



Clergy Support Trust

Clergy and their families spend their lives serving others

Clergy Support Trust exists to serve them



As Trustees of this historic charity, we are delighted to share our 2022-25 Strategy, which promises an energetic and exciting expansion of our current programme.

The Court of Assistants (Trustees)



Introduction

Nobody has found the past two years easy. The global Covid-19 pandemic has caused massive upheaval to individuals and communities everywhere. As throughout its history, the Church has kept serving God and serving our neighbours. This has been, as ministry is, a huge privilege – but it has been a huge challenge too. Many clergy and their families have struggled – with physical and mental health, with finances, with isolation and burn-out, with the need to keep worship going through unprecedented circumstances, and with caring for their own loved ones alongside those they are called to care for.

In the complex tapestry of modern-day ministry, we believe that Clergy Support Trust has a unique and important role. Working closely with the Church, but completely independent and confidential, it offers a beacon of hope and support for thousands of clergy and families each year – showing the love of God through its love for others. Its wide-ranging programme includes financial grants, mental health and wellbeing support, and services for ordinands and retired clergy, partners and former partners of clergy, and children of clergy. As the moving testimonials in this document show, it is valued across the countries where it works.

For hundreds of years, Clergy Support Trust has been a lifeline for many people. Now, at this decisive moment in our Church and global story, we want to be bold in our service of those extraordinary people in ministry across the UK and Ireland, and their families. As Trustees of this historic charity, we are delighted to share our 2022-25 Strategy, which promises an energetic and exciting expansion of our current programme. We feel privileged to play a small role in serving those who, in their own ministry, serve so many others.

The Court of Assistants,
Clergy Support Trust

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Azariah's Story



“I’m grateful to have a friend in the Clergy Support Trust – thank you.”

Clergy Support Trust has been my constant companion as I’ve lived out my vocation as a priest in the Church of England.

They’ve been there to help numerous times, whether it was an emergency grant for a washing machine, the gift of a special family holiday or counselling at a time of change.

One of the biggest differences the Trust has made to my family’s wellbeing was being able to go on a special trip away to Centre Parcs, thanks to a holiday grant.

It meant so much to us and we will forever have memories of that special time to keep us going, not to mention it being much needed rest and relaxation together.

The Grants and Services Officer I usually speak to is so thoughtful and discreet, helping me to navigate the application process easily.

I’m dyslexic and so I usually have a natural aversion to paperwork, but they took me through the process step by step.

Priests are often thought of as invincible, or at least like to think they are, but being there for others all the time is often lonely.

Why we exist: context and rationale

The Churches of England, Wales and Ireland, and the Scottish Episcopal Church, are woven indelibly into the fabric of their countries. Clergy and their families have been instrumental in supporting their communities, often under the radar, through the past two years.

Their ministry genuinely changes lives. Clergy, forced to close their church buildings during the pandemic, have taken worship online to new and diverse audiences; where buildings have been open, many have reinvented themselves as food banks, shelters, and vaccination centres. Clergy have kept pace with frequent changes to ensure that sacraments and praise have still been offered, and have held the hands of the sick and dying when others could not. And, throughout it all, they have prayed, sustaining our country and keeping its people in their hearts.

The Church, and its clergy, show God's love to those who are straining and struggling through dark and difficult days. This has never been more needed.

Clergy, though, have not been immune to the stresses experienced by so many of us. Some feel challenged by the present, or fearful for the future. Too many have experienced poor mental health, financial worries, isolation, and burn-out. Support for clergy families matters not only because it enables them to help others, but because – like anyone – they should have positive wellbeing in their own right.

Clergy Support Trust exists for them – to show love to those who preach it in our diverse communities. As the world and Church embark on a new era, our Strategy outlines new ways in which we will grow and develop, in order to serve our applicants ever better.

Our guiding principles

We exist in order to help relieve or prevent poverty, hardship, and illness, and to promote the physical and mental health of our beneficiaries: clergy, ordinands and their current or former spouses, their children and dependants.

We will aim to do this in a way which makes a tangible difference to their day to day lives and needs, including new and emerging challenges. We will aim to learn also from what similar support organisations provide to other groups, balancing stewarding our resources and putting them to good use.

We will focus as far as possible on areas which have a good fit with our expertise and experience, and which are not cumbersome or expensive to create, not providing support already available from others, or which it is the responsibility of the Church itself to provide, unless it is clearly in our beneficiaries' interests to do so.



Mira's story

Vivacious Mira has very complex needs. She has quadriplegic cerebral palsy and epilepsy, and has no use of her legs at all. She's tube fed and has an internal medicine pump fitted, one just under her ribs, which sends medicine via a tube into her spine. She can't sit up or walk and her vocabulary is limited to about 100 words.

Despite this eight-year-old Mira shares her enthusiasm for life with her adoptive parents, Revd Simon and Kate, brothers Sam, aged 21, and Isaac 17, and sisters Hannah 19, and Cola aged 10.

Until recently days out or even simple trips to the shops were pretty much out of bounds for the whole family as they balanced Mira's mobility needs.

All this changed when a new, specially built bike arrived.

Mum, Kate, takes up the story:

"We were really limited to only being able to get some fresh air by going in the car.

"Family bike rides, so essential for our physical and mental wellbeing, were simply impossible, as we had no way of Mira travelling with us.

"We were recommended a bike which has a wheelchair on the front. It means we're not just limited to biking from A to B, we're also able to do things when we get there."

When Kate approached Clergy Support Trust, the Grants and Services Officer arranged for an Occupational Therapist to visit and see if the bike was the best option for Mira's needs. Following



"Thanks to the bike and the help from Clergy Support Trust we can now access some really brilliant places, in a way that everybody genuinely enjoys and that also benefits our physical and mental health. The whole thing is amazing."

this assessment Clergy Support Trust subsequently provided a Health Grant of £5,000 towards the cost of the wheelchair adapted bike, with other charities and Mira's family paying contributions to bring it up to the total cost of £7,658.

"You're never going to be able to get something like Mira's bike on the NHS and we made a decision to live on a stipend, so we were never going to be able to afford such things. But the bike is such a blessing for us.

"Thanks to the help from Clergy Support Trust we can now access some really brilliant places, that also benefit our physical and mental health. The whole thing is amazing."

367 years: the story so far

Founded by sons of clergymen in 1655, the charity now known as Clergy Support Trust has supported Anglican ministers and their families for almost four centuries.

Historically, the Trust's focus has been the provision of financial grants, and the maintenance and promotion of good health and wellbeing. Recent changes to our Royal Charter and charitable objects have kept alive that original mission, while ensuring that broader, non-financial support is also available to those who need it. In making those changes, we have been guided by clergy families themselves – not least by the hundreds of responses to our annual impact survey, which suggested a range of innovations that might benefit applicants. We believe that any organisation like ours can only be as good as the listening it undertakes.

In 2019, we launched new criteria ensuring that our work spoke directly to the needs of clergy and their families. Our grants and services have, since then, been focused in the following areas:

- **Emergency Grants**
of up to £500 each, for general living expenses and a range of situations
- **Financial Support**
including means-tested grants for larger expenses, such as childcare and furniture, and support with managing debt
- **Wellbeing Support**
including access to free counselling, mentoring and coaching, support for holidays, retreats, and sabbaticals
- **Health Grants** for a wide range of needs, including assistive technology, dentistry, occupational health assessments, and care home fees
- **Study Support**
for ordinands and curates, including through our free, online library of thousands of books (in partnership with SPCK)

We aimed, also, to act swiftly and flexibly in response to new challenges presented by the pandemic, for example by increasing the number of Emergency Grants per household to three per year.

2021 saw the highest ever number of applications to the Trust, and we were privileged to help over 5,000 people.

Now, as we launch our new Strategy, we are determined to do more, and to do it better, in service of those who serve others.

We will continue to be guided by our four organisational values: **generosity, compassion, wisdom** and **truth**.

We will also continue to be unflinchingly **independent, confidential, and inclusive**, offering a programme which is separate from the Church and open to all eligible households across the UK, Ireland and Europe.



The next chapter:
a broad and bold programme for 21st-century ministry

We are clear that the Church has never been more needed, but that times have, perhaps, never been tougher for those who minister in it. Many Dioceses are facing challenging periods, and clergy report feeling concerned about their futures and finances. The pandemic has created and exacerbated issues for many people, including with mental health and relationships.

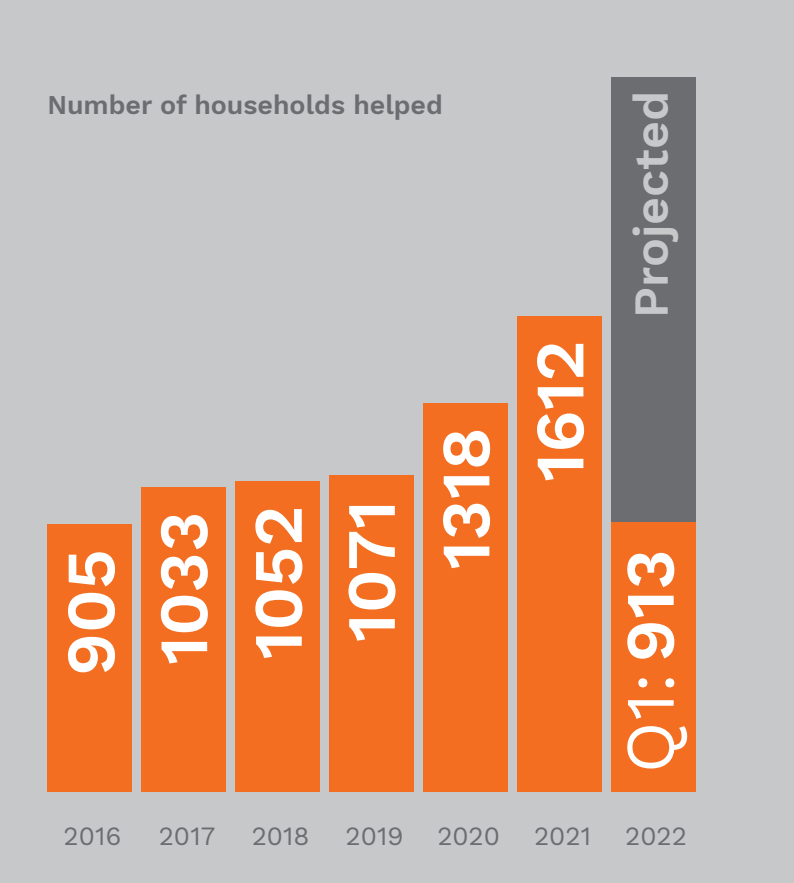


Over the next three years, our efforts in supporting clergy and their families will be shaped by six key objectives.

1

We will aim to help 3,000 families with financial support each year, by 2025, continuing recent years’ significant growth in this area.

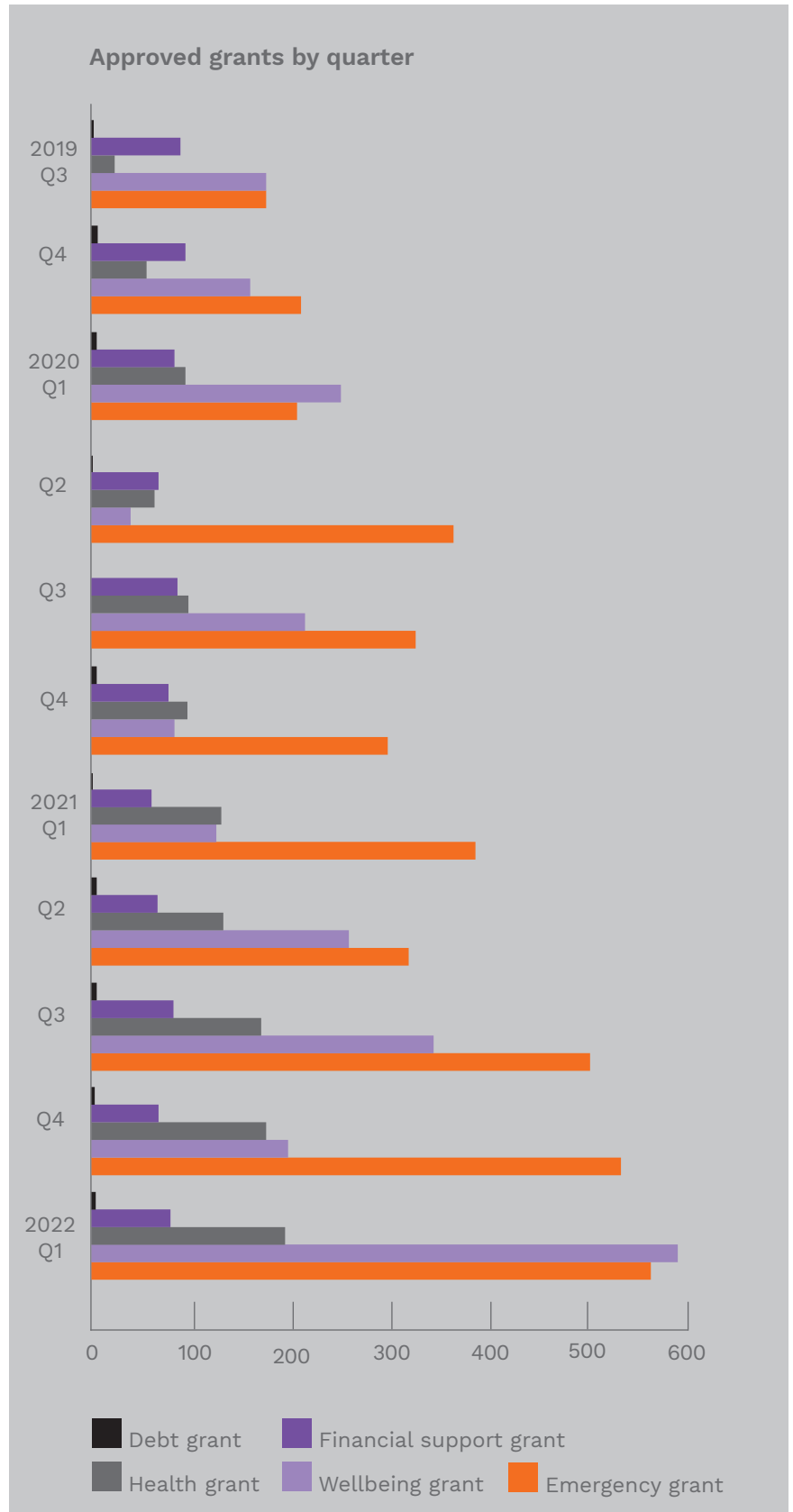
Since 2017, the number of households applying for financial support has grown significantly. That mission, which has always been at the heart of the Trust’s efforts, will continue. Although it is hard to project numbers with certainty in these changing times, we anticipate providing at least 6,500 grants per year, to 3,000 households who meet our core eligibility criteria, by the end of this strategic period (2021: 3,534 grants to 1,610 households).



2

Our current programme of specialist support will be significantly expanded, including increased help for clergy households with financial planning, mental and physical health, delivered primarily through partner organisations.

Our 2020 impact survey asked where clergy families would like to see us do more. Based on hundreds of responses, and on our wider research, we will develop a range of non-financial support services, offering much-needed help for families, and focusing especially on health and financial planning. Many of these services will be delivered in partnership with other organisations, but with the Trust acting as the conduit. We hope this will ensure an easy, confidential and supportive experience for those we help.



3

A new Clergy Support Hub will be launched on our website, so that clergy and their families can easily access a wide range of guidance and toolkits.

For many years, we have been conscious that, too often, people approach us when problems have already escalated. We hear a need for clergy and their families to access support earlier, and to prevent challenges becoming more extreme where possible. To this end, we will significantly expand the resources available on our website. This is not because we want to walk alongside fewer people, but the reverse. We are conscious that, although many are happy to speak with our confidential team, there are others who might prefer a different approach. In essence, we envisage the Hub as an accessible repository of valuable information for those we serve, curated in partnership with and signposting towards a range of experts. We hope that, for many, the Hub will be a 'first port of call', or act as an additional resource alongside grants and services.

4

We will develop a programme of training and resources for Dioceses and Theological Education Institutions.

In 2021, we piloted a number of training and peer-to-peer development opportunities, in partnership with other expert organisations, to very positive feedback. Now, continuing to work with such partners, we plan to support a major training initiative across the Church. Courses will be developed alongside, and offered to, Dioceses and theological colleges. Initially, our focus will be on mental health and relationships, with other areas developing as we listen to the views of those we work with.

5

Clergy and their families requiring longer-term support will be offered more intensive support through a new team of caseworkers.

Many of us will sometimes need a grant or service to get things back on track, but for some of us, problems can be more complex. Eager to support every clergy family we can, we will establish a new team of dedicated Visiting Caseworkers who can potentially meet with and advocate for those who perhaps need longer-term support. This will mean that, for the first time in recent history, the Trust will offer face-to-face help, for those assessed as needing more intensive support, as well as by e-mail and phone.

6

We will reinvigorate our approach to research, including by commissioning and curating work to improve outcomes for those we serve.

We are privileged that people share their stories and challenges with us in confidence. While protecting that confidentiality, we believe we can serve clergy and their families even better by advocating for their wellbeing, using the position and networks we have. As such, we will develop our own voice, particularly through research and thought leadership, and act as a public champion of clergy and their wellbeing. This work will be strongly evidence-based and solutions-focussed, ensuring that we are a voice of truth as well as for truth, and will continue our recent funding of specific research projects.



Taken together, these ambitious objectives will ensure that more clergy are able to access the support they need, when they need it, and that the Trust will continue to support thousands of people each year in their life-affirming, life-changing ministry. In doing so we will continue to be proudly independent, consistently confidential, and fully inclusive.



Augustine's story

I had a very difficult experience finding a curacy. When I left college during the pandemic in 2020, I didn't have anywhere to live or a job, which was quite scary. The Church said I might 'feel uncomfortable' in a curacy where parishioners were 'monochrome white working-class parish' – that I wouldn't fit in as a black person. It was really heartbreaking.

People kept telling me I was overreacting, but I think God has called me to be a prophet-like figure, to be a mover and shaker within the Church for the gospel of Jesus Christ, to call out this behaviour. But this left me needing to find somewhere to live at a time of national emergency.

It was the first lockdown in March 2020, and I went to stay with a friend. Unfortunately, this friend turned out to be a drug user. I was terrified. I was like, 'What am I going to do? I want to be a clergy person, what if the police come?' And the police did raid the house. Thank the Lord I didn't get in trouble because I didn't do anything.

Without the generosity of friends then and reaching out, I don't know what I would have done. I finally



ended up getting a curacy, thanks to the support of a church I'd been on Easter training placement at before the pandemic. Unlike those people who were so unpleasant, saying I wouldn't be a good fit for their church, the people from my placement church wanted to be the Good News in action.

St James Emmanuel in Manchester, when they found out what happened, were so kind. Someone in the local community owned a house and I moved in there and the Church paid the rent for three or four months. They made sure that I was fed and stuff like that. It was honestly really amazing. I just helped at the Church, but they were a tangible miracle to me.

When I finally got my title post I applied to Clergy Support Trust. I knew about

the Trust from the amazing resources I was given during my training, so as soon as I had a role, I knew I could apply for help. The Trust gave me some money to tide me over. It meant I could afford food and loo paper.

The relief I felt when the emergency grant from Clergy Support Trust came in was immense. That overwhelming sense of relief.

Finally knowing I'm going to eat next week, and I'm going to have enough money to eat the week after that. It was amazing. Clergy Support Trust gave me the first security I had felt after more than a year of limbo.

The help from the Trust has enabled me to minister the gospel in a better way because it provided essential support for my wellbeing. John 10:10, live life to the full.

Making it happen: how we work

Clergy Support Trust has a dedicated team of staff and Trustees who oversee its strategy, programme, operations and engagement. In order to serve as best we can, and to continue being an efficient and well-run charity, we are also setting three key organizational objectives for the strategic period 2022-25.

1

We will engage more proactively with Dioceses, Theological Education Institutions and others, including in Scotland, Wales, Ireland and Europe, ensuring that our work represents, speaks to, and is accessible by the full diversity of our Church.

In recent years, the Trust has made concerted efforts to improve the diversity both of its own personnel, and of its marketing. That journey is by no means complete, and we will continue to work hard in learning from a range of partners and perspectives. In particular, we are keen to ensure that our sisters and brothers across the UK, Ireland and Europe are aware of our grants and services, as well as those training for ministry or retired from it, and the families of serving clergy. We will significantly and proactively expand our engagement programme, enabling us to hear and learn from more clergy households than ever before.

2

We will make more effective use of our data, and use this to contribute to research, advocacy, and thought leadership.

The Trust has a unique data-set detailing the challenges faced by clergy households. We believe it is our responsibility to use the knowledge gleaned from that

data, particularly as the nature of ministry changes. We will invest in data analysis, which in turn will support us in providing a rich evidence-base for the work we do, and for our advocacy to the Church. Using that alongside other evidence, and with individual confidentiality remaining our highest priority, we will then seek to articulate a narrative around clergy wellbeing in support of individuals and the wider Church too.

3

We will continue to improve our infrastructure and governance, developing better information management systems and operational processes.

Like many organisations, we have worked largely remotely since March 2020 and will continue to operate as a 'hybrid' organisation going forward. In order to work as well as possible, and to ensure a simple and hassle-free experience for applicants, we will further invest in our internal and online systems. We will consider afresh, in light of the pandemic, the value our London offices might offer to other organisations. Additionally, and building on the success of recent years, we will continue to improve our governance (including, in 2022, with a full, externally-led review to ensure that our high standards are maintained).



Matt's story



I was going through a really difficult time in my life, it was quite a stressful time.

The problem with our job is it can be really full on, and you're stuck in a bubble; be it a parish, be it a community like the one I'm involved in. Your social life and your ministry get interlinked. It's a joy, but it can also be a difficult thing as well. The family feel it because you're there in the vicarage and it can be very intense.

It's quite a difficult thing to pick up the phone or to email someone saying, 'Listen, I need some counselling. Can you help me?'

The person I spoke to at Clergy Support Trust was just wonderful, sensitive, and

caring and they just made it so easy. They didn't ask any sort of inappropriate questions or make me feel guilty, or like I was doing something wrong.

It was so refreshing to know that they just understood.

As a Christian, I believe that God is interested in my mind, my body and my soul and even though my mum's a counsellor, the hardest thing in the world sometimes is to make that decision to go and see someone because you're struggling. You can use all sorts of excuses not to get help.

Clergy Support Trust took the 'I can't afford it' out of the equation and so it was just down to me. Its support

enabled me to get some sessions to see someone.

I hooked up with a counsellor and Clergy Support Trust paid them direct, so I didn't need to worry about that part.

The counselling – it was just a massive gamechanger for me. It was amazing not just for me, but also for my ministry, because if I'm not 100%, then my ministry is affected.

The healthier I am in my head, physically and all the rest, the better I am able to serve in the way I do.

I can't speak highly enough of Clergy Support Trust. The fact that they're being proactive in helping you to help yourself, it's just really refreshing.

Your organisation, your views.

Clergy Support Trust can only continue to support clergy and their families if it hears from them! The extraordinary people we exist to serve are the heartbeat of our organisation, and our programme can only be as good as the feedback we receive.

If you have thoughts on the vision outlined in this document, or might wish to help us enact it, we would love to hear from you.

You can also become a Governor of the Trust, for a one-off donation of £100, which entitles you to vote at our Annual General Meeting. Governors are important ambassadors for our work: many clergy still hear about us through word-of-mouth. Further information about supporting our work, including through legacy giving, can be found at www.clergysupport.org.uk

We undertake a significant programme of engagement, and can offer presentations for Diocesan Clergy days and other events. These can be very short and purely informative, or whole-day events including workshops with some of our specialist partners, and the chance for peer-to-peer discussion facilitated by one of our experts. If this is of interest, please contact us: hello@clergysupport.org.uk





Watch, O Lord, with those who
serve you this day. Tend your
sick ones, rest your weary
ones, and soothe your suffering
ones. Pity your afflicted ones,
shield your joyous ones, and all
for your love's sake.

Amen.

after St Augustine



Get in touch.
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