

## Press Release

### **'Understood of the People' – St Paul's marks 350 years of Book of Common Prayer**

**Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2012**

Journalists, politicians, church leaders and writers are amongst people from all walks of life who have contributed to an exhibition celebrating the Book of Common Prayer.

2012 marks the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer (BCP) and to celebrate that milestone, St Paul's, in conjunction with the [Church Times](#), will display a host of prayer books, old and new.

Titled '*Understood of the People: The People's Prayer Book 1662-2012*', the exhibition will run at St Paul's throughout May and coincides with a special service of choral evensong on Wednesday 2 May at 5pm, attended by the [Prayer Book Society](#), at which the Bishop of London will preach and the Archbishop of Canterbury will give the blessing.

The BCP remains the classic worship book of the Church of England. Although contemporary prayer books have been introduced, many churches and most cathedrals still use the BCP alongside these modern forms. The 1662 version still has a strong hold on people's affections and even people with little faith still see merit in its venerable language and historical associations.

The exhibition will include prayer books from the First World War, a prayer book carried by a bride at her wedding instead of flowers, the gift of a brother to his sister as he left for active service in World War II, and prayer books special to people like PD James, Terry Waite, Frank Field and many others. Readers of the Church Times were also invited to submit their prayer book stories and some of these readers will have their books on display.

The Reverend Canon Michael Hampel, Precentor of St Paul's, said: "The language of the Book of Common Prayer runs like a golden thread through the history of the English language. For many of the contributors to this exhibition, it shaped who they are and it's a privilege for St Paul's to be able to share personal stories alongside people's prayer books."

The exhibition will be on display in the North Quire Aisle of St Paul's Cathedral from Tuesday 1 to Thursday 31 May from 8.30am to 4pm. Please see the [website](#) for visitor information.

### **ENDS**

For more information please contact Ed Holmes, Press and Communications Manager, St Paul's Cathedral on 020 7246 8321 or email [ed@stpaulscathedral.org.uk](mailto:ed@stpaulscathedral.org.uk)

### **St Paul's Cathedral**

St Paul's is the cathedral church of the diocese of London, which it has served for over 1,400 years. The current building has become a potent symbol of the life of a nation and is one of the world's most beautiful buildings. Designed by Sir Christopher Wren in the late seventeenth century, its stones have absorbed the hopes, fears, sorrows and joys of generations and stand as an enduring symbol of our communion with those gone before and those still to come. Each year nearly two million people flock to the cathedral for services, concerts, debates, educational events, performing arts and sightseeing. All are most welcome.

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