced as a person suffering from “Long COVID.” I’m sorry if I have forgotten to name everyone deserving of praise from being named personally, but rest assured that I am

profoundly grateful to everyone who supports the work of the Society, and who prays for our success and that we may remain faithful to the Gracious God who has called us to this unique and extraordinary ministry.

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One of the real success stories of the PBSC over the last several years has been the development of the Prayer Book App. Far from being a static product available for download, it has continued to be refined and expanded to encompass larger portions of the *Book of Common Prayer*. One of the most exciting developments in regards to the app has been the addition of portions of the BCP in Inuktitut. We are very thankful to the Canadian Bible Society for making available to us their electronic version of the Bible in Inuktitut, and there are members of the Inuit community who are working on electronic versions of the material that is not biblical, such as the Creeds and Collects, so as to eventually be able to offer a more or less complete version of the BCP Office in the Inuktitut language. Having the Prayer Book available in an indigenous language is more than a practical necessity for those who speak the language. I would also like to believe that it is our Society's contribution to the Church's larger imperative of reconciliation with First Nations people. That we can be a part of this healing process increases our relevance as a Society to both the Church and the wider community of Christian believers.

Another positive development over the past year has been the ongoing renewal of our website and Facebook page. These electronic means of communication have helped to increase awareness of the existence of the PBSC and has made available an ever-expanding library of resources for people to use. They have also been an excellent way to advertise the various events related to the 60th anniversary of the final authorization of the 1962 Canadian BCP. We are currently in the process of adding more audio clips to our website. These are mostly psalms sung from *The Canadian Psalter: Plainsong Edition* (the "Red Psalter") so that people can hear how traditional plainsong chant is meant to be sung.

There are other projects on the go as well, including a subcommittee working on a table of optional Old Testament lessons that can be used in conjunction with the Eucharistic Lectionary printed in the *Book of Common Prayer*. There is also a subcommittee working to update the online PBSC Wikipedia entry. It is initiatives like these that continue to enliven the interest of the members of the Society and beyond.

One event we must plan for in the coming year is the next General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada. This gathering was supposed to take place this summer in Calgary but was postponed due to concerns about the coronavirus. It is not yet clear if this event will still take place in Calgary or be moved to another city. Wherever it is eventually held, this Synod will include a second reading of the motion to replace the occasional prayer "For the Conversion of the Jews" by the new collect "For Reconciliation with the Jews." This initiative has garnered new respect for the work of the Prayer Book Society, and the fact that this motion is coming

forward for final approval will once again draw attention to our existence and work as a Society. We hope to have a PBSC booth at General Synod, as we have in the past, and it will be another opportunity to engage new people in our ongoing mission.

Finally, I hope that in this coming year we will begin to talk about the future of leadership in the PBSC and to develop a succession plan for my position in particular. I have now been Chairman of the PBSC for eleven years and, while I have no immediate plans to step down from this position, it would not be good for the Society if I remain as Chairman indefinitely. The worst leaders are those who refuse to acknowledge that they have gone beyond their “best before date” and I do not want to fall into this category. What this will entail, from a practical point of view, will be the development of a job description and a profile of those qualities most desirable for a Chairman of the Society. None of this is meant to imply that I am unhappy with being Chairman of the PBSC or that I have health issues that would prevent me from continuing for the foreseeable future. On the contrary, this position has been one of the most rewarding parts of my more than 30 years of ordained ministry. However, my love for the PBSC means that I do not want to see its good work falter because of inadequate leadership, and thus I think it is prudent to plan for the future.

I want the final word in this report to be one of optimism. Hope is one of the three theological virtues (along with faith and charity) and I remain confident that whatever purposes God has for the Prayer Book Society of Canada will be worked out in accordance with his plans for the salvation of the world. I ask that you keep me and all the members of the National Council in your prayers so that we may be attentive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and faithful to the revealed truth manifested by our Lord Jesus Christ. By God’s grace the Society can continue to be an instrument of renewal in the Church and a good steward of our Anglican heritage.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev’d Dr. Gordon R. Maitland,
National Chairman of the PBSC