



The Cathedral & Metropolitan Church of St Peter in York

ADVENT PROCESSION

The First Sunday of Advent

30th November 2025

at 5.30 pm

Since the Middle Ages, the Church has kept Advent as a season of great solemnity—a time in which to meditate upon the ultimate issues of death, judgement, hell and heaven. Advent, though, is also a time of great rejoicing. For Christ will come, not only as Judge, but also as Saviour, and will usher in the Kingdom of God. Advent provides a vivid preparation for Christmas. Processions from west to east, and the use of lights, speak of the Church's hope in the coming of Christ—the Light of the world—to banish sin and darkness. Antiphons are sung, calling upon God to deliver his people, and readings from the Old Testament point to the fulfilment of God's purposes in Jesus.

This service begins in darkness with the choir and clergy gathering at the west end of the Minster. The Blessing of Light follows and, as the service unfolds, the Light is carried to other parts of the Church as the Procession moves from west to east. The remainder of the service is structured around the great Advent Antiphons, known as the 'Great Os'. These were sung originally as Antiphons to the Magnificat at the Evening Office from 16 to 23 December, and have provided a rich source of devotional imagery in Advent. The readings and music serve to complement the Antiphons, and help us reflect on the theme of the Christ who comes to judge and save his people. The Antiphons are gathered together in the hymn, *O come, O come, Emmanuel*.

The service is sung by the Choir of York Minster and the Great Advent Antiphons are sung by The Ebor Singers, placed at some distance from the Choir of York Minster. The readings are read by those who work, volunteer and worship at the Minster.

Lighting the Candles

Candle-bearers light the candles of the people at the end of each row. It is simplest for the lit candle to be held vertically, with the unlit candle held towards it horizontally. Please pass the light along the row, but not forwards. The use of recording equipment is prohibited. Please make sure that mobile telephones are switched off.

Organ music before the service

Chorale Prelude on 'Rorate Caeli'

Jeanne Demessieux

Evocation of Wells Cathedral: 'O Radix Jesse'

David Bednall

O Antiphons O Clavis David

Cecilia McDowall

O Oriens

O Rex Gentium

O Emmanuel

Prélude, Choral Varié et Fugue sur 'Veni redemptor gentium'

Margreeth de Jong

At 5.15 pm, His Majesty's Deputy Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire is received at the West Door by the Dean, and the Lord Mayor of York and the Sheriff of York are received by the Canon Missioner.

At 5.20 pm, the Dean welcomes the congregation.

At 5.25 pm, remain seated in silence as the procession moves to the west end of the Minster.

The chorale prelude Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland, BWV 659 (Now come, Saviour of the nations) by J S Bach, is played, and the lights in the Minster are extinguished.

The Blessing of the Light

As lights at the Lectern and the choir lights are lit, the congregation stands and faces west.

The choir sings the ADVENT RESPONSORY:

*I look from afar: and lo, I see the power of God coming,
and a cloud covering the whole earth.*

Go ye out to meet him and say:

Tell us, art thou he that should come to reign over thy people Israel?

High and low, rich and poor, one with another,

Go ye out to meet him and say:

Hear, O thou Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep.

Tell us, art thou he that should come?

Stir up thy strength, O Lord, and come to reign over thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

*I look from afar: and lo, I see the power of God coming,
and a cloud covering the whole earth.*

Go ye out to meet him and say:

Tell us, art thou he that should come to reign over thy people Israel?

Words Matins of the First Sunday in Advent in the Sarum Breviary

Music G P da Palestrina (1525–94) adapted by David Willcocks (1919–2015)

A cantor and the choir sing:

You, O Lord are my lamp: you turn our darkness into light.

With you, O Lord, is the well of life: in your light shall we see light.

Your word is a lantern to my feet: and a light upon our path.

The Advent Candle is lit.

Jesus Christ is the Light of the world: a light no darkness can quench.

Words PSALMS 18.28, 36.9, 119.105, and after JOHN 8.12, 1.5

The Dean says:

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe,
eternal creator of day and night.

Now, as darkness has fallen, hear the prayer of your faithful people.

Wash away our transgressions, cleanse us by your refining fire,
and make us temples of your Holy Spirit.

May we live in watchfulness

as we wait for the coming of your Son Jesus Christ,
who shall judge the world and all its works.

Rouse us from the sleep of sin, and make us ready to enter your kingdom,
where songs of praise for ever sound.

For you are the true light, who lightens everyone,
and the new heavens and the new earth join to sing your praise,
now and for evermore.

Amen.

Sit.

The Word of God

First Antiphon: O Sapientia

during which the procession moves to the North Nave Aisle

O WISDOM, which camest out of the mouth of the most High,
and reachest from one end to another,
mightily and sweetly ordering all things:
Come and teach us the way of prudence.

First Reading

The Wisdom of God, the creator of all, dwells with God's people.

'I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,
and covered the earth like a mist.

I dwelt in the highest heavens,
and my throne was in a pillar of cloud.

Alone I compassed the vault of heaven
and traversed the depths of the abyss.

‘Over waves of the sea, over all the earth,
and over every people and nation I have held sway.
Among all these I sought a resting-place;
in whose territory should I abide?

“Then the Creator of all things gave me a command,
and my Creator chose the place for my tent.
He said, “Make your dwelling in Jacob,
and in Israel receive your inheritance.”
Before the ages, in the beginning, he created me,
and for all the ages I shall not cease to be.’

ECCLESIASTICUS 24.3–9

The choir sings:

This is the truth sent from above,
the truth of God, the God of love;
therefore don’t turn me from your door,
but hearken all both rich and poor.

And at that season of the year
our blest Redeemer did appear;
he here did live, and here did preach,
and many thousands he did teach.

Thus he in love to us behaved,
to show us how we must be saved;
and if you want to know the way,
be pleased to hear what he did say.

Words traditional text collected by Ella Mary Leather (1874–1928)

Music Traditional English carol arranged by Philip Moore (*b* 1943)

Master of the Music, York Minster, 1983–2008

composed for the Choir of York Minster in 1986

Second Antiphon: O Adonai

during which the procession moves to the South Nave Aisle

O ADONAI, and leader of the house of Israel,
who appearedst in the bush to Moses in a flame of fire,
and gavest him the Law in Sinai:
Come and deliver us with an outstretched arm.

Second Reading

Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush,
and the giving of the Commandments.

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

EXODUS 3.1–6

The choir sings:

A tender shoot has started up from a root of grace, as ancient seers imparted,
from Jesse's holy race; It blooms without a blight, blooms in the cold bleak
winter, turning our darkness into light.

This shoot, Isaiah taught us from Jesse's root should spring; The Virgin Mary
brought us the branch of which we sing; Our God of endless might, gave her
this child to save us, thus turning darkness into light.

Words Anonymous fifteenth-century German poem versified by Otto Goldschmidt (1829–1907) and translated into English by William Bartholomew (1793–1867)

Music Kerensa Briggs (b 1991)

Third Antiphon: O Radix Jesse

during which the procession moves to the South Transept

O ROOT OF JESSE, which standest for an ensign of the people,
at whom kings shall shut their mouths,
to whom the Gentiles shall seek:
Come and deliver us, and tarry not.

Third Reading

God's spirit will rest upon the one who is to come from the root of Jesse,
that is, the royal house of David.

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.
His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide by what his ears hear;
but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;

On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations
shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

ISAIAH II.I-4a, 10

The choir sings:

Listen, lordings, old and young,
How this rose began to spring;
Such a rose to mine liking
In all this world ne know I non.
Alleluia.

The ferste braunche is full of might,
That sprong on Christmas night,
The sterre shone over Bethlem bright
That is bothe brod and long.
Alleluia.

The aungel came fro hevene tour
To greet Mary with gret honour,
Said she should bear the flour
That should breke the fiendes bond.
Alleluia.

The secunde braunche sprong to helle,
The fiendes power down to felle:
There in might non soul dwelle;
Blyss'd be the time rose sprong!
Alleluia.

The flower sprong in high Bethlem,
That is both bright and schen:
The rose is Mary, hevene queen,
Out of her the blosme sprong.
Alleluia.

The thredde braunche is good and swote,
It sprang to hevene, crop and rote,
There to dwell and ben our bote,
Ev'ry day it schewit in prystes hond.
Alleluia.

Words Anonymous fifteenth-century English text
Music Cecilia McDowall (b 1951)

Fourth Antiphon: O Clavis David

during which the procession moves to the North Transept

O KEY OF DAVID, and Sceptre of the house of Israel; that openest and no man shuttest, and shuttest, and no man openeth: Come and bring the prisoner out of the prison-house, and him that sitteth in darkness and the shadow of death.

Fourth Reading

God's rule will bring peace.

On that day I will call my servant and will clothe him with your robe and bind your sash on him. I will commit your authority to his hand, and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and no one shall shut; he shall shut, and no one shall open. I will fasten him like a peg in a secure place, and he will become a throne of honour to his ancestral house.

ISAIAH 22.20–23

The choir sings:

Hosanna to the son of David.

Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna, thou that sittest in the highest heavens.

Hosanna in excelsis Deo.

Words Matthew 21, Luke 19 ♦ *Music* Thomas Weelkes (c 1574–1623)

Stand.

Hymn



- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Hills of the North, rejoice;
river and mountain-spring,
hark to the advent voice;
valley and lowland, sing.
Christ comes in righteousness and love, he brings salvation from above. | 3. Lands of the East, arise,
he is your brightest morn,
greet him with joyous eyes,
praise shall his path adorn:
your seers have longed to know their Lord;
to you he comes, the final word. |
| 2. Isles of the Southern seas,
sing to the listening earth,
carry on every breeze
hope of a world's new birth:
In Christ shall all be made anew,
his word is sure, his promise true. | 4. Shores of the utmost West,
lands of the setting sun,
welcome the heavenly guest
in whom the dawn has come:
he brings a never-ending light
who triumphed o'er our darkest night. |
| 5. Shout, as you journey home,
songs be in every mouth,
lo, from the North they come,
from East and West and South:
in Jesus all shall find their rest,
in him the universe be blest. | |

Words AM 39, editors of *English Praise* (1975) based on Charles Ernest Oakley (1832–1865)
Tune LITTLE CORNARD, AM 39, Martin Shaw (1875–1958)

Sit.

Fifth Antiphon: O Oriens

during which the procession moves to the Centre of the Nave

O DAYSPRING, brightness of light everlasting,
and sun of righteousness:
Come and enlighten him that sitteth in darkness
and the shadow of death.

Fifth Reading

The preaching of John the Baptist and the coming of Christ are foretold.

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years. Then I will draw near to you for judgement; I will be swift to bear witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts. For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, have not perished.

MALACHI 3.1–6

The choir sings:

People look East. The time is near
of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able,
trim the hearth and set the table.
People look East, and sing today:
Love the Guest is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,
one more seed is planted there:
give up your strength the seed to nourish,
that in course the flower may flourish.
People look East, and sing today:
Love the Rose is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim
one more light the bowl shall brim,
shining beyond the frosty weather,
bright as sun and moon together.
People look East, and sing today:
Love the Star is on the way.

Angels, announce to man and beast
Him who cometh from the East.
Set every peak and valley humming
with the word, the Lord is coming.
People look East, and sing today:
Love the Lord is on the way.

Words Eleanor Farjeon (1881–1965)

Music Besançon carol arranged by June Nixon (*b* 1942)

Sixth Antiphon: O Rex Gentium

during which the procession moves to the Nave Sanctuary

O KING OF THE NATIONS, and their desire;
the Cornerstone, who makes both one:
Come and save mankind,
whom thou formest of clay.

Sixth Reading

All the nations will come to the light of Christ.

Alas! that day is so great
there is none like it;
it is a time of distress for Jacob;
yet he shall be rescued from it.

On that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will break the yoke from off his neck, and I will burst his bonds, and strangers shall no more make a servant of him. But they shall serve the Lord their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them. But as for you, have no fear, my servant Jacob, says the Lord, and do not be dismayed, O Israel; for I am going to save you from far away, and your offspring from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return and have quiet and ease, and no one shall make him afraid. For I am with you, says the Lord, to save you.

JEREMIAH 30.7–11a

Stand.

Hymn



1. Hark! a herald voice is calling:
 'Christ is nigh,' it seems to say;
'Cast away the dreams of darkness,
 O ye children of the day!'
2. Startled at the solemn warning,
 let the earth-bound soul arise;
Christ, her Sun, all sloth dispelling,
 shines upon the morning skies.
3. Lo! the Lamb, so long expected,
 comes with pardon down from heaven;
let us haste, with tears of sorrow,
 one and all to be forgiven;
4. So when next he comes in glory,
 and earth's final hour draws near,
may he then as our defender
 on the clouds of heaven appear.
5. Honour, glory, virtue, merit,
 to the Father and the Son,
with the co-eternal Spirit,
 while unending ages run.

Words NEH 5, Latin, translated into English by Edward Caswall (1814–1878)

Tune MERTON, NEH 5, William Henry Monk (1823–1889)

Prayers

led by the Reverend Canon Maggie McLean, Missioner

Watchful at all times,
let us pray for strength to stand with confidence
before our Maker and Redeemer.

Sit or kneel.

That God may bring in his kingdom
with justice and mercy,
let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That God may establish among the nations
his sceptre of righteousness,
let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That we may seek Christ in the Scriptures
and recognise him in the breaking of bread,
let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That God may bind up the brokenhearted,
restore the sick and raise up all who have fallen,
let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That the light of God's coming may dawn
on all who live in darkness and the shadow of death,
let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That, with all the saints in light,
we may shine forth as lights for the world,
let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

We commend ourselves and all for whom we pray
to the mercy and protection of God, saying:

**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.**

The choir sings:

Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down
righteousness. Let the earth be fruitful, and bring forth a Saviour.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people; my salvation shall not tarry:
I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions:
Fear not, for I will save thee:
for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Redeemer.
Drop down, ye heavens...

Words Advent Prose

Music Judith Weir (*b* 1954)

Seventh Antiphon: O Emmanuel

O EMMANUEL, our King and Lawgiver,
the Desire of all nations, and their Salvation:
Come and save us,
O Lord our God.

Stand.

Hymn



1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here,
until the Son of God appear:

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

2. O come, thou Rod of Jesse, free
thine own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell thy people save,
and give them victory o'er the grave:

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

3. O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by thine advent here;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight:

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

4. O come, thou Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery:

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

5. O come, O come, thou Lord of Might,
who to thy tribes, on Sinai's height,
in ancient times didst give the law
in cloud and majesty and awe:

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

Words AM 45, the Reverend John Mason Neale (1818–1866)
based on the Latin Advent antiphons

Tune VENI EMMANUEL, AM 45, French melody adapted by Thomas Helmore (1811–1890)

Sit.

Seventh Reading

The coming of Emmanuel, God with us, is foretold.

The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.'

ISAIAH 7.10–15

The choir sings:

O thou the central orb of righteous love,
pure beam of the most high, eternal light
of this our wintry world, thy radiance bright
awakes new joy in faith, hope soars above.

Come, quickly come, and let thy glory shine,
gilding our darksome heaven with rays divine;
thy saints with holy lustre round thee move,
as stars about thy throne, set in the height
of God's ordaining counsel, as thy sight
gives measured grace to each, thy power to prove.

Let thy bright beams disperse the gloom of sin,
our nature all shall feel eternal day,
in fellowship with thee, transforming clay
to souls erewhile unclean, now pure within. Amen.

Words Henry Ramsden Bramley (1833–1917)

Music Charles Wood (1866–1926)

Stand.

The Dismissal

The Advent Collect

The Archbishop says:

Let us pray.

Silence is kept.

Almighty God,
give us grace to cast away the works of darkness
and put on the armour of light,
now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;
that on the last day,
when he shall come again in his glorious majesty
to judge the living and the dead,
we may rise to the life immortal;
through him who is alive and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Blessing

The Archbishop says:

We wait for your loving-kindness, O God,
in the midst of your temple.

The glory of the Lord shall be revealed
and all flesh shall see it together.

Show us your mercy, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.

May Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
fill you with his light,
scatter the darkness from your path,
gladden your eyes, warm your heart,
and guide your feet into the way of peace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Hymn

during which the procession moves from the Sanctuary



1. Lo, he comes with clouds descending,
once for favoured sinners slain;
thousand thousand saints attending
swell the triumph of his train:
Alleluya! Alleluya!
Alleluya!
God appears, on earth to reign.
2. Every eye shall now behold him
robed in dreadful majesty;
those who set at nought and sold him,
pierced and nailed him to the tree,
deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
deeply wailing,
shall the true Messiah see.
3. Those dear tokens of his passion
still his dazzling body bears,
cause of endless exultation
to his ransomed worshippers:
with what rapture, with what rapture,
with what rapture,
gaze we on those glorious scars!
4. Yea, Amen! let all adore thee,
high on thine eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and glory;
claim the kingdom for thine own:
O come quickly! O come quickly!
O come quickly!
Alleluya! Come, Lord, come!

Words NEH 9, Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

Tune HELMSLEY, NEH 9, melody attributed to Thomas Olivers (1725–1799) in

Select Hymns with Tunes Annexed (second edition, 1765) edited by John Wesley (1703–1791)

Organ Voluntaries

Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 645

Johann Sebastian Bach

Toccata on 'Veni Emmanuel'

Andrew Carter

During which the Dean escorts His Majesty's Deputy Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire and the Lord Mayor of York and Sheriff of York to the West Door.

There is a retiring collection which will be given to the Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association (JMECA) for their work in Gaza.

Information about the collection

After two years of horrific violence, at the time that this order of service went to print, a fragile ceasefire is enduring in Gaza, in which context the ministry of the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza City is profoundly worthy of our prayers and our support. It is the only hospital that has operated nearly continuously in Gaza since the violence flared up in October, 2023, and is run by the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem, under the leadership of Archbishop Hosam Naoum.

With more aid being able to enter Gaza since the implementation of the ceasefire, the need for medical supplies (and trained doctors and nurses) is now one which can be met, and financial support for this remarkable institution is vital.

The hospital is an icon of the Advent hope being celebrated tonight, that brings a glimmer of light in a very dark place. That is why the collection taken at this service will go to the Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association (JMECA), the leading Anglican charity supporting the Church throughout the Middle East. Anything you can give would be greatly appreciated.

The Very Reverend Dominic Barrington, Dean of York

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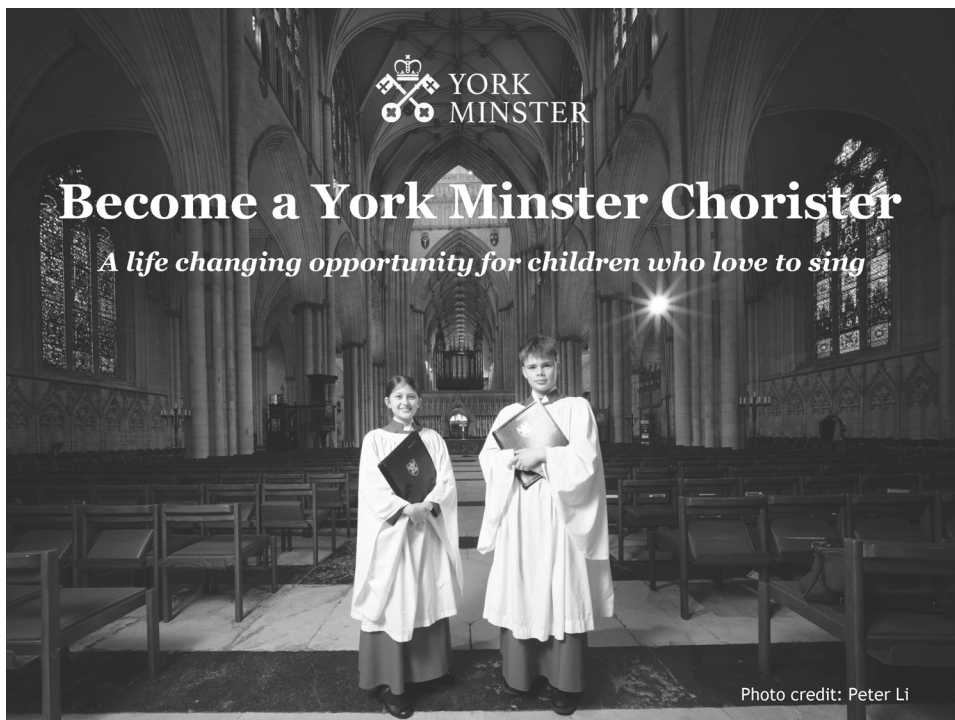


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