



Strategic Plan 2025-2035

Inspiring life in all its fullness.



Canterbury Cathedral

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Last updated: July 2025



A message from The Dean

Welcome to this new vision and strategic plan for Canterbury Cathedral, which will shape and govern our work and witness in the coming ten years.

It has grown out of a series of consultation events with our communities and valued partners. Through this we have listened to the wisdom and truths which underpin the unique identity and purpose of this Christian community at the heart of Canterbury and the Anglican Communion.

These have been shaped by the stories of our past, and run as threads through our history, to their modern expression today; golden threads such as faith, worship, prayer, pilgrimage, community, commitment, welcome, service to those in need, mother to the Anglican Communion of Christian faith across the world, and the seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Whilst this Cathedral building has changed and developed through time and stewardship, it remains dedicated to Christ.

In these times when the church as a whole is being called to be simpler, humbler and bolder, it is to the identity of Christ as the Good Shepherd that we look to guide, encourage, and nurture us in our vision and endeavours so that we may enable Christ's mission to 'inspire life in all its fullness'.

At the heart of this strategic plan lies the simple rules and values of the Benedictine Community, who shaped their life and worship around service to Christ and His world. We have returned to them anew and brought fresh understanding, in order to invigorate our commitment, service, welcome and witness to Christ for our times.

“At the heart of this strategic plan lies the simple rules and values of the Benedictine Community, who shaped their life and worship around service to Christ and His world.”



Central to this is to enable our shared life and this holy place to be accessible for all who come here as visitors, pilgrims and those who seek belonging and sanctuary; where ramps, lifts and good signage make the building safe and navigable. New interpretation retells our stories of faith that have shaped the community here and across the Anglican Communion. The figures and events of the past will be unfolded for a new generation; both those which we know and love, as well as addressing the difficult stories of slavery and the shadows of colonialism.

This desire to be accessible extends outwards in developing a range of activities which will increase our congregations, volunteers and participants, and nurture our connections with our partners to address exclusion and injustice.

Canterbury Cathedral has ever been a holy place where the building, worship, learning and music have enabled many to sense and experience the divine in their lives.

As we move forward into a new expression of our ministry and vision, we seek to make the following pledges:

As a place of pilgrimage, learning and worship, we will inspire people afresh and support them in their journeys of wisdom and faith.

As stewards of this building and environment, we pledge to ensure that our carbon impact on God's world is zero, whilst preserving the stone and traditions of this sacred space, for generations to come.

As we turn outward in our service and mission, we pledge to support local business and provide a voice for local charities, so that all may flourish in this city through collaboration, compassion and service.

As a centre of the arts and human expression, we pledge to encourage new works which engage with the issues of our day and shine a light of faith onto them.

As one of the foremost heritage attractions in Kent and across the world, we pledge to run our organisation with efficiency, dedication and renewal.

We are just beginning on an exciting new journey, and we invite you to join with us as we set off on this path.

Guided by the Good Shepherd, we believe and trust that we do not go alone, but will be given strength and commitment, as we seek to inspire life in all its fullness.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David Monteith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the bottom of the name.

David Monteith, Dean of Canterbury



The Story of the Good Shepherd

The image of Christ the Good Shepherd is foundational to the life and mission of Canterbury Cathedral. It is within the meaning, significance and history of this image that we seek to find inspiration for Canterbury Cathedral today, to care for the sheep of our time; to seek them out, and accompany them when they are lost; to provide safety, shelter and a place of welcome; to nourish them, and help them find the resources needed; to offer leadership, both within the life of the church, and in our service to the world.

In his life and teachings, Jesus used many ideas to describe himself and our relationship with God. One of the most enduring and beloved is that of the Good Shepherd. It is in chapter 10 of St John's gospel that Jesus unfolds his thinking and understanding of what it means for him to be the Good Shepherd; he is the one who cares, leads, searches out, protects and directs his people, as a shepherd does his sheep. Taking upon himself the image and work of one of the lowliest members of society at the time, Jesus transfigures it into an icon of service and loving care. It is therefore not surprising that down the ages the church has described the role of those who embody this spiritual leadership and pastoral care in terms of a shepherd; presenting them with a crook to remind them of this office of lowly service to the members of the church and the world.

It was a tradition followed by Gregory the Great who, in his time as Pope, focused on the shepherding role of the bishop as a pastor (Latin for shepherd) and influenced monasticism.





It was Gregory who sent Augustine and a retinue of 40 or so monks to re-establish Christianity in England in 597, after the fire of faith had burned low for many years following the Fall of Roman Britain. Welcomed and enabled by Bertha, Queen of Kent - a Frankish princess and Christian - and her pagan husband, King Ethelbert, Augustine founded the first Christian community on the site of what was later to be known as Canterbury Cathedral.

This church was dedicated to Jesus Christ the Holy Saviour, and Augustine became the first Archbishop of Canterbury.

The ancient crozier traditionally associated with Pope Gregory and with Augustine's mission to England shows Jesus as the Lamb of God, encircled by the dragon of evil that is conquered through the cross of Christ. It is still held today by the monks of San Gregorio al Celio. A replica (pictured left) was presented by Pope Francis to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2016.

The crozier is an emblem of the Archbishop's office, signifying his role to follow that of the Good Shepherd.

Our self-understanding, aims, values, plans and direction are rooted in listening to and following Jesus the Good Shepherd, so that we may make real in this place the gift of 'life in all its fullness', which Christ the Good Shepherd offers to all of us and to all creation.

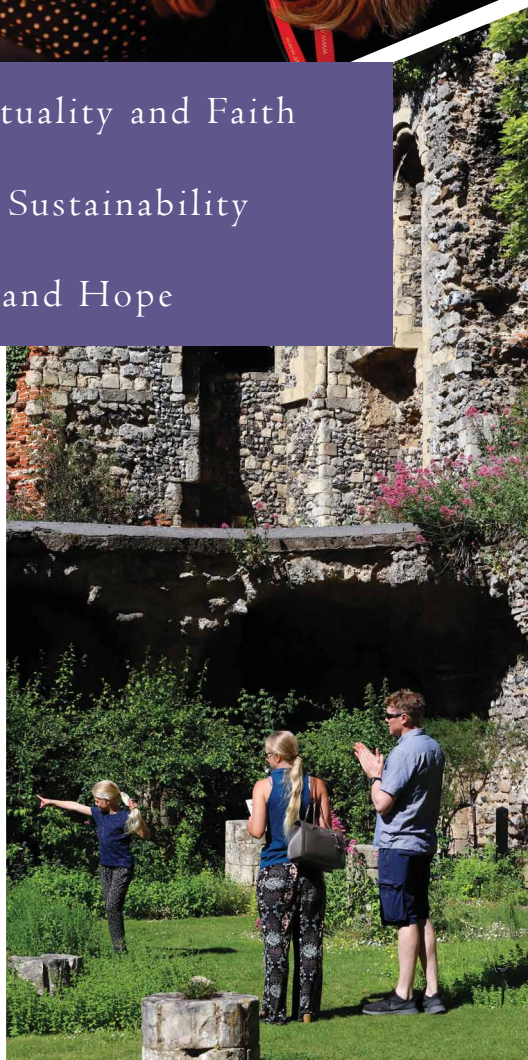
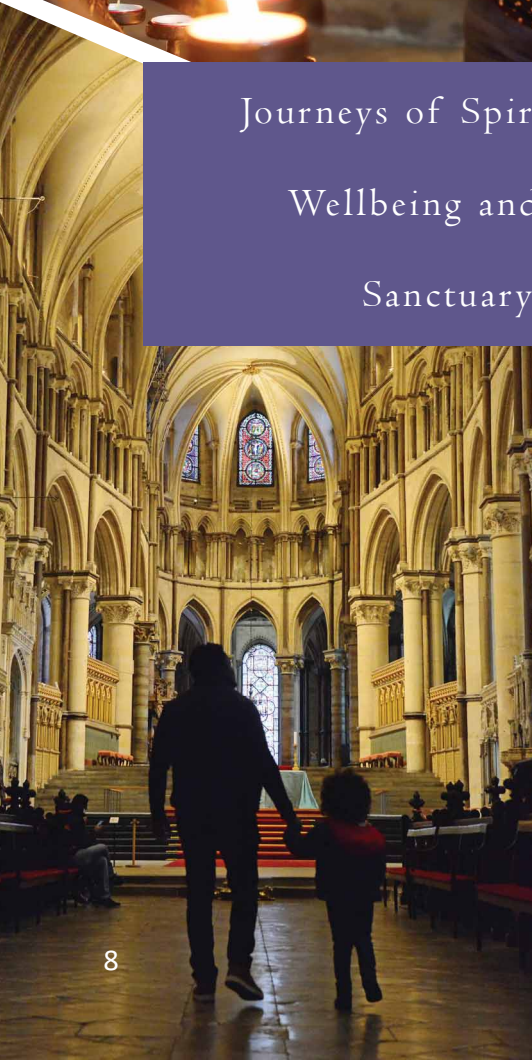
all its fullness.



Journeys of Spirituality and Faith

Wellbeing and Sustainability

Sanctuary and Hope



Vision

As seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Mother Church of the Anglican Communion and the Church of England:

We will accompany one another in our journey of faith, practice of justice, protection of all people and our planet and in firing our yearnings for the divine.

As a World Heritage Site in the City of Canterbury:

We will foster wellbeing within our communities through humble service, courageous leadership and imaginative partnership.

As a holy place shaped by the rhythms of Christian community life and prayer:

We will be a sanctuary for all, where hope is nurtured and inspired.

Core Themes

From this new vision, we identify our three core themes:

- Journeys of Spirituality and Faith
- Wellbeing and Sustainability
- Sanctuary and Hope

Core Theme

Journeys of Spirituality and Faith

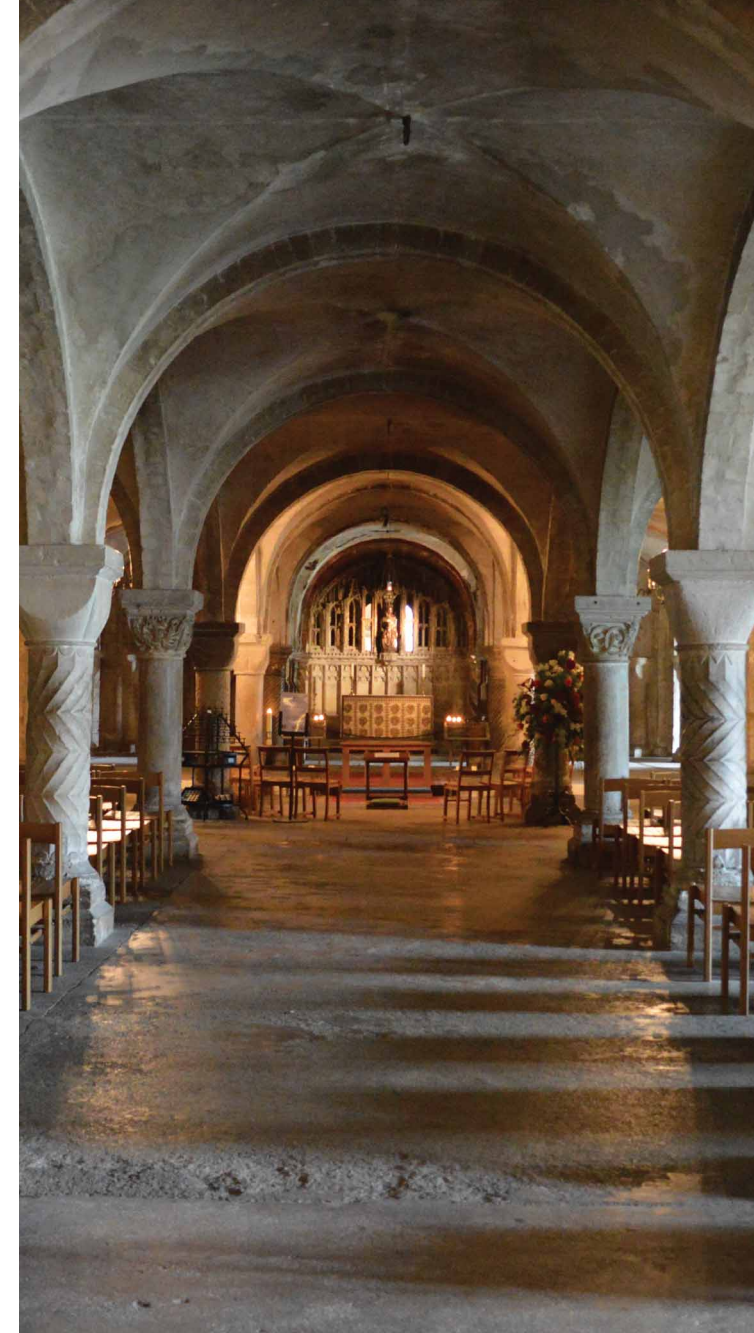
Canterbury Cathedral has long been known as a centre of learning and study.

From the learning initiated by 7th-century Archbishop Theodore and Abbot Hadrian of St Augustine's Abbey, through the Benedictine principles of study and prayer, and the importance of preaching in the post-Reformation cathedral, Canterbury has been a place where the scriptures are unfolded, theological learning is embedded, and new ideas are disseminated.

This tradition continues today.

Strategic aims

- To develop the learning tradition of Canterbury Cathedral for a modern and diverse age, and invite others into the life of faith and the way of Jesus Christ.
- To nurture the mystery of God through prayer, place, music, worship and encounter, and sustain the story of faith across the Anglican Communion, for this generation and the next.
- To encourage and enable all - regardless of faith, culture, age and ability - to encounter this holy place.



"He led his people like sheep and guided them in the wilderness like a flock." (Ps 78:52)

Core Theme

Wellbeing and Sustainability

As the community of Canterbury Cathedral enters a new phase, we seek to enable everyone to reflect on the main issues of our day through the eyes of faith and justice.

We will accomplish this through deeper engagement with the complex social, political and theological issues of our day via conversation, artistic expression and responsive action, in order to be at the forefront of witness to the will of God for our world.

Strategic aims

- To develop, through partnership and collaboration, a voice for highlighting modern social issues that reach out to the most vulnerable in our community.
- To live in harmony with the natural order of creation, and treasure its resources.
- To develop, with imagination, a sustainable Cathedral for a modern age and celebrate our staff and volunteers; equipping and empowering them with knowledge, skills and support to fulfil their potential.

Image: Visit Kent, Josh Carter



"He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms..." (Isaiah 40:11)

Core Theme

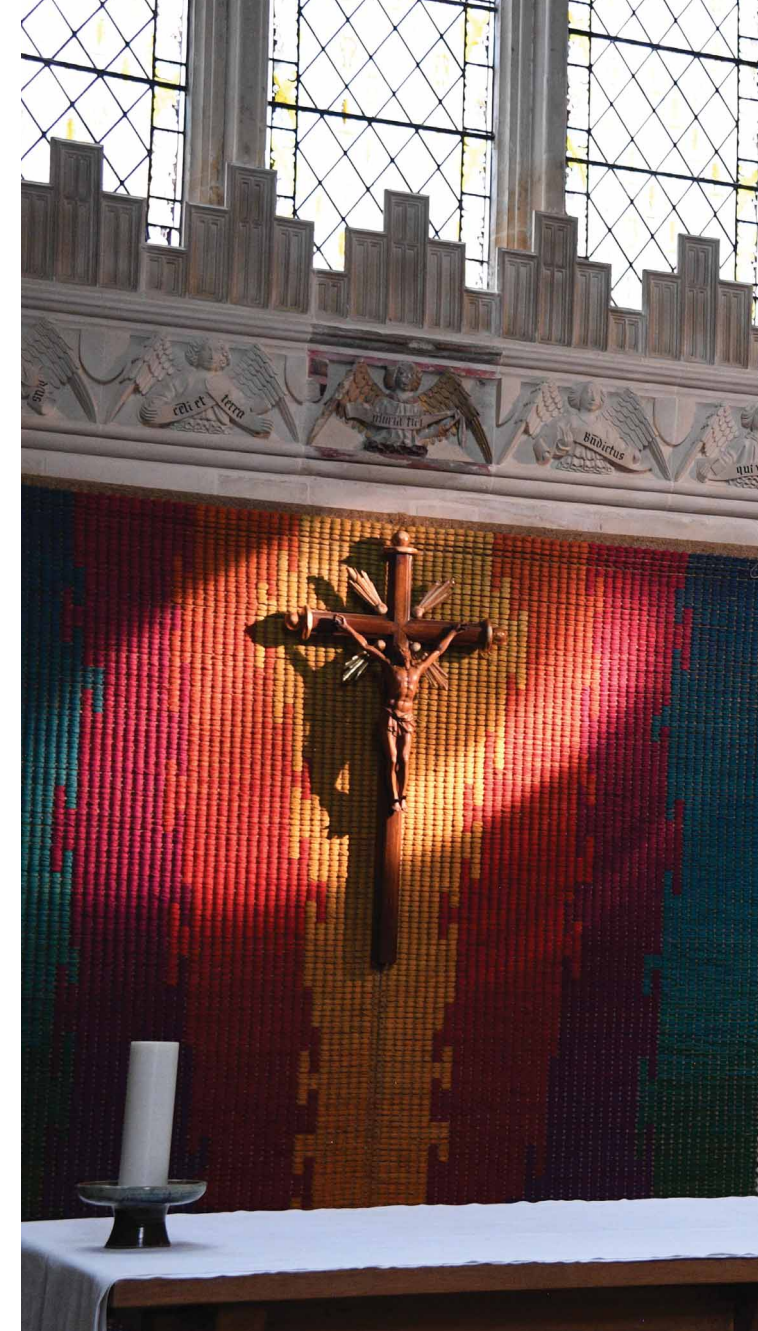
Sanctuary and Hope

Across the ages, people have taken the pilgrim path to Canterbury Cathedral in order to find healing, meaning and hope.

Steeped in the practice of Benedictine hospitality, we will continue to welcome and serve our wider community, both here in Canterbury and across the world.

Strategic aims

- To be a beacon of hope and the premier site of pilgrimage in England, celebrating our modern-day Canterbury Tales.
- To treasure and steward this sacred space and reimagine the stories of the wisdom of our past for a new age.
- To provide shelter, community, safety and togetherness.



*"The gatekeeper opens the gate for him and the sheep hear his voice"
(John 10:3)*

The Fruits of our Strategy

During the next ten years, our ambitions are to deliver the following across our three Core Themes: Journeys of Spirituality and Faith; Wellbeing and Sustainability; Sanctuary and Hope.

Journeys of Spirituality and Faith

A School of Hadrian and Theodore

To develop a programme of retreats, quiet days and learning to explore the spiritual wisdom of the Christian faith and share the gospel message with everyone.

Arts and Culture

To enable music, art, drama and debate to reflect on the Christian story and the issues of our times, and create a platform which explores the richness of diverse talents and the challenging issues we face.

Anglican Choral Tradition

To be at the forefront of fostering the Anglican Choral Tradition; to the benefit of worship within the Cathedral, and to enable music to address areas of social justice, education and welfare in the wider community.



"I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father" (John 10:14)

Wellbeing and Sustainability

Journeying in Partnership Together

To listen and accompany others with respect and humility, both locally and internationally, on our shared journeys, so that all may flourish spiritually, mentally, physically and economically.

Community Wellbeing

To provide a safe space for those in need, through our commitment to wellbeing, safeguarding, accessibility and inclusivity.

Caring for Creation

To live in harmony with the natural order of creation, and treasure its natural resources through limiting our carbon footprint, improving biodiversity within our grounds and championing issues of environmental concern.

Conserving Heritage and Holy Space

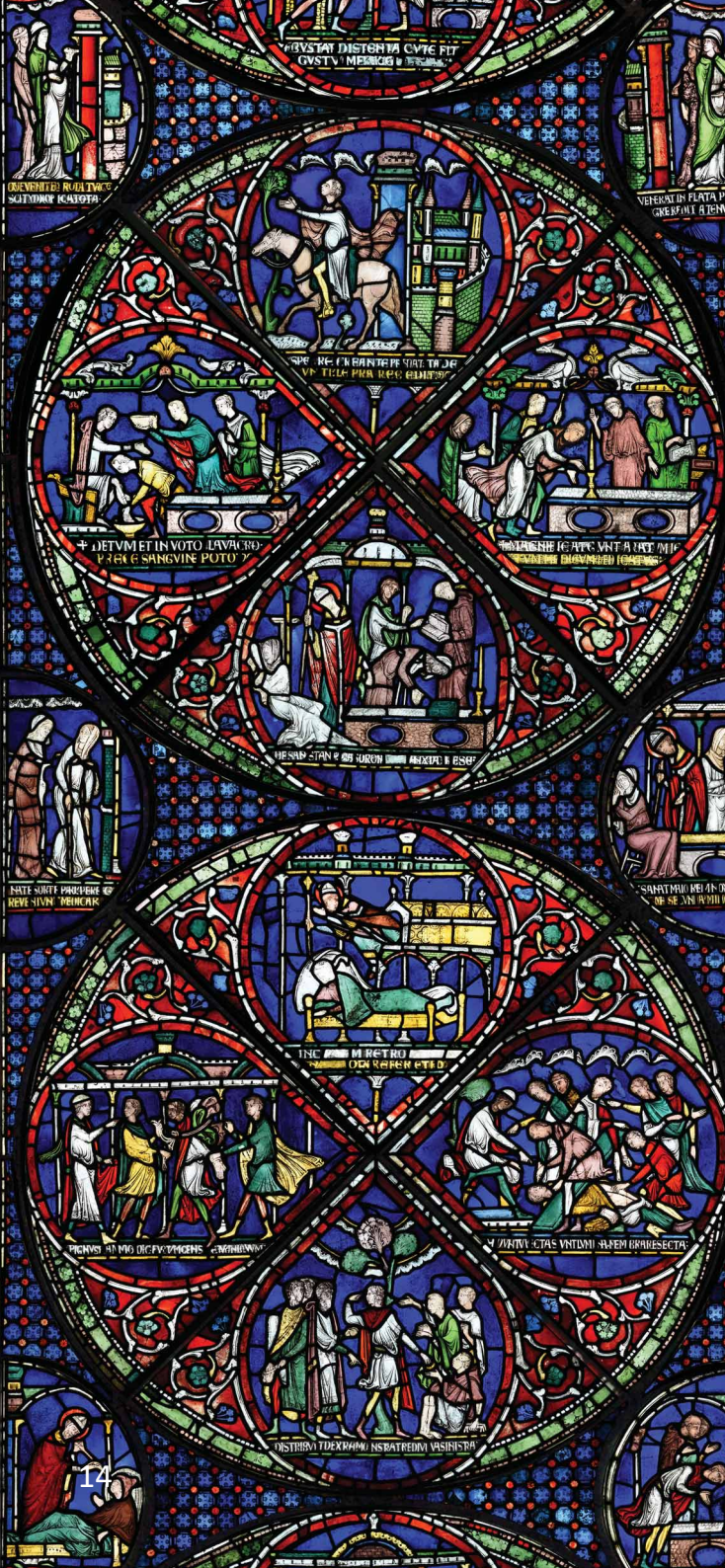
To conserve and develop the Cathedral, Precincts, monastic ruins, gardens, treasures and wider estate so that they are accessible and continue to be a source of enjoyment and learning, for this and future generations.

Organisational Sustainability

To nurture financial and operational sustainability by developing new income streams, raising funds and improving efficiency whilst developing our outward focus and local collaborative relationships.

“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want” (Psalm 23:1)





Sanctuary and Hope

A Cathedral of Sanctuary

To enhance our Benedictine welcome to all pilgrims, following in the footsteps of those that have gone before and accompanying those on the journey of life and faith, who seek understanding for our modern age.

Retelling our Stories

To nurture the inspirational and holy dimensions of this place - using symbols, signs and art, and developing the interpretation of our Cathedral, Precincts and treasures - which will breathe new life into our stories of faith, history and heritage.

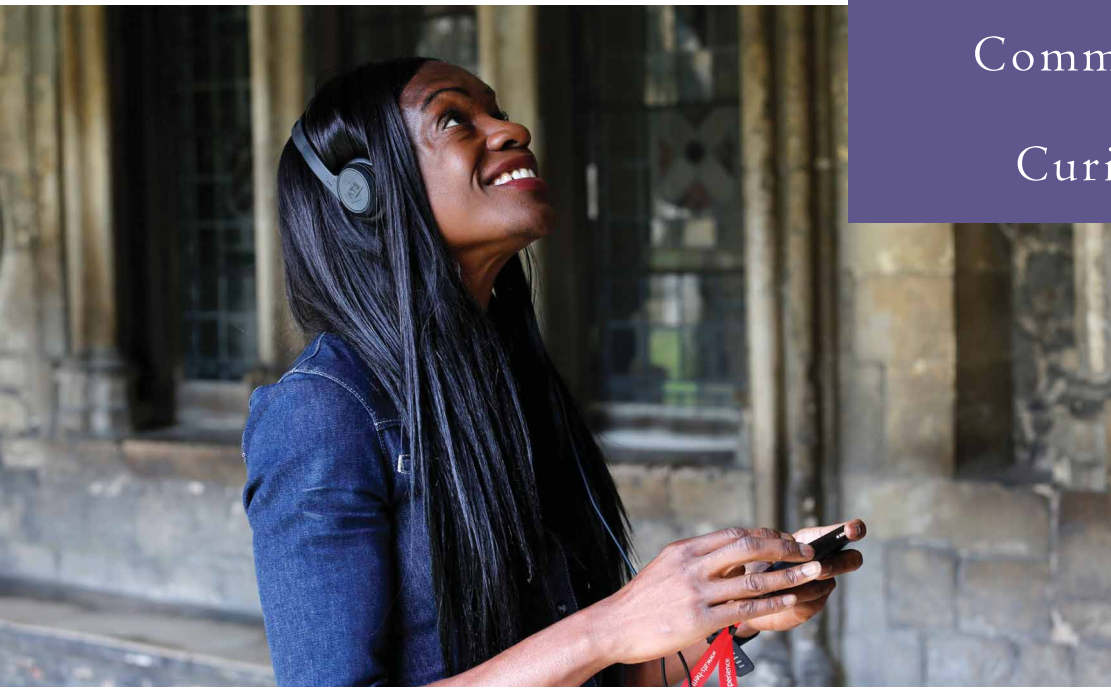
Supporting our Community

To nurture relationships with local charities and the diocese, to engage in the complex issues of social justice, and build supportive and strong partnerships locally, regionally and worldwide.

"He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out...he goes ahead of them and the sheep follow him because they know his voice" (John 10: 3-4)



Compassion
Collaboration
Commitment
Curiosity



Our Community Culture

Our Community Culture

Our Community Culture is the way we do things.

Together, we want to embody these four values in our relations with the Cathedral Community, and beyond.

Faithful to Christ the Good Shepherd, we will embody the following behaviours:

- Compassion
- Collaboration
- Commitment
- Curiosity



Compassion

- We offer a hand of support and welcome to others.
- We make time to listen and care for those around us; treating all with respect and courtesy.
- We take responsibility for noticing those around us who are struggling.
- We recognise our limitations and encourage others to build a community of compassion.



Collaboration

- We ask “who else could be involved?”
- We encourage new and imaginative ideas, and willingly explore different approaches.
- We question which voices are not being heard, and seek to listen to all.
- We seek solutions, and deal responsibly with difficulties and misunderstandings.



Commitment

- We are loyal to each other through good times and bad.
- We seek to follow through our words with deeds, and deliver our promises.
- We approach our life together with dedication, fun and joy.
- We recognise our ambassadorial role for Canterbury Cathedral.



Curiosity

- We are interested and engaged in different ideas and perspectives, and are willing to bring new and challenging ideas to the table.
- We keep an open mind to create a safe space in which we succeed and fail.
- We seek to grow individually and together, to explore new ideas and tackle complex problems.
- We seek the views of others; and give and receive feedback constructively.



“The Cathedral’s strategic plan aims to steward this place so that in the words of Jesus, everyone can experience something of the ‘fullness of life’.”

A word from the Bishop of Dover

Canterbury Cathedral serves as a beacon in Kent, the place where Christianity was re-introduced to England by St Augustine. Many people are served by the Cathedral, starting with its own Diocese of Canterbury, here in East Kent. The Cathedral is a focus for the pastoral and teaching ministries of Anglican bishops, nationally and internationally, and is a key focus and gathering place for the communities of our diocese.

Nationally, the Church of England seeks to grow missionary disciples; increase significantly the numbers of young people and children in our churches; and be a church where different expressions of worship and church life enrich one another. Responding to this here in the Diocese of Canterbury, we aim to: increase the number of children and young people; establish 200 new Christian communities; and look to see all our existing worshipping communities being revitalised.

The Cathedral’s strategic plan aims to steward this place so that in the words of Jesus, everyone can experience something of the ‘fullness of life’. There are natural synergies with the wider national and local aspirations, such as the Cathedral’s aim to enable more people to explore and grow in faith, utilise the unique opportunities for pilgrimage, or explore faith through an experience of the arts, culture and music which opens up the human soul. Additionally, the Cathedral seeks to work in partnership and to make a real difference in the way we care for the planet, to open up the place to wider audiences, and to care for all that we inherit through our history, and to address social justice.

It is fitting that the inspiration for this plan comes from Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd. The Cathedral is dedicated to Christ, and is therefore associated with the Archbishop and the ministry of bishops, who are 'shepherds of the flock'. I support this plan, and assure you of my prayers and that of the diocese, as worship, welcome and witness grow here in new and vivid ways.

+ Rose Dover

The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin

*The Bishop of Dover and
Bishop in Canterbury*



*"It is fitting that
the inspiration
for this plan
comes from Jesus
Christ the Good
Shepherd."*



Christ, the Good Shepherd,
in whose care and protection, we find life in all its fullness;
encourage us to pray for each other and for the holy Church of Canterbury that,
being guided by your values, we may serve the world inspired by compassion,
eager in collaboration, steadfast in commitment, and delighting in curiosity.
Draw us all into one flock and one fold,
so that we may become pastors of his people,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Inspiring
life in all
its fullness

