

Westminster Abbey



The Commonwealth Day Service of Celebration



ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

Monday 10th March 2025
3.00 pm

The whole of the church is served by a hearing loop. Users should turn their hearing aid to the setting marked T.

The service will be broadcast live on BBC One.

Members of the congregation are requested kindly to refrain from using private cameras, video, or sound recording equipment. Please ensure that mobile telephones and other electronic devices are switched off.

The service is sung by the Choir of Westminster Abbey, directed by Andrew Nethsingha, Organist and Master of the Choristers. The organ is played by Matthew Jorysz, Sub-Organist.

The State Trumpeters of the Household Cavalry are directed by Trumpet Major Julian Sandford MVO. The Fanfare Team, from the Central Band of the Royal Air Force, is directed by Sergeant Benjamin Murray.

Before the service the Shree Muktajeevan Swamibapa Pipe Band perform outside the Great West Door.

Paul Greally, Assistant Organist, plays

Pièce d'orgue BWV 572 Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Future Talent, directed by Nicholas Robinson, play

Four Pieces for Four Celli Op 33 Julius Klengel (1859–1933)

- i. Song Without Words*
- ii. Gavotte*
- iii. Lullaby*
- iv. March*

Sonata in D Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91)

Poco allegretto from Symphony No 3 in F Johannes Brahms (1833–97)

My Evaline arranged by Andrew E Hall (1901–78)

The Assistant Organist plays

Triptych Errollyn Wallen (b 1958)

Prelude and Fughetta from Five Pieces for Organ Healey Willan (1880–1965)

Chant vespéral from Twelve Short Pieces Rachel Laurin (1961–2023)

The Sub-Organist plays

Romance in B flat William McKie (1901–84)

THE PROCESSION OF HONOURED GUESTS AND PARTICIPANTS

THE FOUR LOYAL SOCIETIES

Honorary Steward

Prince Aynn Aga Khan
*Representative of the Vice-President
Royal Commonwealth Society*

John Steel KC
*Chairman
The Victoria League
for Commonwealth Friendship*

Helen Prince
*Chairman
Royal Over-Seas League*

Miles Young
*Chairman
English-Speaking Union*

THE REPRESENTATIVES OF FAITH COMMUNITIES

Verger

Representing Jewish Reform Synagogues
Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers

Representing the Baha'i Community
Mrs Padideh Sabeti

*Representing the Shi'a Muslim
Community*
Maulana Sayed
Ali Abbas Razawi

Representing the Hindu Community
Mrs Harsha Yashwant Shukla MBE

Representing the Jain Community
Mr Vinay Shah

Representing the Sikh Community
Lord Singh of Wimbledon CBE

Representing Orthodox Judaism
Rabbi Jason Kleiman

Representing Liberal Judaism
Rabbi Anna Wolfson

*Representing the Buddhist
Community*
The Venerable
Bogoda Seelawimala

*Representing the Sunni Muslim
Community*
Imam Monawar Hussain MBE DL

*Representing the Zoroastrian
Community*
Mr Malcolm Deboo

THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHURCHES

Verger

Church of Scotland
The Reverend William McLaren

Methodist Church
The Reverend Tony Miles

Roman Catholic Church
Fr Sławomir Witoń

Pentecostal churches
Ms Shermara Fletcher

Syriac Orthodox
His Eminence Archbishop
Athanasius Thoma Dawod

Armenian Orthodox
His Grace
Bishop Hovakim

Greek Orthodox
The Very Reverend
Archimandrite Nephon Tsimalis

Coptic Orthodox
His Eminence
Archbishop Angaelos

The Right Honourable The Lord Mayor of London, Alderman Alastair King DL, is received by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. Presentations are made and he is conducted to his seat.

The High Sheriff of Greater London, Millicent Grant KC, is received. Presentations are made and she is conducted to her seat.

The Prime Minister of The Independent State of Samoa, The Honourable Fiamē Naomi Mata'afa MP, Commonwealth Chair-in-Office, is received. Presentations are made.

The Honourable Dr Ian Borg MP, Deputy Prime Minister of Malta and Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade, is received. Presentations are made and he is conducted to his seat.

The Right Honourable Priti Patel MP, representing His Majesty's Most Loyal Opposition, is received. Presentations are made and she is conducted to her seat.

The Right Honourable Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, The Right Honourable Angela Rayner MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities, and Local Government, and The Right Honourable David Lammy MP, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Affairs, are received. Presentations are made and they are conducted to their seats.

The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Robert Rigby, arrives. Presentations are made and he is conducted to his seat. All stand and then sit.

Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester are received. Presentations are made.

Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal is received. Presentations are made.

All stand.

Their Royal Highnesses The Prince and The Princess of Wales are received. Presentations are made.

A fanfare is sounded.

Their Majesties The King and The Queen are received. Presentations are made.

THE PROCESSION

Beadle

The Choir of Westminster Abbey

The King's Almsmen

The Cross of Westminster and Lights

The Minor Canons

The Commonwealth Theologian

The Receiver General

High Bailiff

High Steward

The Canons' Verger

The Canons of Westminster

The Commonwealth of Nations Flag

The Chief Honorary Steward

The Executive Chair of the Royal Commonwealth Society

The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations

The Dean's Verger

The Dean of Westminster

Mace

Her Majesty

The Queen

His Majesty THE KING

Head of the Commonwealth

Her Royal Highness
The Princess of Wales

His Royal Highness
The Prince of Wales

Her Royal Highness
The Princess Royal

Her Royal Highness
The Duchess of Gloucester

His Royal Highness
The Duke of Gloucester

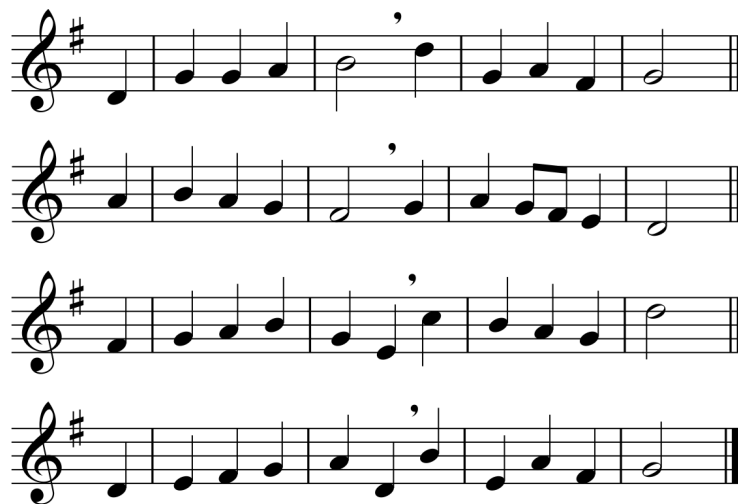
ORDER OF SERVICE

All sing

GOD save our gracious King,
Long live our noble King,
God save The King.
Send him victorious,
happy and glorious,
long to reign over us:
God save The King.

arranged by Gordon Jacob (1895–1984)

All sing the Hymn, during which the Procession and flags of all the Commonwealth nations move through the Abbey to places in Quire, Lantern, and Sacrarium



O WORSHIP the King
all glorious above;
O gratefully sing
his power and his love:
our Shield and Defender,
the Ancient of Days,
pavilioned in splendour,
and girded with praise.

O tell of his might,
O sing of his grace,
whose robe is the light,
whose canopy space.
His chariots of wrath
the deep thunder-clouds form,
and dark is his path
on the wings of the storm.

This earth, with its store
of wonders untold,
Almighty, thy power
hath founded of old:
hath stablished it fast
by a changeless decree,
and round it hath cast,
like a mantle, the sea.

Thy bountiful care
what tongue can recite?
it breathes in the air,
it shines in the light;
it streams from the hills,
it descends to the plain,
and sweetly distils
in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust,
and feeble as frail,
in thee do we trust,
nor find thee to fail;
thy mercies how tender!
How firm to the end!
Our Maker, Defender,
Redeemer, and Friend.

O measureless Might,
ineffable Love,
while angels delight
to hymn thee above,
thy humbler creation,
though feeble their lays,
with true adoration
shall sing to thy praise.

Hanover 433 NEH
William Croft (1678–1727)
Organist of Westminster Abbey 1708–27
arranged by James O'Donnell (b 1961)
Organist of Westminster Abbey 2000–22

Robert Grant (1779–1838)

The Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle KCVO MBE, Dean of Westminster, gives the Bidding

WE gather, in this house of prayer, to rejoice in our common life. We are God's people in a Commonwealth of Nations. As different peoples we rejoice in this opportunity to reflect, in mutual respect, on our shared dignity and commitment to the service of others. We celebrate the love and affection that binds us in unity and gives us resilience and strength.

Looking back on long years of shared endeavour, we also look forward with hope, knowing that we can and will work together to build a community confident in its diversity yet still committed to peace and human flourishing. We pray for one another, for our King and for the peace and flourishing of our vulnerable world. Confident in God's grace, we will gather the richness and range of our lives into the shared offering of a common people with one hope under God.

All sit. The choir sings the Anthem

LET all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
My God and King.

The heav'ns are not too high,
His praise may thither fly:
The earth is not too low,
His praises there may grow.

Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
My God and King.

The Church with psalms must shout,
No door can keep them out:
But above all, the heart
Must bear the longest part.

Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
My God and King.

*Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)
from Five Mystical Songs*

*Antiphon I in The Temple
George Herbert (1593–1633)*

Masai Cultural Arts perform traditional dance and music

Cynthia Wakuna gives a Reflection

Braimah and Jeneba Kanneh-Mason play an arrangement of Deep River

The Prime Minister of The Independent State of Samoa, The Honourable Fiamē Naomi Mata‘afa MP, reads the Lesson

NOW there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

1 Corinthians 12: 4–12

Thanks be to God.

All stand to sing the Hymn



BE thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
be all else but naught to me, save that thou art,
be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight,
be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might,
be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower,
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my power.

High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright Sun,
O grant me its joys after vict'ry is won,
great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

*Slane 339 NEH
traditional Irish melody*

*Irish, c 8th century, translated by Mary Byrne (1880–1931)
and versified by Eleanor Hull (1860–1935)*

All sit. The Reverend Canon Dr Ishaya Anthony, Commonwealth Theologian, Westminster Abbey, gives a Reflection

The choir sings the Anthem

THE Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you;
the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen.

John Rutter (b 1945)

Numbers 6: 24–26

The Reverend Robert Latham, Minor Canon and Precentor, introduces the prayers

Let us pray for the Commonwealth of Nations, and give thanks to God for his blessings.

All remain seated or kneel.

HEAVENLY Father, hear our prayers for every nation represented among us; for their leaders and peoples; that we might care for our common home, celebrate our diversity, and live together in unity, fellowship, and peace.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Fr Sławomir Witoń, Dean, Westminster Cathedral, says

HEAR our prayers for all who are suffering as a consequence of war and terrorism; those stricken by natural disaster; for all in danger or distress today; for those working for the relief of suffering and the promotion of peace and justice.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

The Reverend Tony Miles, Superintendent Minister, Methodist Central Hall Westminster, says

HEAR our prayers for all the young people of our Commonwealth; that through friendship, shared values, creativity, and resilience, they may meet every challenge and opportunity to serve the common good; for the flourishing of generations to come in prosperity and peace.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

The Reverend Mark Birch MVO, Canon in Residence, says

HEAR our prayers for His Majesty The King, the Head of the Commonwealth; that our bonds of affection may remain strong, and our commitment to service be lifelong and steadfast.

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

Let us pray in the words that Jesus taught us:

OUR Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

All sit. Aivale Cole sings Way of my Dreaming Heart, by Errollyn Wallen

Leanne Ellul reads A Résumé of Bees

All stand for The Act of Affirmation. The Right Honourable Baroness Scotland of Asthal KC, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations, says

LET us now stand together to renew our pledge to uphold and serve the values and fellowship of our unique global family.

We affirm that every person possesses unique worth and dignity, and that by embracing our diversity, we grow stronger together.

We affirm our desire for peace among all peoples and nations, and our belief in justice for everyone, everywhere.

We affirm our respect for the natural world and our shared responsibility to be stewards of the earth — working as partners to nurture and protect our common home.

We affirm our commitment to empowering young people in every part of our Commonwealth. By honouring their ingenuity and imagination, we celebrate their role in shaping a future in which we can thrive together.

United in kinship and common purpose, we cherish the rich tapestry of thought, culture, tradition, and experience which strengthens our bonds. Through fraternity and partnership, we build on our shared inheritance to create a more connected, resilient, and prosperous world.

We reiterate our commitment to the values of the Commonwealth Charter — not only as an expression of our ideals and aspirations, but as a guide for action that unites us in progress.

Through our Commonwealth connection, we see each other, hear each other, learn from one another, and stand together in mutual respect and goodwill, working hand in hand for a better future.

All respond

We affirm our belief in the Commonwealth as a powerful influence for good in the world, and pledge ourselves to its service, now and for the future.

All sit. Joan Armatrading sings Love and Affection

All stand. The Dean introduces the Blessings

With friends who represent some of the many communities of faith, let us now seek a blessing upon the Commonwealth, in all its diversity.

The Venerable Bogoda Seelawimala says

AS long as the harmonious assembly, meet frequently... and perform their duties in unity; recognising values and traditions... adhering to moral and spiritual principles... upholding the honour and wisdom of elders... and free movement of peoples between realms... so long may the society be expected not to decline, but to prosper.

On behalf of the Buddhist community, may the Commonwealth be blessed.

Rabbi Anna Wolfson says

THIS is our hope, this is our security, in the light of eternity we have a significance we cannot measure. Together we build God's kingdom. Our world is in the process of being repaired through us and within us. This is our redemption.

On behalf of the Jewish community, may the Commonwealth be blessed.

Mr Malcolm Deboo says

GOD is wholly good and not responsible for evil. We collectively must connect to assist God to defeat evil by constantly doing good deeds. We will thrive together by our cumulative righteous acts, because it will bring about eternal peace and endless light on earth as it is in heaven.

On behalf of the Zoroastrian community may the Commonwealth be blessed.

Imam Monawar Hussain MBE DL says

SEND Thy peace, O Lord, which is perfect and everlasting,
that our souls may radiate peace.

Send Thy peace, O Lord, that amidst our worldly strife
we may seek peace, reconciliation, and healing.

Send Thy peace, O Merciful Lord, that we
Thy children on earth may all unite as one family.

On behalf of the Muslim community, may the Commonwealth be blessed.

All sing the Hymn during which the flags of the Commonwealth nations leave the Abbey



GUIDE me, O thou great Redeemer,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
hold me with thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven,
feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain
whence the healing stream doth flow;
let the fiery cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through:
strong Deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's Destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side:
songs of praises
I will ever give to thee.

*Cwm Rhondda 368 NEH
John Hughes (1873–1932)
arranged by James O'Donnell*

*Arglwydd, arwain trwy'r anialwch
William Williams (1717–91)
translated by Peter Williams (1727–96) and others*

The Dean pronounces the final blessing

GOD grant to the living grace; to the departed rest; to the Church, The King, the Commonwealth, and all people, peace and concord; and to us sinners life everlasting; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

All remain standing as the clergy and choir, Their Majesties The King & The Queen, and Members of the Royal Family depart the Abbey church

Music after the service

Fanfare *from* Four Extemporisations

Percy Whitlock (1903–46)

Members of the congregation are requested kindly to remain in their seats until directed to move by the Honorary Stewards

There will be a retiring collection for the Samoa Victim Support Group



Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG) is the voice of the voiceless and a recognised human rights defender. It is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) established in 2005 with a mission to provide integrated, personalised, professional services for victims of crime. SVSG protects and promotes the rights of women, children, and vulnerable populations, specifically their right to be free from abuse.

During the Samoa Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Her Majesty The Queen opened the 'Queen Camilla Pre-School of Hope'. This school will enable the Samoa Victim Support Group to continue its mission to raise awareness and educate young people on tackling and preventing violence against women and girls.

<https://svsg.org.ws/>