

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

9 May 2026

Let me begin by expressing my gratitude once again to the members of the National Council of the Prayer Book Society of Canada. The Society could not function, never mind produce great works, without the combined efforts of everyone involved. I want to thank in particular the Revd Chris Dow, Diana Verseghy, Archdeacon Richard Spencer, and Anne Chisholm for their outstanding work. I also need to apologize to Anne because we announced last year that we would actively search for a new Treasurer for the Society so that she could retire. That search has proved fruitless so far, but we are hopeful that a new Treasurer will be found soon.

I also need to acknowledge the wonderful work of our Web Custodian, Kerry Dickson, who has indefatigably kept our social media and website up to date. Her report speaks for itself in terms of the interest that these sites generate. It is hard to believe that when I started my role as National Chairman fifteen years ago, we had only the crudest of websites and no social media presence at all. The expansion of our online presence has certainly been a great boon for the Society.

The major project that we are engaged in at present is one of the most rewarding that I can think of. We are in the process of proofreading the text of the updated *Book of Common Prayer* for the Canadian Church. Due, in large part, to intervention by our Episcopal Visitor, the Rt. Revd William Cliff of the Diocese of Ontario, the National Office prioritized the re-publication of the BCP with the name of our new Sovereign along with other minor changes which I will note below. The National Communications Officer, who is responsible for our service books, entrusted the proofreading of the new draft to members of the Society.

Because of changes in the technology of book production, the BCP had to be newly typeset, with significant alterations to the formatting of the Table of Lessons in the front of the book. These pages will have a very different appearance. The name of the Sovereign (King Charles) has replaced that of the late Queen wherever it appeared, and the collect *For Reconciliation with the Jewish People*, the production of which was spearheaded by the PBSC and which received widespread acclaim, replaces the old collect, *For the Conversion of the Jews*, in the section entitled "Prayers and Thanksgivings Upon Several Occasions". The Table of Moveable Feasts has been extended to 2065.

Needless to say, the proofreading of this completely re-formatted text is turning out to be slow and tedious work, but we are thankful for the opportunity to ensure that the new draft is as error-free as possible. The national church is looking at two possible printers for the book, and it will be produced in a number of different sizes and bindings. If all goes well, we can expect to see the new BCPs available at the start of 2027.

Of course, people will then ask, "When will the *Book of Alternative Services* be updated and published?" Speaking personally, I doubt very much that the BAS will be reprinted with only the changes to the Sovereign's name. There are supplementary Eucharistic Prayers and Seasonal Collects which have been approved by General Synod that would need to be added. The Office Book, *Pray Without Ceasing*, effectively replaces all of the material for Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer that appear in the BAS. The psalter that appears in *Pray Without Ceasing* could replace the BAS psalter that was borrowed from the Episcopal Church in the USA. In short, the BAS would have to be so completely revised as to constitute a new book altogether. And at the present time the National Office of the Anglican Church of Canada has neither the money nor the staff to effect such a drastic revision. It is ironic that the *Book of Common Prayer* will soon be the most up-to-date worship book that the Canadian Church has in its possession.

In terms of other projects, we have started preliminary work on producing a Cree version of the BCP App for use by indigenous speakers who use that language, and we are considering new material to add to our website. This is in addition to our ongoing work of answering online inquires about the BCP itself and about where various worship resources connected to the BCP may be found, and responding to more general questions related to the worship of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Of course, the work of the Society can only go so far in restoring the BCP to more general use. What we really need are courageous clergy who are willing to re-introduce Prayer Book worship where it has been eliminated or sidelined. In some cases, this is made more difficult because there are no longer any physical copies in the church building. However, the new printing of the BCP will hopefully spark some interest in people willing to buy copies for their worshipping community and asking that they be used at least occasionally. A renewed interest in praying the Daily Office would be helpful here, since the BCP is far more user-friendly for this purpose than the more cumbersome *Pray Without Ceasing*.

I remain hopeful that the *Book of Common Prayer* will continue to be a part of our Anglican worship experience in Canada for years to come. The intrinsic beauty of its

prose and the weight of tradition that it carries in respect to our Anglican heritage will ensure that it does not disappear altogether. I ask that all the members of the Society continue to pray for the success of our endeavours and for the renewal of the Church.

Respectfully submitted,

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