



Lambeth Palace

The **Archbishop of Canterbury**, the spiritual leader of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion, is appointed by The King following a prayerful and carefully structured process.

This process is led by the **Crown Nominations Commission (CNC)**, whose role is to discern whom God may be calling to this vital ministry.

Unlike a secular recruitment process, no one applies to be the Archbishop of Canterbury. Following a full and open public consultation, candidates are invited into a months-long process of prayerful discernment. This spiritual approach ensures the nomination is about discernment under God, anticipating His provision and recognising His anointing of a particular person to give leadership.

How is the next Archbishop of Canterbury chosen?

The selection process unfolds over several months and involves multiple stages to ensure the needs of the [Diocese of Canterbury](#), the Church of England and the global [Anglican Communion](#) are met. Here's a concise breakdown:

1. Resignation and reflection

The process begins when the current Archbishop announces their intention to step down. This triggers a period of consultation to assess the needs of the Church.

- **December 2024:** The Diocese of Canterbury's Vacancy in See process commences to consider the needs of the Diocese of Canterbury and who will represent the diocese on the CNC.

2. Consultation and input

The **Diocese of Canterbury** Vacancy in See Committee creates a *Statement of Needs* outlining the gifts, qualities and skills needed in a new Archbishop.

This is followed by a broader extensive public consultation to gather input to inform the CNC's consideration of the needs of the mission of the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion.

The Diocese of Canterbury Vacancy in See Committee then finalises its *Statement of Needs* and elects representatives to the CNC from its members.

3. Crown Nominations Commission

The CNC, consisting of representatives from the Church of England and Anglican Communion, meets to pray, reflect and nominate a candidate. The chosen individual must secure the support of at least two-thirds of voting members.

You can learn more about the makeup of the Crown Nominations Commission below.

4. Nomination and approval

The CNC nominates the name of the preferred candidate to the Prime Minister, who submits the name to His Majesty The King for approval.

Once approved, the appointment is announced by 10 Downing Street.

5. Formal appointment

The **College of Canons** at Canterbury Cathedral formally elects the Archbishop.

A legal ceremony, the **Confirmation of Election** marks the official date on which the new Archbishop takes up office. The Archbishop pays Homage to His Majesty, The King as Supreme Governor of the Church of England.

An installation service is later held at Canterbury Cathedral to denote and mark the start of the new Archbishop's ministry.

Who is on the Crown Nominations Commission?

The CNC for the Archbishop of Canterbury is a 20-member body, including 17 voting members and up to three non-voting members.

Voting members (17):

- **Chair:** A lay Anglican in public life, appointed by the Prime Minister having consulted “such persons or bodies as the Prime Minister thinks fit”.
The Standing Orders of the General Synod state that they “must be an actual communicant lay member of the Church of England”.
- **Five Anglican Communion representatives:** One from each of the five regions of the Anglican Communion – Africa, Americas, Middle East and Asia, Oceania, Europe.
- **Three Canterbury diocesan representatives** elected by the Diocese of Canterbury’s Vacancy in See Committee.
- **Six General Synod representatives:** Three ordained and three lay members drawn from the CNC Central Members elected by General Synod.
- **The Archbishop of York** participates unless they opt out, in which case it will be another person in episcopal orders elected by the House of Bishops.
- **One bishop from the Southern Province** elected by the House of Bishops. They must be residing in the Southern Province but could be a retired person in Episcopal Orders.

Non-voting members (up to three):

- **The Archbishops’ Secretary for Appointments** also serves as the Secretary to the CNC.
- **The Prime Minister’s Appointments Secretary.**
- **The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion** may join if they accept the invitation to participate.

Diversity requirements for Anglican Communion representatives

One from each of the 5 regions of the Anglican Communion (and, for this purpose, the Europe region includes the provinces of the British Isles other than England) of which there should be:

- At least one primate, one priest or deacon, and one communicant lay person;
- At least two males and two females and,
- At least three Global Majority Heritage/non-white.

Key people in the process

- **The Crown Nominations Commission** is the (up to) 20-member body responsible for nominating the Archbishop.
- **The Prime Minister** submits the name of the chosen candidate.
- **The King** provides final approval.
- **The Church and the public** contribute through consultations.

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