AN OBSERVANCE FOR COMMONWEALTH DAY 2011

In the presence of Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh

Monday 14 March 2011 at 3.15pm
Most of the church, with the exception of the Transepts, is served by a hearing loop. Users should turn their hearing aid to the setting marked T.

Members of the congregation are kindly requested to refrain from using private cameras, video, or sound recording equipment. Please ensure that mobile phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are switched off.
It is my great pleasure, in my capacity as Chairman of the Council of Commonwealth Societies, to welcome you to this very special event.

Each year, on the second Monday in March, the Council of Commonwealth Societies - an association of Commonwealth civil society organisations and partner organisations working under the auspices of the Royal Commonwealth Society - organises its flagship occasion, the Commonwealth Day Observance. The Observance marks Commonwealth Day, when people across the world celebrate the special partnership of nations, peoples, and ideals which constitutes the modern Commonwealth.

The Observance is the UK’s largest annual multi-faith gathering, and today we are honoured by the presence of Head of the Commonwealth Her Majesty The Queen, His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, heads of government, the High Commissioners, and faith leaders representing each major religion. Equally importantly, we are joined by more than 1000 young people representing the bright future of the Commonwealth.

Today you will hear inspiring testimonies and readings from accomplished Commonwealth citizens, and witness colourful performances by talented Commonwealth artists. The Observance takes a different theme each year and, in 2011, it is 'Women as agents of change'. This important theme will be reflected throughout today’s celebration.

I hope you enjoy this vibrant and exciting event. I would also like to record the gratitude of the Council of Commonwealth Societies to the Dean of Westminster Abbey and his staff.

\[Signature\]

The Lord Watson of Richmond, CBE
Commonwealth Women as Agents of Change

*Did you know?*

» The Commonwealth has 54 member states stretching across every continent on earth. Over half of the Commonwealth's two billion people are women and girls.

» All Commonwealth countries have voluntarily signed up to be members of this association. No one country is more important than any other - this is a partnership of equals.

» But to become a member of the Commonwealth, countries must commit to upholding certain agreed values and principles, including the protection of human rights.

» Equality is a basic human right. This isn’t to say that women and men are the same, but that an individual's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities should not depend on whether they are born female or male.

» If gender equality is the goal, Commonwealth countries - just like many other countries around the world - still have a long way to go.
Around the Commonwealth - out of 54 heads of government, only three are women - over two thirds of people living on less than one US dollar a day are women... 24 million people are living with HIV and women account for more than half of all newly-infected adults...

Around the world... gender-based violence causes more deaths and disabilities among women of child-bearing age than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents, and war combined... two thirds of the children denied school are girls... civilians account for more than 70% of casualties in conflicts and most of them women and children...

In 2011, the Commonwealth is focusing on the theme 'Women as agents change' because:

- By investing in women and girls, we can accelerate social, economic, and political progress. When girls and women are empowered to contribute to their local and national economies, they can help to lift societies out of poverty.

- When women and girls have access to life-changing opportunities such as education and health care, we can go a long way towards creating a fairer and more prosperous world.
At Intel, our focus is not simply on the technology we make—it’s on what we make possible for people around the world.

We believe that to foster innovation and drive economic growth, we need to enable everyone and especially women and girls with education and entrepreneurial skills.

This is a goal we share with governments, NGOs and development agencies because by empowering women and girls we also improve the lives of their children, families and communities.

That is why Intel is actively engaged in programs that provide women and girls access to technology, offer scholarships and grants that encourage them to pursue education in technical fields, enable them to pursue entrepreneurial paths, and offer substantial development opportunities in the workplace.
Order of the Observance

Before the Observance

Music before the start of the Observance is provided by Bear Love, a Yidaki (didgeridoo) player, and the Maria Fidelis Convent School Gospel Choir. Celebrating women filmmakers, the video clips playing on plasma screens around the Abbey are provided by the Birds Eye View Film Festival 2011. (See page 31 for details.)

The Procession of Flags

As the procession of Commonwealth flags moves through the Abbey, the musical accompaniment is performed by the Maria Fidelis Convent School Gospel Choir. The flags of the member countries of the Commonwealth are carried in the order determined by the date of membership (when read from right to left):

Canada  United Kingdom
New Zealand  Australia
India  South Africa
Sri Lanka  Pakistan
Malaysia  Ghana
Cyprus  Nigeria
Tanzania  Sierra Leone
Trinidad and Tobago  Jamaica
Kenya  Uganda
Malta  Malawi
The Gambia  Zambia
Guyana  Singapore
Lesotho  Botswana
Mauritius  Barbados
Nauru  Swaziland
Samoa  Tonga
The Bahamas  Bangladesh
Papua New Guinea  Grenada
Solomon Islands  Seychelles
Dominica  Tuvalu
Kiribati  Saint Lucia
Vanuatu  Saint Vincent and The Grenadines
Antigua and Barbuda  Belize
St Christopher and Nevis  Maldives
Namibia  Brunei Darussalam
Mozambique  Cameroon
Mozambique  Rwanda
All stand.

The Procession of Honoured Guests and Participants

An Honorary Steward

The Chairman of the Royal Commonwealth Society, Mr Peter Kellner
The Chairman of the Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship, Mr Lyn Hopkins
The Chairman of the Royal Over-Seas League, Sir Anthony Figgis
The Chairman of the English-Speaking Union, The Right Honourable The Lord Hunt of Wirral MBE PC and Lady Hunt

The Representatives of the Faith Communities

An Honorary Steward

The Representative of the
Hindu Community
Anil Bhanot OBE

The Representative of the
Buddhist Community
The Venerable Bogoda Seelawimala

The Representative of the
Sikh Community
Dr Indarjit Singh CBE

The Representative of the
Jewish Reformed Synagogues
Rabbi Dr Tony Bayfield CBE

The Representative of the
Sunni Muslim Community
Imam Mohammed Raza OBE

The Representatives of the Christian Churches

Free Churches
Commissioner Elizabeth Matear

Church of Scotland
The Very Reverend Dr John Cairns

Methodist
The Reverend Tony Miles

Roman Catholic
Canon Christopher Tuckwell

Orthodox
His Eminence Archbishop Gregorios
The Observance

Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh are received at the Great West Door by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster.

All stand. Presentations are made.

All sing

The National Anthem

God save our gracious Queen,
long live our noble Queen,
God save The Queen.
Send her victorious,
happy and glorious,
long to reign over us:
God save The Queen.
The Hymn

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation;
O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health and salvation:
come ye who hear,
brothers and sisters draw near,
praise him in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,
shelters thee under his wings, yea, so gently sustaineth:
hast thou not seen
all that is needful hath been
granted in what he ordaineth?

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee;
surely his goodness and mercy here daily attend thee;
ponder anew
all the Almighty can do,
he who with love doth befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
all that hath life and breath come now with praises before him!
Let the Amen
sound from his people again:
gladly for ay we adore him.

Lobe den Herren 440 NEH
Praxis pietatis melica 1668
Joachim Neander (1650-80)
translated by Catherine Winkworth (1827-78)
and Rupert Davies (1909-94)
The Order of the Procession

The Beadle

The Choir of Westminster Abbey

The Chaplain

The Minor Canons

The Canons’ Verger

The Canons of Westminster

The Dean’s Verger

The Dean of Westminster

The Queen’s Almshmen

The High Steward

An Honorary Steward

The Commonwealth Flag
(with Brownie escort)

The Commonwealth Secretary-General
His Excellency Kamalesh Sharma and Mrs Sharma

The Chairperson-in-Office of the Commonwealth
The Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar MP,
Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

The Chief Honorary Steward

The Chairman of the Council of Commonwealth Societies
The Lord Watson of Richmond CBE

The Commonwealth Mace

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
HEAD OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Lady-in-Waiting to The Queen

Private Secretary to The Queen

Equerry-in-Waiting to The Queen
All remain standing.
The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster, gives

The Bidding

On behalf of The Dean and Chapter I welcome you warmly to Westminster Abbey, this House of God and House of Kings, where God is honoured in daily worship, the place of coronations since 1066.

Our celebration this year of women as agents of change has a particular resonance for those of us who honour Mary, by God's grace the Mother of the Lord Jesus. We honour too Queen Elizabeth I and many other women of our island story, buried or memorialised here in the Abbey, who have been agents of change for the better.

We together represent every nation of the Commonwealth, a rich diversity of cultures and faiths throughout the world, united by ties of history and friendship. We shall pray, each in our own way, for the Commonwealth itself as an agent of change for good in the world.

As we come into the presence of almighty God, let us pray for a moment in silence.

Silence

Now let us pray for the spread of God's kingdom in the words Jesus taught his disciples:

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.
The Commonwealth Day Message 2011
from Her Majesty The Queen, Head of the Commonwealth

Last week, on the 8th of March, we marked the hundredth anniversary of the first International Women's Day. The idea of having a women's day was first proposed against the backdrop of the rapid industrialisation of the early twentieth century. From small beginnings, this idea has grown to become a widely recognised way of celebrating women around the world. While some people use this day to acknowledge the love, admiration, and respect for women, others use it to remember the great social and political strides made both by and for women in the last hundred years. There is no right or wrong approach.

In the Commonwealth, every year, 26 million girls are born; and this equates to one new baby girl arriving almost every second of every day. In the time it takes to hold the Commonwealth Observance Service at Westminster Abbey, nearly four thousand girls will have been born in Commonwealth lands. And every one of these births marks the start of a new life, a journey which begins with the hopes of parents, families, and communities, and which is continued through the aspirations of those girls themselves.

This year, the Commonwealth celebrates the important role that women already play in every walk of life and in every Commonwealth country - from the richest to the poorest areas, across continents and oceans, from villages to places of international debate, in every culture and faith - recognising that women are 'agents of change' in so many ways: as mothers and sisters, teachers and doctors, artists and craftspeople, smallholders and entrepreneurs, and as leaders of our societies, unleashing the potential of those around them.

And also this year, the Commonwealth reflects on what more could be achieved if women were able to play an even larger role. For example, I am encouraged that last year the Commonwealth launched a global effort to train and support half a million more midwives worldwide.

In all this work the commendable goal is to create a greater opportunity for women as children and adults to pursue their hopes and dreams, to attain their goals, and to make best use of their talents and knowledge.

This year, and on Commonwealth Day especially, as governments continue to search for new ways to tackle these important challenges, let us all give a thought to the practical ways in which we, as individuals or as groups, can provide support to girls and women - so that everyone can have a chance of a fuller and more rewarding life, wherever they happen to be born.

Elizabeth R.
In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.’ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.’ Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’ The angel said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.’ Then Mary said, ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’ Then the angel departed from her. In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.’ And Mary said:
The Choir of Westminster Abbey sings

**Magnificat**

My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his hand-maiden. For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name. And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations. He hath shewed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away. He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel: as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed, for ever. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

*Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924) in G*
A Reflection by Dr Dambisa Moyo

The world has made significant strides since 1869 when the British philosopher John Stuart Mill argued for the rights of women.

In my home continent of Africa, for example, there have been marked improvements in female participation in political and economic life in recent decades. Today Africa boasts a female President, and a female Central Bank Governor, and Rwanda - the Commonwealth’s newest member - has more women in Parliament than any other country in the world.

Despite this progress, we still have a lot of work to do.

The Commonwealth’s 54 member states represent more than 2 billion people, with women and girls making up over half of this population. Of the two billion people in the Commonwealth family, one third still live on less than US$1 a day, and over 60 per cent of these people are women.

Yet these statistics are not a counsel of despair. Quite the contrary.

The challenges facing women around the world are a clarion call for the Commonwealth member states to lead the international community towards improvements in economic growth, meaningfully reducing poverty, ensuring the promotion of human rights, and ultimately establishing good governance.

Who better to lead these efforts than the Commonwealth’s 54 member states?

Not only because of their reach, but also because at the heart of the Commonwealth’s Cohesive Value Narrative is achieving sustainable development.

We should applaud the progress the world has made thus far, but also we must continue to motivate and agitate for the Commonwealth to be the beacon of women as agents of change.
Carol Ann Duffy CBE reads

*A Commonwealth Blessing For Girls*

Here are the gifts we wish and the wishes we gift to new girls born, Antigua to Zambia, breathed blessings at cradles, from Canada to Trinidad, sent out by song, poetry, prayer to Bangladesh, Gambia, Jamaica, Kiribati, Tuvalu, to fall as rain on good crops or fill a cup with water, a toast to each bright daughter-health; the soul-wealth learning brings; friendship's dancing rings in Cameroon, Guyana, New Zealand, Pakistan; equality, a girl half of the whole of the harmed world, healer; the joy of choice; a boy-loud voice; her life a loved light in Britain, India, Malaysia; lastly we wish she gives back in return to us her blessings, her unique gifts.

*Carol Ann Duffy CBE (b 1955)*
*commissioned for this service*
All stand to sing

The Hymn

God is love: let heav'n adore him;
God is love: let earth rejoice;
let creation sing before him,
and exalt him with one voice.
He who laid the earth's foundation,
he who spread the heav'n's above,
he who breathes through all creation,
he is love, eternal love.

God is love: and he enfoldeth
all the world in one embrace;
with unfailing grasp he holdeth
every child of every race.
And when human hearts are breaking
under sorrow's iron rod,
then they find that selfsame aching
deep within the heart of God.

God is love: and though with blindness
sin afflicts the souls of men,
God's eternal loving-kindness
holds and guides them even then.
Sin and death and hell shall never
o'er us final triumph gain;
God is love, so love for ever
o'er the universe must reign.

Abbot’s Leigh 185 NEH
Cyril Taylor (1907-91)
All sit for

**A Reflection by Marie Staunton**

It is a great privilege to address you all today.

Plan is a global children’s charity. For over 70 years we’ve been working with the world’s poorest children so that they can move from poverty to opportunity. Standing up for every child’s right to fulfil their potential. What this experience has shown us, is that poverty, especially where it is combined with prejudice, has a particularly devastating impact on girls and that we have a responsibility to do something about it.

For most of us going to school, learning at the very least to read and write, is vital. Without the opportunity that my education provided I would not be here. Today, 75 million children are denied that chance of education - because they are girls. That’s more than the entire population of the UK.

In too many Commonwealth countries more girls than boys die before the age of 5, and more are excluded from education. They get pregnant much too young and if they survive childbirth they produce low-weight babies who continue the cycle of poverty from generation to generation.

That’s not right - it's against the gender, equality, and human rights principles of the Commonwealth. It is also not smart - if our fragile global economy is to fully recover, it needs girls to make their economic contribution.

So which of our 54 countries are doing right by girls? My organisation Plan teamed up with the Royal Commonwealth Society to find out where is the best country to be a girl in the Commonwealth. We measured eight indicators - survival, education, early pregnancy, access to scholarships, women in politics, success in sports, the pay gap, and life expectancy. And the answer was unexpected.

Our survey shows that it is not historical wealth but present political leadership which determines where is the best place to be born a girl. Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago rank second and third on our report card ahead of much richer countries. Five of the six poorest countries in the Commonwealth score higher than richer ones. A girl with political ambitions is better off in Rwanda than the UK.

Investing in girls is the right thing to do. It is also the smart thing to do. Because educated girls invest more of their higher wages in their families. They marry later, have fewer - and healthier - children who are, in turn, more likely to go to school. Simply by educating girls you can raise your country’s GDP.

The half a billion girls in the Commonwealth are not our problem - they are our opportunity if we give them a chance. Who gave you your chance in life? A parent, a teacher, the first party committee who adopted you as their candidate?

The Plan is that you give that chance to a girl, to all the girls in the Commonwealth. The Plan is that by so doing you change their lives, their children's lives, and their children’s children’s lives for generations to come.
All remain seated for

**A Performance** by Dance Ihayami

**A Reflection** by Dr Martina Roth

It is estimated by UNESCO that just a one percent increase in female education would increase that nation's GDP by over a third of a percent. This, as well as many other statistics and cases we hear today are reason enough for the private sector to take responsibility for improving the prospects of women and girls around the world.

Intel is a leading edge technology company - but we don't just focus on the technology; we're interested in driving innovation and making things possible. The key to fostering positive change and driving economic growth is enabling individuals and groups, especially women and girls. In order to enable people, you need to educate effectively and drive entrepreneurial skills. Governments and NGOs also share our goals, and by working closely with them we can empower women and by doing so, also improve the lives of their children, families and communities.

'Why are we doing this?' you may ask. For us, Corporate Social Responsibility reflects our deep respect for people and for the world around us. We do not view corporate responsibility as something separate, but as integrated into how we do business - from providing a progressive workplace for our employees to setting ethical expectations for our suppliers to delivering more energy-efficient products. Our approach to corporate responsibility is motivated by our understanding that the success of our company cannot be separated from the health of the planet and of economies around the world.

Statistics tell us that four in ten companies worldwide have no women in senior management, so the private sector can play a big role in giving women equal opportunities at all levels. Access to good education is important but women and girls also need to know that education will mean they are able to realise their ambitions.
I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight a recent experience, which, for me, brought home the importance of why we are all here today, celebrating the union we know as 'the Commonwealth'.

My first visit overseas as an envoy for the Scottish branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association had a particular personal relevance, as it brought together my advocacy work on HIV/AIDS, and the long standing relationship between my birthplace of Scotland and the country of Malawi.

The connection between both countries stretches back over the centuries, to the time when David Livingstone, the explorer and medic, first recognised the link between mosquitoes and malaria.

Today, the enduring sense of friendship and co-operation between Scotland and Malawi is an example of the Commonwealth at its best.

It is also a partnership that is helping to tackle many issues, most crucially for me, the spread of HIV/AIDS and the task of caring for mothers and children affected by this terrible pandemic.

The grim fact we must face is that 24 million Commonwealth citizens are living with HIV today. That's 60% of all those infected with the virus around the world.

Women account for more than half of all adults newly infected by HIV and it is only by equipping, supporting, and empowering women that we can begin to turn the tide.

During my trip, I was honoured to meet members of the recently formed Malawian Women's Caucus in the Parliament building itself. I was impressed and encouraged by their obvious commitment to affect the right type of change, to influence the right policies, to ultimately bring about the right type of progress.

Along with dedicated NGOs, individuals from civil society, and faith groups, The Women's Caucus stands out as a powerful example of women acting as Agents of Change.

The challenges faced are immensely complex. But a union of ideas, stretching out across country borders, can help to find common solutions to our shared challenges.

My visit to Malawi helped me to begin to appreciate the unique reach and potential of the Commonwealth. There's so much to be done, but with willpower, vision, and commitment, I believe that positive changes can, and absolutely must, be achieved.
All remain seated. The Choir of Westminster Abbey sings

The Anthem

O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands: serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.

Be ye sure that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.

For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting: and his truth endureth from generation to generation.

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) in C

The Prayers

Commissioner Elizabeth Matear, Moderator of the Free Churches Group, says:

O God of love and compassion, you have shown your love for us in many marvellous ways and encouraged us to see that in your sight all are equal. We give you thanks for the many women who have been influential in bringing change to our world. Bless all who continue to be agents of change, that through their efforts the world may show more clearly the values of your kingdom. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Rabbi Dr Tony Bayfield CBE, representative of the Jewish Reformed Synagogues, says:

God of our ancestors, Your covenant with the world is revealed through our different scriptures. It is also revealed in the burning bushes that still surround us today. As the poet wrote: 'Earth's crammed with heaven, And every common bush afire with God: But only he who sees, takes off his shoes.'

He and she. The burning revelation of our times is he and she.

We give thanks that today many synagogues are beautified by ritual artworks made by women. Prayers rise to heaven on the melodies and voices of women. The drama of Judaism is publicly enacted by women. As well as men.

We thank You for the fiery truth: at last men know that she also sees, takes off her shoes, and is a blessing.
Dr Natubhai Shah, representative of the Jain community, says:

Lead me from death to Life, from falsehood to Truth.
Lead me from despair to Hope, from fear to Trust.
Lead me from hate to Love, from war to Peace.
Let Peace fill our heart, our world, our universe.

Satish Kumar, member, Jain community, adopted by the Prayer for Peace movement, 1981

Malcolm Deboo, representative of the Zoroastrian community, says:

To Pouruchista, Youngest of the daughters of Zarathushtra,
'Grant the constant aid of the Good Mind, the strong support of Thy Truth that she may take counsel with enlightened understanding, and with devotion act well as wisdom may direct! ' Just as now a woman or a man knows what the truth is, so they do know what is really good. Therefore let them put it into practice and let them make it known to those who shall practise truth in the way that it really is. We worship the Guardian Spirits of all holy women and men, of all holy teachers and disciples, of all the saints both female and male.

Verses 53.3, 35.6, 26.7
Gathas / Hymns of Prophet Zarathushtra c 1500BCE

Dr Indarjit Singh CBE, representative of the Sikh community, says:

'It is to women, condemned by men as inferior, that we are born
In women we seek companionship and life-long marriage;
How can we call inferior those that give birth to royalty
And are central to all our lives?'

These words of Guru Nanak on the lowly status of women, still sum up the plight of women in many parts of the world today.

O Lord give us the wisdom to heed the Guru's sentiments and resolve to ensure that women everywhere have the opportunity to work for what Sikhs call 'sarbar ka bhalla', or the wellbeing of all.

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

O God the ruler of all, bless Elizabeth our Queen, and all the nations of the Commonwealth and their leaders. Give wisdom and vision to those who govern the peoples of the world; and grant us peace and justice that men, women, and children of every community may live in mutual respect. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
All stand for

The Act of Affirmation to the Commonwealth

The Secretary-General says:

We affirm that every person possesses unique worth and dignity.
We affirm our respect for nature, and that we will be stewards of the earth
by caring for every part of it, and for it as a whole.
We affirm our belief in justice for everyone, and peace between peoples and
nations.
In 2011, with our theme of 'Women as Agents of Change', we affirm our
collective belief that where women prosper, societies prosper. In word and
deed, we will continue to seek new ways to show solidarity and to support
women and girls practically and meaningfully, in order to fulfil all our
human potential.

The congregation replies:

We affirm our belief in the Commonwealth as a force for good in the
world, and pledge ourselves to its service, now and in the future.
All remain standing to sing

The Hymn

For the beauty of the earth,
for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies:

Lord of all, to thee we raise
this our sacrifice of praise.

For the beauty of each hour,
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower,
sun and moon and stars of light:

For the joy of ear and eye,
for the heart and brain's delight,
for the mystic harmony
linking sense to sound and sight:

For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild:

For each perfect gift of thine,
to our race so freely given,
graces human and divine,
flowers of earth and buds of heaven:

Dix 47 NEH
adapted from Conrad Kocher (1788-1872)
by William Henry Monk (1823-89) 

Folliot Sandford Pierpoint (1835-1917)
All remain standing. The Dean pronounces

The Blessing

Unto God's gracious mercy and protection we commit you. The Lord bless and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

Amen.

Numbers 6: 24-26

Finale from Symphonie VI  

Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937)

Members of the Congregation are asked to remain in their places until invited to move by the Stewards. Those in the Nave will be asked to leave by the Great West Door. Those seated in the Lantern and Transepts leave by the North Door.

A retiring collection is taken for the Commonwealth Countries League (CCL), working to educate and empower young women around the world. For more information on the work of the CCL, see page 33.
The Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar MP

Born in 1952, on completion of her studies Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar entered the teaching profession and, after lecturing for a total of six years, became a full-time Attorney-at-Law. In 1987 she entered the political arena. Since 1995, she has been the Member of Parliament for Siparia, serving as Attorney General, Minister of Legal Affairs and Minister of Education between 1995 and 2001. In April 2006, Mrs. Persad-Bissessar was appointed Leader of the Opposition, the first woman to ever hold that position in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

On Tuesday May 26, 2010, two days after a victory at the polls, Mrs. Persad-Bissessar created history again, becoming the first woman to hold the office of Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Mrs. Persad-Bissessar is also the first female Chairperson-in-office of the Commonwealth. She is married with one son.

Dr Dambisa Moyo

Dambisa Moyo is an international economist who comments on the macro-economy and global affairs. She is the author of the New York Times Bestseller Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How there is a Better Way for Africa. Her book How the West Was Lost: Fifty Years of Economic Folly and the Stark Choices Ahead was published in January 2011.

In 2009, Ms. Moyo was named by Time Magazine as one of the '100 Most Influential People in the World'. Her writing regularly appears in economic and finance-related publications such as the Financial Times, the Economist Magazine and the Wall Street Journal.

Born in Zambia, Ms. Moyo completed a PhD in Economics at Oxford University and holds a Masters degree from Harvard University. She completed an undergraduate degree in Chemistry and an MBA in Finance at the American University in Washington D.C.
Ms Carol Ann Duffy CBE

Carol Ann Duffy is a poet, playwright, and freelance writer, and was made Britain's poet laureate in May 2009. She is the author of numerous volumes of poems, including *Standing Female Nude*, *Feminine Gospels*, *Rapture*, and *Answering Back*. She won the TS Eliot prize in 2005 (for *Rapture*), as well as the Dylan Thomas award, the Whitbread poetry prize, the Somerset Maugham award and the Forward prize. Duffy is a Professor of Contemporary Poetry as well as the Director of Creative Writing at the Manchester Metropolitan University. She lives in England.

Ms Marie Staunton

Marie Staunton has over thirty years experience in the development, commercial and human rights sector. She is currently Chief Executive of Plan UK, the child-centred development organisation, which publishes the Report, *Because I am A Girl*. Plan works with children and their communities in over sixty countries worldwide.

Marie is also Chief Executive of Interact Worldwide which specialises in sexual and reproductive health. Since 2007, she has served as the UK Independent Member of the Board of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency. She is also Chair of 'Grow up Free from Poverty', a coalition of thirteen NGOs working on social protection as a way to end child poverty.

Dr Martina Roth

Dr. Roth is responsible for Intel's Global Education Strategy, Research and Policy, as well as the organisation’s engagement with strategic alliance partners such as the World Economic Forum's Global Education Initiative, UNESCO and OECD.

Dr Roth first joined Intel in 1997 as Program Manager for 'Kids and Creativity', managing Intel Software Developers throughout Europe and providing leading edge education content to the school and after-school market. From 2002 to 2007, she was Director of the Intel Education Group for Europe, Middle East and Africa covering approximately fifty countries on three continents. Dr. Roth holds a M.A. in Pedagogy and a Ph.D. in Philology from the University of Jena, Germany.
Ms Annie Lennox OBE

Annie Lennox was first invited to Cape Town in 2003, to take part in the inaugural concert of Nelson Mandela’s 46664 HIV campaign. It was there that she personally witnessed the plight of people struggling to cope with the situation - in clinics, orphanages, hospitals and townships. Today, Annie Lennox’s SING campaign raises funds and awareness to help prevent the spread of HIV in South Africa, most importantly through treatment literacy programs at grass roots level.

Annie Lennox is an ambassador for 46664, Oxfam, Amnesty International, The British Red Cross and has been awarded both the 'Freedom of the City of London' by the British Red Cross and the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates from The Gorbachov foundation. She is a patron of The Elton John Aids Foundation, a Scottish and London Ambassador for HIV and AIDS and a UNAIDS Goodwill Ambassador. In 2010, Annie Lennox was named Barclay’s Woman of the Year, GQ Charity Woman of the Year, Harper’s Woman of the Year, and Global Defender Woman of the Year. In January 2011, she was granted an OBE by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

His Excellency Mr Kamalesh Sharma

An Indian diplomat, Kamalesh Sharma became Commonwealth Secretary-General on 1 April 2008. He was appointed to the post by Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meeting in Kampala, Uganda, in November 2007. Mr Sharma previously served as India’s High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, where he was closely involved in Commonwealth activities. A career diplomat since 1965, Mr Sharma served as the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to Timor Leste from 2002 to 2004. From 1997 to 2002 he was the Indian Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, and from 1988 to 1990 he served as India’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva.
Performers

_in order of appearance_

**Bear Love**

Bear has been playing the didgeridoo for the past twelve years since he heard a busker in London’s Covent Garden and was captivated by the ancient sounds emanating from this unique instrument. Since then he has pursued his passion for the traditional Aboriginal Yidaki (didgeridoo) and for the indigenous custodians of that instrument from the Northern Territory in Arnhem Land. Bear actively promotes the Aborigine’s rich culture in talks and workshops for schools and colleges all over the UK. He works with sound and its healing properties, in beautiful acoustic church spaces using didgeridoo, huge gongs, Tibetan singing bowls, Native American flute and Solfeggio chimes.

**Maria Fidelis Convent School Gospel Choir**

The Maria Fidelis Convent School Gospel Choir was the BBC Songs of Praise Senior School Choir of the Year in 2010. The choir sang for His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI during his state visit to the UK in September 2010 and has performed at Buckingham Palace for the Prince’s Foundation for Children and the Arts, for the US Ambassador and for the Mayor of London.

Maria Fidelis Convent School is a split-site inner city London Roman Catholic comprehensive. The choir reflects the school’s multicultural intake and draws its pupils from all parts of inner-city London. Un-auditioned, the choir enables girls from all year groups and backgrounds to sing, learn and grow together. Through their passion and enjoyment they demonstrate that young people are capable of achieving excellence. The choir is lead by Karen Gibson and managed by Lyn Newell, Assistant Headteacher.
Ms Denyse Plummer
Born in Trinidad and Tobago, Denyse Plummer began singing at the age of nine with the Holy Name Convent choirs. She embarked upon her professional music career at the age of twenty. In 1986, Denyse began singing calypso, a style of Afro-Caribbean music which originated in Trinidad and Tobago and evolved into a way of spreading news around the country. Denyse has won numerous titles and awards, including the National Award for best Female Vocalist, Best Nation Building Song 1991 (with La Trinity) and Calypso Queen of the world for four consecutive years between 1988 and 1991. She has performed at a number of prestigious international events, and toured extensively.

The Choir of Westminster Abbey
The Choir of Westminster Abbey is renowned worldwide as one of the finest choirs of its type. Comprising some thirty boys (all of whom attend the Abbey’s dedicated residential Choir School) and twelve professional adult singers (known as Lay Vicars), the Choir plays a central role both in the daily choral services in the Abbey and in the many royal, state, and national occasions which take place there. In addition to fulfilling its responsibilities in Westminster, the Choir undertakes an extensive programme of recordings, broadcasts, concerts, and tours, travelling in recent years to Australia, the United States, the Far East, Russia, and Spain. The Choir is directed by James O'Donnell, Organist and Master of the Choristers, and the organ is played by Robert Quinney, Sub-Organist.

Dance Ihayami
Dedicated to the art of Indian classical dance and its rich complexity of rhythm, posture, gesture and expression, Dance Ihayami was founded in 2003 by dancer and choreographer Priya Shrikumar. Dance Ihayami’s repertoire of scintillating dances blends contemporary dance with traditional South Indian classical styles.

The company has a history of developing cross-cultural partnerships, including internationally. Previous works include a tour of New Zealand with Maori dancers, performances at the Belfast and Edinburgh Fringe festivals and a collaborative production with the Scottish Chamber orchestra. Dance Ihayami School, the company’s education wing, offers a wide range of outreach programmes.
With thanks to

Creative Scotland is the national leader for Scotland's arts, screen and creative industries. Established in July 2010, Creative Scotland is a non-departmental public body and is a significant investor in the creative sector, committing both Scottish Government and National Lottery funding.

Creative Scotland invests in talent, in the quality of artistic production, in audiences, access and participation, in the cultural economy, in places and in their contribution to a creative Scotland. Education, equalities and international partnerships underpin all of its work. Creative Scotland has replaced both Scottish Screen and the Scottish Arts Council.

University of Cambridge International Examinations is the world’s largest provider of international education programmes and qualifications for 5-19 year olds. Our qualifications are taken in over 160 countries and recognised by universities, education providers and employers across the world.

We are part of the Cambridge Assessment Group, a not-for-profit organisation and a department of the University of Cambridge. We share in their mission of providing excellence in education. Our programmes and qualifications develop successful learners and support the economic performance of countries where we work at national level. We believe that young men and women should be educated equally around the world. Learn more! Visit www.cie.org.uk

For over 40 years, Intel Corporation has developed technology enabling the computer and internet revolution that has changed the world. Today, our mission is to be the pre-eminent building block supplier to the internet economy.

But our focus is not simply on the technology we make - it’s on what we make possible for people around the world. We believe that to foster innovation and drive economic growth, we need to equip everyone and especially women and girls with education and entrepreneurial skills. That is why Intel is actively engaged in programs that provide women and girls access to technology, offer scholarships and grants that encourage them to pursue education in technical fields and enable them to pursue entrepreneurial paths. Intel has invested over $1 billion and Intel employees have donated close to 3 million hours in the past decade toward improving education in over 60 countries.

Plan is a global children’s charity. We work with children in the world’s poorest countries to help them build a better future. A future you would want for all children, your family and friends. For over 70 years we’ve been taking action and standing up for every child’s right to fulfil their potential by: giving children a healthy start in life, including access to safe drinking water, securing the education of girls and boys, working with communities to prepare for and survive disasters, inspiring children to take a lead in decisions that affect their lives and enabling families to earn a living and plan for their children’s future.
We do what’s needed, where it’s needed most. We do what you would do. With your support children, families and entire communities have the power to move themselves from a life of poverty to a future with opportunity. www.plan.org.uk

Sightsavers believes that no one should be blind from avoidable causes and that visually impaired people should have the same opportunities as everyone else.

Over 90% of blindness occurs in the developing world, and women are twice as likely as men to be blind. This is often because they face greater barriers in accessing eye care due to cultural, geographical and financial factors, as well as traditional gender roles.

Sightsavers’ eye care projects ensure that eye care is embedded in the heart of the community. In Pakistan and India for example we support a network of Lady Health Workers, who go door to door examining people for eye problems. Sightsavers partners also work with communities to understand and take ownership of their health needs, with no discrimination.

Nexus is a company working in partnership with the Royal Commonwealth Society to deliver a communications package in support of the Commonwealth Day Observance. Nexus publishes the official ‘Commonwealth Yearbook’ and manages www.commonwealth-of-nations.org for the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The Birds Eye View Film Festival 2011 - Celebrating Women Filmmakers - is back with an electric and eclectic showcase of work by women from across the world. Running 8 - 17 March at the Southbank Centre and ICA, highlights include the London premiere of Susanne Bier’s Oscar-nominated *In a Better World* and a special preview of Oscar-nominee Lucy Walker’s *Countdown to Zero* (plus Director Masterclass), as well as a new live score by Grammy Award-winning Imogen Heap to Germaine Dulac’s classic, *The Seashell and the Clergyman*. For the full line-up and booking details visit www.birds-eye-view.co.uk.

Other supporters:

Charlie Allen, Claire Anholt, Sumeira Ayub, Joanna Bennett, Neil Denny, Venu Dhupa, Tara Goldsmid, Roanna Gopaun, Paul Huggins, David Ives, Jenny Kendra, Rebecca Keys, Michael Macey, Claire McFarlane, Melanie Tankard, Caroline de Verteuil, Holly Welch, Trisha Williams, Robert Wooding, Nicholas Woodward.
Behind the Scenes

The Commonwealth Mace
The Mace, carried by Marcus Beltran, goes before The Queen. It was a gift of the Royal Anniversary Trust to The Queen in her role as the Head of the Commonwealth, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of her accession to the throne. The Mace is used on special Commonwealth occasions, including the Commonwealth Day celebrations in London, and at biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government meetings.

Flowers
As in previous years, the striking flower arrangements you see around the Abbey today have been prepared by the National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies (NAFAS) under the direction of Jane Rowten-Lee.

Flag-bearers
The flag-bearers (under the direction of Louise Ewington) perform a vital role in the Observance and their presence was made possible by the support of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the High Commissions which nominate a flag-bearer from their own country, usually resident in the United Kingdom. The Commonwealth flag is accompanied by an escort of the Brownies of the UK.

The Council of Commonwealth Societies
The Council of Commonwealth Societies (CCS) is a group of organisations which promotes the value of Commonwealth Day and seeks to raise the profile of the modern Commonwealth. Its Chairman is Lord Watson of Richmond CBE and the Project Manager for Commonwealth Day, from the Royal Commonwealth Society, is Chi Kavindele. The CCS gratefully acknowledges the financial support of its member organisations and the Commonwealth High Commissions.

CCS members (2011) are:
» Association of Commonwealth Universities
» Commonwealth Broadcasting Association
» Commonwealth Business Council
» Commonwealth Countries League
» Commonwealth Foundation
» Commonwealth Education Trust
» Commonwealth Local Government Forum
» Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (UK)
» Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (International Secretariat)
» Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation
» Commonwealth Secretariat
» Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council
» Corona Worldwide
» English-Speaking Union
» Foreign & Commonwealth Office
» Goodenough College
» League for the Exchange of Commonwealth Teachers
» Nexus Strategic Partnerships
» Pacific Islands Society
» Pakistan Society
» Royal Commonwealth Society
» Royal Over-Seas League
» Soundseekers (Commonwealth Society for the Deaf)
» Papua New Guinea Church Partnership
» Victoria League
LAUNCHING TODAY!
The Commonwealth Jubilee Time Capsule

In honour of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II’s Diamond Jubilee in 2012, the Royal Commonwealth Society is building the world’s biggest online time capsule. Covering every day of the last sixty years, this archive will form a unique people’s history of the Commonwealth. And we need you to tell us your story.

From the dismantling of apartheid to the world’s first female Prime Minister, over the last sixty years numerous events have both shaken and shaped our world. Some of them we know about; but many we don’t.

We want you - young and old, and from every corner of the Commonwealth - to tell us about a particular day in the last sixty years. Tell us your story; tell us those of your family and community. In a very real way, your memories - the untold stories of millions of ordinary and extraordinary lives - are the story of the modern Commonwealth.

The very best entries will be presented as a gift to Her Majesty in 2012. And, preserved online in a safe and accessible format, the contents of the capsule will be available to historians, researchers and schoolchildren for generations to come.

To tell us your story, visit: www.jubileetimecapsule.org

The Commonwealth Countries League

Your donations today will be used to support the valuable work of the Commonwealth Countries League (CCL).

The CCL is a voluntary pan-Commonwealth civil society organisation, established in 1925. In 1960, the then President of the CCL, Alice Hemming, visited Sierra Leone where she met a clever girl who, for lack of finance, could not continue her education. The CCL decided to sponsor this girl and soon realised that their support was needed throughout the Commonwealth.

To date, sponsorship provided by the CCL Education Fund has enabled more than 3,000 girls across the Commonwealth to complete their secondary education. The success stories are numerous: sponsored girls have gone on to become teachers, doctors, lawyers, scientists, accountants and agricultural officers, building a better future for themselves and their communities.

Thank you for your generous support.
To find out more, visit www.ccl-int.org
Founded in 1868, today the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) is a modern charity working to promote international understanding. Its programmes range from creative writing, film and photography competitions to an innovative international youth leadership programme. Headquartered at London’s Commonwealth Club, the RCS has some 4,000 members in the UK and a presence in over 40 Commonwealth countries through a network of branches and Commonwealth societies. The RCS organises the Observance on behalf of the Council of Commonwealth Societies (CCS), and in consultation with the Dean of Westminster. www.thercs.org.

To find out more, visit www.commonwealthday.org

Photographs from this event are available from www.picturepartnership.co.uk/events