

PRESS RELEASE

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HISTORIC CHORAL FESTIVAL DATING BACK TO CHARLES II AMONG FIRST EVENTS HELD FOLLOWING CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III

Yesterday (9 May), St. Paul's Cathedral saw three cathedral choirs unite at the **Clergy Support Trust Festival**, the world's oldest choral festival, now in its 368th year.

The Festival brought together cathedral choirs from Leicester and Llandaff with choristers from St Paul's. The Service saw each choir perform individually, before all three combined in a joyous anthem. Among the pieces sung was the Coronation anthem, which heard St Paul's Cathedral Choir sing "O Lord, grant the king a long life" for the first time since 1952.

The congregation also enjoyed pieces from celebrated composers such as Edward Elgar and William Byrd as well as a composition written by a then 15-year-old Anna Thomas for her GCSEs.

The service was attended by 1,800 people and 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 Bishop of Gloucester, The Rt Revd Rachel Treweek, gave the sermon. Bishop Rachel made history when she became the first female diocesan Bishop in England, and the first female Bishop in the House of Lords.

Bishop Rachel said: "It was a joy to be at the Clergy Support Trust Festival. After such a monumental weekend for our nation, it was extraordinary to come together in this way and hear magnificent choral performances in St Paul's. It was also deeply moving to hear from people supported by Clergy Support Trust's grants and services."

The Reverend Ben Cahill-Nicholls, CEO of Clergy Support Trust, said: "With a stunning location and impeccable performances from the choirs, the Festival was a wonderful act of worship. However, it was also impactful because it allowed us to celebrate the dedication of so many. The vital role of Clergy Support Trust is to serve those who spend their lives serving others. In 2022, the Trust distributed almost 5,500 grants to 2,318 households, including over £250k on energy bills. As well as the privilege of helping so many families with the cost-of-living crisis, it is also wonderful to hold this annual Festival Service of recognition to give thanks for clergy."

To find out more about Clergy Support Trust, please visit: <http://clergysupport.org.uk/>

ENDS

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

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, Isle of Man and 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