

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

11 May 2024

I want to begin by reflecting on the fact that I have been National Chairman of the Prayer Book Society of Canada since 2011. It is hard to believe that I have been at this post for more than a decade. I am profoundly grateful to be a part of this ministry and to continue to be Chairman of this distinguished group of volunteers. God willing, I will have at least a few more good years ahead of me in this role.

Needless to say, this is not a one-man operation and it would be impossible to continue this ministry without the help of many talented and dedicated individuals. All the members of the National Council are important, but I want to still centre out a few individuals. The Very Reverend Chris Dow has been the main driving force for the development of our Prayer Book app, and continues to be very involved in making sure there is a continuous stream of additions being made to the app. He is one of the co-authors of the prayer "For Reconciliation with the Jews" and has been a tremendous help to me personally. Diana Verseghe does so much for the Society that I can hardly begin to list all that she does in addition to being our Newsletter editor and organizing the awarding of our bursaries to seminarians. Her competence and patience are much appreciated. Finally, let me just name Anne Chisholm, Kerry Dickson, Archdeacon Richard Spencer, Fr. Benjamin von Bredow, Fr. Kieran Wilson, and Ron Bentley as important members of the Society. I'm sorry if I have not named everyone who is a member of the National Council or an Officer of the Society, but please be assured that every person who is involved with the PBSC is important and their contributions – small and great – are valued and appreciated.

The next big project which is coming to fruition is the publication of a table of Old Testament lessons to go with, and compliment, the epistles and gospels already found in the Prayer Book. This table goes far beyond the provisions found in the table of Old Testament lessons published by the Church of England in the 1960s by providing lessons for the Eucharistic propers found in services such as the Form of Solemnization of Matrimony and the Ordination rites. This project is in the final stages of review and will be published in time for Advent of this year. One of the goals of such a project is to

assist those who might want to transition away from the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) and towards the ancient sequence of Eucharistic lections found in the Prayer Book. It is our hope that this will be yet another contribution by the Society for the good of the Church and the benefit of clergy.

One of the events we will be preparing for this year is our participation in General Synod 2025, which will be held in London, Ontario, near the end of June. Since this event is slated to be held at the Convention Centre in London, there should be no trouble accommodating the displays of various church groups (such as our own) at this Synod. This Synod will be all the more interesting due to the election of a new Primate for the Anglican Church of Canada. It is my hope that we will have new pamphlets and other information booklets to give away, as well as introducing people to the resources we already have available. Much more will be said about this event as it draws near.

I was privileged to be able to attend The Anglican Way conference last March in Savannah, Georgia. This conference is sponsored by our sister Prayer Book Society in the USA. It is always inspiring to engage with sympathetic and like-minded people, especially since this convention drew people from a number of Anglican jurisdictions: The Episcopal Church, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Reformed Episcopal Church, and the Anglican Church of North America. We hope to publish some of the papers presented at this conference on our website in the near future. What was most encouraging was the presence of young clergy and seminarians who are keen to use and promote the Book of Common Prayer. While many in our church continue to predict the imminent demise of the Prayer Book, the fact that young adults continue to be inspired by the language and theology of that venerable book means that the BCP will continue to be with us and used in the foreseeable future.

Finally, I want exhort all of us to continue to pray for God's strength and wisdom in discerning the way forward for us as a Society. It would be very tragic indeed if an organization dedicated to preserving a certain pattern of prayer should fail to encourage people to actually pray! It is only by God's grace and the power of the Holy Spirit that we can continue to be faithful in proclaiming the Christian heritage of common prayer which we have received. May all that we do be to the Glory of God and the furtherance of the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Respectfully submitted,

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