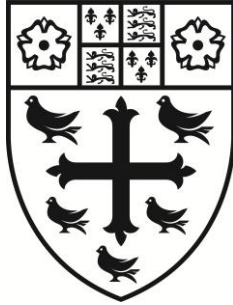


Westminster Abbey



A Service to mark the opening of
the Legal Year in England
and Wales

Wednesday 1st October 2025
11.30 am

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

The service is conducted by The Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle KCVO MBE, Dean of Westminster.

The service is sung by the Westminster Abbey Special Service Choir, conducted by Andrew Nethsingha, Organist and Master of the Choristers.

The organ is played by Matthew Jorysz, Sub-Organist.

Music before the service

Fantasia super
Komm, heiliger Geist BWV 651

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

ORDER OF SERVICE

All stand for the Procession

All sit when the Lord Chancellor, Secretary of State for Justice, & Deputy Prime Minister, the Lady Chief Justice, the Heads of Divisions, and the Justices of the Supreme Court have taken their seats

The remaining members of the procession enter, taking their seats upon reaching their places

All stand as the clergy and choir move to places in Quire and the Sacrarium

All remain standing. The choir sings the Introit

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 joyful hymn of praise.*

For the beauty of each hour	For the joy of human love,
Of the day and of the night,	Brother, sister, parent, child,
Hill and vale and tree and flower,	Friends on earth and friends above,
Sun and moon and stars of light,	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,
*Lord of all, to thee we raise
This our joyful hymn of praise.*

John Rutter (b 1945)

Folliott Pierpoint (1835–1917)

All remain standing. The Very Reverend Dr David Hoyle KCVO MBE, Dean of Westminster, gives the Bidding

AT the beginning of the legal year, we gather in the presence of almighty God, who is the judge of all and who knows the secrets of our hearts, to renew our commitment to the service of the Crown and to all manner of people that we may, together, do right.

We acknowledge a shared high calling, a common commitment to a justice that all can recognise, done without fear or favour, affection or ill will. So we seek God's strength and guidance that we might remain true to our calling; informed, wise, and just.

We pray for The Right Honourable David Lammy MP, the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, for The Right Honourable the Baroness Carr of Walton-on-the-Hill, Lady Chief Justice of England and Wales; and for all who make and administer the law, both in the United Kingdom and in the other legal jurisdictions represented here today.

In this holy place we ask God to sustain us in our life and work, to grant us humility and sound judgment, to forgive our errors, and to inspire our service. Through us and in us, may the words of the prophet find fulfilment and justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Now let us pray for the coming of God's kingdom on earth, saying, as 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

*The Right Honourable the Baroness Carr of Walton-on-the-Hill DBE, Lady
Chief Justice of England and Wales, reads the first Reading*

FOR the Lord gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;
he stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
he is a shield to those who walk blamelessly,
guarding the paths of justice
and preserving the way of his faithful ones.
Then you will understand righteousness and justice
and equity, every good path;
for wisdom will come into your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;
prudence will watch over you;
and understanding will guard you.

Proverbs 2: 6–11

Thanks be to God.

The choir sings the Psalm

TEACH me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes :
and I shall keep it unto the end.
Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law :
yea, I shall keep it with my whole heart.
Make me to go in the path of thy commandments :
for therein is my desire.
Incline my heart unto thy testimonies :
and not to covetousness.
O turn away mine eyes, lest they behold vanity :
and quicken thou me in thy way.
O stablish thy word in thy servant :
that I may fear thee.

Take away the rebuke that I am afraid of :
for thy judgements are good.
Behold, my delight is in thy commandments :
O quicken me in thy righteousness.
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.

John Stainer (1840–1901)

Psalm 119: 33–40

after Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

The Right Honourable David Lammy MP, Lord Chancellor, Secretary of State for Justice, and Deputy Prime Minister, reads the second Reading

WHO is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

James 3: 13–18

Thanks be to God.

All stand to sing the Hymn



LOVE Divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
pure unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation,
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in thee,
changed from glory into glory
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Blaenwern 408i NEH

William Penfro Rowlands (1860–1937)

Charles Wesley (1707–88)

after Fairest Isle John Dryden (1631–1700)

The Right Reverend Dr Emma Ineson, Bishop of Kensington, gives the Address

The choir sings the Anthem

GOD is our hope and strength
a very present help in trouble.

Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved
and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea;
Though the waters thereof rage and swell
and though the mountains shake at the tempest of the same.

The rivers of the flood thereof shall make glad the city of God
the holy place of the tabernacle of the most Highest.

God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed
God shall help her, and that right early.

The nations make much ado, and the kingdoms are moved
but God hath shewed his voice, and the earth shall melt away.

The Lord of hosts is with us
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

O come hither, and behold the works of the Lord
what destructions he hath brought upon the earth.

He maketh wars to cease in all the world
he breaketh the bow, and knappeth the spear in sunder,
and burneth the chariots in the fire.

Be still then, and know that I am God
I will be exalted among the nations, and I will be exalted in the earth.

The Lord of hosts is with us
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Be Still
Sally Beamish (b 1956)

Psalm 46

The Reverend Helena Bickley-Percival, Minor Canon & Sacrist, leads the Prayers

Let us pray.

All kneel or remain seated

The Venerable Sheila Watson, Preacher of Lincoln's Inn, says

LET us pray for this United Kingdom, for its unity, peace, and concord; for Charles our King, and for all members of the Royal Family; for both houses of Parliament, and all who bear responsibility in the ordering of our society; that justice, truth, and integrity may direct our common life.

Lord, in thy mercy

hear our prayer.

The Reverend David Stanton, Canon in Residence, says

LET us remember both the victims of crime and its perpetrators. Let us pray for those held prisoner, whether convicted or on remand, and for communities where there is anxiety and the fear of crime; praying for all that encourages social cohesion, resilience, and the development of virtue.

Lord, in thy mercy

hear our prayer.

The Reverend Robin Griffith-Jones, Master of the Temple, says

LET us pray for all who administer justice in this realm; for all judges and the tribunals judiciary, magistrates, jurors, and ombudsmen; for clerks and court officials; for barristers, solicitors, chartered legal executives; and all whose profession or expertise is the law. Let us pray for the police, the armed forces, the probation and the prison services, and those who maintain order in our land; that our nation may live in peace and security.

Lord, in thy mercy

hear our prayer.

The Reverend Stephen Baxter, Preacher to Gray's Inn, says

LET us pray for our fellow jurisdictions in the United Kingdom, in the nations of the Commonwealth, and the Council of Europe; and for all those who make and administer law in nations and bodies governed by the Rule of Law.

Lord, in thy mercy

hear our prayer.

The Right Reverend James Curry, Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster, says

O GOD, the just and merciful Judge of all, look down from heaven, we beseech thee, on these thy servants, who are set by thy appointment to minister justice in this land. Grant unto them thy Holy Spirit, the Spirit of uprightness, the Spirit of discernment, and the Spirit of love, that they may boldly, discreetly, and mercifully fulfil their sacred duties, to the good of thy people and the glory of thy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All stand to sing the Hymn



O JESUS, I have promised
to serve thee to the end;
be thou for ever near me,
my Master and my Friend;
I shall not fear the battle
if thou art by my side,
nor wander from the pathway
if thou wilt be my Guide.

O let me hear thee speaking
in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion,
the murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me,
to hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
thou guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, thou hast promised
to all who follow thee,
that where thou art in glory
there shall thy servant be;
and, Jesus, I have promised
to serve thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow,
my Master and my Friend.

O let me see thy footmarks,
and in them plant mine own;
my hope to follow duly
is in thy strength alone;
O guide me, call me, draw me,
uphold me to the end;
and then in heaven receive me,
my Saviour and my Friend.

Wolvercote 420 NEH
William Ferguson (1874–1950)

Hymn for the Newly Confirmed
John Bode (1816–74)

All remain standing. The Dean pronounces the 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 sing the National Anthem

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.

Thy choicest gifts in store
on him be pleased to pour,
long may he reign.
May he defend our laws,
and ever give us cause
to sing with heart and voice:
God save The King.

All remain standing as the Procession leaves the church

Music after the service

Pièce d'Orgue BWV 572

Johann Sebastian Bach

The bells of the Abbey are rung

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