

## **Common Worship: Times and Seasons** **(CHP £30 – 2 ribbons!)** ISBN 0 7151 2112 X

Liturgy file 605

The month before Advent is a good time to buy **Common Worship: Times and Seasons**, if you haven't already done so. It's full of material to re-invigorate your Advent and Christmas worship and it won't take you hours to put it into practice

Remember 'Lent, Holy Week and Easter'? Ever use 'Promise of his glory'? Forgotten all about 'Enriching the Christian Year'? **Times and Seasons** takes all three and brings them into the Common Worship library. It covers the whole Christian year from Advent to Christ the King with extra sections on Festivals of the agricultural year and Ember days. A second volume will be published in about a year covering Saints Days and celebrations independent of the cycle of the Christian year.

Perhaps the best definition of this book is 'hosting the holy'. If it is true that we are in a culture that constantly omits to acknowledge, or even notice, the holy, how are we, as a Church, able to do it? This book is a major new resource that attempts to enable us to do just that. Whether it succeeds we will only know in a few years time, but there are all sorts of encouraging signs and those who have been road-testing it have largely found it invaluable.

**Forget churchmanship.** If all this leaves you cold, think of it as a large collection of accessible texts that enable people to worship on a theme:

With love and compassion,  
**come Lord Jesus.**

With judgement and mercy,  
**come Lord Jesus.**

In power and glory,  
**come Lord Jesus.**

In wisdom and truth,  
**come Lord Jesus.**

This is billed as part of the dismissal for Advent Sunday, but could easily be used as a call to prayer at any time of year. (The book has a wide-ranging index!)

There are some complete services similar to the format in Lent, Holy Week and Easter (for instance Epiphany and Ascension Day). There are also loads of seasonally arranged resources with lots of new ways to bring out the particular emphases of the season. Particularly strong are the "hellos and goodbyes" – the Gathering and Dismissal rites of the Eucharist. It is clearly laid out and attractively presented. A particular feature is the large red initials on the top right corner of every page which make it very easy to find a particular season (e.g. EL for Easter Liturgy etc). It is a book for the president rather than the congregation but with endless potential to cut and paste onto pew leaflets.

You might ask why you need to buy this book when you have already got Lent, Holy Week and Easter and the companion volumes? There are three answers to this. First, it is to do with language. LHWE uses the language of the ASB which is at least 25 years old and has been criticised for lacking beauty and discernible Anglican roots. Second Times and Seasons covers a much wider remit: the whole year with lots of alternatives. But, most importantly, third, Times and Seasons, when used properly, invites liturgical thought about worship in a way that LHWE didn't. It gives you the material but there is a strong encouragement to adapt it for your own setting. Anything that helps us look again at the worship we lead, surely has to be good!

However the book does come with **one major health warning**. In the Church of England we are very used to using words, often to the exclusion of all other ways of imparting information. However only 24% of the population identify first with words rather than visually or learning by doing. Therefore if we rely solely on beautiful written liturgy (which this book certainly contains) we are likely to inspire under a quarter of the congregation to worship God.

