



THE ARCHBISHOP  
OF YORK

Archbishop Stephen writes in today's [Yorkshire Post](#) as the cities of York and New York mark 100 years of partnership and friendship. This follows in full.

Not many of us are lucky enough to celebrate a hundred-year friendship.

This year I have the great privilege of being involved in marking a civic friendship formed one hundred years ago between the City of York and New York City. As with a few other great friendships, this may seem an unlikely one. The differences between the old walled City of York and the soaring 'skyscrapered' New York City can seem more striking than any similarities we may have. However both our cities strive to be places of welcome and inclusion; both share a drive for ambition, innovation and excellence; both are rich in culture and strong in identity. Therefore, this is not the marking of a newer city outgrowing its godparent, but the celebration of civic friendship between proud and beautiful places. In a fragile, siloed and divided world such friendships are hugely important. When we reach out and build relationship with people from other parts of the world, we discover our common humanity - our similarities. We build partnership. Also, we are much more likely to find the wisdom we need to deal with the common challenges we face.

During the centenary weekend we will give our friends in New York City a flavour of Yorkshire's culture and heritage. A delegation led by the York & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce will showcase the best the County has to offer at a 'Great Yorkshire Show' hosted by the British Consul General at the British Residence in New York with Visit Britain. We will celebrate the extraordinary number of existing trade and cultural links between the two cities and promote new opportunities for business, education, transport, tourism and technology. Our universities will be represented as well as our church and representatives from civic and commercial life.

In 1924 when New York City presented the City of York with a memorial tablet, Governor Smith of New York said, "City speaks to City and State to State." The tablet which is in the Guildhall in York speaks of friendship and goodwill. To mark the centenary of this friendship, a ledger stone has been crafted from Westmorland slate by Richard Bossons, the York Minster stonemason who sculpted the statue of Queen Elizabeth II which now stands proudly on the West Front. This will be given as a gift to the City of New York and will be unveiled at a service in the Anglican Church of St Thomas, Fifth Avenue, where it will then reside. The inscription on this stone speaks again of friendship but describes New York as that place which 'has been enriched by different cultures... and which stands as a global symbol of liberty.'

I will be preaching at this service, and I will be speaking about how the God we serve is a God of liberty, a God who makes things new and all things possible. I will speak about new York and old York and how we both need to be made new again, and how abiding friendship and flourishing partnership work for the common good of all.

Our city of York is, therefore, playing an important part in a wider bond between nations at a time where international cooperation has never been more important. I am excited by this because it gives me an opportunity to be proud of the place in which I live and see it represented on

the international stage.

It is also a time of new beginnings for us as this week we elect the first Mayor for York and North Yorkshire as part of the new devolution deal. I hope this will be a step towards the renewal of our regional identity and enable us to take a longer-term view of our challenges and opportunities. It is heartening to see the people of York and North Yorkshire step forward to play their part in our local democracy. Whoever you voted for, I look forward to where this will lead us as a region and I offer the successful candidate my support and my prayers.

Also to be celebrated is the link between the Merchant Adventurers of the City of York and St George's Society of New York, whose historic and charitable work represent the spirit of this partnership so well.

I expect the old Duke of York who gave New York City its name would not believe the dizzying heights it has now reached. Indeed, I think the same could be said for the progress made for the city he knew even better.

My prayer as we mark this historic occasion is that it would remind us that our similarities are more striking than our differences; that there is great value in our togetherness; and that we have much to be proud in both of these places and the opportunities they present to their respective citizens. Although, of course, I know which city I prefer.



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