



The Cathedral & Metropolitan Church of St Peter in York

**CHORAL EVENSONG**

**ON THE**

**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**with the Chorister Bishop Ceremony**

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2025**  
**at 4.00pm**

# Welcome

A warm welcome to York Minster and to this service of Choral Evensong. Welcome if you are a regular worshipper and know the Minster well, and welcome if you are experiencing this building and this form of worship for the first time today.

Today's service will be live-streamed from the Minster. In this service we are immersed in the words of scripture, spoken and sung, and we are given time and space to lose ourselves in prayer and come closer to God.



## Information about this Service

- ♦ This service is being live-streamed, but care is taken to focus on the clergy and choir and not the congregation. For licensing and safeguarding reasons, please do not record this service on your own devices.
- ♦ Please follow the directions of the stewards. Where “Sit” or “Stand” are indicated, these are given simply as a guide. Throughout the service please feel free to adopt the posture that is most comfortable for you.
- ♦ Please join in saying together the words printed in **bold** type and in singing the hymn.
- ♦ We are grateful for all who give to support the mission and ministry of York Minster. You can offer a gift, or set up regular giving, by using the following QR code. 10% of all giving offered during this service will be given to three charities York Minster supports, HOPE Africa, a charity which was initiated by our companion link dioceses in SA; Mustard Seed, a York Diocese based organisation which works in the most deprived areas of our diocese; and a variety of Refugee charities based in the City of York. Thank you for all you are able to give.
- ♦ Donations can be made via the following QR code:



## **The tradition behind today's ceremony**

The concept of the Chorister Bishop ceremony draws its inspiration from the Gospels where Jesus said that to enter the Kingdom of God one must become as a child (MATTHEW 18.3). Through this teaching, Jesus taught his disciples an unforgettable lesson about humility and belonging to the kingdom of God. He placed children at the centre of his ministry and work. The symbolism of Jesus' actions remains more powerful than many words. At the heart of the Chorister Bishop ceremony is the same profound gospel truth, subverting concepts of power and authority with a vision of the Kingdom of God from the perspective of children and young people.

In Medieval times, the Chorister Bishop ceremony was an important annual tradition here at York Minster. On the 6<sup>th</sup> December, the Feast of St Nicholas, one of the Cathedral Choristers was elected bishop while others acted as canons, discharging all the Offices except the Mass until Holy Innocents' Day (28<sup>th</sup> December). The custom probably started in the twelfth century: restrictions were placed upon it in many cathedrals in the later Middle Ages but at York the chorister bishops still had wide powers in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, collecting monies from around the Diocese and distributing gifts to the poor. Lists of the 'young bishops' exist from 1416 until 1537 when the custom was suppressed by Henry VIII.

In the last thirty years or so, a number of English Cathedrals have 'resurrected' this ancient ceremony and chorister bishops have led prayers and given a short address whilst wearing robes of office: a cloak, a mitre and a pastoral staff. The service in many ways is symbolic of the mighty being brought down from their seats and the lowly and humble raised up. The Choristers will recognise these words as coming from the Magnificat, which they sing daily as part of the Office of Choral Evensong. This simple ceremony gives us the opportunity to hear the vision of our children and young people and commit to creating a world where their voices are heard.

During the Magnificat, the Bishop (for today, the Bishop of Whitby) will descend from his stall and take off his vestments of office. In the final part of the service the nominated Chorister Bishop will be escorted forward by their 'Canons' and they will all be vested in the robes of their office and receive a book of prayers. The Chorister Bishop will be commissioned and will then deliver a short address on behalf of all the choristers and children everywhere.

# Order of Service

*A bell is rung and prayers are sung.*

## Introit

Today I rise, today I soar in splendour.  
As the day keeps unveiling all her grandeur.  
Let the chains of yesterday break away;  
Today is here, I will not cling to yesterday.

*Words* Ozioma Ogbaji ♦ *Music* Lucy Walker (b 1998)

*Stand when the choir enters the Quire.*

## Preces

*Cantor* O Lord, open thou our lips;  
*Choir* And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

*Cantor* O God, make speed to save us;  
*Choir* O Lord, make haste to help us.

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.

*Cantor* Praise ye the Lord.  
*Choir* The Lord's name be praised.

*Music* Philip Radcliffe (1905–1986)

*Sit for the singing of the psalms but stand for the final Gloria.*

## Psalmody

Help me, Lord, for there is not one godly man left ♦  
for the faithful are minished from among the children of men,  
They talk of vanity every one with his neighbour ♦  
they do but flatter with their lips, and dissemble in their double heart.  
The Lord shall root out all deceitful lips ♦  
and the tongue that speaketh proud things;  
Which have said, With our tongue will we prevail ♦  
we are they that ought to speak, who is lord over us?  
Now for the comfortless trouble's sake of the needy ♦  
and because of the deep sighing of the poor,  
I will up, saith the Lord ♦ and will help every one from him that swelleth  
against him, and will set him at rest.  
The words of the Lord are pure words ♦ even as the silver, which from the  
earth is tried, and purified seven times in the fire.  
Thou shalt keep them, O Lord ♦  
thou shalt preserve him from this generation for ever.  
The ungodly walk on every side ♦  
when they are exalted, the children of men are put to rebuke.  
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.

PSALM 12

The fool hath said in his heart ♦  
There is no God.  
They are corrupt, and become abominable in their doings ♦  
there is none that doeth good, no not one.  
The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men ♦  
to see if there were any that would understand, and seek after God.  
But they are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become abominable ♦  
there is none that doeth good, no not one.  
Have they no knowledge, that they are all such workers of mischief ♦  
eating up my people as it were bread, and call not upon the Lord?

There were they brought in great fear, even where no fear was ♦  
for God is in the generation of the righteous.

As for you, ye have made a mock at the counsel of the poor ♦  
because he putteth his trust in the Lord.

Who shall give salvation unto Israel out of Sion? When the Lord turneth the  
captivity of his people ♦ then shall Jacob rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

*Stand.*

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.

PSALM 14. I-4, 8-II

*Sit.*

## First Lesson

The First Lesson is taken from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.

Ah, you who drag iniquity along with cords of falsehood,  
who drag sin along as with cart-ropes,  
who say, 'Let him make haste,  
let him speed his work  
that we may see it;  
let the plan of the Holy One of Israel hasten to fulfilment,  
that we may know it!'

Ah, you who call evil good  
and good evil,  
who put darkness for light  
and light for darkness,  
who put bitter for sweet  
and sweet for bitter!

Ah, you who are wise in your own eyes,  
and shrewd in your own sight!  
Ah, you who are heroes in drinking wine  
and valiant at mixing drink,  
who acquit the guilty for a bribe,  
and deprive the innocent of their rights!

Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble,  
and as dry grass sinks down in the flame,  
so their root will become rotten,  
and their blossom go up like dust;  
for they have rejected the instruction of the Lord of hosts,  
and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against his people,  
and he stretched out his hand against them and struck them;  
the mountains quaked,  
and their corpses were like refuse  
in the streets.  
For all this his anger has not turned away,  
and his hand is stretched out still.

He will raise a signal for a nation far away,  
and whistle for a people at the ends of the earth;  
Here they come, swiftly, speedily!  
None of them is weary, none stumbles,  
none slumbers or sleeps,  
not a loincloth is loose,  
not a sandal-thong broken;  
their arrows are sharp,  
all their bows bent,  
their horses' hoofs seem like flint,  
and their wheels like the whirlwind.  
Their roaring is like a lion,  
like young lions they roar;  
they growl and seize their prey,  
they carry it off, and no one can rescue.  
They will roar over it on that day,  
like the roaring of the sea.  
And if one looks to the land—  
only darkness and distress;  
and the light grows dark with clouds.

Here ends the First Lesson.

ISAIAH 5.18–30

*Stand.*

## Magnificat

*during the Magnificat, the Bishop leaves his stall, takes off his robes of office, and moves to the sanctuary seats.*

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.

*Words* LUKE I. 46–55

*Music* EVENING SERVICE IN A, Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924)

*Sit.*



## Second Lesson

The Second Lesson is taken from the Acts of the Apostles.

Then Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. John, however, left them and returned to Jerusalem; but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And on the sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. After the reading of the law and the prophets, the officials of the synagogue sent them a message, saying, 'Brothers, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, give it.' So Paul stood up and with a gesture began to speak:

'You Israelites, and others who fear God, listen. The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. For about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. After he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance for about four hundred and fifty years. After that he gave them judges until the time of the prophet Samuel. Then they asked for a king; and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, who reigned for forty years. When he had removed him, he made David their king. In his testimony about him he said, "I have found David, son of Jesse, to be a man after my heart, who will carry out all my wishes." Of this man's posterity God has brought to Israel a Saviour, Jesus, as he promised; before his coming John had already proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John was finishing his work, he said, "What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but one is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of the sandals on his feet."

'My brothers, you descendants of Abraham's family, and others who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent. Because the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize him or understand the words of the prophets that are read every sabbath, they fulfilled those words by condemning him. Even though they found no cause for a sentence of death, they asked Pilate to have him killed. When they had carried out everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead; and for many days he appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and they are now his witnesses to the people.'

Here ends the Second Lesson.

ACTS 13.13-31

*Stand.*

## Nunc Dimittis

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace:  
according to thy word,  
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation:  
which thou hast prepared before the face of all people,  
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles:  
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.  
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.

*Words* LUKE 2. 29–32

*Music* EVENING SERVICE IN A, Sir Charles Villiers Stanford

*Remain standing and turn to face east.*

## The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God  
**the Father Almighty,**  
**maker of heaven and earth:**  
**and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,**  
**who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,**  
**born of the Virgin Mary,**  
**suffered under Pontius Pilate,**  
**was crucified, dead, and buried;**  
**he descended into hell;**  
**the third day he rose again from the dead,**  
**he ascended into heaven,**  
**and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;**  
**from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**  
I believe in the Holy Ghost;  
the holy catholic Church;  
the communion of saints;  
the forgiveness of sins;  
the resurrection of the body;  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

## The Lesser Litany and Responses

*Cantor* The Lord be with you.

*Choir* And with thy spirit.

*Cantor* Let us pray.

*Kneel or sit.*

*Choir* Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Our Father,  
which art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done,  
in earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive them that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
Amen.

*Cantor* O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.

*Choir* And grant us thy salvation.

*Cantor* O Lord, save the King.

*Choir* And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

*Cantor* Endue thy Ministers with righteousness.

*Choir* And make thy chosen people joyful.

*Cantor* O Lord, save thy people.

*Choir* And bless thine inheritance.

*Cantor* Give peace in our time, O Lord.

*Choir* Because there is none other that fighteth for us,  
but only thou, O God.

*Cantor* O God, make clean our hearts within us.

*Choir* And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

## The Collects

O Lord Jesu Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee: Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed: Give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that by thee we being defended from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Music* Philip Radcliffe

*Sit.*

## Anthem

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing.

Say to them of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God, even God, he will come and save you.

Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

And a highway shall be there: it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it: but the redeemed shall walk there.

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

*Words* ISAIAH 35. 1–2, 4, 6, 8–10 ♦ *Music* Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1810–1876)

*After the Anthem, the Chorister Bishop is processed forward with their attendant Canons, together with the Precentor and the Dean. The congregation remains seated. The Chorister Bishop and their Canons are vested. The Chorister Bishop is clothed with a cloak of office and a mitre, and given a pastoral staff and a pectoral cross.*

## Prayers at the Chorister Bishop Ceremony

*The Bishop of Whitby says:*

Blessed are they who put their trust in the Lord.

Liam, you have been chosen to serve in the office of Chorister Bishop in the Metropolitan Cathedral Church of St Peter in York.  
Will you be faithful and keep the promises made for you in holy baptism?

*The Chorister Bishop replies:*

I will, the Lord being my helper.

*The Bishop of Whitby says:*

While you hold this office, will you pray regularly for the members of this Cathedral Community and for all those who need your prayers?

*The Chorister Bishop replies:*

I will, the Lord being my helper.

*The Bishop of Whitby says:*

Bishop and Canons,  
receive this book of prayers to guide you all in your resolve.

*The Bishop gives the Chorister Bishop and his Canons a book of prayers.*

*The Chorister Bishop leads this collect:*

Bless, O Lord, us thy servants who minister in thy temple.  
Grant that what we sing with our lips we may believe in our hearts,  
and what we believe in our hearts we may show forth in our lives.  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*The Bishop of Whitby gives a blessing to the Chorister Bishop:*

The Lord bless you and keep you:  
The Lord make his face to shine upon you,  
and be gracious unto you:  
The Lord strengthen you to serve him  
all the days of your life.

**Amen.**

*Music is played as the Canons take their seats and the Chorister Bishop moves into position.*

## **Sermon**

The Chorister Bishop

*Stand.*

## Hymn



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. People, look east to see at last<br>hopes fulfilled from ages past:<br>now in the promise of the morning,<br>see, a brighter day is dawning,<br>rich with the visions long foretold,<br>prophets' dreams from days of old.  | 3. Now, with the coming of the light,<br>darkest fears are put to flight;<br>see how the clouds of gloom are clearing,<br>blown aside by hope's appearing.<br>Jesus, the Light of all our days,<br>comes and sets our hearts ablaze. |
| 2. God reaffirms the gracious call:<br>words of welcome meant for all;<br>comfort enough for all our sorrows;<br>justice shaping new tomorrows.<br>Mercy bears fruit in lives restored,<br>freed to praise and serve the Lord. | 4. Born of our race, a child so small —<br>hail the promised Lord of all!<br>Nailed to a cross for our salvation,<br>he shall rule God's new creation.<br>Lift up your eyes, and look again:<br>see, he comes in power to reign!     |

*Words* AM 47, Martin Leckebusch (*b* 1962) © 2000, Kevin Mayhew Limited  
*Tune* BESANÇON CAROL, AM 47, French traditional carol

*Remain standing.*



## The Blessing

*The Dean gives the Blessing:*

May God, who gives patience and encouragement,  
give you a spirit of unity  
to live in harmony as you follow Jesus Christ,  
so that with one voice  
you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;  
and the blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

**Amen.**

*Remain as quiet as possible as the choir processes out and sings the final prayer; this is followed by the organ voluntary which concludes the service.*

## Voluntary

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, BWV 661

J S Bach

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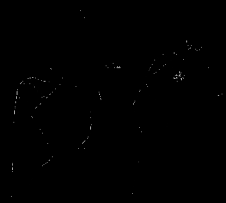
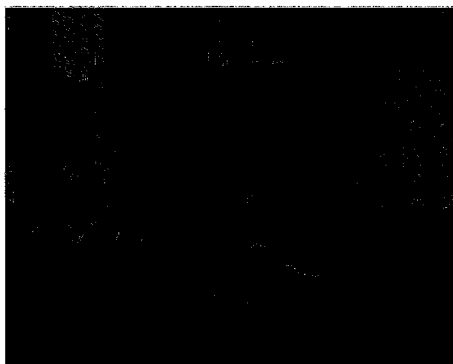


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