



The Cathedral & Metropolitan Church of St Peter in York

SOLEMN EVENSONG

*commemorating the 800th Anniversary
of the Canonisation of William of York*

**Wednesday 18th March 2026
at 5.30 pm**

Welcome

A warm welcome to York Minster and to this service of Solemn Evensong to commemorate the 800th Anniversary of the Canonisation of William of York.

Born in Winchester, William FitzHerbert became Treasurer of York Minster in 1109. After decades of service, he was made Archbishop of York in 1141. However, against the backdrop of broader political and religious disputes, William's appointment was supported by some and challenged by others. He was removed from office six years later. In 1153, three of William's greatest opponents died and he was reappointed Archbishop. As crowds gathered to welcome William back to York, Ouse Bridge collapsed. William prayed for the victims' safety and no one drowned. This was later considered his first miracle. Just three weeks later, William fell ill after celebrating Mass. He died on 8th June 1154. As rumours of poisoning circulated, William was buried in the Cathedral to which he had devoted most of his adult life. Within a few decades of William's death, there were accounts of miracles happening at his tomb. People travelled from across Yorkshire seeking help and healing. He was canonised on this day in 1226 by Pope Honourius III. As we give thanks for his life and witness, we pray for the church in Yorkshire and for those who today journey to this sacred place in search of solace, hope, inspiration and healing.

Information about this Service



- ◆ For licensing and safeguarding reasons, please do not record this service on your own devices.
- ◆ The Chapter of York Minster is committed to the safeguarding and protection of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. If you therefore have any concerns about the welfare of a child, a young person or a vulnerable adult, or about the behaviour of someone in relation to safeguarding, please do not hesitate to contact our Safeguarding Officer, Caroline Wood: Tel: 01904 559542, Mobile: 07843 339980, Email: carolinew@yorkminster.org. If you believe someone is at immediate risk of harm, please call the emergency services on 999.
- ◆ 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 hymns.
- ◆ 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 received during this service will be given to charities York Minster supports – HOPE Africa, a charity initiated by our companion link dioceses in SA; Mustard Seed, a York Diocese organisation which works in the most deprived areas of our diocese; and a number of charities who work locally with homeless people in the City of York. Thank you for all you are able to give.
- ◆ Donations can be made via the following QR code:



At 5.20 pm, the Lord Mayor of York and Lady Mayoress are received at the Great West Door by the Dean.

At 5.25 pm, the Dean welcomes the Congregation.

Order of Service

Stand.

Processional Hymn



1. Rejoice in God's saints, today and all days!
A world without saints forgets how to praise.
Their faith in acquiring the habit of prayer,
their depth of adoring, Lord, help us to share.
2. Some march with events to turn them God's way;
some need to withdraw, the better to pray;
some carry the gospel through fire and through flood:
our world is their parish: their purpose is God.
3. Rejoice in those saints, unpraised and unknown,
who bear someone's cross, or shoulder their own:
they shame our complaining, our comforts, our cares:
what patience in caring, what courage, is theirs!
4. Rejoice in God's saints, today and all days!
A world without saints forgets how to praise.
In loving, in living, they prove it is true:
the way of self-giving, Lord, leads us to you.

Words AM 308, Fred Pratt Green (1903–2000)

© 1973, 1980, Stainer & Bell Ltd

Tune HANOVER, AM 308, melody by William Croft (1678–1727)

in *A Supplement to the New Version of the Psalms* (1708)

Bidding Prayer

led by the Dean

Dear friends, we gather together in this Cathedral Church, on the eight-hundredth anniversary of the Canonisation of Saint William of York, to give thanks to God for his service and witness, and for the inspiration, hope and encouragement his life has given people through the ages.

We pray for those who today make pilgrimage to his resting place in search of of solace, hope, inspiration and healing, for unity within the Body of Christ, and for the renewal of God's Church.

We pray too for the City of York for whom William is Patron, for all who faithfully serve those who live, work and visit here, for those of our community in deepest need, and for a strengthening of our common life together.

All these our prayers and thanksgivings let us offer to God in the words our Saviour Jesus Christ commanded and taught us, praying:

**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.**

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.

Praise ye the Lord.

Music William Byrd (c 1540–1623)

Sit for the singing of the psalm but stand for the Gloria.

Psalmody

I will always give thanks unto the Lord ♦
his praise shall ever be in my mouth.

My soul shall make her boast in the Lord ♦
the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

O praise the Lord with me ♦
and let us magnify his Name together.

I sought the Lord, and he heard me ♦
yea, he delivered me out of all my fear.

They had an eye unto him, and were lightened ♦
and their faces were not ashamed.

Lo, the poor crieth, and the Lord heareth him ♦
yea, and saveth him out of all his troubles.

The angel of the Lord tarrieth round about them that fear him ♦
and delivereth them.

O taste, and see, how gracious the Lord is ♦
blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

O fear the Lord, ye that are his saints ♦
for they that fear him lack nothing.

The lions do lack, and suffer hunger ♦
but they who seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good.

Come, ye children, and hearken unto me ♦
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
What man is he that lusteth to live ♦
and would fain see good days?
Keep thy tongue from evil ♦
and thy lips, that they speak no guile.
Eschew evil, and do good ♦
seek peace, and ensue it.
The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous ♦
and his ears are open unto their prayers.
The countenance of the Lord is against them that do evil ♦
to root out the remembrance of them from the earth.
The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth them ♦
and delivereth them out of all their troubles.
The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart ♦
and will save such as be of an humble spirit.
Great are the troubles of the righteous ♦
but the Lord delivereth him out of all.
He keepeth all his bones ♦
so that not one of them is broken.
But misfortune shall slay the ungodly ♦
and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.
The Lord delivereth the souls of his servants ♦
and all they that put their trust in him shall not be destitute.

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 34

Sit.

First Lesson

read by Dr Helen Rawson, Director of Collections,
Cultural Heritage and Learning, York Minster

The First Lesson is taken from the Wisdom of Solomon.

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,
and no torment will ever touch them.

In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died,
and their departure was thought to be a disaster,
and their going from us to be their destruction;
but they are at peace.

For though in the sight of others they were punished,
their hope is full of immortality.

Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good,
because God tested them and found them worthy of himself;
like gold in the furnace he tried them,
and like a sacrificial burnt-offering he accepted them.

In the time of their visitation they will shine forth,
and will run like sparks through the stubble.

They will govern nations and rule over peoples,
and the Lord will reign over them for ever.

Those who trust in him will understand truth,
and the faithful will abide with him in love,
because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones,
and he watches over his elect.

Here ends the First Lesson.

WISDOM 3.1–9

Stand.

Magnificat

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 THE SECOND SERVICE, Orlando Gibbons (1583–1625)

Sit.

Second Lesson

read by the Right Reverend Marcus Stock, Roman Catholic Bishop of Leeds

The Second Lesson is taken from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance towards redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Here ends the Second Lesson.

EPHESIANS I. II—23

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 THE SECOND SERVICE, Orlando Gibbons

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

Almighty God, by whose grace and power thy servant William patiently endured tribulation and never ceased to love his enemies: strengthen us with thy grace, that we may meet with faith the troubles of this earthly life and bear loving witness to the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, In the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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 William Byrd

Sit.

Anthem

Give us the wings of faith to rise
within the veil, and see
the saints above, how great their joys,
how bright their glories be.

We ask them whence their victory came: They marked the footsteps that he trod,
they, with one united breath, his zeal inspired their breast,
ascribe the conquest to the Lamb, and, following their incarnate God,
their triumph to his death. they reached the promised rest.

Words Isaac Watts (1674–1748)

Music Sir Ernest Bullock (1890–1979)

Sermon

The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Stephen Cottrell,
Lord Archbishop of York, Primate of England and Metropolitan

Stand.

Hymn



1. For all thy saints, O Lord,
 who strove in thee to live,
who followed thee, obeyed, adored,
 our grateful hymn receive.
2. For all thy saints, O Lord,
 who strove in thee to die,
and counted thee their great reward,
 accept our thankful cry.
3. O Lord, thy name we bless,
 and humbly pray that we
may follow them in holiness
 who lived and died in thee.
4. Thine earthly members fit
 to join thy saints above,
in one communion ever knit,
 one fellowship of love.
5. All praise to thee, O Lord,
 the Father and the Son
and Holy Spirit, God adored
 while endless ages run.

Words NEH 224, Richard Mant (1776–1848)

Tune MOUNT EPHRAIM, NEH 224, Benjamin Milgrove (1713–1810)

Sit or kneel.

Litany of Prayer and Thanksgiving

led by the Archbishop and the Right Reverend Marcus Stock

Let us give thanks for the life and witness of William of York and let us pray for the Church in our day, for the city and people of York and for a world transformed by the redeeming love of God.

For William's faithfulness to the call of God in times of joy and in times of trial.

Lord accept our thanks and praise.

For a life that inspires sinners to be saints.

Lord accept our thanks and praise.

For his care of people, especially the poor and the outcast.

Lord accept our thanks and praise.

For the life of this City and for the many communities for whom it is home.

Lord accept our thanks and praise.

For the mission of the Church today, that in faithful witness it may proclaim the gospel of reconciliation to the ends of the earth.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the unity of the Church, that there may be one flock and one Shepherd,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For those in deepest need and for all who come to their aid and care for them.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For an end to violence and conflict wherever it is found
and for the grace to live lovingly with all.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Remembering the Blessed Virgin Mary, Peter the Apostle, William of York
and all who have gone before us in faith,
and in communion with all the saints,
we commit ourselves, one another,
and our whole life to Christ our God.

To you O Lord.

Stand.

Hymn



1. Thanks be to God for his saints of each past generation,
 one with us still in one body, one great congregation;
with them proclaim
 Jesus for ever the same,
Author of life and salvation.

2. Thanks be to God for his blessings which daily surround us;
 glory to Christ, the Redeemer who sought us and found us,
who from the grave
 rose, the almighty to save,
breaking the fetters that bound us.

3. Thanks be to God for the years that are yet in his keeping,
 trusting each day to the care of a Father unsleeping,
on to the end,
 Christ our companion and friend,
joy at the last for our weeping.

4. Thanks be to God who has called us and daily defends us,
 who with the Son and the Spirit unchanging befriends us;
now in that name,
 Jesus for ever the same,
forth to his service he sends us.

Words AM 310, Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926–2024)

© administered by Oxford University Press in Europe (including UK and Ireland)

Tune LOBE DEN HERREN, AM 310, Seventeenth-century German melody

The Blessing

given by Archbishop

God give you grace to share the inheritance
of his saints in glory;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

Voluntary

during which the Dean escorts the Lord Mayor of York and the Lady Mayoress to the Great West Door.

Toccata on 'Hanover'

Kenneth Leighton (1929–1988)

There will be an opportunity to make a donation to support the music, ministry and mission of York Minster as you leave.

If you worship regularly at York Minster, you are already a member of our community. Please help us know who you are by joining the Community Roll and by subscribing to our weekly notice sheet. Take a look online at yorkminster.org/get-involved/community or ask a steward or a member of the clergy for more information.



Some of the material in this Order of Service is reproduced from *The Book of Common Prayer*, the rights in which are vested in the Crown. It is reproduced by permission of the Crown's Patentee, Cambridge University Press. The texts of the Scripture readings are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (Anglicized edition), copyright © 1989, 1994 the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. The words of copyright hymns and songs are reproduced under CCL 270217. Copyright music is reproduced under MRL 941175. This compilation is copyright © 2026 The Chapter of York. The Chapter of York (York Minster) is a Registered Charity (Number 1201499).