



THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST JAMES  
PRIORITIES FOR A TIME OF TRANSITION  
Vestry 2022 to Vestry 2025

*An authentic experience of God through  
worship, opportunities for discipleship,  
and service to the community*

## Introduction

For 225 years, Anglican Canadians have been gathering in this part of Toronto to faithfully serve God and neighbour. That original gathering would become St. James Parish and then St. James Cathedral, occupying a succession of buildings until the glorious Cathedral we know today was completed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Cathedral congregation and the City of Toronto, then York, grew up together, always sharing a relationship of mutual support. While much has changed, the core of what the Cathedral stands for has remained steady and strong.

What we Anglicans call “the Summary of the Law” in our liturgies has been an overarching guide through the decades: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, all your soul and all your strength; and love your neighbour as yourself”. These words continue to shape us even today.

We stand on this busy corner and in this old neighbourhood as a constant reminder that God is with us, calling us to worship, love and service. As we pass through this pivotal time of pandemic and a significant anniversary, members of the Cathedral have met together to think and pray about how we are called to be a community that serves Jesus Christ at this time and in this place.

In the pages that follow, you will see the results of intense listening, praying and consulting over a two-year period. What you will find is a set of Core Values, Priorities and Priority Actions that will shape our ministry and decision making as we emerge from the pandemic with a renewed commitment to serve God and neighbour.

We are grateful to have had this opportunity to work with the congregation in this way, and we look forward to this exciting time and next chapter in the history of St. James Cathedral.

The Visioning Working Group  
February 2022

## Dean's Remarks

I can recall a time when the most common word used in visioning was “relevant”. In recent years, the word “authentic” is often used and speaks more to what the unchurched and de-churched are seeking spiritually – a real expression and experience of God. I believe we are in a time when both words are important. We are most relevant when we are most authentic to the core teachings of the gospel and our vocation as witnesses to the love of God made known to us in Jesus Christ. Now it is more important than ever for us to be authentic expressions of the reign of God in the world, by working hard to be a community that expresses divine peace, joy, love and hope.

As a community, we are in a time of both pandemic recovery and significant challenge that pre-dates COVID-19. The gifts of this time have included an increase in our self-reflection regarding who we are and why we do what we do, as well as an increased interest in those around us about what we have to offer as a faith community. If we are clear, faithful and authentic in what we have to offer, this will be a time of great opportunity for us.

Since the pandemic is not over and we continue to rebuild our focus and identity as a Christian community and Diocesan Cathedral, this report is more like a bridge than a long-term destination. It will carry us through our emergence out of the pandemic and onto the path to stabilizing our various resources. It contains what we have heard from members and other similar faith communities and experts in the field of congregational development.

We have heard that people are longing for the nurturing in three areas: they want something for the head, something for the heart and something for the hand. In other words, a thoughtful approach to the Gospel that deepens one's relationship to God and provides opportunities for Christian service. We have heard that now is the time to strengthen and rebuild our core identity as a faith community and how we live that faith in practical ways. *Who are we? Why are we? What are we called to do?* We have also heard, partly because of our current constraints, that any visioning plan needs to act both as a filter that helps us make decisions and a rudder that guides us along the way. We have heard that the key question at this time is “why”, and that the answer is found in our vocation as Christians as well as understanding and embodying our core business as a faith community.

In 2022, we will celebrate being a centre of prayer and ministry in this city and diocese for 225 years! Anniversaries are always a time of looking back and looking ahead. This report enables us to refocus our attention on the core of who we are, and to engage in the mission of Christ with renewal and intention. We are in a new and exciting chapter in our story together and this report helps frame what comes next in that story. The pandemic and our specific challenges as a community are helping us to refocus on the first principles of our identity: our purpose and vocation as both a Christian community and the Cathedral Church of this Diocese and the unfolding of God's reign among us and through us. My prayer is that all open our eyes, hearts and spirits to work together to strengthen the core of this great place as God leads us from chapter to chapter in the story of faith. God bless us all.

*Dean Stephen Vail*

# CORE VALUES

The priorities and aspirations for our future begin with an understanding of whom we feel God has called us to be; how God has shaped and is continuing to shape our identity, and how we express this through the ministries and mission at St. James Cathedral.

We asked probing and evocative questions in consultations with the congregation such as: Who are we? Why is St. James Cathedral important to us? and How are we connecting with our neighbours? Through this, we heard **six core values**.

1. Authenticity in connections with the Divine (Authentic)

A purposeful congregation where people can encounter Jesus, grow in discipleship, and participate in God's mission for the world.

2. Community and relationships (Relational)

Reflecting on the needs within the community and creating a warm and inviting environment where all feel welcome to worship, serve their neighbours and experience God's grace.

3. Anglican identity and heritage (Anglican)

Through the Anglican theology of abundance and generosity, demonstrate leadership, volunteer, provide hospitality and generous financial stewardship through the personal and collective.

4. Inclusivity and diversity (Inclusive)

Intentionally welcoming inclusive, and diverse in church membership, leadership, systems and structures, so that peace and justice are revealed in order that all people may share the banquet God has promised.

5. Being of service through outreach and advocacy (Service)

A respected voice and action-oriented advocate for social, economic and environmental justice within the church and our ecumenical and interfaith partners, the city and the diocese.

6. Learning (Learning)

A leading authority and a resource on all aspects of spirituality and worship, nourishing the need to find a deeper understanding of the teachings of Jesus.

In this transitional time in the life of St James, these values will take expression in the Vestry 2022-Vestry 2025 priorities, ministries and missional endeavours.

## TIMELY OPPORTUNITIES – CRITICAL PRIORITIES

The pandemic has affected St James profoundly in ways we know and in ways we don't yet fully understand. It is imperative that we take action to restore and restabilize the Cathedral ministry. Some Vestry 2022 to Vestry 2025 priorities focus on core ministry areas such as rebuilding and growing the congregation and deepening our stewardship practices. There are also new, timely opportunities arising directly from the pandemic experience. These include developing and integrating hybrid worship and programming (i.e. both on-line and in-person), and perhaps most relevantly becoming a place where people, exhausted and shaken by living through a pandemic, can find a safe place to talk about their spiritual life and find ways to make a meaningful contribution to building a kinder and more just society.

Creating a plan based on priorities is a different experience for the Cathedral where we are used to more classic visioning and strategic planning methods. In a time of re-stabilizing and rebuilding, where the full effects of the pandemic and our financial issues are still unknown, these priorities provide a compass rather than a road map. We can see clearly where we should be aiming, and will expect flexibility, experimentation and course corrections as we work to express these priorities in our ministries and mission.

These affirm and focus the [INTERIM STRATEGIC PLAN](#) adopted by Vestry in 2020.

## 2020 INTERIM STRATEGIC PLAN

### 1. Sound Financial Stewardship

Practice excellence in stewardship, working to achieve financial health by better balancing revenue and programs

Restore financial sustainability through multi-year financial planning, programs that connect with young people, and engaging all members to contribute generously and regularly

### 2. Inspiring Worship

Strengthened relationship to the Diocese as its Cathedral Church through liturgy, music and events.

Attract new people to the community through liturgical innovation, openness and welcome, and excellence in preaching and teaching

### 3. Equipping Lay Leadership to Engage the Community

Hone our skills on being a welcoming, attractional community that knows its neighbours of all walks of life and engages with them

Encourage greater participation by parishioners in all we do

## 5 PRIORITIES FOR 2022-25

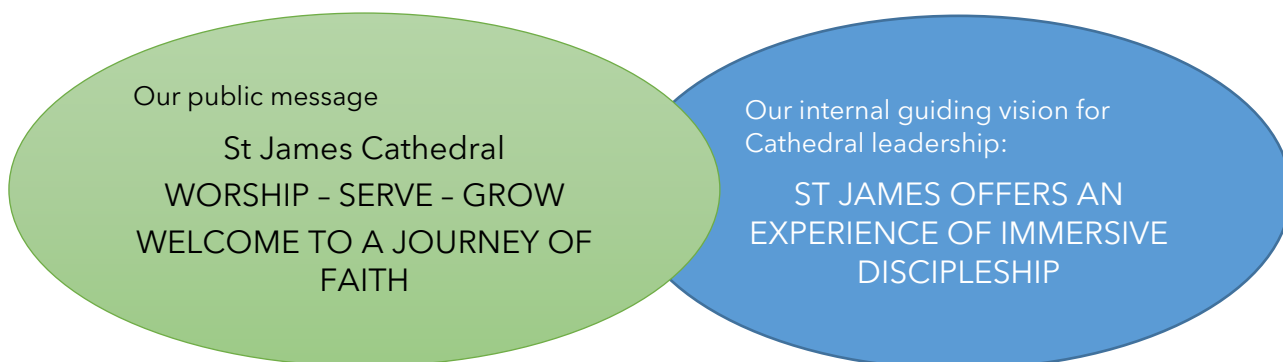
*A cathedral rests not on a theory but on earth... a cathedral is also a creation imagined by the human spirit in order to affirm an aspiration and a faith, and as such it is used and valued every day.*

David Edwards, Provost of Southwark

As a Cathedral we have the responsibility and call to faithfully discern our identity; who we are as a parish church and as a special place in the life and witness of the Diocese. Our identity is both rooted in the strengths of our tradition and history as well as emerging in response to a changing context for ministry and mission. The global pandemic has changed our context in ways that are only beginning to be seen. With churches everywhere and with society we are called to serve, we find ourselves in an extended process of watching and waiting for our new identity to emerge.

As we journey through this transitional, liminal time, these priorities define the primary focus for St James Cathedral's activities and resourcing:

1. Rebuild and grow the congregation paying attention to all ages.
2. Growing strong personal and congregational stewardship practices to restore the financial health of the Cathedral
3. Reestablish and expand programming for spiritual nurture to address the spiritual searching that has been awakened in people through the pandemic.
4. Expand our capacity to provide excellent hybrid worship and learning
5. Offer opportunities for people to express their faith through service and advocacy, locally, nationally and internationally, attending to the wellbeing of humankind



## STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON

Through a rich history and tradition of excellence in worship, service and programming and through our membership and leadership, God has gifted St James with considerable strengths. These are the roots of the vision and priorities set out in this plan.

### Inspiring worship and music

While remaining committed to offering the best of the Anglican tradition liturgically and musically, we seek to enhance the variety of our offerings to God and the community. We will implement different styles of worship and music that reflect the diversity of the Anglican Communion and City of Toronto.

### Service to those in need

We are committed to serving the most vulnerable of the city, mindful of the dignity of every human being. We will continue to enhance our relationship with other helping agencies, businesses and civic officials, through the Drop-In, and assisting with the settlement of refugees through the Cathedral-Community Refugee Committee and enhanced interfaith relations.

### Educational programming

God calls each of us into ministry and service, and we are committed to ongoing gifts discernment and education of the laity in all its diversity. We seek to help the baptized understand who they are as God's people and how God is calling them individually and us collectively to offer our lives and resources in service.

### Holy space

We are committed to being open to the community to enter, rest and pray. We will seek ways to connect the wider community and diocese to this holy place or worship, nurture and service with open doors, hearts and minds, seeking to welcome the seeker on the journey of faith.

## OUR PRIORITIES

Over the summer of 2021, all Cathedral committee chairs were asked to provide input into this visioning and priority setting process. A questionnaire was sent out asking the following:

1. What is your ministry called to do and why?
2. Do you think there is more your ministry can/should do?
3. What will enable your ministry to accomplish some of the aspirational goals you have?
4. Do you have any other ideas for your ministry which you would like to share with us post-pandemic?

The Visioning Working Group received a wealth of responses. The priorities set forward for the next 2 years of the Cathedral's ministry emerged from this material, what was heard in the listening groups and learned through our investigations into flourishing Cathedrals and larger churches.

In the pages that follow you will find a set of Five Priorities, in no particular order, that will guide the Cathedral's mission and ministry between Vestry 2022 and Vestry 2025.

Attached to each Priority is a set of Action Items that has been born out of this consultative process. There are thirteen in total.

Following this full list of Priorities and Actions is your Cathedral Council's decision on which five actions to implement first. An Implementation Team will be formed out of Council members to enact and measure the Priorities and Actions as we move forward in God's call to us through Jesus Christ.

We look forward to this exciting chapter in our history as we emerge from pandemic and transition. We encourage you to pray for the Cathedral Community and to fully engage as a member of it and a follower of the Christ.

This phase of visioning and planning has finished and now it is handed to the very gifted congregation and leadership to tend and grow it.



<b>PRIORITY 1</b>	Rebuild and grow the congregation paying attention to all ages and elements of the community
<b>COMMENTARY</b>	<p>The next 2 years will be a time of recovery from the pandemic. We will focus on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reconnecting with members of the congregation of all ages and rebuilding our worshipping community, programs &amp; ministries and strengthening our unique identity in the Diocese</li> <li>2. Developing programs and activities to attract young adults, the largest demographic group living in the neighbourhoods closest to the Cathedral.</li> </ol>
<b>SCRIPTURE</b>	Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you ... (Matthew 28:19-20)

RESULTING ACTIONS (in order of priority)

Expand our presence in the Diocese to become a centre of learning, worship and Diocesan life and not simply a stage for Diocesan events
Embrace an outward looking approach to ministry that includes a clear communications strategy, intentional new members ministry, and small groups for fellowship and learning
Ensure that families and seekers feel welcome by creating a service that is less formal, more family friendly, and includes children's programs (possibly at 9:00 am)

<b>PRIORITY 2</b>	Grow strong personal and congregational stewardship practices to restore the financial health of the Cathedral
<b>COMMENTARY</b>	As our ability to depend on rental and cemetery income has decreased, we will need to focus increasingly on growing an understanding of personal responsibility, stewardship and the joy of giving to ensure quality programming and worship
<b>SCRIPTURE</b>	Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:7)

RESULTING ACTIONS (in order of priority)

Continue to stress the need for increased congregational giving and focus on stewardship education as a priority
Lay the groundwork for a capital campaign that leverages the wider community

<b>PRIORITY 3</b>	Re-establish and expand programming for spiritual nurture to address the spiritual searching that has been awakened in people through the pandemic
<b>COMMENTARY</b>	New people are with us every week, some as visitors and some looking for a parish. This is a prime opportunity to make real connections with them in ways that will help them grow in Christ and participate in the life of the Cathedral
<b>SCRIPTURE</b>	When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, (Jeremiah 29:13)

RESULTING ACTIONS (in order of priority)

Create a safe space for seekers/enquirers to ask questions and gather for worship and fellowship apart from our main services
Amplify our public voice as a place that speaks to the human condition where people, in the city and diocese, can safely come with their questions, especially during difficult times
Focus educational programming on Christian formation, paying attention to all stages of the life of faith

<b>PRIORITY 4</b>	Excellence in worship, both in-person and digital, recognizing our unique place as both a parish church and the Diocesan Cathedral
<b>COMMENTARY</b>	With our worship and programming now increasingly available to those outside our walls, we must be mindful of the wider community of Christians we are called to serve, as well as the unique nature of our community as parish and cathedral
<b>SCRIPTURE</b>	Sing praises to the LORD, for God has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth. (Isaiah 12:5)

#### RESULTING ACTIONS (in order of priority)

Ensure that all places along the journey of faith are respected in how we worship together: seekers, families, adherents, the life-long faithful, and traditionalists
Enhance the truth that liturgy is the “work of the people”, through education, training and increased lay participation
Continue to rebuild the music program in ways that honour the best of the Anglican tradition while encouraging local musicians and contemporary expressions of worship in our various worship services

<b>PRIORITY 5</b>	Opportunities for people to express their faith through service and advocacy.
<b>COMMENTARY</b>	The cathedral has a long history of serving those in need. We know this is an essential part of what it means to represent the love of Christ to those around us. We wish to be a place where people can find ways to a difference through our ministries. Th wellbeing of humankind and the created world is central to our mission.
<b>SCRIPTURE</b>	The gifts God gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, (Ephesians 4:11,12)

RESULTING ACTIONS (in order of priority)

Develop a stronger lay ministry that allows more lay leadership. This will involve gifts discernment, matching giftedness to ministries, training and ongoing support.
Strengthen links with the neighbouring community, other churches and the wider Diocese to become intentionally missional and outward looking in our understanding of ministry.

## WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

Here are the first five actions that have been selected through consultation with the Clergy, Wardens and Cathedral Council.

1. Embrace an outward looking approach to ministry that includes a clear communications strategy, intentional new members ministry, and small groups for fellowship and learning.

2. Expand our presence in the Diocese to become a centre of learning, worship and diocesan life and not simply a stage for diocesan events.

3. Amplify our public voice as a place that speaks to the human condition where people, in the city and diocese, can safely come with their questions, especially during difficult times.

4. Develop a stronger lay ministry that allows more lay leadership. This will involve gifts discernment, matching giftedness to ministries, training and ongoing support.

5. Continue to stress the need for increased congregational giving and focus on stewardship education as a priority.

## A LITANY FOR THE RENEWAL OF ST. JAMES CATHEDRAL

*We begin with prayer, move forward in prayer, and act in faith. We encourage you to use the prayers below, written by Vicar Stephen Fields and Carol Kysela as we engage in this essential and exciting work as God's people at this time and in this place.*



Almighty God, who calls us to look to the future with confidence and hope, and with whose help we will seek to remain grounded in the life and love of Christ and faithful to your church,

Help us to continue to share in your life-giving mission by participating in the renewal and further growth of our community and the family of our Cathedral Church of St. James.

**Lord, renew your church, beginning with me.**

Help us to discern the leading of your Spirit, to listen to and learn from each other, and to work together to discover ways to identify and employ the necessary gifts and resources to make our renewal and growth possible.

**Lord, renew your church, beginning with me.**

Help us, by the empowering force of your life-giving Spirit, to discover who You are calling us to be, Your beloved, a people desirous of learning more about You and our faith, a voice that speaks life and joy to every human condition, and a community that offers a welcome and safe refuge for those who seek comfort and acceptance

**Lord, renew your church, beginning with me.**

Help us to be generous in using our diverse gifts, talents, and resources in all that we do in the world and in the church, and when we gather to worship may the music and devotion we offer enable us to worship in the beauty of holiness and holiness of your beauty.

**Lord, renew your church, beginning with me.**

Help us to be always mindful that when our service of worship ends that our service in the world continues as we respond to the opportunities available to us that enable us to make a difference in the lives of Your people.

**Lord, renew your church, beginning with me.**

This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, whom we follow and who lives with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen**