

Bishop Stephen Geoffrey Cottrell will be confirmed as the 98th Archbishop of York at 11am on Thursday 9 July 2020, in a service broadcast entirely via video conference due to the Coronavirus restrictions. As Presiding Judge, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, has granted permission for the virtual service to take place.

The service, which had been due to take place in York Minster, will be in two parts: a legal ceremony with readings, prayers and music; and a film marking the start of Bishop Stephen's ministry as Archbishop of York.

The service will include music from York Minster Choir and Manor Church of England Academy School (York). Young people from across the North of England, will read a letter written by the medieval religious scholar Alcuin of York. Bishop Stephen will offer his first address as Archbishop of York. Prayers will be offered for the Archbishop, the Diocese of York and the Northern Province of the Church of England as well as for the wider world in these difficult times.

Commenting on the service, Bishop Stephen Cottrell said: "I am looking forward to beginning my ministry as the 98th Archbishop of York. This isn't quite how I imagined it would begin. It is certainly the first time an Archbishop's election will have been confirmed via video conference. But we're all having to re-imagine how we live our lives and how we inhabit the world. These are difficult times. My hope is that through this service the love of God that is given us in Jesus Christ will shine out, perhaps even to those who while never attending a service in York Minster, might have a look online. I can still just about remember what it's like to not be part of the Christian community. What inspired me to follow Jesus is that vision of a new humanity that I see in him. Following in the footsteps of my many predecessors, I look forward to serving our nation and bringing the love and peace of Christ to our world, especially here in the north."

The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said: "Like so many across the Church of England and Anglican Communion, I am looking forward to welcoming Bishop Stephen to his new ministry with joy, thanksgiving and hope. He radiates the love of Jesus Christ wherever he goes, and along with my fellow bishops, I look forward to serving alongside him. These are difficult times for everyone, and frightening and painful times for many. But we believe as strongly as ever that Jesus is the light that shines in the darkness. I pray that this new beginning for Bishop Stephen as he becomes Archbishop of York is also a moment that refreshes our hope, deepens our faith and sends us out with new energy to love and serve others in Christ's name."

Commenting on behalf of the Bishops of the Northern Province, the Bishop of Newcastle, Christine Hardman said: "The Bishops of the Province of York welcome Bishop Stephen to his new ministry and look forward to working with him in serving communities across the north and in building confidence in the good news of Jesus Christ."

The Dean of York, the Right Revd Dr Jonathan Frost said: "It is a joy to welcome Bishop Stephen to his Cathedral Church, new Diocese and to a vibrant community of cathedrals across the North of England: they are true powerhouses of love and prayer. Bishop Stephen, Rebecca and their family are enfolded in our prayers and love."

Dr Nick Land, Chair of the House of Laity in York Diocesan Synod and Chair of the Diocese's Vacancy in See Committee said: "I would like to add my voice of welcome to Bishop Stephen. Anyone spending any time with him will be struck by Bishop Stephen's deep love for God and his infectious enthusiasm for telling people about Jesus. My prayer and expectation is that he will lead us in deepening our personal commitment to Christ and will help us become more confident in sharing the Good News of the Gospel in the Diocese of York."

The Confirmation of Election is the formal legal process that completes the appointment of senior bishops. Prior to the confirmation, the College of Canons of York Minster will have elected the Archbishop Designate as the Queen's nominee for the post. At the start of the proceedings, he will give his consent to his appointment. Following the reading of the Queen's Letters Patent, legal documents supporting the appointment will be produced to show that all necessary procedures have been followed. At the conclusion, the election will be confirmed, and Bishop Stephen will become the Archbishop of York. The service would ordinarily take place in York Minster, the seat of the Archbishop of York.

The service will be available on the Church of England website.

Arrangements for Bishop Stephen's enthronement service will be announced later in the year.

A prayer on the announcement of the Archbishop of York Designate

Generous God, we give you thanks:

you have heard our prayer,

guided your people

and raised up Stephen

to serve as the next Archbishop of York.

By your Holy Spirit, grant to him

good counsel, holy insight and

joy in the gospel,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Biographical details - Bishop Stephen Cottrell

Born in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, in 1958, Stephen Cottrell was educated at Belfairs High School, Leigh-on-Sea, and the Polytechnic of Central London. He found faith as a teenager through the work of youth organisations in his local church. After a brief spell working in the film industry, he began training for ministry at St Stephen's House, Oxford, in 1981 and was ordained deacon at the age of 26. He later studied for an MA with St Mellitus College.

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Serving his curacy in Christ Church and St Paul's, Forest Hill, south London, in the mid-1980s he was priest-in-charge at St Wilfrid's, in Parklands, a council estate parish in Chichester from 1988 to 1993. He also served as Assistant Director of Pastoral Studies at Chichester Theological College at the same time.

He then moved to West Yorkshire, as Diocesan Missioner and Bishop's Chaplain for Evangelism in the Diocese of Wakefield and in 1998 he took up the role of Springboard Missioner and Consultant in Evangelism. During his time in the diocese he adopted Huddersfield Town as his team alongside his beloved Spurs.

In 2001, he was called south to become Canon Pastor of Peterborough Cathedral and three years later was consecrated as Bishop of Reading. He took up his current role as Bishop of Chelmsford in 2010.

Author of more than 20 books including children's books, he enjoys poetry, music and art. His 2013 book on the artist Stanley Spencer, *Christ in the Wilderness*, prompted a recent podcast reflection with Russell Brand, discussing the crucifixion and resurrection.

He has undertaken several pilgrimages, including twice walking the Camino to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, as well as pilgrim routes in England including to his future See in York.

A founding member of the Church of England's College of Evangelists, he chairs a group of bishops with an interest in the media and is one of the authors of the Church of England's Pilgrim course, a major teaching and discipleship resource. He also chairs the Board of Church Army. Based in Sheffield, but working across the British Isles, Church Army is an organisation committed to evangelism and social justice. He is Bishop Protector for the Society of St Francis.

Stephen is married to Rebecca who is a potter. They have three sons.

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