



CHESTER
CATHEDRAL



**Service to give thanks
for those engaged in
safeguarding work in
the diocese**

**23rd June 2026
7.00pm**

**Preacher:
The Rt Revd Dr Mark Tanner,
Bishop of Chester**

WELCOME

We welcome you to Chester Cathedral!
It is a place where the mission of the church to proclaim God's love is central, and your welcome presence here for worship helps to strengthen this vital act of witness.

We are a paperless Cathedral and are working environmentally to save paper. The service can be downloaded to your device by visiting [Services - Chester Cathedral](#). Hymns, readings and responses will be presented on the screens.

The organ is played by Philip Rushforth, Organist and Master of the Choristers.

If you have been affected by any issues raised in this service, there will be people available to speak to afterwards, or you can contact The **Safe Spaces Helpline**, which provides free, independent and confidential support to anyone who has been abused by someone in the Church.

Contact 0300 303 1056

<https://safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk/>

THE GATHERING

Please stand, if able, to sing the hymn, during which the procession enters.

Opening Hymn

Angel-voices ever singing
round thy throne of light,
angel-harps, for ever ringing,
rest not day nor night;
thousands only live to bless thee
and confess thee Lord of might.

Thou who art beyond the farthest
mortal eye can see,
can it be that thou regardest
our poor hymnody?
Can we know that thou art near us,
and wilt hear us? Yea, we can.

For we know that thou rejoicest
o'er each work of thine;
thou didst ears and hands and voices
for thy praise design;
craftsman's art and music's measure
for thy pleasure all combine.

In thy house, great God, we offer
of thine own to thee;
and for thine acceptance proffer
all unworthily
hearts and minds and hands and voices
in our choicest psalmody.

Honour, glory, might and merit
thine shall ever be,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
blessed Trinity.
Of the best that thou hast given
earth and heaven render thee.

Francis Pott 1832-1909

*ANGEL VOICES
E.G. Monk 1819-1900*

Greeting

The Bishop of Birkenhead says

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
and also with you.

There are varieties of gifts,
but the same Spirit.
There are varieties of service,
but the same Lord.

There are different kinds of working,
but the same God is at work in all.

Peace be with you.
And also with you.

We gather in the name of Christ to...

... give thanks for the safeguarding work in
our worshipping communities, schools, and
chaplancies

... acknowledge our safeguarding failings

... repent the times we have failed to hear
the voices of victims and survivors of abuse

... recommit ourselves to this vital part of
the mission of the Church

*Please be seated. Informal words of welcome
are offered.*

Confession

The Dean of Chester says

Human sin disfigures the whole creation,
which groans with eager longing
for God's redemption.

We confess our sin in penitence and faith.

cf Romans 8.22,23

You made your church
to be a place of safety and refuge,
yet people have been hurt and harmed.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

You call your church be a voice
for the voiceless and the oppressed,
yet we have remained silent
and not spoken out about injustice.
Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

You send your church
to be an example of love to the world,
yet we have been selfish and not shown
love to those who are hurting.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Absolution

The Bishop of Chester says

May the Father of all mercies
cleanse you from your sins,
and restore you in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Prayer

The Bishop of Chester says

Compassionate God,
our refuge and strength,
defender of the weak,
the weary, and the oppressed,
we come to you
with humble and thankful hearts.
As your children, you call us to be like you,
to speak up for the rights of all
who are vulnerable.
Help us as we strive
to be a place of safety for all.
May we listen to those who are hurting,
learn from Jesus' example,
and love one another as you first loved us.
Amen.

Bible Reading

*Read by His Honour Roger Dutton, Chair of
Cathedral Safeguarding Advisory Group*

There was a certain man of Zorah, of the tribe of the Danites, whose name was Manoah. His wife was barren, having borne no children.

And the angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, 'Although you are barren, having borne no children, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now be careful not to drink wine or strong drink, or to eat anything unclean, for you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor is to come on his head, for the boy shall be a nazirite to God from birth. It is he who shall begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines.'

Then the woman came and told her husband, 'A man of God came to me, and his appearance was like that of an angel of God, most awe-inspiring; I did not ask him where he came from, and he did not tell me his name; but he said to me, "You shall conceive and bear a son. So then drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, for the boy shall be a nazirite to God from birth to the day of his death."' "

The woman bore a son, and named him Samson. The boy grew, and the Lord blessed him. The spirit of the Lord began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Judges 13:2-7, 24-end

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

Please stand, if you're able, to sing.

May this place be one of nurture
where we all may come to know
how your endless love sustains us
as we live and move and grow.

May we work to build your kingdom
full of truth and light and grace,
living life in all its fullness
held in one divine embrace.

From our negligence and failures
you have called us to repent,
drawing energy for action
from the voices of lament.

As the secret hurts long hidden
may at last be brought to light,
may the truth unlock the freedom
that is every person's right.

For you hold the broken hearted
till they learn to live again,
and your justice stands like mountains,
while your mercy falls like rain
when the smallest child is valued,
and the strong empower the weak,
when each human life is hallowed
and the unheard voices speak:

So with humble thanks we praise you
and we lift to you in prayer
all the people you are calling
to this ministry of care.

Give us wisdom, grace and courage,
holding fast to all that's good,
seeing Christ in one another
we will love and serve our Lord.

Ally Barrett b. 1975

CORVEDALE

Maurice Bevan 1921-2006

Please sit.

Bible Reading

*Read by Xyna Prasad, member of Diocesan
Safeguarding Executive Group*

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because

Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. Now at the time of the incense-offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.'

Zechariah said to the angel, 'How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.' The angel replied, 'I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.'

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, 'This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favourably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.'

Luke 1:5-25

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Address

The Rt Revd Dr Mark Tanner,
Bishop of Chester

Hymn

Please stand, if you're able, to sing

Brother, sister let me serve you.
Let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've
seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister let me serve you.
Let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

Richard A.M. Gillard b.1953

THE SERVANT SONG

Richard A.M. Gillard

Thanksgiving

*A time of thanksgiving for those who have
made a particular contribution to the work of
safeguarding in this diocese.*

At the end, The Bishop of Birkenhead says

For those who have been the champions
of children, young people and vulnerable
adults, let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

For those who have been a voice
for the voiceless and the silenced,
let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

For those who have shown safeguarding to be at the heart of the gospel, let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Intercessions

During our time of prayer, while the organ plays, you are invited to light a candle for one person for whom you want to pray within your safeguarding role. These will represent the prayers of us all, shining with hope.

At the end, The Dean of Chester says:

Heavenly Father,
give us the gift of anger, that we may rage against injustice and harm;
give us the gift of discontent with all systems that exploit your children;
give us the gift of courage,
that we may fearlessly confront abuse;
give us the gift of hope,
that we may offer to those who are abused a place to dare to dream again;
give us the gift of truth, that all may see themselves as your beloved.

Amen.

The Revd Lizzie Green (used with permission)

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray for the coming of God's kingdom as our Saviour 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 them
that 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.**

Hymn

Please stand, if you are able, to sing.

Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee.
Take my moments and my days;
let them flow in endless praise.

Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love.

Take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice and let me sing
always, only, for my King.

Take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee.

Take my silver and my gold;
not a mite would I withhold.

Take my intellect and use
every power as thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine.

Take my heart it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure store.

Take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.

Frances Ridley Havergal 1836-79 *NOTTINGHAM*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart 1756-1791

The Commissioning

*All those engaged in safeguarding work stand.
The Bishop says*

As the people of God, we are called to follow in the way of Christ, to walk humbly and love mercy, and to speak up about injustice so that the church may be a place of safety and refuge for all. In acknowledging the role we all have in making our churches safer places, let us join together and pledge our commitment before almighty God:

Will you treat everyone with respect and dignity and seek to never knowingly hurt or harm others by what you do, or say?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you actively support the work of safeguarding in this church?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you support all those who have safeguarding responsibilities?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you use your voice to speak up about the injustice of abuse?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you make space to listen to those who have been hurt and harmed in our community?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you commit to never knowingly hide or keep quiet about abuse that you know of or suspect?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you call on the wider church to take steps towards change in this area?

With the help of God, I will.

May the God in whom we trust, strengthen this commitment within us that we may truly be a place of safety and refuge for all.

Amen.

The Blessing

Please remain standing. The Bishop of Chester says

May the Father, from whom every family in earth and heaven receives its name, strengthen you with his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith,

and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.
Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ, Amen.

Organ Voluntary

Voluntary on the Old 100th

Henry Purcell 1659-95

*Please do stay for refreshments in the South
Transept following this service.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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