



Ascension Day
**The Ceremony of
Beating the Bounds**

4.15pm, Thursday 14 May 2026

Welcome to All Hallows by the Tower for the Ceremony of Beating the Bounds. At each boundary mark the procession will stop and there will be a short introduction and prayer. The beaters will mark the boundary by beating it with canes before the procession continues. Please take care when crossing roads.

Introduction

Beating the Bounds is an ancient custom dating from Anglo-Saxon times when parishes re-affirmed their boundaries by processing round them, stopping at each boundary mark. The clergy of the parish with the churchwardens and parish officials headed a crowd of boys who, armed with willow or birch wands, beat the parish boundary markers. In the days when maps were uncommon this was an important way of ensuring that knowledge of the boundaries was handed on to the next generation.

Beating of the Bounds was usually carried out during Rogationtide, a season of prayer and fasting that takes its name from the Latin 'to ask' (*rogare*). As they walked around the parish, the clergy would pray for God's blessing on the people's crops for the coming harvest. Today in this City parish we pray for the harvest more widely, in terms of the fruits of labour in the offices and workplaces that surround us. We also pray for God's blessing and his peace for all who live or work in our parish.

Let us pray for this parish of All Hallows by the Tower with St Dunstan in the East in the City of London.

Heavenly Father, we ask you to bless the City of London and all who work or live in this parish. May peace be found here and the love of God be in each heart.

Lord, in your mercy:

All Hear our prayer

Boundary I – The Tower of London

The usual first stop will take place after Evensong as part of the Triennial Battle.

Boundary 2 – The River Thames

Read by Sean Collins, Master of the Worshipful Company of Watermen and Lightermen of the River Thames

The River Thames is not only a parish boundary, but also a diocesan boundary between London and Southwark. All Hallows has had a long association with the river and with those who rely on it for their livelihood. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century and the construction of the Docks, all shipping was handled in the Pool of London, and wharves lined the river here; many parishioners were dock workers, sailors and officials.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the trade, prosperity and cultural riches which the river has brought us. We ask for your blessing on all who travel or work on the river, including those running transport services here at Tower Pier, the RNLI Tower lifeboat station, the members of the Company of Watermen and Lightermen and the Port of London Authority, and all involved in maritime trade.

Lord, in your mercy:

All hear our prayer.

The students in the Beating Party will go out on the river in the boat to beat the boundary. Please remain on the quay until they return, when the procession will continue on dry land.

Boundary 3 – Custom House

Read by William Marle, Master of the Worshipful Company of Bakers

Custom House was until recently the oldest building used by HM Revenue and Customs. The first Custom House was built slightly east of here in 1275, and there have been several buildings on this site.

The HMRC employees based here have now relocated, but All Hallows' links with the organization continue: with the annual Act of Remembrance and Christmas carol service.

We are also close to the halls of two of All Hallows' linked livery companies: the Company of Watermen and Lightermen and the Worshipful Company of Bakers. Livery companies, with their emphasis on charitable work, mutual support and fellowship, are another part of our parish's long history which continue to flourish today.

Heavenly Father, we ask your blessing on the staff of HMRC and those who serve our government in working for the common good. We pray for our linked livery companies; for the Worshipful Companies of the World Traders, Water Conservators and Bakers, asking a blessing on their members and charitable works.

Lord, in your mercy:

All **Hear our prayer.**

Boundary 4 – St Dunstan in the East

Read by Jade McLellan, Head of Senior School at St Dunstan's College

The church of St Dunstan in the East, was joined to the parish of All Hallows by the Tower after it was badly bombed during the Second World War. A school for girls and boys aged 7-11 was associated with the parish from around 1446 until the early sixteenth century. In the Victorian period, aiming to meet the highest educational standards of the day, the parishioners decided to re-establish the school and chose its current site at Catford. As you walk through the gardens you will see a plaque on the wall commemorating the church and College's long association.

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for St Dunstan's College, with its tradition of "Excellence. Differently", and its work in developing character and fulfilling potential. We ask your blessing on the students and staff and pray for the flourishing and well being of all, and remember those parishioners and students who have contributed to the shaping of our world, and have dedicated themselves to education.

Lord, in your mercy:

All hear our prayer.

Boundary 5 – Minster Court

Read by The Revd Lauren Hart, Curate at The United Benefice of Corringham and Fobbing and on Placement at All Hallows

Our boundary here is on Mincing Lane, which in the late 19th century was the world's leading centre for tea and spice trading. Many insurance companies are based here in this area, along with co-working spaces' reflecting changing working patterns in the City since the pandemic.

Heavenly Father, we ask your blessing on all who work in offices in our parish including those in insurance, IT, banking, law and commodity trading; and on the tourism and leisure sectors – hotels, shops and restaurants, service and facilities providers. We pray for those with demanding or stressful jobs, those adapting to changed working patterns in unsocial hours and in unseen jobs and those who struggle to find a good work/life balance.

Lord, in your mercy:

All hear our prayer.

Boundary 6 – Seething Lane Garden

Read by Sheila Batchelor, City of London Guide and volunteer at All Hallows

This is a boundary between the Parish of All Hallows by the Tower and the Parish of St Olave's, Hart Street. Tower Ward embraces both parishes,

Members of All Hallows and the Company of Watermen and Lightermen come to this garden each year as part of the Knollys Rose ceremony. This commemorates an event in the fourteenth century when Lady Constance Knollys built a footbridge across Seething Lane to her garden on the other side without the mediaeval equivalent of planning permission. The City Corporation of the day imposed an annual rent of one red rose, and to continue this ancient tradition, a red rose is picked here and presented to the Lady Mayor at the Mansion House on the altar cushion of All Hallows by the Tower.

Heavenly Father, we ask your blessing on the Ward of Tower, and all who live or work within its boundaries. We thank you for our Alderman, Common Council members, City Corporation and Lady Mayor, and all involved in City leadership, administration and governance, and we ask you to bless and guide them in their work for the good of all.

Lord, in your mercy:

All hear our prayer

Boundary 7 – Trinity Square Gardens

Read by The Revd Dr John Barker, Associate Priest at All Hallows

The church of All Hallows and its wider parish are both places of remembrance.

Here we remember all who lost their lives in merchant shipping in two world wars, and close by in this garden, at the Tower of London execution site, those killed for political or religious reasons in previous centuries. In the church, we hold the Maritime Memorial book for those lost at sea with no known grave and the Thames memorial, installed to remember those who have lost their lives in the river.

Heavenly Father, give your comfort to all who mourn those lost in war, bad weather or accident. Be with seafarers suffering hardship or loneliness and bless the charities and organisations supporting them. Bring your peace and justice to our parish and throughout the world.

Lord, in your mercy:

All hear our prayer.

The Procession returns to the church and concludes with a prayer and the blessing.

You are most welcome to join us
for refreshments before

A Service of Festal Evensong for Ascension Day
with the St Dunstan's College Choir
will take place today at 6pm.

The Team at All Hallows

Vicar The Revd Nicol Kinrade
Associate Priest The Revd Dr John Barker
Parish Administrator Michael Griffiths
Education & History Officer Adey Grummet
Director of Music David Cook
Churchwardens Di Robertshaw & Robert Stichbury
Safeguarding Officer (safeguarding@ahbtt.org.uk) Sarah Alder



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