

# Rooted in Christ Built on Christ

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL  
VISION ACTION PLAN, 2020–2025

COMPILED BY THE VISIONING TASK FORCE  
ADOPTED BY THE VESTRY, FEBRUARY 15, 2020

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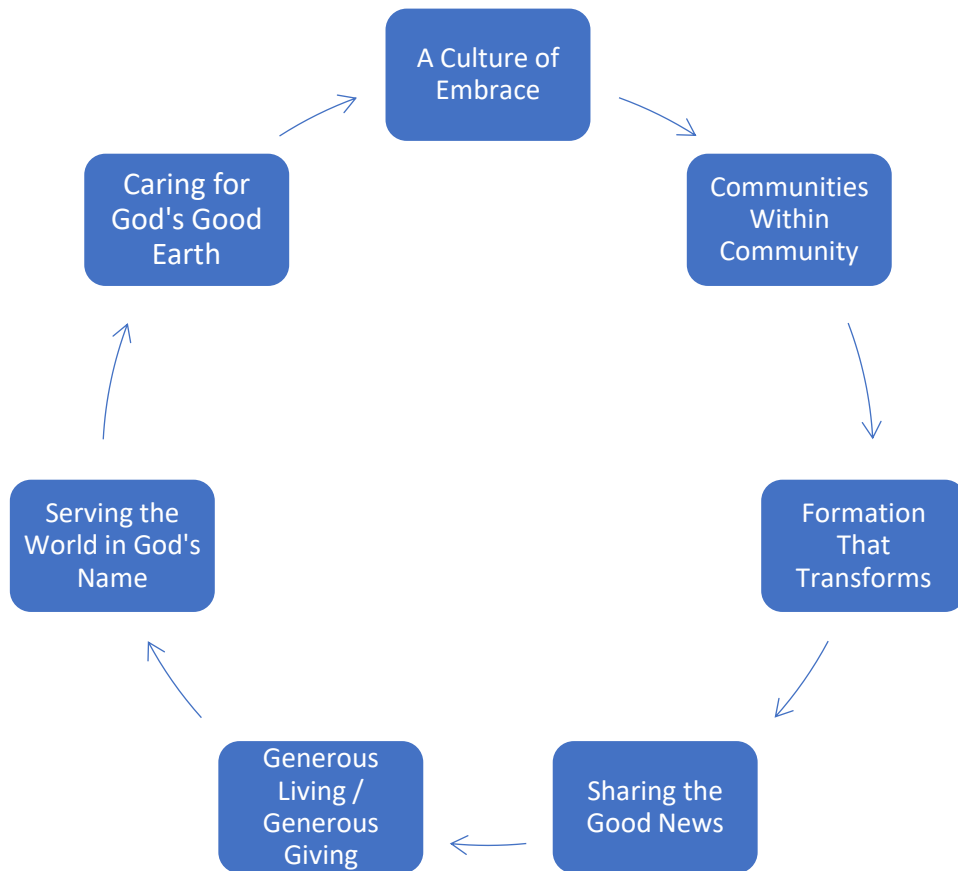
“Let your roots go down into Christ, and let your lives be built on Christ, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.” (Colossians 2:7)

Six years ago, Christ Church Cathedral developed a vision action plan under the title “A Future Filled with Hope.” In the intervening years we have faithfully executed that plan, and it has served us well. The Hines Center for Spirituality and Prayer, our Sunday evening Celtic Eucharist—“The Well,” a full-time Canon for Welcome and Evangelism, our Neighborhoods Initiative, and an enhanced pastoral care program are all direct outgrowths of that plan. With “A Future Filled with Hope” completed and the subsequent culmination of a successful capital campaign to restore our historic campus and set the financial foundation, now is the time to reflect again on God’s plan for Christ Church Cathedral.

This five-year Vision Action Plan is the culmination of several months of work by all eleven of the Cathedral councils (plus two ad hoc committees to represent the music and youth ministries), facilitated by members of the Visioning Task Force and an outside consultant. In addition to the councils’ own deliberations, a parish-wide survey was undertaken to ensure that all parishioners could bring their thoughts to the table. In the course of this work we reaffirmed our Cathedral’s mission to **“proclaim the love of Jesus Christ through word and deed to the parish, the diocese, and the downtown community”**; we re-evaluated and updated our guiding principles; we reflected prayerfully on the origins, history, and purpose of each council—clearly defining their “why”; we assessed and graded close to 100 individual ministries and programs for their fit and effectiveness with respect to each council’s “why” and the Cathedral’s guiding principles; and we proposed 78 possible ministry initiatives and an equal number of modifications and improvements to existing ministries.

### The Vision Action Plan: “Rooted in Christ, Built on Christ

From all the ideas put forward by the councils and individual parishioners, guided by our principles, the Visioning Task Force synthesized seven strategic themes that will guide our programming, investment of resources, and development for the next five years. Each of these themes is generative of the next, in a way that suggests a continuous circle. These themes provide both a **rudder** (what are the things we should do?) and a **filter** (what are the things we cannot do?) for our planning of ministries and programs.



## A Culture of Embrace

In Mark's gospel we are exhorted to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to *all* creation." (Mark 16:15) The Cathedral will be an open, loving, and diverse parish that embraces all who wish to know God in this place.

- We will embrace and seek to understand those whose faith differs from our own.
- Through education, dialog, and engagement with the community around us, we will actively address the attitudes that divide the human family and seek to thwart God's love, including anti-Semitism, racism, and homophobia.

## Communities Within Community

The Cathedral is a large faith community, drawing parishioners from many geographic areas, demographics, affinities, and mile markers on the faith journey.

- We will provide opportunities for parishioners to gather in intentional small groups to grow in relationship with one another and Christ, toward the goal of every Cathedral parishioner becoming involved in community at Christ Church.

- Program initiatives may include new activities to meet the needs of underserved groups and to reach out actively to welcome and embrace parishioners in existing groups.

## Formation That Transforms

In addition to our vibrant adult education programs that offer many ways for us to engage our intellect, many of us also desire formation that transforms the heart. St. Paul says in Romans, "Be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God." (Romans 12:2) The prophet Ezekiel promises, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." (Ezekiel 36:26)

- We will provide formation that transforms both the mind and the heart, so that God's spirit can work within us and make us disciples.
- To do this, we will expand our educational programs to include spiritual practices and formation of the whole person. We will promote deep spiritual connection and engagement in existing ministries and small groups.

## Sharing the Good News

Our own joyful response to the transforming influence of God in our lives is to share joy with others. We call this Evangelism, and it is a direct outgrowth of community, spiritual discipline, and formation.

- Building on our culture of welcome, we will empower our community to share the Good News of Jesus in all areas of our lives: our work, our play, and our homes.
- Evangelism is largely about storytelling: the story of God's work in the world. We will create spaces in Cathedral programs for all to share their stories, share their joy, and share the story of God's love.

## Generous Living, Generous Giving

We believe a natural outcome of our faithful joy is not only sharing our stories and experiences but also sharing our resources—our time, energy, and money. Just as a sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward grace, generosity is an outward and visible sign of our deepening faith. Recognizing that the Cathedral's mission requires substantial human and financial resources, we will encourage generosity in our parishioners.

- We will be proactive in addressing changes in Cathedral members' generational giving patterns, seeking to educate all parishioners to be faithful and joyous givers.
- We will develop new opportunities and innovative methods for giving, enlarge the Cathedral endowment, and explore other revenue streams to support the Cathedral's mission.

## Serving the World in God's Name

The visioning process revealed a desire to focus both inside and outside the Cathedral, as our deepening faith and generous living impel us to extend God's grace in the world. With servant hands and hearts of all ages, we will put faith into action, serving the world in God's name.

- Within our community, we will address the pastoral needs of Cathedral parishioners, assuring that no one navigates life's journey alone.

- For many years the Beacon—first building it and then strengthening it financially and programmatically—has been a primary focus of our outreach efforts. In addition to that ongoing good work, we will focus outside our Cathedral campus to partner with other charitable organizations in the city to amplify and enhance our outreach to Houston's immigrant communities, the homeless, and others in need.

## Caring for God's Good Earth

In Form IV of the Prayers of the People, we ask God to “give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory.” We recognize that stewardship and service must extend to the natural world over which God grants us dominion (Genesis 1:26-31) and which is our most precious and finite resource.

- As a cathedral church in a sprawling urban landscape of concrete and metal, we will work to green the world around us.
- We will minimize our carbon footprint, use green spaces as reminders of God's good creation, and educate our congregation on how best to steward the earth.

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St. Paul wrote to the Christians at Colossae, “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him. Let your roots go down into Christ, and let your lives be built on Christ, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.” (Colossians 2:6-7) As Christ Church Cathedral moves into the nineteenth decade of its life, this new Vision Action Plan seeks to grow deep and transformative roots of faith in every Cathedral parishioner, so that our lives built on Christ will overflow with abundant joy, generosity, and gratitude. With that abundance, we will spread the Good News, build the kingdom, and care for God's good earth. This is our vision.