

Pastor Killed in Tragic Accident at Massive Christian Festival

What was supposed to be a massive weekend of Christian worship and celebration in the United Kingdom came to a heartbreaking halt after a pastor was killed in a devastating accident at Big Church Festival.

Pastor Robert Guanco, 41, died Friday, Aug. 28, after a large sign fell at the Christian music festival at Wiston Park in West Sussex, England. Sky News reported that Guanco was pronounced dead at the scene and at least six others were transported to the hospital for treatment.

The tragedy brought the sold-out festival to an abrupt end. Guanco's own congregation's response points directly to the faith he spent his life proclaiming.

Guanco served at Jesus the Living Water Church in Eastbourne, East Sussex. Following his death, the congregation released a powerful statement acknowledging both the crushing weight of its grief and its determination to trust God through what it cannot explain.

"We are mourning, grieving, praying, and trusting in the Lord during this incredibly difficult time," the church said, according to ChurchLeaders.

The congregation acknowledged that some questions surrounding such a devastating loss may never receive answers, but said that even in profound sorrow, it continues to trust in God's sovereignty.



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That kind of declaration carries a different weight when faith is no longer theoretical.

Guanco was a husband, father and pastor whose ministry impacted those around him. His church remembered him as a faithful servant of God and described his devotion to his wife, Isay, and daughter, Ellie.

“His life, his faith, his love, and his service to God will never be forgotten,” the church said.

And while his death has left his family and congregation reeling, they are holding onto an eternal perspective. Sky News reported that the church said it takes comfort in believing Guanco is now “home with the Lord.”

The tragedy unfolded at a festival built around that very hope.

Big Church Festival is known as the United Kingdom’s largest Christian music festival and averages more than 40,000 attendees each August, according to ChurchLeaders. The 2026 lineup included some of Christian music’s biggest names, including CeCe Winans, Lecrae, for KING & COUNTRY, Lauren Daigle, Anne Wilson, Elevation Worship, Matthew West, Bethel Music and Rend Collective.

Organizers canceled the remainder of the three-day event after the fatal incident, saying they were devastated and focused on those directly affected. The incident has been reported to the Health and Safety Executive and local authorities.

Archbishop of Canterbury Dame Sarah Mullally also responded, offering prayers for Guanco’s family and friends, the injured, healthcare workers and those involved with the festival.

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