

Salisbury Cathedral unveils two new 'statement' altars

The altars have been placed at two of the building's key spots - the Spire Crossing and Trinity Chapel

Steven Morris

@stevenmorris20

Sun 14 Jan 2024 16:11 GMT



📍 The Right Revd Stephen Lake, bishop of Salisbury, consecrates the main altar in the Spire Crossing during a service at Salisbury Cathedral on Sunday. Photograph: Finnbarr Webster/Getty Images

More than 800 years after work began on Salisbury Cathedral, the space is still being developed and modified - and this weekend two new altars were officially unveiled and consecrated.

Created by the sculptor **William Pye** in collaboration with the furniture maker Luke Hughes, the altars have been placed at two of the building's key spots - the Spire Crossing and Trinity Chapel.

It is the first time a new altar has been consecrated in the nave - the main body of the church - in 500 years.

Pye was responsible for the design of the altars, while Hughes took on the task of planning the space and creating the daises. The altars were to link in form and material - Purbeck stone and inscribed bronze - to the William Pye font, which was installed at the great Wiltshire church in 2008.

"I wanted the altars to feel intimate, using the words and symbols that have been inscribed around the base to capture the inner, individual experience of faith as well as he shared experience," Pye said. "The lettering aims to arrive at something akin to a Roman tablet. I wanted the altars to belong to the space, whilst making a statement. Just as the font has become part of the visitor experience and worship, I hope these two new altars will also form part of that experience."



📍 Luke Hughes (left) the Very Revd Nicholas Papadopoulos, dean of Salisbury (in the pulpit), the Right Revd Stephen Lake, bishop of Salisbury, and sculptor William Pye (right) at the main altar in the Spire Crossing. Photograph: Finnbarr Webster/Getty Images

Hughes's daises, made in oak and shaped to mirror each altar, have been

Most viewed



Denmark's King Frederik X takes throne after Margrethe abdicates



Luciana Berger given key Labour role after quitting over antisemitism



Live Manchester United v Tottenham: Premier League - live



Trump returns to court for new E Jean Carroll trial - and it could prove costly



Everton 0-0 Aston Villa: Premier League - as it happened

designed and constructed in such a way that what looks like a solid structure is made up of a series of interlocking parts that sit on wheels, meaning they - and the altars - can be moved by one person though they weigh several tonnes each.

The Revd Anna Macham, the canon precentor of Salisbury Cathedral with responsibility for liturgy and music, said: "For a long time we have made good with various arrangements of carpeted staging blocks and temporary altars, so to see the new altars in place is inspiring. In both cases the space in which each new altar stands is significant. The Trinity Chapel is where prayer is offered every morning of the year, and the Spire Crossing is where the principal Sunday services and great seasonal liturgies are celebrated."

The Spire Crossing altar is octagonal, as is the space it occupies beneath the cathedral's tower and spire. The stone base is inscribed with a text from St Matthew's Gospel: "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

The altar in the Trinity Chapel carries lines by the 17th-century poet George Herbert, who worshipped in the cathedral and whose statue stands in a niche on the West Front.

More on this story

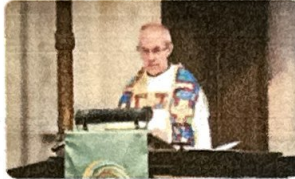
'A long journey': blessings for same-sex couples expose Church of England divisions

15 Dec 2023



Most Church of England priests back gay marriage, survey finds

30 Aug 2023



Cornish church reverses ban on female vicars

29 Jul 2023



C of E vicar 'spiritually abused' parishioners for 20 years, report finds

21 Jul 2023



More from Headlines

Labour

Luciana Berger given key Labour role after quitting over antisemitism

3h ago



Channel crossings

Five die trying to board small boats in freezing temperatures

2h ago



Middle East

Israel risking serious escalation by killing Hezbollah leaders, say diplomats

2h ago



Iceland

Houses set alight as lava from volcano eruption reaches town

19m ago



Most viewed