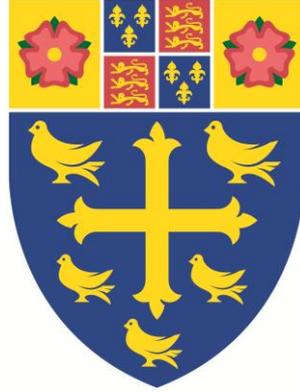


Westminster Abbey



The Commonwealth Day Service of Celebration



ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

Monday 9th March 2026
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.

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 Simon Hicks. The Fanfare Team, from the Band of the Scots Guards, is directed by Assistant Band Sergeant Major Robert Parry.

Before the service the Melodian Steel Orchestra perform outside the Great West Door.

Paul Greally, Assistant Organist, plays

Fantasia in G FWB 8

William Byrd (c 1540–1623)

Fantasia in C FWB 103

William Byrd

Super Grouse, a Scottish reeling band, plays

The Assistant Organist plays

Ancient Sunlight

Judith Bingham (b 1952)

Chorale prelude on 'Gieb fried', o frommer treuer Gott'

Iain Farrington (b 1977)

Toccata

Martin Stacey (b 1975)

THE PROCESSION OF HONOURED GUESTS AND PARTICIPANTS
THE FOUR LOYAL SOCIETIES

Ravi Suchak
Trustee
Royal Commonwealth Society

John Steel KC
Chairman
The Victoria League
for Commonwealth Friendship

Helen Prince
Chairman
Royal Over-Seas League

Miles Young
Chairman
The English-Speaking Union

THE REPRESENTATIVES OF FAITH COMMUNITIES

Representing the Zoroastrian Community
Mr Malcolm Deboo

Representing the
Sunni Muslim Community
Imam Monawar
Hussain MBE DL

Representing the
Buddhist Community
The Venerable
Bogoda Seelawimala

Representing the Jain Community
Mr Amit Lathia

Representing the Sikh Community
Lord Singh of Wimbledon CBE

Representing the Chief Rabbi
Rabbi Jason Kleiman, representing
Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis KBE, Chief Rabbi of Great Britain
and the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth

Representing the
Movement for Progressive Judaism
Rabbi Charley Baginsky

Representing the
Bahá'i Community
Mrs Padideh Sabeti

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

Representing the
Hindu Community
Mrs Trupti Patel

THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHURCHES

Verger

Church of Scotland
The Reverend C Angus MacLeod

Methodist Church
The Reverend Tony Miles

Roman Catholic Church
Father Slavomir Witoń

Pentecostal churches
Ms Shermara Fletcher

Syriac Orthodox
His Eminence Archbishop
Athanasius Thoma Dawod

Armenian Orthodox
His Grace
Bishop Hovakim

Greek Orthodox
His Eminence
Archbishop Nikitas

Coptic Orthodox
His Eminence
Archbishop Angaelos OBE

The Honourable Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, Commonwealth Secretary-General, is received by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. Presentations are made.

The Honourable Mulipola Anarosa Ale Molio 'o MP, Minister of Finance, Independent State of Samoa, is received. Presentations are made.

The Right Honourable The Lady Mayor of London, Dame Susan Langley, is received. Presentations are made and she is conducted to her seat.

The High Sheriff of Greater London, John Garbutt JP, is received. Presentations are made and he is conducted to his seat.

The Lord Forsyth of Drumlean, The Lord Speaker of the House of Lords is received at the Great North Door and is conducted to his seat.

The Honourable Dr Ian Borg MP, Deputy Prime Minister of Malta and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism, His Excellency Professor Stephen Montefort, High Commissioner of Malta to the United Kingdom, are received. Presentations are made and they are conducted to their seats.

The Right Honourable Kemi Badenoch MP, Leader of His Majesty's Most Loyal Opposition, and The Right Honourable Dame Priti Patel DBE MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Affairs, are received. Presentations are made and they are conducted to their seats.

The Right Honourable Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and The Right Honourable Yvette Cooper 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 Paul Dimoldenberg, arrives. Presentations are made and he is conducted to his seat. All stand and then sit.

The Right Honourable Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, Speaker of the House of Commons accompanied by Lady Hoyle are received at the Great North Door and are conducted to their seats.

His Serene Highness, Prince Albert II, Sovereign Prince of Monaco, and Her Excellency Mrs Genta, Ambassador of Monaco to the Court of St James's, are received. Presentations are made and they are conducted to their seats.

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

Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal and Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence GCVO CB ADC are 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

The Canons' Verger

The Canons of Westminster

The King's Baton

The Commonwealth of Nations Flag

The Chief Honorary Steward

The Chair of the Royal Commonwealth Society

The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations

The Dean's Verger

The Dean of Westminster

The Commonwealth 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

Vice Admiral
Sir Timothy Laurence GCVO CB ADC

Her Royal Highness
The Princess Royal

Her Royal Highness
The Duchess of Gloucester

His Royal Highness
The Duke of Gloucester

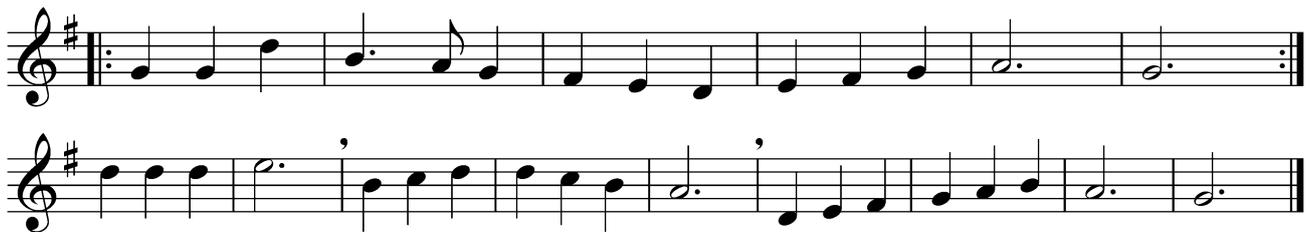
ORDER OF SERVICE

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



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, who, when tempests their warfare are waging,
who, when the elements madly around thee are raging,
 biddeth them cease,
 turneth their fury to peace,
whirlwinds and waters assuaging.

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
arranged by James O'Donnell (b 1961)

Lobe den Herren, den mächtigen König der Ehren
Joachim Neander (1650–80)
translated by Catherine Winkworth (1827–78)

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

REJOICE in the Lord, O ye righteous.
Praise the Lord with the harp.
Sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.
Sing unto him with a new song.
Play skillfully with a loud noise.
Rejoice in the Lord. Praise!

Iain Farrington

from Psalm 33

The Honourable Mulipola Anarosa Ale Molio 'o MP, Minister of Finance, Independent State of Samoa, reads the Lesson

LET love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Romans 12: 9–18

Thanks be to God.

Members of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the Town Hall Gospel Choir performs Commonwealth Symphony by Rekesh Chauhan BEM (b 1990), with words of introduction given by Femi Elufowoju jr OBE

Geri Halliwell-Horner gives a Reflection

All stand to sing the Hymn



KING of glory, King of peace,
I will love thee;
and that love may never cease,
I will move thee.
Thou hast granted my request,
thou hast heard me;
thou didst note my working breast,
thou hast spared me.

Wherefore with my utmost art
I will sing thee,
and the cream of all my heart
I will bring thee.
Though my sins against me cried,
thou didst clear me;
and alone, when they replied,
thou didst hear me.

Seven whole days, not one in seven,
I will praise thee;
in my heart, though not in heaven,
I can raise thee.
Small it is, in this poor sort
to enrol thee:
e'en eternity's too short
to extol thee.

Gwalchmai 391 NEH
Joseph David Jones (1827–70)

Praise (II) in The Temple
George Herbert (1593–1633)

All sit. Otlile Mabuse gives a Reflection

The choir sings the Anthem

O TASTE and see how gracious the Lord is :
blest is the man that trusteth in him.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

Psalms 34: 8

The Reverend Tessa Bosworth, Minor Canon and Succentor, introduces the prayers

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

All remain seated or kneel

The Reverend Dr Allan Palanna, Commonwealth Theologian in Residence, says

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.

Father Slavomir Witoń, Dean, Westminster Cathedral, says

HEAR our prayers for all who are suffering as a consequence of war and violence; 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 Dr James Hawkey, 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. Indigo Marshall sings Home with Tarju Le'Sano

Professor Selina Tusitala Marsh ONZM, inaugural Commonwealth Poet Laureate, reads an extract from her own poem How to make a Commonwealth Quilt

All stand for The Act of Affirmation. The Honourable Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, Commonwealth Secretary-General, 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.

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 together to protect and sustain it for generations to come.

We affirm our commitment to empowering young people in every part of our Commonwealth, and our belief that by investing in their ingenuity and imagination, we enhance the well being of our people and strengthen our shared future.

United in kinship and common purpose, we cherish the rich diversity of thought, culture, tradition and experience that shapes our Commonwealth. Through friendship and partnership, we build on our shared inheritance and unlock opportunity for the benefit of all.

We reiterate our commitment to the values of the Commonwealth Charter — as an enduring expression of our ideals, and as a guide to cooperation and common action in pursuit of peace and prosperity.

Through our Commonwealth connection, we see each other, hear each other, learn from one another, and work side by side in mutual respect and goodwill to build a more resilient, inclusive and prosperous common future.

All respond

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

All sit. Sapnay Entertainments and The Royal Ballet School perform Rays of Rhythm, with music composed by Rekesh Chauhan BEM

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.

Rabbi Charley Baginsky says

הִנֵּה מְהֻטָּב וּמְהַנְּעִים
שִׁבְתַּת אַחִים גַּם־יַחַד:

How good and how pleasant it is
when people live together in unity.

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

Mrs Padideh Sabeti says

O YE beloved of the Lord! This day is the day of union, the day of the ingathering of all mankind. If a small number of people gather lovingly together, with absolute purity and sanctity, with their hearts free of the world, experiencing the emotions of the Kingdom and the powerful magnetic forces of the Divine, and being at one in their happy fellowship, that gathering will exert its influence over all the earth. So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.

On behalf of the Bahá'í Community, may the Commonwealth be blessed.

Mrs Trupti Patel says

अयं निजः परोवेति गणना लघुचेतसाम् ।
उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैवकुटुम्बकम् ॥

'This is my own relative and that is a stranger,' such is the belief of the narrow-minded. For the magnanimous, the entire world is but one family.

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

Maulana Sayed Ali Abbas Razawi says

LET what you hold most dear be that which is most just and most embracing of all people. Instil in your heart mercy, love and kindness for them. For they (the people) are of two kinds: either your sibling in faith or your equal in humanity.

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



NOW thank we all our God,
with heart and hands and voices,
who wondrous things hath done,
in whom his world rejoices;
who from our mother's arms
hath blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours to-day.

O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessèd peace to cheer us;
and keep us in his grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills
in this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given,
the Son, and him who reigns
with them in highest heaven,
the One eternal God,
whom earth and heaven adore;
for thus it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.
Amen.

*Nun danket 413 NEH
in Johann Crüger's Praxis pietatis melica 1647
arranged by Christopher Robinson (b 1936)*

*Nun danket alle Gott Martin Rinkart (1586–1649)
translated by Catherine Winkworth (1827–78)*

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 and The Queen, and Members of the Royal Family depart the Abbey church

Music after the service

Chorale Fantasia on 'The Old Hundreth'

C. Hubert. H. Parry (1848–1918)

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 Royal Commonwealth Society Commonwealth Clean Oceans Plastics Campaign*

The Royal Commonwealth Society Commonwealth Clean Oceans Plastics Campaign is stopping one million pieces of plastic from entering our waterways. Delivered in partnership with Commonwealth Sport through the King's Baton Relay, this initiative is inspiring communities across the Commonwealth to take action.

To donate, scan the QR code below or visit: www.royalcw society.org/donate

