

One of the largest Advent wreaths in the country is being raised at York Minster today (Friday 27 November) as a sign of hope as the cathedral prepares to mark the start of Advent this Sunday.

The Archbishop of York, The Most Reverend Stephen Cottrell, will be at the Minster to see the 4m wide wreath lifted into place, for the start of what will be his first Advent and Christmas in the role of Archbishop.

The wreath will be suspended in its traditional place below the Central Tower for the first time since 2017, as scaffolding surrounding the Grand Organ as part of its once-a-century refurbishment has prevented it from being lifted into place for the last two years.

The wreath, which has been made by the cathedral's volunteer flower arrangers using ivy and holly sourced mainly from the Minster's gardens, will hold five candles which are gradually lit each Sunday during Advent in the countdown to Christmas Day.

The Archbishop of York, The Most Reverend Stephen Cottrell, said: "The raising of the Advent Wreath is a sign of hope – the hope that light will come to our darkness, the hope that life will overcome death, and the hope that God will be with us.

"I pray that in these weeks as we journey towards Christmas together, that people will be filled with these hopes. I am praying that all will discover that in Jesus they can be made whole and be fulfilled."

The first of the 1m tall candles, which are capable of burning constantly for three weeks, will be lit on Sunday (29 November), the first day of Advent, during the Minster's 11am Eucharist service.

Public worship is not currently permitted in the cathedral but the service will be livestreamed via the Minster's website and social media channels for people to join from home. A special service called "Looking for the Light – A Sequence of Music and Readings for Advent Sunday" will also be livestreamed at 4pm on Sunday.

The remaining candles will be lit each Sunday building up to the lighting of the final candle on Christmas Day, which represents the birth of Christ, the light of the world. They will remain lit until the Feast of Epiphany on 6 January, although at least two will need to be replaced during the five weeks.

In addition to the digital worship opportunities, the Minster is currently open for private prayer from 10am – 12noon Monday to Saturday (excluding Tuesdays when the Minster is closed) and 1pm – 3pm on Sundays.

Full details of York Minster's programme for the start of Advent 2020 are available via the cathedral's website [www.yorkminster.org](http://www.yorkminster.org)

. Details of its programme during December will be released shortly.

3 min read

