



OUR ASPIRATIONS

VISION: MISSION, MEANS & MESSAGE

In 2005, Grace Cathedral defined a set of strategic objectives focusing on “mission, means and message.” The overarching aspiration of Grace Cathedral is to fully live its mission, and to extend its reach and impact by building on the strengths it enjoys today. Doing so has proven to be difficult for the Cathedral. It may be helpful to look at the facets of this continuing aspiration.

Mission

Our Mission Objectives

This strategic objective incorporates three areas of focus: Worship, Serve & Grow

- **Worship**
Offer variety in the ways individuals can approach, worship and celebrate God’s presence in their lives. Stay grounded in Episcopal tradition while being open to the many pathways to God. Practice radical hospitality, and consider the questions asked as important as the answers to which they may lead.
- **Serve**
Be a place for civic gathering to celebrate and seek solace. Make a difference in the community and the world. Offer a wide range of opportunities – individually and collectively – to serve our neighbors and thereby serve God.
- **Grow**
Offer both traditional and innovative opportunities for individuals to grow in their spiritual journeys. Be a place where civil conversation about important issues can take place, where we can learn and grow and be courageous in our speech and actions.



Worship Takes Many Forms

We have a proud legacy deriving from some of the finest traditions of the Episcopal Church, including an extraordinary structure, two labyrinths, a world-class musical program, and excellent liturgies and sermons.

Yet rather than rest on this legacy, we have engaged with the congregation, diocese and community to address new challenges: How do we offer both the great traditional liturgy for which Grace Cathedral is known, and at the same time, offer accessibility and community to the un-churched and seekers whom we want to welcome? How do we stay true to who we

are as Christians, and at the same time, practice an openness that invites in and makes welcome those same seekers? How do we understand the way that young adults see “church” and how can we be relevant to them?

We have taken good initial steps to address some of these challenges by offering an alternative 6 p.m. Sunday evening service. In addition, the two labyrinths have engaged an otherwise tentative church population and are well used by many people who consider Grace Cathedral their spiritual home, who walk the labyrinths and never attend a “regular” service.

Were these questions not challenging enough on their own, we must address them in an environment limited by our financial resources, which presents two additional challenges – how do we maximize what we have, and how will we prioritize when our resources are inadequate to realize all of our ambitions simultaneously?

A Legacy to Serve

In seeking to “serve” there have been moments in the Cathedral’s life where we have served the community in a beautiful and meaningful way. The beautiful space of the Cathedral in itself serves the community. We find that many people who may not be a part of the regular worshipping community are fed by being in the Cathedral. Our past successes are considerable. When the Bay Area’s homeless problem became serious in the 1980s, the Diocese of California and Grace Cathedral were called upon to respond. In January 1983, 40 people were sheltered in Grace Cathedral’s crypt, and The Episcopal Sanctuary was born. It later became a standalone organization, and by 2000, Episcopal Community Services housed 2,000 in the downtown Sanctuary and related facilities. The AIDS crisis in the late 1980s saw the Cathedral at its best in ministering to those who were dying and to their partners, families and loved ones. It was a place of solace and compassionate care for the community, which created an enduring impact on the Cathedral.



In the last 20 years, the focus of the Cathedral’s work has been more on “civic conversation” rather than social action. Planning has been organic rather than strategic. Hands-on work in the community has consisted of meaningful but smaller efforts driven by the interests and energy of individuals, rather than a planned and focused effort by the Cathedral. *[Please see “Our Past & Present” pages 9-10 for a list of current programs.]* Yet we have a desire to make a greater impact outside the walls of the Cathedral, and to collaborate with other organizations both within and outside the Episcopal community. There is an appreciation for the work that has been done, and a desire to leverage it into something far greater. What that looks like, we do not know. The next phase of the life of the Cathedral will include determining how and what we do.

Even More Potential to Grow

We continue to look at ways to offer opportunities to “grow” spiritually. Grace Cathedral is a place where an intelligent and generous Christianity is practiced. Seekers need not know if they are Christian and can consider it a place to explore their spirituality. The Cathedral enjoys a corps of clergy who bring different perspectives and experiences to the work. Priests and deacons alike are able to guide spiritual growth, whether in a workshop setting or one-on-one. The preaching has been of a consistent high quality and one of the obvious ways in which we all grow. Lay leaders are also well versed and have historically had leadership roles in spiritual guidance. Classes are offered that support spiritual growth. For a number of years, The Forum was offered each week bringing the dean into conversation with a wide variety of voices – whether the topic was related to religion or a wide variety of other topics, from the arts to science to history or current culture. We know that there are ways – yet to be determined – where we can live into this more fully. Education has historically been a strength of the Cathedral. We suspect there are opportunities to leverage this to both support the individual’s spiritual growth and to serve the broader community. In other words, to link our objectives to “serve” and “grow.”

Where and How We Do This

Grace Cathedral is an amazing place that in itself ministers to the congregation and the community. Much of what we do, and can do, can happen in and around our facility. Our ministers, both clerical and lay, make ongoing outreach efforts that we wish to encourage and expand. Moreover, an increasing amount of the “work we’ve been given to do” is happening offsite and via the Internet. The Cathedral was an “early adopter” in Internet-based programs, and many of the connections around the country and around the globe are made via graceCathedral.org. We are at risk, however, of falling behind and aspire to re-imagine how we reach our potential audiences as technology develops and as our potential audience evolves.



The Role of Grace Cathedral in the Diocese

For the last 20 years and more, Grace Cathedral and the Diocese of California have lived out their roles quite separately, driven primarily by the desires, relationships and personalities of leadership. Leadership has changed. We are in a new economic situation and a challenging environment for all religious institutions. We are also beginning to explore more critically the joint roles of the Cathedral in the diocese. Among other things, we are now looking at opportunities for greater collaboration and sharing of functions between Cathedral and Diocese. This process is just underway. We expect that it will evolve and take clearer shape over time and with the attention, engagement and involvement of the lay and clerical leadership of the Diocese and Cathedral.

Means

Our Means Objectives

This strategic objective incorporates both financial management and development.

Financial Management:

- Commit to a balanced budget.
- Maintain a clean balance sheet.
- Prudently invest endowment assets.

Development:

- Grow the asset base.
- Provide consistent annual revenue in support of operations.
- Raise temporarily restricted funds as necessary.

Financial Management

We have significantly improved financial management over the past six years, and aspire to continue (and continuously improve) the professional management of the financials in the specific ways noted in the Financials Section of *“Our Past & Present”* (pages 11-13). The challenge is that revenue has remained fairly flat over time, while non-controllable expenses grow. Thanks to the growth in the investment portfolio, from which we take a prescribed percentage of earnings into the operating budget, we have managed through these past several years with a close-to-balanced budget. The future holds continuing challenges, however, unless we are able to grow the income stream or make significant reductions in expenses. There is effort underway to create a “shared services” arrangement with the Diocese of California, as we have many similar functions and our offices are next door to one another. Thus far, shared service opportunities have been identified in administrative areas as well as Communications and Development. Other areas are being explored. This will create both greater efficiencies along with improved effectiveness.

There is a strong commitment to maintaining and growing the investment portfolio and avoiding use of the corpus of the endowment except when prudent and appropriate. Some of our largest expenses relate to maintenance of the physical property; our largest gift in the portfolio is also dedicated to supporting the building. We have a strong commitment to keeping the physical plant in excellent condition, without compiling deferred maintenance. To that end, there is a clear schedule of maintenance and improvement projects for the building and a capital plan is created and approved by the board each year along with the operating budget. We attempt to raise the funds for any new projects or programs.

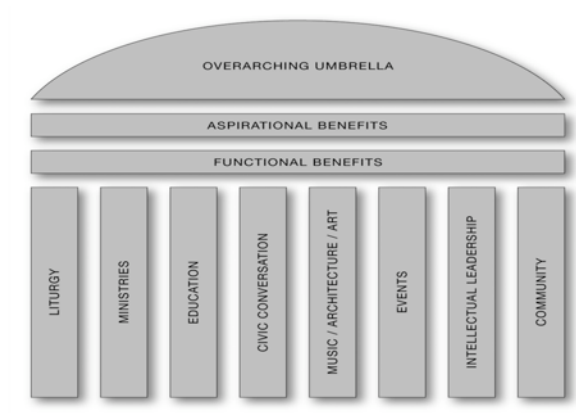
Development

We aspire to become as professional in our management of fundraising efforts as we are in financial management. We need and want to develop an even more effective and compelling case for fundraising. For that, we believe that we need further clarity in our mission and greater mission-related impact. We need to develop our fundraising skills, both in stewardship and in external fundraising. And we are challenged by a shrinking “community donor” base and a congregation that is pressed in these difficult economic times. Our ability to attract new members will have a significant impact on our fundraising success.

Message

Our Message Objective

Our final strategic objective is to ensure that Grace Cathedral conveys a consistent, straightforward and accurate message to its broad array of target audiences throughout all communications. This message should welcome them and invite them to learn more; reaffirm and convey what Grace Cathedral is; break through stereotypes and help correct misperceptions about Grace Cathedral; reinforce the belief that current participants are in the right place; and encourage them to deepen their involvement.



We have established a mission statement and a “message architecture” which complement each other and help us to consistently articulate the Grace Cathedral “brand.”

Mission Statement

We believe in one God, known to us in Jesus Christ, also known by different names in different traditions. We seek to challenge and transform the world, beginning with ourselves, and to celebrate the image of God in every person. We are a house of prayer, worship, and service for everyone, welcoming all who seek an inclusive community of love.

Key Message

Grace Cathedral is home to a community where the best of Episcopal Christian tradition courageously embraces innovation and open-minded conversation, where inclusion is expected and people of all faiths are welcomed, where beliefs are put into action and where people are encouraged to seek God and progress on their own spiritual journey. This renowned San Francisco landmark serves as a regional magnet where diverse people gather to celebrate, seek solace, converse and learn.

Communications in Flux

As identified earlier, the communications function in the Cathedral is in a state of transition. With the December 2008 departure of the Cathedral’s Canon for Communication, resources for leadership and direction have been tapped from the diocesan office – without significant reduction of demand for communications projects at the Cathedral or Diocese. If anything the demand for more frequent and effective communications has increased through the interim period, putting further strain on the skills, time and capacity of staff. With this transition, and a greater commitment to a consistent delivery of the messages identified in

the mission statement and key message, the communications function of the combined Cathedral/Diocese is being challenged.

There is a recognized universal need – and commitment to meet the need – for more consistent, transparent and regular communications within the Cathedral (and now, diocesan) leadership, Chapter and staff, governing bodies, congregation and donors; and outside to the greater San Francisco Bay community, the Episcopal Church and to a variety of influencer groups including secular and religious media. Meeting this need will require a strategic plan built on clear marketing communications objectives and a set of prioritized strategies that include budget and staffing. Staff skills sets and capabilities will also require assessment.

Opportunities Abound

In marked contrast to the limitations of budget and staff resources, there is a call and expectation that Grace Cathedral should be leading the charge in embracing new technologies for communications. Not only should the Cathedral be setting the standard for web outreach for delivery of key messages, but it should also be embracing new media communications processes for development and mission outreach. Plans are in development for a video-based communications interface that would dramatically enhance delivery of message and dynamically establish Grace Cathedral and the Diocese of California as leaders in both message and media.

While that process is in development, some of the most basic internal and external communications practices need to be established and put into regular practice. Meeting both the foundation and new media aspirations of the communications function for the Cathedral will require inspiration, commitment and involvement from Cathedral and Diocesan leadership.