

Warm welcome for our new Archbishop

WORSHIPPERS in our churches have welcomed the news that the Rt Rev Dame Sarah Mullally is to be the next Archbishop of Canterbury.

Bishop Sarah will be the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury – the first woman to ever hold the role. She will be installed in a service at Canterbury Cathedral on March 25 next year.

Sarah Mullally has been the Bishop of London since 2018, the first woman appointed to that role, and before that was Bishop of Crediton in the Diocese of Exeter.

Prior to her ordination in 2001, she was the government's Chief Nursing Officer for England – the youngest person ever to be appointed to that role at the age of 37 – having previously specialised as a cancer nurse.

Our bishop, the Rt Rev Jonathan Frost, was one of those who welcomed the news.

He said: "I am delighted by the announcement that Bishop Sarah has been nominated as the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury. She will bring a deep prayerfulness, love for Jesus Christ, a servant heart and a rich pastoral wisdom to her leadership of the Church of England and within the Anglican Communion.

"I recognise, with thanksgiving, that this is also an historic, landmark, day for women within the Church and our society.

"I believe Bishop Sarah is very well placed to lead the Church



Bishop Sarah speaks in Canterbury Cathedral after she was announced as the new Archbishop of Canterbury

as together, with our ecumenical partners, we seek to serve Jesus Christ and seek God's Kingdom of justice, compassion and peace. Please join with me in praying for Bishop Sarah, for her husband Eamonn and for their family at this time of transition."

'I remain rooted in my first calling - to follow Christ and make him known.'

The vicar of Hope Church, Whiteley, the Rev Amy Adeniran, said: "While I was training for ordination, the vote for the Church to have women bishops failed to get through General Synod, which was disappointing. Yet here we are, 13 years later, with a female

Archbishop, which shows the strides that we have made since then.

"It reminds me of the faithful people – men and women – who have campaigned for us to get to this stage. And of course we do still have some way to go before we can genuinely say that everyone's ministry is accepted across the whole Church of England, regardless of gender."

The most senior bishop in the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury's ministry combines many roles, including serving as the diocesan bishop of the Diocese of Canterbury, Primate of All England and Metropolitan, as well as primus inter pares – or first among equals – of the Primates of the global Anglican Communion, which consists of around 85 million people, across 165 countries.

In the House of Lords, the Archbishop of Canterbury is one of 26 bishops who comprise the Lords Spiritual.

Bishop Sarah said: "As I respond to the call of Christ to this new ministry, I do so in the same spirit of service to God and to others that has motivated me since I first came to faith as a teenager.

"At every stage of that journey, through my nursing career and Christian ministry, I have learned to listen deeply – to people and to God's gentle prompting – to seek to bring people together to find hope and healing.

"Washing feet has shaped my Christian vocation as a nurse, then a priest, then a bishop. In the apparent chaos which surrounds us, in the midst of such profound global uncertainty, the possibility of healing lies in acts of kindness and love.

"With humility and grace, we uphold and support those in need of our help. We do this to the best of our ability, in small ways and big, according to our own very particular gifts. That too is the service which I offer to the Church today.

"I remain rooted in my first calling, to follow Christ, to know him, and to make him known in the world."

Bishop Sarah is currently known as Archbishop of Canterbury-designate. The College of Canons of Canterbury Cathedral will be asked to vote her into the role, after which she will become the Archbishop of Canterbury-elect.

A legal ceremony, known as the confirmation of election, will take place at St Paul's Cathedral on January 28, during which the archbishop-elect legally becomes Archbishop of Canterbury – ahead of the formal installation service.

That installation of Bishop



Our new Archbishop-designate enters Canterbury Cathedral with Alanis, a pupil at The Archbishop's School who would introduce her

REACTIONS TO OUR NEW ARCHBISHOP

"I am delighted that Bishop Sarah has been appointed, and I believe it was more about her gifts and skills than her gender. It is an encouragement for women, and I hope it helps to support women in the wider Anglican Communion, particularly where women's ministry is still restricted and not valued in the same way." **Canon Karina Green, rector, St Alban's Church, West Leigh**

"What pleases me most is her NHS background as – whatever people say – it's a fine organisation to work for. And to have made it to the very top of two different professions is pretty impressive." **Debbie Sutton, lay chair, Portsmouth Diocesan Synod**

"I was overjoyed when I heard that Sarah Mullally had been nominated to be the next Archbishop of Canterbury. I believe this deeply Christian lady brings a whole wealth of knowledge and experience she has gained as one of the senior

bishops of the Church of England, supplemented by her experience as a the youngest Chief Nursing Officer in the NHS. Many blessing and prayers for her as she faces this challenging role." **Stuart Forster, chair, Diocesan Board of Patronage**

"It lifted my heart to hear the news, and it changed how I feel about the Church of England. I thought it was a vain hope that it would be a woman. But I think she will make a real difference." **The Rev Wendy May Jacobs, associate priest, St Mary's, Portsea**

"I think it's an amazing appointment and shows how the Church is changing. Without the ministry of women over the past 40 years, the Church would be a very different place. I think the variety of people who come forward has brought an openness that wasn't there before." **Sarah McCarthy-Fry, St Saviour's, Shanklin, and former Portsmouth North MP**

Sarah as the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury, will take place at Canterbury Cathedral on Wednesday 25 March 2026, the Feast of the Annunciation.

Historically known as an enthronement, the Installation marks the symbolic start of the Archbishop of Canterbury's public ministry in the Church of England and across the Anglican Communion.

Archbishop Sarah will be installed on the cathedral chair as the Diocesan Bishop of the See of Canterbury, the oldest diocese in the English church.

Following this, she will be installed on the Chair of St Augustine, as Primate of All England, which also symbolises her ministry in the Anglican Communion. Find out more on www.archbishopofcanterbury.org