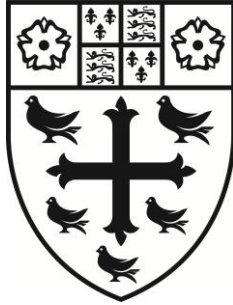


Westminster Abbey



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

Thursday 1st October 2026
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 Matthew Jorysz, Sub-Organist.

The organ is played by Paul Greally, Assistant 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, 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

WE wait for thy loving kindness, O God :
in the midst of thy temple. Alleluia!
O God, according to thy name, so is thy praise unto the
world's end :
thy right hand is full of righteousness. Alleluia!
We wait for thy loving kindness, O God :
in the midst of thy temple.
O Lord, send us now prosperity. Amen.

*William McKie (1901–83)
Organist of Westminster Abbey 1941–63*

Psalm 48: 8–9; 118: 25b

*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 Alexander Norris 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*

AH, you that turn justice to wormwood,
and bring righteousness to the ground!

The one who made the Pleiades and Orion,
and turns deep darkness into the morning,
and darkens the day into night,
who calls for the waters of the sea,
and pours them out on the surface of the earth,
the Lord is his name,
who makes destruction flash out against the strong,
so that destruction comes upon the fortress.

They hate the one who reproves in the gate,
and they abhor the one who speaks the truth.
Therefore, because you trample on the poor
and take from them levies of grain,
you have built houses of hewn stone,
but you shall not live in them;
you have planted pleasant vineyards,
but you shall not drink their wine.
For I know how many are your transgressions,
and how great are your sins—
you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe,
and push aside the needy in the gate.
Therefore the prudent will keep silent in such a time;
for it is an evil time.

Seek good and not evil,
that you may live;
and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you,
just as you have said.
Hate evil and love good,
and establish justice in the gate;
it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts,
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

Amos 5: 7–15

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)

after Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Psalm 119: 33–40

The Right Honourable Alexander Norris MP, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, reads the second Reading

UNLESS your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

'You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, "You shall not murder"; and "whoever murders shall be liable to judgement." But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgement; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, "You fool", you will be liable to the hell of fire.

'You have heard that it was said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 5: 20–22, 38–48

Thanks be to God.

All stand to sing the Hymn



IMMORTAL, invisible, God only wise,
 In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
 most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
 almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
 nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
 thy justice like mountains high soaring above
 thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all life thou givest—to both great and small;
 in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
 we blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
 and wither and perish—but naught changeth thee.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
 thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
 all laud we would render: O help us to see
 'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.

St Denio 377 NEH
from John Roberts's Caniadau y Cyssegr 1839

Walter Smith (1824–1908)

The Right Reverend Dr Barry Morgan gives the Address

The choir sings the Anthem

OS justi meditabitur sapientiam,
 et lingua ejus loquetur judicium.
 Lex Dei ejus in corde ipsius
 et non supplantabuntur gressus ejus.

*The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom,
and their tongues speak justice.
The law of their God is in their hearts;
their steps do not slip.*

Anton Bruckner (1824–96)

Psalms 37: 30–31

*The Reverend Helena Bickley-Percival, Minor Canon and 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 Stephen Baxter, Preacher to Gray's Inn, 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 Dr Andrew Bowyer, 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 Mark Birch MVO, Canon in Residence, 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



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 fire and 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)

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

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

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

Introduction and Passacaglia
from Sonata no 8 in E minor

Josef Rheinberger (1839–1901)

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