

## WORSHIP CHANGES LIVES – Supporting Resources

### *BECOMING*

#### *Transforming Weddings*

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##### *The Marriage Vows*

I, N take you, N, to be my wife/husband,  
to have and to hold  
from this day forward;  
for better, for worse,  
for richer, for poorer,  
in sickness and in health,  
to love and to cherish,  
till death us do part;  
according to God's holy law.  
In the presence of God I make this vow.

*Common Worship: The Marriage Service*

##### *Preface to Thanksgiving for Marriage*

We have come together in the presence of God  
to give thanks [with N and N] for [... years of] married life,  
[to ask his forgiveness for all that has been amiss,]  
to rejoice together and to ask for God's blessing.  
As our Lord Jesus Christ was himself a guest  
at the wedding in Cana of Galilee,  
so through his Spirit he is with us now.  
Marriage is a gift of God in creation and a means of his grace;  
it is given that a husband and wife  
may comfort and help each other,  
living faithfully together  
in times of need as well as in plenty,  
in sadness and in joy, in sickness and in health;  
it is given that with delight and tenderness  
they may know each other in love.

[It is given as the foundation of family life  
in which children may be born and nurtured  
in accordance with God's will, to his praise and glory.]  
In marriage a couple belong together  
and live life in the community;  
it is a way of life created and hallowed by God,  
that all should honour.  
Therefore we pray with them that, strengthened and guided by God,  
they may continue to fulfil his purpose for their life together.

*Common Worship: The Marriage Service*

The proportion of the population getting married is at its lowest since figures were first calculated in 1862, and people are now waiting longer before they wed. Yet 22% of couples who marry still choose to do so in church and recent research reveals that 53% of the population still believes that church is the 'proper' place for a wedding.

### **Looking AT**

- List any things you can think of during a wedding service / ceremony that remind us that marriage involves change (e.g., any particular words used in the service, sometimes the bride wears a veil at the beginning but not the end...etc)

### **Looking IN**

- Is marriage still important in your community?
- How does marriage change relationships?

### **Looking OUT**

- How could we prepare people better for a church wedding, and for marriage?
- How does the way in which we conduct marriage services speak of transformation?
- What can we offer those whose marriages have broken down?

### **Looking DEEPER**

Stephen Lake, *Marriage (Using Common Worship series)* (CHP, 2000)

Andrew Body, *Making the Most of Weddings – A Practical Guide for Churches* (CHP, 2007)

*The Weddings Project* is being launched by the Church of England later this year. Resources and information to help couples prepare for a church wedding will be at [www.ourchurchwedding.org](http://www.ourchurchwedding.org) from June 2008 (site currently under construction).

## *Psalm 23*

The Lord is my shepherd; •  
therefore can I lack nothing.

He makes me lie down in green pastures •  
and leads me beside still waters.

He shall refresh my soul •  
and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; •  
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me; •  
you have anointed my head with oil and my cup shall be full.

Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, •  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

## *The Committal*

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy,  
slow to anger and of great goodness.  
As a father is tender towards his children,  
so is the Lord tender to those that fear him.  
For he knows of what we are made;  
he remembers that we are but dust.  
Our days are like the grass;  
we flourish like a flower of the field;  
when the wind goes over it, it is gone  
and its place will know it no more.  
But the merciful goodness of the Lord endures  
for ever and ever toward those that fear him  
and his righteousness upon their children's children.

*From Psalm 103  
Common Worship: Funeral Service*

There are now so many funeral options to choose from – a green funeral, a DIY one, a funeral in church or at a crematorium, one led by a minister of religion or by a secular celebrant, ashes scattered on a hilltop or at sea..... In this pick 'n' mix culture of choice, what does the church particularly have to offer?

## **Looking AT**

- Have you been at a funeral you would call a 'good funeral'? Describe what made it good.

## Looking IN

- How would you like to be remembered?
- Think of a hymn or piece of music you would like used at your funeral. Why have you chosen this?
- How does the way we conduct funerals speak of a transformation from death to life?

## Looking OUT

- What does the church have to offer to those mourning the death of a loved one?
- What support might your church offer families after a church funeral?

## Looking DEEPER

Funerals remind us of the Christian belief in the Communion of Saints, the company of those who, in times past, have borne witness to Christ. Some churches hold services of commemoration or remembrance on or around All Souls' Day (2 November), and a growing number use these services as an opportunity to invite to church those families for whom funerals have been taken during the past year. Helpful resources for services such as these may be found in:

*Common Worship: Pastoral Services* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, CHP, 2005), especially pp 318-416

*Common Worship Times and Seasons* (CHP, 2006), pp561-572

Anne Horton, *Using Common Worship: Funerals* (CHP, 2000)

Donald Gray, *Memorial Services* (Alciun / SPCK, 2001)

David Kennedy, *Using Common Worship: Times and Seasons, All Saints to Candlemas*, pp44-52

Further material is at

[http://www.transformingworship.org.uk/TransformingWorship/?page\\_id=61](http://www.transformingworship.org.uk/TransformingWorship/?page_id=61)

## *The Decision to be Baptized from the Baptism service*

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness  
into his marvellous light.  
To follow Christ means dying to sin  
and rising to new life with him.  
Therefore I ask:

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?  
**I reject them.**

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?  
**I renounce them.**

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?  
**I repent of them.**

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?  
**I turn to Christ.**

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?  
**I submit to Christ.**

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?  
**I come to Christ.**

*Common Worship: Christian Initiation*

## *Prayer for Sponsors from Rites on the Way*

May God give you the gift of love  
to serve N whom he loved first.  
May God give you the gift of faith  
to share the good news of his kingdom.  
May God give you the gift of joy  
as you journey together with Jesus our Lord.  
And may the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

*Common Worship: Christian Initiation*

The number of babies being baptized each year is falling; currently it has dropped to about 15% of all babies born in England. Non-religious naming ceremonies are now available. However, the number of older children and adults being baptized is rising steeply.

## **Looking AT**

- What does your church do to encourage new adult worshippers to explore faith?

## Looking IN

- What would you like all new adult Christians to have experienced before they were baptized?
- Were you baptised as a child or an adult? Does it make a difference to you?
- Do you welcome baptisms in your church, or find them an intrusion into your regular worship?

## Looking OUT

- How do you welcome families bringing babies for baptism, and support them before and after the baptism?

## BIG QUESTIONS...

Weddings, funeral, baptisms... They all attract people to church who don't regularly attend.

- How welcoming is your church?
- Are the architecture, seating, lighting, and visuals attractive?
- Are the welcomers, sponsors, and others involved in the service excited to be there?
- Does the worship, the way we stage it and lead it, speak of transformation?
- Does your church attract people or scare them away?.....

## Finding HELP

There are lots of resources about weddings, funerals and baptisms. A good place to start is the Life Events section of the Church of England website [www.cofe.anglican.org](http://www.cofe.anglican.org) or Mark Earey and Gilly Myers, *Common Worship Today* (Harper Collins, 2001; revised study edition, St John's Nottingham 2007, <http://www.stjohns-nottm.ac.uk/html/more/resources>

Other useful resources include:

*Common Worship: Christian Initiation* (CHP, 2006)

Mark Earey, Ian Tarrant, Trevor Lloyd, *Connecting with Baptism* (CHP, 2007)

Andrew Body, *Making the Most of Weddings* (CHP, 2007)

<http://www.flamefamily.co.uk>

Rod Symmons, *Preaching at Weddings* (Grove Pastoral Series 103)

Nick Watson, *Sorrow and Hope: Preaching at Funerals* (Grove Pastoral Series 86)

Gordon Ogilvie, *Preaching at Baptisms* (Grove Worship Series 70)

## *Prayer of Preparation*

Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Common Worship: Holy Communion Order One*

## *Words at the breaking of the bread*

We break this bread  
to share in the body of Christ.  
**Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.**

*Common Worship: Holy Communion Order One*

In 2006, the Church of England issued regulations to enable baptized children to be admitted to communion. If we are what we eat, then children need sustenance too.

## Looking AT

- When did you first receive Holy Communion? Are there particular things you remember about that occasion?

## Looking IN

- How does receiving communion change you? What do you find special about it?
- Do you receive communion regularly; how does it feel if you miss receiving the sacrament for a few days or weeks?

## Looking OUT

- How do you make those who cannot yet receive communion feel welcome at the Eucharist?
- Find out from a church where children are admitted to communion what difference it makes (ask the children too!)

## Looking DEEPER

Worship material for the Admission of the Baptized to Communion can be found in *Common Worship: Christian Initiation* (CHP, 2006), pp 188-192, and is accessible via [www.transformingworship.org.uk/TransformingWorship/?page\\_id=92](http://www.transformingworship.org.uk/TransformingWorship/?page_id=92)

Other helpful resources include:

Margaret Withers, *Welcome to the Lord's Table* (Bible Reading Fellowship, 2006)

Margaret Withers and Tim Sledge, *Creative Communion* (Bible Reading Fellowship, 2008)

Stephen Lake, *Let the Children Come to Communion* (SPCK, 2006)

The Communion Cube (CHP, 2002), [www.chpublishing.co.uk/listing.asp?id=2390085](http://www.chpublishing.co.uk/listing.asp?id=2390085)

Diana Murrie, *My Communion Book* (CHP, 2005),  
[www.chpublishing.co.uk/listing.asp?id=2390085](http://www.chpublishing.co.uk/listing.asp?id=2390085)

## *A Confession and Absolution*

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned against you  
and against our neighbour  
in thought and word and deed,  
through negligence, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
We are truly sorry  
and repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who died for us,  
forgive us all that is past  
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life  
to the glory of your name.  
Amen.**

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent,  
have mercy upon you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Common Worship*

Sometimes we can become so engrossed in our personal shortcomings as individuals that we forget that we are also part of a sinful world. The people of the Old Testament often said sorry, not only for their own sins, but for the sins of their community and nation. Our corporate confession need not be only for us as individuals, but for our nation and for our world.

## Looking AT

- Are there any phrases in this (or another) prayer of confession that you find particularly helpful?
- Describe what your church does to mark Ash Wednesday. Have you ever been to a church that worships differently on that day?

## Looking IN

- How do you bring before God any big sins that you have committed as an individual?
- What helps you to know that you are forgiven?

## Looking OUT

- What do you understand by the phrase “the sins of the world”? How might you bring these before God?

- What might we do in church to focus on forgiveness in Advent and Lent (the penitential seasons of the Christian year)?
- Are there ways in which, from time to time, we might make more of confession in our worship?

## Looking DEEPER

A helpful resource is the section *Reconciliation and Restoration: Recovering Baptism in Common Worship: Initiation Services* (pages 227-309). This includes material for individual confession of sin as well as corporate services of penitence. The text is available electronically at [www.transformingworship.org.uk/TransformingWorship/?page\\_id=92](http://www.transformingworship.org.uk/TransformingWorship/?page_id=92)

See also

Andrew Atherstone, *Confessing our Sins* (Grove Worship Series 179)

Phillip Tovey (ed), *Common Worship Reconciliation and Restoration: A Commentary* (Grove Worship Series, 187)

You might also like to look at the ideas for celebrating Lent in Gill Ambrose, Peter Craig-Wild, Diane Craven, Peter Moger, *Together for a Season: All-age seasonal resources for Lent, Holy Week and Easter* (CHP, 2007)

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father,  
**accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*Common Worship*

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom,  
you know our needs before we ask,  
and our ignorance in asking:  
have compassion on our weakness,  
and give us those things  
which for our unworthiness we dare not,  
and for our blindness we cannot ask,  
for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Lancelot Andrewes*

Different people pray in different ways, and we all pray in different ways at different times of our lives. Sometimes we need words; at other times, actions feel like prayer. Sometimes only silence, an absence of words, allows space for us to draw close to God, and God to draw close to us.

## Looking AT

- What are the things that get prayed for regularly in intercessions at your church? Are there things that do not often get prayed for, that you would like included?

## Looking IN

- Has God answered your prayers recently?
- How do you feel when it seems that God doesn't answer your prayers?

## Looking OUT

- What links might be made between your church's intercession and its mission to the local community?
- What different ways of leading intercession can you think of? (e.g involving young people or children lead, prayer stations etc)
- Have you ever used silence or music during intercessions, as well as words?

## Some Resources

Sue Wallace, *Multi-Sensory Prayer, Multi-Sensory Church* (Scripture Union, 2000)

John Pritchard, *The Intercessions Handbook, The Second Intercessions Handbook* (SPCK, 2004)

Gill Ambrose, Peter Craig-Wild, Diane Craven, Mary Hawes, Peter Moger *Together for a Season*, 2 vols (CHP, 2006, 2007)

Anna de Lange & Liz Simpson, *How to lead the Prayers* (Grove Worship Series 169)

Ian Tarrant & Sally Dakin, *Labyrinths and Prayer Stations* (Grove Worship Series 180)

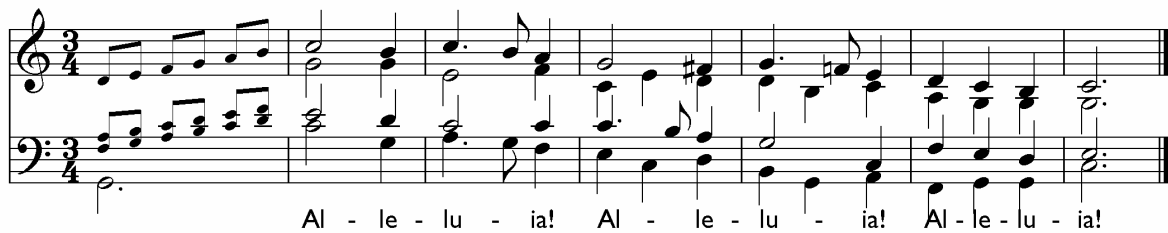
Roots Worship / Roots on the Web - <http://www.rootsontheweb.com/>

Invitation to Prayer - <http://www.invitationtoprayer.org/>

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland - <http://www.ctbi.org.uk/>  
<http://www.ctbi.org.uk/H/8> has links to other sites

The Fresh Expressions website <http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/section.asp?id=3017>  
has links to a number of helpful sites

For Prayer Resources from Church House Publishing, go to  
<http://www.chpublishing.co.uk/category.asp?id=2385549>



Some churches have wonderful musical resources, a superb organist, a wonderful worship band, a melodious cantor. Others struggle to lead worship with live music, without musicians or a sound system. And some people, even those leading worship, can seem scared of silence, and shy away from making space as well as noise.

## Looking AT

- Do you have a favourite song, hymn or anthem? Why do you value it?

## Looking IN

- How important is silence to you?
- Are there particular types of music in worship that you personally find helpful or unhelpful? How did you first come to value that type of music?

## Looking OUT

- How could you be more creative about music and silence in your church?
- How could you encourage and resource your music and musicians better?
- Can you think of any ways music might be used to help mission?

## Finding HELP

There are many organisations who support church music, even in parishes without musicians. For more information, go to

The Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) – [www.rscm.com](http://www.rscm.com)

Music and Worship Foundation (MWF) – [www.mwf.org.uk](http://www.mwf.org.uk)

Keynote Trust - [www.keynotetrust.org.uk](http://www.keynotetrust.org.uk)

Christian Music Ministries – [www.cmm.org.uk](http://www.cmm.org.uk)

The Guild of Church Musicians – [www.churchmusicians.org](http://www.churchmusicians.org)

And visit the 'Music for Worship' area of [www.transformingworship.org.uk](http://www.transformingworship.org.uk)