



The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE to become 106th Archbishop of Canterbury

His Majesty The King has approved the nomination of the Bishop of London, the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally, as the next Archbishop of Canterbury, Downing Street has announced.

The 106th Archbishop of Canterbury since Saint Augustine arrived in Kent from Rome in 597, Bishop Sarah will be the first woman to hold the office.

She will be installed in a service at Canterbury Cathedral in March 2026.

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. Bishop Sarah has described nursing as "an opportunity to reflect the love of God".

The Crown Nominations Commission (CNC) for Canterbury nominated Bishop Sarah following a process of public consultation and prayerful discernment that began in February this year. The Canterbury CNC was made up of representatives from across the Church of England, global Anglican Communion and the Diocese of Canterbury.

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.

“I want, very simply, to encourage the Church to continue to grow in confidence in the Gospel, to speak of the love that we find in Jesus Christ and for it to shape our actions.

“And I look forward to sharing this journey of faith with the millions of people serving God and their communities in parishes all over the country and across the global Anglican Communion.

“I know this is a huge responsibility but I approach it with a sense of peace and trust in God to carry me as He always has.”

Lord Evans, Chair of the Crown Nominations Commission for Canterbury, said: “It has been a great privilege to have chaired the Crown Nominations Commission as it sought to discern who God is calling to lead the Church of England and Anglican Communion as Archbishop of Canterbury.

“That discernment began with the public consultation, which heard the voices of thousands of people as they expressed their hopes for this nomination, and continued all the way through to the Commission’s final meeting.

“I would like to thank all those who took part in this process, particularly those who took time to share their views in the consultation and the members of the Commission who worked so diligently over several months, ably assisted by the Appointments Secretaries and by the Appointments and Vocations team at Lambeth Palace.

“I shall be praying for Bishop Sarah as she prepares to take up this new ministry in the coming months.”

Bishop Anthony Poggo, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, said: “I welcome and commend the nomination of Bishop Sarah as the next Archbishop of Canterbury and invite the churches of the global Anglican Communion to pray for her as she prepares to take up this important ministry.

“May God grant her wisdom and discernment, as she seeks to listen to Member churches, encourage mutual support, and foster unity.

“The Anglican Communion Office is fully committed to supporting her ministry as she works with other Provinces and the Instruments of the Anglican Communion.

“Let us pray that God will pour out His Spirit on the Anglican Communion to boldly share Christ's transformational love and the hope of the Gospel in today's world.”

Background information:

Early this morning Bishop Sarah met with staff and volunteers at the community larder, and clergy and volunteers involved in the Ignite Christian Community at All Saints Church in Canterbury.

She will give an address in Canterbury Cathedral – ten years after she was consecrated there as Bishop of Crediton. Bishop Sarah will be addressing guests from across the Church of England, Anglican Communion and the Diocese of Canterbury.

She will be introduced by Alanis, a pupil from The Archbishop's School, a Church of England school in the Diocese of Canterbury, with a prayer delivered by Noah, following her address.

In the afternoon, Bishop Sarah will meet pupils and staff at The Archbishop's School before visiting the chaplain and staff at Pilgrims Hospice Canterbury, later attending Evensong in the Cathedral.

Currently known as the Archbishop of Canterbury-designate, Bishop Sarah will legally become the Archbishop of Canterbury at her Confirmation of Election at St Paul's Cathedral in January 2026, with a service of installation taking place at Canterbury Cathedral in March.

Biography:

Born in Woking in 1962, Bishop Sarah became a Christian at the age of 16. Before being ordained, Bishop Sarah worked as a nurse in the National Health Service, which she has described as "an opportunity to reflect the love of God".

She specialised as a cancer nurse and, at the age of 37, became the Government's Chief Nursing Officer for England, the youngest person ever to be appointed to the post. Bishop Sarah was made a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in recognition of her outstanding contribution to nursing. She was ordained in 2001 and served her curacy in the Diocese of Southwark, initially as a self-supporting minister, before leaving her government post in 2004.

In 2012, she was installed as Canon Treasurer at Salisbury Cathedral and three years later took the role as Suffragan Bishop of Crediton in the Diocese of Exeter. On 12 May 2018, Bishop Sarah was installed as the 133rd Bishop of London at St Paul's Cathedral, the first woman to hold the role. Bishop Sarah is married to Eamonn and they have two grown-up children, Liam and Grace.

Appointment process – key dates:

Following the announcement, the next stage of the appointment process is the Election by the College of Canons of Canterbury Cathedral, which will take place before Christmas.

On 28th January 2026, there will be a Confirmation of Election at St Paul's Cathedral in London, at which Bishop Sarah will legally become the Archbishop of Canterbury.

In March there will be an Installation (sometimes referred to as an 'enthronement') at Canterbury Cathedral, which denotes and marks the start of the new Archbishop of Canterbury's ministry.