



Christ  
Church  
Cathedral  
Dublin

# Statement of Strategy

2024



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## Foreword by the Dean

As with any complex organisation that has a multifaceted approach to its daily function, it is important that Christ Church Cathedral has a strategic plan that embraces all disciplines of the foundation as it journeys forward towards celebrating its millennium in 2028.

It is important at the beginning of any strategic statement to define who we are as an organisation. Christ Church Cathedral is a foundation established nearly one thousand years. The foundation is rooted in its monastic past embracing the charisms of: Welcome, Worship and Witness as its guiding principle in its daily life. The cathedral's religious expression is that of the Church of Ireland. It is both catholic and reformed. Catholic in its membership of the worldwide Anglican Communion and reformed in its expression of worship rooted in the book of Common Prayer.

Christ Church Cathedral is an iconic building in the Dublin landscape. It is synonymous with the foundation of the city of Dublin in Viking times and has embraced change throughout its long history. Throughout its history the foundation has guarded its core function as being a place of worship, prayer, and reflection. At the same time, it is facing the challenge of change as it opens its doors to thousands of visitors each year who come to experience the history and architecture of the building. Our welcome to visitors is coloured by our ancient charisms of hospitality and witness. Visitors are transformed into pilgrims as they experience the transcendent nature of the building which points towards a living God. The cathedral is the spiritual heart of Dublin and therefore has a vital role in its ministry to the city and beyond. While being the cathedral of the united dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough, it is also a place of cross tradition celebration and an oasis of interfaith dialogue. Its outreach to the city and beyond is a building block for its future as it invites a wider community to participate in its life and function.

Time does not stand still. The nature of prayer and worship has evolved across the centuries to match the march of time. Our understanding of God too requires us to challenge ourselves, to renew our faith and to find new ways of honouring our Christian mission that

are meaningful to the diversity, richness and uniqueness found in God's creation.

This strategic plan sets out the Mission and Values of the Cathedral, along with our ambitions for the coming period across four key areas. These comprise:

- Celebrating God's Love through Worship, Welcome and Witness
- Sharing through Engagement, Hospitality and Outreach
- Learning & Developing our Governance, and our people
- Good stewardship

This high-level plan will be pursued through an annual planning process to guide our actions, resource our initiatives and record progress on a yearly basis.

The Cathedral welcomes you whether you are an intrepid visitor, or a person in search of a quiet sacred space for calm and reflection, or someone with unanswered questions, or simply seeking prayerful participation in our services. Reflecting God's love, we wish to embrace all those who come to the Cathedral and to reach beyond. Linked to this primary purpose is our duty to maintain and preserve the Cathedral for future generations.

This strategy statement sets out our high-level plans for the coming period accordingly.

I commend it to you.

## Mission and Values

By way of context, it may be helpful to reflect on the wider Anglican witness in relation to mission. Sometime ago, the Anglican Consultative Council developed a mission statement for the global Anglican Communion.

It identified five marks of Anglican mission, and these comprise:

1. **TELL** - To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom
2. **TEACH** - To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. **TEND** - To respond to human need by loving service
4. **TRANSFORM** - To seek to transform unjust structures of society
5. **TREASURE** - To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain the life of the earth.

These five marks have been adopted by provinces, dioceses, and parishes around the global Anglican Communion. They assume significance here as they have helped inform us on the board of Christ Church Cathedral in understanding our mission and, quite critically of the values which underpin all that we do.

Our understanding of mission and values is therefore expressed as follows:

*a) Our Mission*

To be a welcoming, sacred space and place of prayer,  
with the love of God at its heart.

*b) Our Values*

*Faithfulness*

*Integrity*

*Welcome*

*Stewardship*

We understand and express our values thus:

**Faithfulness** to our belief in God, to the grace and dignity of every human being, to our beliefs and prayerful mission, and to our enduring choral and liturgical traditions.

**Integrity** in all our dealings with one another, with visitors, and with all with whom we interact in the course of undertaking our work on behalf of the Cathedral.

**Welcome** to all who visit to pray, or simply to experience the richness of the Cathedral in its architecture, history or artefacts. Warmly embracing diversity and the richness of God's creation in all.

**Good stewardship** in all our affairs – be it financial, care of our built heritage, our historic artefacts, our services to others and our obligations to care for the environment.

## In service of our Mission

We undertake to pursue the mission of the Cathedral across four areas - two principal and two ancillary

- **Celebrating God's Love** through *Faith and Worship*
- **Sharing** through *Engagement, Hospitality and Outreach*
- **Learning & Developing** *our Governance, and our people*
- **Good stewardship** of our *finances and our heritage - buildings, artefacts etc*

### **Celebrating God's Love**

The love of God shown to all of creation in Jesus Christ stands at the heart of all that we do at Christ Church.

The Dean and Chapter lead on our daily pattern of offices and services, where we both share and explore God's love in sacramental and pastoral ways. The Daily Eucharist is the central act of the Church's worship and our long choral tradition of almost 1,000 years of singing God's praise, both in support of celebrations and offices, is one of the things we are best known for and remains at the heart of what we do.

Formal prayers, occasional prayers, blessings for pilgrims, the opportunity to light candles, pray with icons and pray with a priest, are all the exercise of the ministry of sharing. Longer encounters and discussions with visitors and opportunities to discuss the Bible and theology and pray together are where we can explore God's love as a journeying group of people, those who follow Christ and those who are on the threshold of the Church. The welcome that we offer to all visitors, and the spiritual and practical support that we offer to those who ask, are key parts of these ministries. We also share God's love by working with established charities and this work is part of our very being.

In the future we will look towards maintaining the continuity of prayer and spiritual ministries between our services for those many visitors who come between the times of services, yet

still seek a spiritual experience in this holy place.

Over the period of this plan, we are also committed to working with, caring for and ministering to those outside our precincts.

### **Sharing** through *Engagement, Hospitality and Outreach*

Christ Church Cathedral welcomes around 250 000 visitors annually. Many come for a moment of peace and reflection, others to marvel at the cathedral's architecture and discover its stories. Others come to simply pray and delight in the splendour of the great choral and liturgical traditions of the Cathedral.

Our intention is to be an inclusive space for all – whether in service the city of Dublin, the wider United Dioceses as well as for individuals and groups, even those from far beyond our shores who come to visit. We aim to bring together people of all faiths and none and provide a warm welcome to those who choose to visit the Cathedral.

We offer an audio guide in five languages, Irish sign language and an audio descriptive tour for the visually impaired. Our new bronze model of the Cathedral uses braille as well as simple English and has been installed for wheelchair access on all sides. We offer workshops for families and individuals at low or no cost that aim to draw new audiences into our spaces. We stream our services for those who cannot come in person and extend hospitality to all in attendance after Eucharist every Sunday.

Through engagement and hospitality therefore we share our building, its history and heritage, and the faith enacted within it. By providing a place of sanctuary from the pressures of modern living, where people can feel a sense of connection, inclusion, and inspiration, we aim to ensure that the cathedral retains its spiritual ethos and a civic vibrancy across the decades ahead.

Perhaps the greatest challenge we face is in outreach: that is to say in engaging with those whom we do not know, who are perhaps wary of coming to our door, and who may benefit



from us, and we from them.

Our challenge therefore over the period of this plan is to develop new ways to reach out to communities, institutions, and places beyond the comfort zone of visitors, worshippers, and familiar faces. Our purpose is to build our relationships with local communities through school and community groups, and to deepen our partnerships with civic and cultural institutions, as well as with commercial and other interests.

## **Learning and Development**

### *Governance*

Following on from an independent review of governance arrangements, the Cathedral has embarked on a series of reforms so as to renew and strengthen its board capabilities and effectiveness. Integral to this is the proposed incorporation of the Cathedral Board. This will establish Christ Church Cathedral as a company limited by guarantee; at present it is an unincorporated association. It is envisaged that, over the period of this Plan, and subject to General Synod agreement, that the incorporation will be enacted.

A critical challenge for the board is to learn new ways of doing things which meets the demands of contemporary life as well as the requirements of good governance. Central to such change is the management of risk. The Cathedral has embarked on extensive risk assessment and management across its various activities. It is intended that, over the period of this plan, the strategic risk management process will be further deepened and embedded as well as subject to periodic independent critical review.

### *Our People*

The cathedral employs fifty people in diverse roles. In keeping with our Christian values, we foster an open and collegiate workplace. We encourage employees to use their gifts and talents both in the service of the organisation and for personal fulfilment. We are committed to an ethos of life-long learning and ongoing improvement in our people and our systems.

At executive level, the staffing profile within the Cathedral will continue to evolve to reflect

the specialisms increasingly essential to meet the challenges of contemporary life, be they in IT, Finance Compliance, Education, Communications etc. We would plan to review and strengthen our staffing so as to meet the challenges of the marketplace and staff turnover.

## **Good stewardship**

We are mindful of our responsibilities in relation to the care of the Cathedral buildings and grounds, its heritage items, as well as careful stewardship of Financial and other resources which are entrusted to us.

### *Cathedral buildings, grounds, and assets*

As an aging building on an ancient site, the Cathedral and its precincts require ongoing significant investment and maintenance. This is fundamental our stewardship of Christ Church as a place of worship and prayer, as well as a civic resource to the city. Over the period of this strategy, and integral to the initiatives to mark the millennium of the founding of the Cathedral, a Millennium Plan will be prepared which will prioritise projects to undertaken, as well as the appropriate funding streams to prudently finance such initiatives. The following broad categories present:

- Major Capital projects
- Building Repairs & Enhancement
- Services Upgrades

To enable an ambitious programme of investment it is essential that we build new partnerships across corporate and civic bodies so as to support such projects. This will be integral to the Millennium Plan.

### *Archives and Artifacts*

Christ Church cathedral has custody of a significant body of heritage items. These include printed books and archives, church plate, portraits and works of art, vestments and altar frontals, and furnishings.

Our responsibilities for good stewardship range from ensuring their safety from damage, to creating an up to date inventory of all such materials, to ensuring that these heritage items are used to the benefit of the Cathedral and its wider communities in publications, lectures exhibitions and workshops.

Over the period of this Strategy Statement, it is planned to put in place an up to date inventory of all moveable heritage items, (informed by international good practice). In addition, it is proposed to advance an integrated heritage/communications strategy so as to showcase these treasures better by engaging with the wider community as well as cultural and educational institutions.

### *Finance*

The Cathedral will continue to meet its obligations as a registered charity by prudent and responsible management of the Cathedral's resources.

The Cathedral complies with accounting and reporting good practice, and this will continue. The Cathedral will seek to maintain adequate reserves to guard against financial shocks and to provide a buffer against unexpected fabric issues that may arise. This will be achieved by delivering budgets targeting modest surpluses.

Diversified income streams have been a key component of the Cathedral's financial strategy, and this will continue to be a priority.

An ambitious programme of fundraising and development in support of our mission and fabric will be set out as part of our plans to celebrate the Cathedral's Millennium.

### *Sustainability*

A commitment to sustainability will underpin all our plans. We will work with suppliers who employ sustainable practices and take steps to reduce our usage, waste and energy consumption.

As one of the few organisations with an outdoor space in the city, that is open to the public, it is fitting that we revisit our plans to embark upon phase two of the landscaping of the cathedral's grounds which were paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As this project returns to the Board's attention, biodiversity will be a leading principle.

We have a duty to care for God's creation.

## Conclusion

We are mindful that we are new to this formalised strategy making process and that this statement is finite in its reach and ambition. But it is important, not least in challenging us to revisit and set out our core beliefs and values, as well as requiring us work together to identify and agree medium-term outcomes. It is also quite critical in informing wider communities and stakeholders of our plans, and indeed of the challenges we face.

As mentioned earlier, alongside this strategy statement, annual business planning within the Cathedral will be formalised for each of the four areas and progress reported on in the Cathedral's Annual Reports.

Our prayerful wish is that this document strengthens our purpose, deepens our accountability, and engages the interest and support of the many whom the Cathedral is privileged to serve.



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