



The Church of England is launching an Alexa skill, enabling users to ask the Church of England for prayers, explanations of the Christian faith and where to find their nearest church for local events and services based on their location.

Daily prayer resources are central to the skill, offering a prayer for the day, as well as morning, evening and night-time prayers and a grace before meals all recorded for Alexa devices.

The skill is also integrated with [A Church Near You](#), our national church finder that gets 13 million page views a year, to find the nearest services and events, and seeks to increase users' knowledge of the Christian faith by answering questions such as: what is the Bible? Who is God? What is a Christian?

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, who is [featured in a video to promote the Alexa skill](#), said: “We’re thrilled to be launching the Alexa skill today, to enable regular churchgoers and those exploring faith to connect with God in another way at a time that’s right for them. A quarter of UK households now own a smart device and, after transforming the Church of England’s and Archbishops’ national websites last year, this fast-growing area was identified as a priority for development.

“More broadly, this work is part of our wider Renewal and Reform programme, which seeks to ensure the Church of England is a growing Church for all people and in all places.”

Adrian Harris, Head of Digital at the Church of England, said: “Platforms such as Alexa give the Church the ability to connect people with God and to weave faith into daily lives, whether for daily prayers or exploring Christianity. We also see this as a fantastic opportunity to encourage people into their local church, which is why the link to A Church Near You is so important, particularly at key moments in the Christian year such as Easter and Christmas.

“We’re prioritising Alexa at this stage to reach as many people as quickly as possible but plan to launch on Google and Apple devices in due course. The recent [Church of England Digital Labs](#) event highlighted the importance of voice as a major area of focus and the insights from this day were really useful.”

Thomas Allain Chapman, Publishing Manager at the Church of England, said: “The Alexa skill means prayers that Church House Publishing has previously made available in books, apps and e-books will now be available in audio to a new audience in many homes.”

This is phase one of the AI project, built jointly by the Church’s Digital and Church House Publishing teams, with future development planned to ensure users can find more answers to faith questions.

Users must activate the Church of England skill by saying “Alexa, open the Church of England”. A full list of commands is available on our [dedicated Alexa page](#).

One million people go to a Church of England church and more than four million attend at Christmas. The integration with A Church Near You

will mean even more users are able to find a local place to worship at key events.

This skill is one of the first significant faith-based skills available for smart speaker users in the UK.

The Church of England skill was launched at an evening reception attended by industry influencers, Christian leaders, and digital journalists. At the launch, three promotional videos were shared, which featured the Archbishop of York John Sentamu and Gogglebox vicar Kate Bottley. [You can watch them on Youtube.](#)

The skill was developed by [Aimer Media](#), an app developer founded in 2009 that create new publishing models using the opportunities created by a new generation of computing devices. Aimer have worked closely with the Church of England over a number of years [on a range of apps](#) for Church House Publishing.

Notes to editors

What is a skill? An Alexa skill works like an app, which users must enable, using the Alexa app on their smart phone or web browser in the same way you install or uninstall apps, or by saying: “Alexa, open the Church of England.” Skills on Alexa are voice-driven.

The Church of England Digital team was established in October 2016 to harness the considerable opportunities that digital and social media brings. The first full year has seen several key successes: the transformation of the Church’s national website, with a 20% uplift in page views; the relaunch of [A Church Near You](#), our local church finder, which saw a 50% uplift in traffic in December 2017; a successful Christmas 2018 #GodWithUs campaign that had a reach of 6.8 million; a #LiveLent 2018 campaign that reached 3.54 million; and winning nine industry awards for our work so far.

Church House Publishing (CHP) is the official publisher of the Church of England, producing a range of apps, books, ebooks and websites in partnership with Anglican charity Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd. CHP’s range of Church of England apps have been downloaded over 400,000 times across the world. The Church of England Alexa skill draws on two of CHP’s most important publications: the Common Worship series of official prayers and services, and Pilgrim: A Course for the Christian Journey. Find out more about both on the [Church House Publishing website](#).

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