

PRESS RELEASE

**For immediate release
6 March 2023**



ST PAUL'S HOSTS WORLD'S OLDEST CHORAL FESTIVAL

Join three outstanding cathedral choirs to celebrate our clergy

The **Clergy Support Trust** Festival is taking place for the 368th time on **9 May 2023** at **5pm** at St Paul's Cathedral and is a unique event that is free to attend.

The Festival is renowned for bringing together choirs from different cathedrals across the UK. This year, singers from St Paul's Cathedral will be joined by those from Leicester and Llandaff. Neither cathedral choir has appeared at the Festival for over thirty years.

Andrew Carwood MBE, Director of Music at St Paul's, never grows tired of the Festival experience. "It is a rare and wonderful joy to be able to work with such incredible choirs each year, and even more so when you are part of an almost unbroken line of choirs singing together under the dome of St Paul's stretching back over nearly 370 years."

The service, which first took place in 1655, is organised by Clergy Support Trust, the largest charity dedicated expressly to helping clergy and their families. In 2022, the Trust supported almost one in five of all Church of England ministers.

The colourful and vibrant Festival Service – taking place three days after the Coronation of King Charles III – starts with a stunning procession of the choirs, cathedral clergy, Masters of City Livery Companies and Stewards of the Festival down the majestic central aisle of St Paul's. The music promises to be exceptional in line with its historic choral legacy which has seen celebrated English composers like Parry and Elgar receive commissions to write new anthems for it. Each choir performs individually, before all three choirs combine in a joyous anthem, always the highlight of the evening.

Past preachers have included Rowan Williams, Justin Welby and John Sentamu. This year the sermon will be given by the Bishop of Gloucester, the Rt Revd Rachel Treweek, who made history when she became the first female diocesan Bishop in England, and the first female Bishop in the House of Lords.

The Reverend Ben Cahill-Nicholls, CEO of Clergy Support Trust, says: “Ministry is an enormous blessing and a humbling privilege, but it can also be hard. The role of Clergy Support Trust is to serve those who spend their lives serving others. In 2022 the Trust supported more than 2,300 clergy households in a variety of ways ranging from financial help, counselling, and health grants, to providing nearly 1,300 clergy households with a much-needed post-pandemic break to recharge their batteries.”

Bishop Rachel praises the Trust’s crucial role: “Clergy Support Trust provides an amazing lifeline and offers support in a way which emphasises the value and appreciation of clergy and ensures there is no stigma attached to seeking assistance. An especially moving part of the Festival is hearing the testimonies of recipients of such grants.”

Ben concludes, “The Festival is an extraordinary event, but it’s also a moment to reflect on the equally extraordinary ministry of so many people. This is our way of saying, ‘Thank you.’”

To book tickets for the Festival and find more information, please visit:
clergysupport.org.uk/festival

ENDS

Clergy Support Trust CEO, The Reverend Ben Cahill-Nicholls is available for interview. For media enquiries, including interview and image requests, please contact Laura Nelson at e: laura@jerseyroadpr.com t: +44 (0) 7557 260600 or Priscilla Obilana at e: priscilla@jerseyroadpr.com t: +44 (0) 7562607385

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Event details

Clergy Support Trust Festival Service

Tuesday 9 May 2023, 5pm

St Paul’s Cathedral

London EC4M 8AD

For free tickets and more information visit: clergysupport.org.uk/festival

The event is free, but tickets do need to be booked in advance. A collection towards the vital work of Clergy Support Trust will be taken during the service.

Clergy Support Trust is the oldest and largest charity focused on the wellbeing of clergy and their families. The independent charity, originally founded in 1655, helps Anglican clergy and their families across the UK, Ireland and Diocese in Europe.

www.clergysupport.org.uk

St Paul’s Cathedral

Designed by Sir Christopher Wren in the late 17th century, St Paul’s Cathedral is a vibrant church, a national treasure and one of the most sought-after music venues in

the UK with superb acoustics. This London icon stands as an enduring symbol of hope
– for those of all faiths and none.

www.stpauls.co.uk