

NOTES & NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2026



St Paul's Cathedral
Together transforming our City and Diocese

FROM THE DEAN

There is now a new season in the Church’s year and, appropriately for us, it starts in spring. At this year’s General Synod, meeting right here in Melbourne, members determined to focus on God’s good creation for the month of September, ending with the Feast of St Francis, lover of the creation, on 4 October. Liturgical resources for a new Feast of God, the Creator, will be created for an observance on 1 September in coming years. In the northern hemisphere this season falls in autumn, the time when harvest commences and harvest thanksgiving festivals are held. Here, it falls in spring, with its promise of renewal and new growth.

It’s appropriate, therefore, that we will be finalising our new Strategic Plan during this season. We have been giving you a sneak preview of the new plan, Disciples of all Nations, over the past week, and we loved receiving your detailed feedback and further ideas. The new strategic plan will shape our ministry focus for the next five years. Adopting a special focus to concentrate our thinking and resources on does not mean, of course, that we will not keep on doing what we already are doing: we are identifying the new things we can do together in this new season of growth. And so our focus will be on Young People, on growing together in faith and discipleship, and in stewarding and developing what we have been given. And all these are good themes to pray through as the Season of Creation gets underway.

During the second week of September, from 6-12 September, we were invited to pray round the clock, as we again partnered with the 24/7 Prayer movement to make sure that the ‘voice of prayer is never silent’. Thankfully, no one had to pray in the silent hours of the night, as all were encouraged to do share in this wave of prayer: we conveniently arranged to pass the baton on—I was able to participate in the St John Ambulance world-wide conference in London that week, and

so was up when Australia is asleep. On Friday, 11 September, there was a youth prayer night at the Cathedral, on Saturday, 12 September, there was a prayer night for our diocese. Thank you for joining in praying for the growth of God’s kingdom in our own Cathedral community.

There are a number of opportunities offered to us for our own growth: we will have a deep-dive into Jesus’ parables, looking at the teaching stories that makes up the central chapters of Matthew’s gospel. Those studies will take place on Sundays at 11.45am, so make sure you join us. And if you are not yet a Christian and would like to be baptised and confirmed, or if you are a baptised Christian from another tradition, and would like to become an Anglican, then do join our Baptism, Confirmation and Reception Classes which start on 20 September at 11.45am.

Finally: the Season of Creation reminds us that God cares for all creatures, great and small. And so on the evening of Sunday 4 October, the Feast of St Francis, at our Gather service we will be blessing animals. I will be bringing Tessa, and Leili and Pedram will bring Coco. Do bring your leashed four-pawed friends (securely-housed slithering friends and two-legged flying friends are also welcome). Let’s thank God for the richness and

diversity of his creation, and bless the animals in our lives. And let’s recommit to take better care of what we have been entrusted: a world made very good by God, and we ourselves charged to be fruitful, fill the earth, and tend to it.

With every blessing,
Dean Andreas



Photo by Ming Zhou

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this edition of Notes & News may contain images and names of deceased persons in photographs and print.

WORSHIP WITH US

SUNDAY

8am Holy Communion (BCP)
10am Choral Eucharist
1pm Mandarin Service
4pm Choral Evensong*
6pm Gather at St Paul’s

MONDAY

12.15pm Lunchtime Communion
5.10pm Evening Prayer in Simple English

TUESDAY - FRIDAY

12.15pm Lunchtime Communion
5.10pm Choral Evensong*

SATURDAY

12.15pm Farsi-speaking and Multicultural Communion

**During term time*

JOIN OUR SERVICES ONLINE

cathedral.org.au
facebook.com/StPaulsCathedralMelbourne
youtube.com/c/StPaulsCathedralMelbourne
For more information on joining us online or in-person, please visit our website
www.cathedral.org.au/worship

SUPPORT US

cathedral.org.au/donate

VISIT US

Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm
Saturday 10am to 5pm
Sunday 7.30am to 7pm

cathedral.org.au/explore/visitor-information

CATHEDRAL PRAYER

Almighty God,
who caused the light of the gospel
to shine throughout the world
through the preaching of your servant Saint Paul:
grant that we may follow him
in bearing witness to your truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
Amen.

CELEBRATING FIFTEEN YEARS IN THE LIFE OF THE CATHEDRAL ARCHIVE

The Cathedral Archive collection developed in step with the construction and development of the Cathedral itself and many people have had a hand in its creation.

Originally located in the Precentor's office, the attention it received depended on the interest of the Precentors (which varied) and on the publication of a succession of Cathedral Guides.

By 2011 the archive had relocated to a very tight area of Dracula's Cave (the Workshop) and was quite inaccessible. Sally Petty, a member of Cathedral Chapter, organised the move of the cabinets into what is now part of the Barbara Darling Room, and we began to work on the documents. 'We' included me, Susan Ross and Ian Burk, whose special interest was the Music section.

Once housed in 8 filing cabinets, not all full by any means, over the last 15 years the archive has spilled over to the equivalent of 13 cabinets, 2 large plan cabinets and a large bookcase. The current location was snug when we moved in in 2016 but is now very full indeed!

Climate control is of enormous importance to preserving collections. Fluctuating temperature and humidity can cause materials, especially paper, to deteriorate rapidly. The inks used in the 19th century can be particularly vulnerable to fading or running. The Archive room has provided excellent climate control and is light and bright and has given the opportunity for professional management.

Cathedral staff have been partners in this enterprise. They have provided advice, funding, assistance with moving and carrying items, exploring odd corners to find caches of documents and sharing generally in the highs and lows. Chapter too have provided great support.

There have been landmark moments.

The collection of construction documents was deemed to be of National Cultural Significance in 2017 and a Victorian government grant allowed for the scanning of the first three volumes of Chapter minutes.

During the Covid-19 lockdowns, an extensive correspondence with a glass expert based at Truro in Cornwall allowed for a very interesting re-examination of the genesis of the windows.

The Cathedral Service registers—a record of every service that takes place—and a good collection of financial records emerged from the dust of a forgotten shelf of the Sacristy safe.

The start of the Metro Tunnel project produced a number of questions about the structure, the depth of foundations, the type of stone used, and many details that helped ensure the safety of the building during construction.

The continuing interest of people whose families were involved in the Cathedral construction has been a constant delight. They have included among others the descendants of Charles Deslandes, one of the carvers of the pulpit; the granddaughter of the Head Stonemason on the towers and spire construction; several vergers' descendants. They have brought in family memories, documents and such enthusiasm.

Hundreds of enquiries have been answered, all providing an opportunity to find out more information about the site and its buildings. Research papers have been written, exhibitions mounted and talks given. It has been quite an exhilarating ride! I am most grateful to have had the opportunity to care for this collection over the years. It has been an absolute delight!

Dorothea Rowse
Hon. Cathedral Archivist



THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

Jesus said ¹⁹ *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,* ²⁰ *and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.* (Matthew 28:19-20)

On November 22 at 4pm our next service of Baptism, Confirmation and Reception will see members of various services who have been preparing since 20 September come to formalise their relationship to God in their church membership. It is not too late to join this group.

Church members become disciples of Jesus to make other disciples. A disciple learns from a master and tries to live according to these teachings. We follow the command of Jesus to teach all who ask about him, who he is, what he taught and why we follow him.

Disciples within our congregations are Farsi, Mandarin and English speakers, and some also represent other nations as well. Jesus invites anyone to receive the sacrament of Baptism when they turn away from the world and their sin, to place their trust in Christ Jesus for the rest of their lives. Jesus takes our sin as we are mysteriously, spiritually cleansed by God through the water of Baptism. This is why we call baptism a sacrament – we see the cleansing water which represents the spiritual grace-gift God gives.

Baptism is celebrated 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'. Christians worship God who is three in one, Trinity. With these words we identify our God as distinct from any other deity and our life as following Christ, not adhering to any other ideology.

We might ask why we need God's cleansing if we haven't done anything unlawful. John explains ⁸ *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* ⁹ *If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* (1 Jn 1:8-9) Our humanity and basic selfishness divide us from God's holiness unless we come to him asking him to repair this broken relationship. It is through the death and resurrection of Christ that we have the gift of forgiveness.

Why is this important? ²³ *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Romans 6:23) This is God's promise for all Christians, for all who belong to God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

Baptism is an individual, personal commitment to turn away from worldly pursuits, to follow Christ and live as he demonstrated. The action of the Holy Spirit in Baptism joins the person to Christ's church as a member together with all others, God's children.

Preparing for and receiving baptism is a serious life decision for an adult, requiring a depth of understanding, a growth in faith and a knowledge of fundamental spiritual and religious practices. Babies and small children are baptised and initiated into God's family through the faith of their parents. All who are baptised begin a new life with the inner birth that comes from faith in God, and receive the promise of Jesus' companionship for all of their future, 'to the end of the age'.

Revd Canon Jane Window
Assistant Priest

LOOKING FORWARD TO CHRISTMAS: CELEBRATING MULTICULTURALLY



Earlier this year, the Melbourne Anglican Foundation ran a competition to encourage composers to write a choral work based on Psalm 46: 'God is our refuge and strength; the Lord of hosts is with us; be still and know that I am God'. It encouraged a goodly number of entries and winners were selected by the judging panel according to their criteria – and certainly the winners were very good. I was asked to look over the entries to provide an opinion prior to their judging and I questioned whether having an audience prize on the night of performance and presentation might have been a good idea. In the event, one entry, even though it didn't win, certainly resonated with the audience at Bishops Court as it was performed: *Present Help*, by Daniel Hernandez.

Along with others present, I found it captivating: a very catchy melody, well composed but playable piano part, interesting choral writing, and that indefinable 'wow-factor' that some pieces of art have when one experiences them in performance. I caught the composer as he was trying to make a

quiet exit and spoke with him in the Archbishop's garden. I asked if I could be in touch with him as I felt his composition had this 'wow-factor' and I wanted to see whether we could work together to make it a part of our Cathedral Christmas Carol Services this year.

You'll see that our Cathedral Chapter has put a focus on Diversity and Anti-Racism in its next strategic plan for the Cathedral, 2026-31. You can read that plan on pp. 10-15. Our plan says that the Cathedral community is 'explicitly and proudly multicultural, and will name and resist racism in our community and society. We want to reflect the diversity of our city and church in our members and leaders, and will create pathways for better representation and visibility.'

To that end, our Christmas Carol services will air that loudly through a reading from St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (3.28, 'There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus'), through the readings in the

many languages represented by members of our community, through the Dean's preaching, and through the version of *Present Help* that we have workshopped with Daniel Hernandez.

Daniel's text incorporates elements from Psalm 46, as well as expressly incarnational words, praying that God will 'come to us in our despair ... to reconcile all on the earth', and 'God gives them peace'. This will be our prayer this Christmas: Holy and faithful God, throughout the ages you have enabled musicians to lead your people's song. Be incarnate with us on the Earth. Bring reconciliation. Bring Peace. Help us to be messengers of your Good News, and grant us grace to hear and join with the songs of the angels, and of all your faithful people. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Canon Philip Nicholls
Director of Music

Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth
should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of
the sea,
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its
tumult. *Selah*
There is a river whose streams make glad the
city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be
moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
The nations are in an uproar; the kingdoms
totter;
he utters his voice; the earth melts.
The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*
Come, behold the works of the Lord;
see what desolations he has brought on the
earth.
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
"Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations;
I am exalted in the earth."
The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

9AM & 11:45AM BIBLE STUDIES

We've had very positive responses to our series of Bible studies during July-Aug from Genesis. These studies focused on the Jacob & Joseph stories and reminded us of God's big plan of redemption. Starting in September we will look at some of the parables from Matthew including the sower, the wicked tenants, the ten bridesmaids, the weeds, the talents and the labourers in the vineyard. The parables of Jesus are often intriguing and have surprising outcomes which illustrate what life is like in the kingdom of God. Everyone enjoys a good story so come along and learn from these wonderful stories from the lips of Jesus.

Our last study series in Oct-Nov will be from 1 Thessalonians. This is considered one of the earliest parts of the New Testament and we will learn a lot from the Apostle Paul about Christian leadership and Christian community. You can see that our Bible studies have covered the range of Old Testament, Gospel and New Testament epistle. This is a key part of helping people grow in their faith and develop as disciples. Do join us in the David Penman Room on Sunday mornings after the 8.00am and 10.00am services.

Revd Canon Peter MacPherson
Canon (Preaching and Teaching)





FROM WINTERFEST TO SUMMERFEST

Winterfest brought the Cathedral community together during the colder months, and gave us a chance to do some good along the way.

This year our charity partner was Monash Children's Hospital, and thanks to everyone who came through the gates—visitors and the wider Cathedral community—we raised \$3,219 for the hospital. It's a great reminder that even a small community market can add up to something meaningful.

Next up: Summerfest.

Running across six Saturdays, from the third Saturday of November right through December, Summerfest lands during the Christmas lead-up and the start of summer — arguably the best time of year to be outdoors at the Cathedral. This time we're expanding into the parking area and the Peron as well, giving us more room for stallholders, more room for visitors, and more

room for everyone to enjoy themselves. We will have local makers, Christmas gifts, good conversation, and a chance to soak up the Cathedral precinct at its best.

It's also a chance to bring more people through our doors who might not otherwise stop in. They'll come for the market — but we're hoping plenty of them stay a little longer to take in the history and atmosphere of St Paul's itself.

Winterfest proved the charity side of things is worth keeping. We're already looking at how to build that into Summerfest and whatever comes after.

So as summer approaches, come along — support local makers, enjoy the atmosphere, and celebrate the season with us at St Paul's Cathedral.

Fabio Perozzi
Commercial manager

Strategic Plan 2026-31

In Lent, we began asking what God was calling us to do in this next season. We heard from eight different Cathedral groups: from you—our Saturday and Sunday congregations—from staff, Chapter members, and volunteers. Our clergy and lay ministers took those thoughts and suggestions and spent a day in prayer.

As we look at the next season for our common life, we have chosen **four foundations** or **qualities** to underpin our planning. The first is rooted in worship: all we do needs to be anchored in a **prayerful posture**. Renewal begins when we listen, pray and respond to the Holy Spirit.

From that prayer-shaped attitude flows the second foundation at the heart of our Strategic Plan. We want our Cathedral community to be **confident**. Not confident in our own strength, but confident in Christ—because the mission of the Church is the mission of Christ, who is our confidence, our cornerstone.

We are each invited to let ourselves be shaped into a temple for God's glory. And when we let ourselves be shaped together, we **grow together**. That's the third foundations we chose for our new Strategic Plan. We are a diverse community, from many backgrounds, and we are proud of that diversity. We bring many gifts that differ.

Our worship here at the Cathedral often ends with words of sending out: 'go in peace to love and serve the Lord', we are told. We want to be people who are ready to be **sent in service**. We worship together so that we may be sent by the Spirit into daily life for the sake of the world God loves.

The four foundations we have chosen for our new Strategic Plan tell us more about the qualities we want to show forth as a community. We want to be known for being **prayerful, confident**, and in this way **growing together** in order to be **sent**. And with these qualities as our foundational attitudes or habits, we want focus on four priorities that will shape our ministry and mission

in the coming five years.

In our *Listening in Lent*, you told us that **children and young people** need to be front and centre at our common life, because they are our present and our future. That's why we want to raise up new leaders—better to equip ministry with children, families and youth. We believe that some of those leaders are already part of our Cathedral community, but we know that we will need to set aside more resources for this important work. We want to raise \$100k to resource our ministry with young people. We want to revive our Mainly Music ministry to infants, which closed in Covid. We want to resource our kids' church and kids' servers. We want to develop a new secondary school and early uni-program centred on *Gather*.

When we listened to your hopes and dreams in Lent, **evangelism and discipleship**—that is equipping each one of us for a lifetime of faithful following of Jesus—emerged as another key priority. We already have a great discipleship strategy—this year we led 51 adults to follow Christ. But we know that we need to follow those first steps up with Bible Studies, formation groups, and apprenticeships—ministry placements—that help people become volunteer leaders or even join our staff-teams as colleagues.

In our Listening in Lent we clearly heard you say that we need to tell our wider community how proud we are to be **diverse and together**. We live in an age where the very nature of who we are as a Cathedral—people coming from many nations and languages—is challenged by a toxic public discourse. We are explicitly, intentionally and proudly multicultural. That is why we will name and resist racism and any form of discrimination. We will pursue reconciliation and right relationships with the First Peoples of this land. And we are committed to hold difference together with respect and kindness and grace.

Finally, we are all called to be good stewards of those gifts that we are given. We have plans to **steward and grow our resources**. And that includes not only this beautiful building and precinct—but each one of us. Our stewardship is expressed in our care for creation. It's expressed through partnerships. I promise you that in my leadership here at St Paul's, I will continue to take diligent care of what you entrust us.

Dean Andreas

Disciples of all Nations

Strategic Plan 2026–31

Shared direction for the life and mission of the Cathedral

Draft 1.6 · 24 August 2026

OUR VISION

*St Paul's Cathedral strives to be a place of transformation
for our City and Diocese, where all people can come to
experience and know God's love in Christ Jesus.*

OUR MOTTO

Together Transforming our City and Church.

THE GROUND WE STAND ON

Our Four Foundations

These four foundations underpin and support everything we do. They are taken from the Diocesan Vision *For the Harvest* through the lens of the Anglican Communion's *Five Marks of Mission* and the Cathedral's nine mission commitments as set out in the *Cathedral Act* (2016), s. 5.

✙ Prayerful

Prayer underpins all that we do. Renewal begins as we listen, pray and respond to the Holy Spirit. We will pray that through us Christ would transform our world, equipping us to be people of peace. We will pray big — for growth in maturity, in members, in the multiplication of resources and leaders. We will pray together across many languages and styles, from large-scale and interactive gatherings to small groups and individual devotion, and always through beautiful worship.

✙ Confident

The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ, who is our confidence and calls us to be One in him. Grounded in Scripture and in Christ the living Word we are being formed together into the Body of Christ. We will be known as Christ's disciples by telling of his love, and tending to the needs of others through our own loving service.

✙ Growing

Health and fruitfulness belong together. We will safeguard all people, make the Cathedral genuinely accessible, and create safe spaces to belong and grow — listening, learning and yarning together. This includes deepening our commitment to reconciliation and right relationship with First Peoples, our passion to overcome injustice, our care for the integrity of creation and the renewal of the earth.

✙ Sending

The Church is gathered in worship and sent by the Spirit into daily life for the sake of the world God loves. As a place of transformation for our City and Diocese, we will speak with a public, theological voice on the gospel and justice issues that unite us — through events, training, conferences and partnership. We will keep raising, forming and sending labourers into God's harvest.

ON WHAT WE WILL FOCUS

Our Strategic Areas

Four areas of shared effort for 2026–31, each built on our four foundations and expressed in practical commitments.

1 Children and Young People

We believe that children and young people are front and centre. They are our present and our future. We will equip this ministry with leaders, ministry and financial resources, and suitable spaces to grow and flourish.

— Growth.

We will develop sustainable, well-resourced children's (pre-school to primary), youth (secondary school) and young-adult (TAFE and university students) programs, with measurable participation goals.

— Leadership.

We will appoint dedicated leads for children's, families' and youth ministry, drawing first on the gifts already within our team.

— Worship and formation.

We will centre our ministry to youth and young adults on the Gather service, and develop programs for secondary school students that link with it.

— Early years.

We will revive and resource Mainly Music for families with infants and young children.

— Schools.

We will build intentional, sustained partnerships with schools.

2 Evangelism and Discipleship

Formation

We long for more people to take up our invitation to follow Christ. We will resource every member for a lifetime of faithful following, and equip them to make disciples.

— Welcome.

We will improve our signage, facilities and web presence so that people find us easily and feel at home.

— Inviting.

We will offer regular, low-barrier invitations to follow Christ through all our programs: through preaching and teaching, intercession and prayer, guiding and welcoming, storytelling and service.

— Presence.

We will sustain and develop the Cathedral's ministry of presence — chaplaincy, guides and storytellers.

— Pathways.

Drawing on our intentional Discipleship pathway we will develop formational resources from first steps to mature discipleship.

— Multiplying.

When each person we bring to Christ brings another, our community grows. In order to resource this growth we will recruit and train 10 Formation Group leaders a year, and start new formation small groups.

— Workplace.

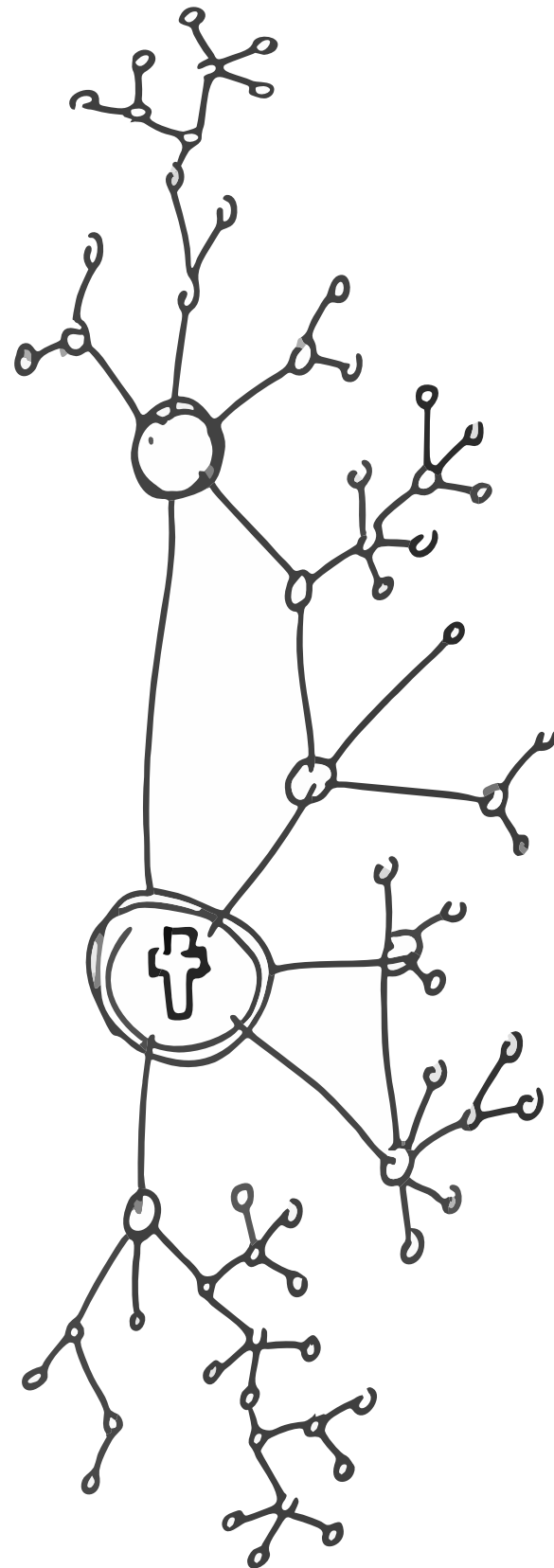
We will equip our members for faithful witness, service and ethical leadership in their workplaces, professions and public life, through our teaching programs.

— Apprenticeship.

We will widen participation in leadership by offering apprenticeships at all levels of ministry, with clear pathways from volunteer leader, to interns, to paid staff.

— Communications.

We will improve how we share our teaching, especially sermons and teaching programs, through our website and podcasts.



3 Diverse and Together

We are explicitly and proudly multicultural, and will name and resist racism and any form of discrimination in our community and society. We want to reflect the diversity of our city and church better in our members and leaders, and will create pathways for better representation and visibility.

— Representation.

We will make sure that those who come to worship see themselves represented among our leaders—increasing diversity in the leadership of worship, not only in the congregation.

— Non-Discrimination.

We will continue to work for greater inclusion and the removal of barriers on the grounds of gender, race, socio-economic and educational status, and disability.

— Language.

We will represent our congregational languages more fully in our 10am Sunday worship, and on Diocesan occasions.

— Worship.

We will model varieties of excellent Anglican worship in the languages of our congregations, as well as for Diocesan occasions, including providing resources for other communities to shape their own liturgies well.

— New communities.

We will plant new worshipping communities within the Cathedral, and partner with others in pioneering multi-lingual and multi-cultural expressions of faith.

— Reconciliation.

We will continue to pursue our commitment to reconciliation with First Peoples as an expression of this work, including payment of a symbolic annual tribute to the Wurundjeri Lands Council.

— Diversity.

We celebrate our diverse community and will continue to treat one another with respect, kindness and grace. We will continue to work together on furthering the things that unite us, and to shape a culture that holds together diversity and difference well. We will share resources with others to help the church come together.

4 Stewarding and Growing our Resources

We will wisely steward what we have been given, and grow our resources for the sake of our mission.

— Our people.

We will invest in our staff and volunteers and enable them to access the necessary training and professional development to flourish in service of the Church.

— Our space.

We will deepen our outreach through worship, music, arts and events by further developing the Cathedral’s unique precinct. We will create new facilities and gathering spaces on our precinct to serve our mission.

— Creation care.

We are committed to care for creation and work towards net zero and set good practice models of saving and generating energy for the wider Church.

— Partnerships.

We will continue to build connections with partners across the City, State, universities, agencies, ambulance services, festivals and beyond.

— Financial sustainability.

We will continue to develop financial sustainability, endowment growth and diversified income streams.

— Shared learning.

We will model income-generation work and share what we learn with other congregations.

— Giving.

We will draw on our funds-generating activities to support people in need. In our charitable giving we will partner with Anglican agencies and other charities to address social and cultural issues, such as homelessness, health and wellbeing.





FARSI FELLOWSHIP

We have had the privilege of joining the Sunday services since June. It has been a joy to preside and preach at the 8am and 10am services, lead Evensong at 4pm, and preside at the Gather service at 6pm. What a blessing it has been to get to know so many people, and to enjoy the conversations shared over refreshments after each service. We have been welcomed so warmly by the congregation and all the staff, and we give thanks to God for this new chapter of ministry in such a beautiful and welcoming community.

While we have expanded our ministry to Sundays, we continue our Saturday service with our Farsi-speaking congregation. By God's grace, we have welcomed new members in these past few months, and we continue to pray that God will bring more people to His church — not only Farsi speakers, but everyone who needs to be saved by Jesus Christ. Pedram is also coordinating ECC (English Conversation Corner) with amazing volunteers on Mondays.

In July, 11 members of our Farsi-speaking congregation celebrated their baptism and confirmation alongside brothers and sisters from different cultures, backgrounds, and generations. They said yes to the Lord's invitation, and they are now looking forward to serving Him in the church.

Thank you for all your support and please continue praying for our ministry and our family. Pray that Farsi-speaking people feel safe and welcomed at our Cathedral and come to know Jesus. Please also pray for peace in our home country, that injustice will end by the grace of God, and that the people of Iran will feel safe in their country.

Revd Leili Shirmast & Revd Pedram Shirmast
Assistant Priests



STORIES UNDER THE WINDOWS

All around St Paul's Cathedral, the stained-glass windows (and of course the mosaic) portray events in the life of Jesus, including his death and resurrection, and events from the life of the apostle Paul. The Window Storytellers are a team of around twenty volunteers who share these stories with local and international Cathedral visitors.

Storytellers invite visitors to hear a story and if they are willing, to engage with the story. They also offer visitors a way to remember the story after their visit. This may be a postcard with a picture of the window or pointing visitors to where they can read the story for themselves in the Bible. These conversations often open the door to deeper reflections on life and faith. Our prayer/hope/passion is that visitors have the opportunity to meet Jesus personally in a story, whether for the first time or the thousandth.

In December 2025, Boyd Eggleston took on the role of Coordinator of the Window Storytellers.

Boyd has been doing stories under the windows since 2019, and the first story he learned to tell was Jesus Calms the Storm. After sharing this story recently, a visitor asked him, 'Where is God in the story?' It was a thoughtful question that captures the heart of what the Storytellers hope to explore with visitors as they share the stories of Jesus.

In March, Melany Williams took on the Deputy Coordinator and Trainer role. She loves supporting the new and the experienced Storytellers as they learn new stories and grow their listening skills and cross-cultural awareness. In 2019, during her first shift as a volunteer, Melany met a Hindu student who came regularly to pray in the cathedral. When she offered to share the Wedding of Cana story, they said 'tell me about the God I've been praying to. When I pray to this God things happen!'

Melany Williams
Storyteller

24/7 PRAYER WEEK



Virginia McDonald, the Diocesan Disability Inclusion Consultant, volunteered during the recent Global Week of Prayer as part of a ministry student placement she's currently undertaking at the Cathedral.

Thank you for the extraordinary prayer, creativity and coordination that went into the Global 24-7 Prayer Week at St Paul's Cathedral. It was a beautiful gift to the Cathedral and to our city.

I volunteered following Tuesday's midday Eucharist and again on Thursday afternoon. I was deeply moved by the number of spiritual conversations that emerged naturally as visitors engaged with the prayer stations. I was simply offering hospitality, helping people understand the activities and listening to what they wanted to share. Again and again, these small interactions

opened into conversations about people's lives, prayer and the Christian faith.

One international visitor spoke very little English and used a translation app to communicate. When I asked whether he knew anything about Christianity, he said that he did not, so I shared the gospel with him. He became emotional and revealed that his life had become very difficult. I connected him with a minister who spoke his language. I later learnt that the minister had been able to talk and pray more fully with the man and his wife, help them respond to Christ and connect them with a church near their home. It was a wonderful example of God working through the whole ministry team.

At the 'Jesus as Mediator' threading prayer station, two interstate students became deeply engaged in the activity. One was visibly emotional and welcomed prayer. Our conversation gradually opened into their experiences of faith. One shared that she had attended a Christian school, while the other came from a non-Christian faith background and had previously attended church with her family for several years. Both indicated that they wanted to put their trust in Jesus. One described the sense of God's presence in the Cathedral as being different from what she had experienced in her own place of worship. Another volunteer joined us and led them in prayer. We gave them a Bible and a Scripture postcard and talked with them about Alpha and finding a local church. They then spent some quiet time praying near the altar.

On another occasion, a woman from a non-Christian faith background asked for help with the threading activity. As we talked, she disclosed a significant life event. We sat together and prayed about what she was facing. She spoke of sensing God's presence in the Cathedral and expressed a desire to commit her life to Christ and deepen her connection with Christian worship and community, having recently begun attending church. She also noted that she was going to walk straight past the prayer station but then turned around and engaged with it and this changed everything!

Not every encounter led to such an explicit response, but each was meaningful. I prayed with one visitor who was travelling alone and

experiencing pressure relating to her studies. Another young woman had entered the Cathedral on the anniversary of a loved one's death. She welcomed prayer, received a Bible and told me that she would never forget that day. Other tourists used translation apps as we talked about Christianity, the banquet table representing the Last Supper, and the meaning of the prayer activities.

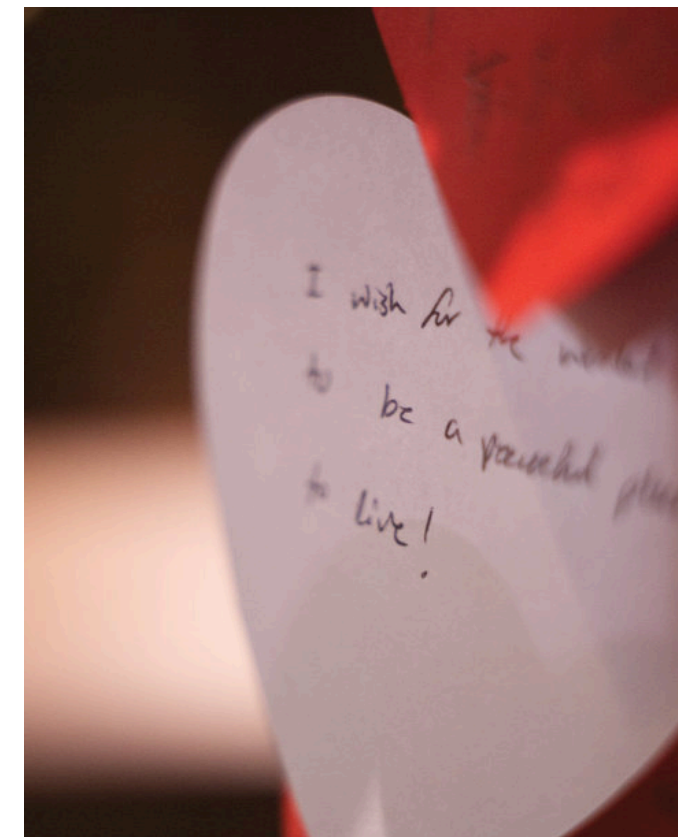
I was also personally challenged by a visitor from the United Kingdom who stopped at the display about children and young people experiencing homelessness. She was profoundly moved by the personal stories and the scale of homelessness in Melbourne and across Australia. I had previously skimmed over the display, but her response caused me to return, read it carefully and confront the reality for myself. Her stopping caused me to stop. It was a powerful reminder that the prayer stations could minister to volunteers as well as visitors.

The tactile and sensory activities were particularly effective. Light, colour, touch, movement and symbolic actions gave people accessible ways to pause and pray, even when they had limited English or little knowledge of Christianity. The activities created gentle points of connection from which deeper conversations could grow.

I finished the week feeling energised and grateful. I had a strong sense that the sustained prayer in the Cathedral had created a tangible atmosphere in which people felt safe to stop, reflect and share what they were carrying. Many people seemed to enter with a need or longing that they could not fully name. Through the prayer stations, the hospitality offered and the willingness of volunteers to listen, space was created for God to meet people at their point of need.

Thank you to everyone who prayed, designed the stations, prepared resources, coordinated volunteers and made the Cathedral such a welcoming place. The week was a remarkable blessing, and it was a privilege to participate.

Virginia McDonald
Diocesan Disability Inclusion Consultant



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