

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have paid tribute to the Church of England's former Secretary General, Sir William Fittall, who has died, aged 68. He was Secretary General of the Archbishops' Council and General Synod from 2002 to 2015.

Former Secretary General William Fittall

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said: "I am deeply sad to hear of the death of William Fittall, who as well as being a valued colleague was also a dear and much-loved friend for over forty years.

"His tireless service to the Church of England, as Secretary General of the Archbishops Council, exemplified the kind of man he was: exceptionally able, respected by all, dedicated to the church and committed to Christ.

"As a Reader, and as a gifted organist, he served his local church faithfully for very many years. The Church of England owes him a great debt of gratitude.

"In the years before he was Secretary General he was a distinguished and effective civil servant, working on issues of security, reconciliation and seeking to bring hope in dark times.

"I pray for William's family and friends, who will miss him greatly, to be comforted and sustained by God in this time of grief. May he have found, in the eternal arms of his beloved God, the peace that passes all understanding."

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, said: "William Fittall was a faithful follower of Jesus Christ and a wise servant of the Church of England. He used his many gifts and talents in the service of the kingdom and will be much missed. May he rest in peace and rise in glory."

William Fittall with colleagues at General Synod in York

During his time as Secretary General, Sir William notably helped to ensure the passage of the legislation enabling women to be bishops, and the accompanying arrangements.

Before joining the Church professionally, his civil service career saw him undertake roles in the Home Office, the Northern Ireland Office and Cabinet Office.

He was a Licensed Lay Minister in his local parish church in Kent, and also an organist.

The Church of England's present Secretary General, William Nye, who succeeded Sir William, said: "William will be very much missed by staff in the National Church Institutions, by members of the General Synod, and by many friends and colleagues. He was a dynamo of energy, who contributed hugely to the life of the Church nationally. He was a faithful and devoted Christian in his local church, where he served as a Reader.

"Many Church House colleagues will recall fondly William's leadership, encouragement and good humour. He achieved very much for the Church, and also for the country in his previous distinguished public service."

âWe hold his wife Barbara and their family in our prayers at this time.â

Sir William Fittall b.26/7/53 d.10/3/22

*(Image:Â William Fittall, on the left, with the Archbishop of Canterbury, former Archbishop of York, and Stephen Slack (former Chief Legal Advisor) at a meeting of General Synod in York)*

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/sir-william-fittall>