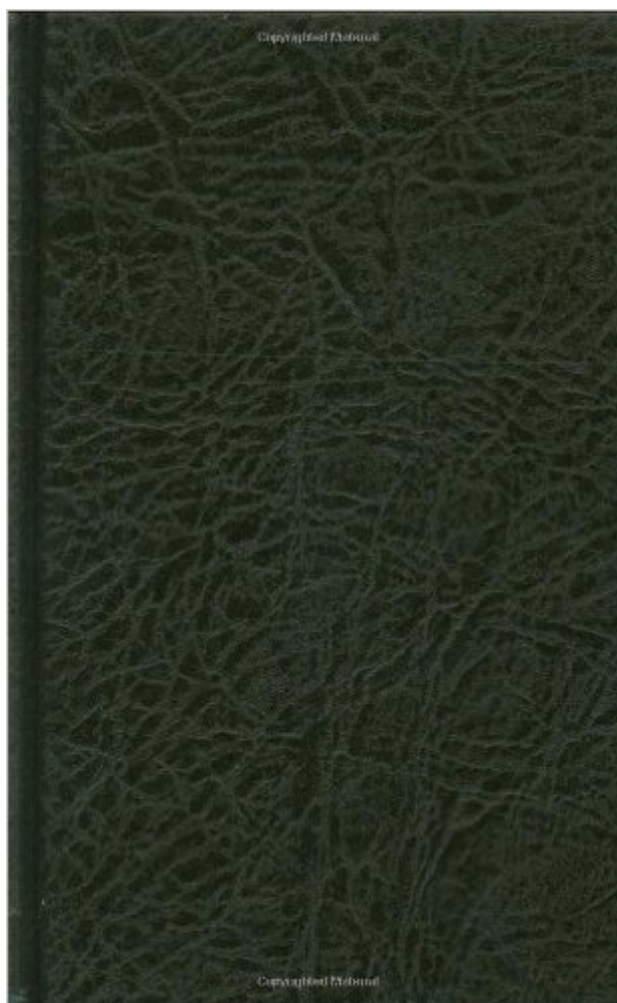


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# The Book Of Common Prayer (Prayer Book)



## Synopsis

This historic edition of the Book of Common Prayer is perfect for those interested in Anglican Church history and liturgical development.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 714 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (11 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

This Book of Common Prayer (1662) is the 'primary' BCP, used by the Church of England proper, the original branch of the Anglicans. There have been many books that have had the title 'Book of Common Prayer' since the first one appeared in 1549; it has been used continuously in one edition or another in the Anglican tradition since 1559; the 'main' edition remains this 1662 edition. Churches in other nations (Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, the United States, Canada) have done revised Books of Common Prayer, but they always use this as the touchstone. A bishop in the Episcopal church once said to me, 'We don't have a theology that we have to believe -- what we have is the prayerbook.' Please forgive the absence of context for this phrase -- while he would say that this statement in isolation is an exaggeration, and I would agree, nonetheless his statement serves to highlight both the importance of and the strength of the Book of Common Prayer. To be an Anglican, one does not have to subscribe to any particular systematic theological framework. One does not have to practice a particular brand of liturgical style. One does not have to have an approved politico-theological viewpoint. One can be a conservative, liberal or moderate; one can be high church, low church, or broad; one can be charismatic, evangelical, or mainline traditional -- one

can be any number of things in a rich diversity of choices, and the Book of Common Prayer can still be the book upon which spirituality and worship is centred. The Book of Common Prayer is not, in fact, a book that changed my life. It is a book that changes my life. Even though it is not the primary book of my own church, it continues to provide for spiritual insight and development; it continues to guide my worship and my theology. It continues to help me grow. The words are part of a liturgy now shared by Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and other liturgical churches, in different combination and priority. Gerry Janzen, an Anglican professor at my seminary, said to me recently as we were lunching and having a fascinating and wide-ranging conversation (in a unique way that only Gerry Janzen is capable of doing) that he strives for that kind of memory and understanding that is so complete that one forgets what one has learned. He recounted to me his experience of working with his book on Job -- he had done a lot of research, development of ideas, writing, and organisation, and then set it aside for a time. When he picked up the topic later, he decided to begin by writing, and then go back to the research, other notes and writings he had done earlier. He was surprised to see, in comparing the work, that he had in fact duplicated much of the material -- he had internalised the information, incorporated it so well into his thinking and being, that it came forward without effort. It is this kind of relationship I feel I have developed with the Book of Common Prayer. To be sure, there are pages of information that I don't know. I haven't memorised the historical documents; I still consult the calendars; I haven't learned all of the collects by heart. But it has become a part of me. When I was asked to put together a liturgy for a house blessing for Episcopalian friends, there were rooms that called for collects that had not been written -- I wrote new collects and inserted them into the liturgy. 'Can you do that?' the householder asked, worried about the flow and the approval of the priest doing the blessing. 'I trust Kurt to write collects -- his probably belong in the BCP,' the priest said in response, and I appreciated her vote of confidence. That was perhaps the first confirmation to me of this sense of incorporation of the book into my life. From his first edition, Cranmer distinguished in his terminology the words minister and priest, and the two should not be viewed as interchangeable. A priest is a minister, but a minister need not be a priest. This became part of the early development of the idea of all people being ministers to each other, which is also a concept that has varying acceptance and fulfillment in actual practice over the history of Anglicanism. One of my favourite prayers derives from this book, part of the English prayer book from the very first one in 1549: Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication unto thee, and hast promised through thy well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his name, thou wilt be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be best for us,

granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come, life everlasting. Amen. This prayer, like many things in the BCP, has moved to a new location from the first edition, but nonetheless the spirit of the BCP shows a circuitous but continuous development from the first English Prayer Book to the current varieties. Likewise, other denominations have gleaned insights, prayers and structures from this and other versions of the BCP. The Book of Common Prayer, as a single unit and as a greater tradition of which this book is a part, is an Anglican gift to the world.

This copy of the BCP (1662) is excellent, and I would have given it five stars if it had been accurately advertised. It is not leather, but card board with imitation leather appearance. It is a later print, at 714 pages, and for the 9 pound price tag from Oxford University Press (UK), I found the \$30 wanted to be grossly over priced.

This is the BCP of 1662 in all its glory, but please note the dimensions of this book. It is 5.6 inches long so it is rather small, something you could carry around in your pocket.

By no means does one have to be an Anglican to read this book, to profit from it, enjoy it, and treasure it. I am a Catholic myself, but I recognize in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer one of the truly great achievements of the English language. It easily stands with Shakespeare, Milton, Chaucer, and Eliot, and deservedly so. The Miles Coverdale Psalms (which comprise nearly a full third of this book) are the most readable, singable, and prayable English translation of these timeless prayers ever. Just compare these lines from Psalm 24 in the Book of Common Prayer, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of glory shall come in." with this from The Liturgy of the Hours, "O gates, lift high your heads; grow higher ancient doors. Let him enter, the king of glory." Ugh. Just looking at them side-by-side is dreadful. The latter translation is like reading the newspaper. But it's not just the beautiful language. Words have power, and we are creatures of body and spirit. When we pray, we are affected not only by our inner selves, but by our physical selves - by how we feel, how we stand, sit, or kneel, what sounds we hear, and by what words we say. So what I say is, say these. (And it is truly easy to ignore, or even to smile at, the occasional anti-Catholic passage, recognizing them as unfortunate products of a very different age.)

Small concise and illuminating. Great way to learn the difference between catholic and church of England....Makes one wonder why Anne Bolin lost her head and so many 'heretics' (from both

sides!) were burned alive! I'd probably burn from either side because there was not much difference in the two different Sunday masses I attended. Extra line at the end of lords prayer and longer service for the Episcopalian guys... I need further research, don't I?

I absolutely love it. Thrilled. Its just like the one I had in Church in England in the 1950's. I kept searching, because they do have another version 1971? I am so pleased. You will be too.

Thank-you Jean M Griffin

This is the version that was in use when the pilgrims settled in America, and when the Constitution was signed. I love the language, and I especially like the unwatered down liturgy.

A classic spiritual and formative English text. A lovely edition.

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