A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAPTER CHAIR:
WHAT WE VALUE MOST

If they say that hindsight is 2020, then what does that make 2021? Insight, clairvoyance, vision?

None of us can claim to fully know the future, but the recent past has shown us how we are each coming to understand our shared present more fully. The COVID-19 pandemic has forever changed the ways we communicate and connect; the people, places and things we value most; and the causes that we want to dedicate our common life to sustaining.

Faced with an uncertain outlook and no map, Dean Hollerith and his leadership team of staff and volunteers charted a path through FY21 that focused on the core mission of cathedrals for all time—a profound and meaningful worship life. This identity recentered us as we encountered challenges and celebrated successes, many shown in the photos on the opposite page.

Through the hardship of 2020 and 2021, this Cathedral welcomed thousands, hundreds of thousands, even millions of new friends who worshipped with us online each Sunday morning. The relationships and generosity cultivated among this group made possible our financial success this fiscal year. They also catalyzed our efforts to create a digital Cathedral experience, where everything we do transcends this beautiful building.

Take, for example, three long-time Cathedral activities that adapted to, and grew, in this new virtual environment: our talented youth choristers, our Honest to God speakers’ series, and our seasonal outreach drives. As someone who has been involved with the life of the Cathedral for many years, I can truly feel a spirit of innovation and inclusivity permeating all our ministries.

On the pages that follow, you will see that our Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2021 reflects an institution committed to careful stewardship of resources and sustainable growth. We are in a period of strong financial health, due to your generous support and a clear focus on the work that God has called us to do.

On behalf of the Cathedral Chapter, thank you for being part of this incredible year.

Andrew C. Florance
CHAIR, CATHEDRAL CHAPTER
63,000 live viewers for the Virtual Presidential Inaugural Prayer Service

53,699 views of the Cathedral’s Easter Sunday service

3,035 attendees at national virtual coffee hour on Sundays

500+ lives saved through seven blood drive collections

347,431 minutes spent on Zoom for Chorister training

57,903 views of the Cathedral’s Christmas Eve service

18,464 visitors to the “Les Colombes” doves installation

330,077 views of the Cathedral’s virtual July 4 Concert

63,000 live viewers for the Virtual Presidential Inaugural Prayer Service

3,678 names received in the COVID-19 memorial

57,903 views of the Cathedral’s Christmas Eve service

3,035 attendees at national virtual coffee hour on Sundays

500+ lives saved through seven blood drive collections

347,431 minutes spent on Zoom for Chorister training

57,903 views of the Cathedral’s Christmas Eve service

18,464 visitors to the “Les Colombes” doves installation

330,077 views of the Cathedral’s virtual July 4 Concert

800 volunteers

$100,000 raised for Cathedral Close Cares holiday giving

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A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN: FIVE YEARS OF GRATITUDE

Each month at our Cathedral All Staff meetings, we acknowledge staff with upcoming work anniversaries. It’s a light-hearted celebration, but the significance of thanking a staff member for five, eight, 14 or 31 years of dedicated service is not lost on me. In fact, it’s a highlight of my month. Such a highlight that I was caught off guard when my turn came around earlier this fall: it has been five years since I became dean of Washington National Cathedral.

Five years, wow. I could have tossed out a joke—“If I knew then what I know now, I’d say ‘no, thanks!’”—but that would be neither fair nor true. If I knew five years ago what I know now about this Cathedral—its people, its ministry, its role in our nation and in our lives—I’d say, “Yes, please. Absolutely, yes!” Yes to the hard times, yes to the good times. And even yes to the uneasy times that we’ve found ourselves in for these last 18 months or more.

When I stood at a reception celebrating my installation as dean back in October 2016, alongside Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde, our current Chapter Chair, Andy Florance, and many governance members and longtime Cathedral volunteers, I had only the slightest idea of what was in front of me. As I look back on photos from that day, I see happy smiles, warm hearts, and a less-gray, less-wrinkled, younger man named Randy. There’s one photo of my wife Melissa, our children Eliza and Marshall, and me, that is joy personified. Since then, Marshall has started his career here in Washington, Eliza graduated from UVA and is now finding her way on the West Coast, and my bride continues her remarkable ministry. I am blessed. It has been an amazing journey so far, and I look forward with great anticipation to the years to come.

A lot in our world has changed since that day. We saw three presidents in the White House, the Washington Nationals win the World Series and a solar eclipse. We mobilized with neighbors, friends and colleagues to raise our voices for #MeToo and Black Lives Matter, cared for refugees and desperate immigrants, sometimes feeling that our voices were powerless against the fever pitch of politicized rhetoric. We prayed—countless times—for victims of gun violence; for those affected by hurricanes, wildfires, earthquakes and other disasters on our precarious planet.

A lot has changed here at the Cathedral, too, in these five years. We honored the lives and legacies of Senator John McCain, President George H.W. Bush and Matthew Shepard; and celebrated the weddings, baptisms and funerals of so many everyday people like you and me. We made visible progress on earthquake repairs, revealing once
again the beauty of some of the Cathedral’s most special places like the Garth and the Way of Peace. We expanded relationships in our Cathedral community, our city and our nation through the offices of the Canon Vicar, Canon Missioner, Canon Theologian and Canon Historian. We broke ground on renovations to the Virginia Mae Center and began re-envisioning our programmatic life through the Cathedral College of Faith & Culture. We came to terms with our history and ushered in a new legacy of expression through the stained-glass windows and poetry that Kerry James Marshall and Elizabeth Alexander will design.

If I were to divide my time as dean so far into pre- and post-pandemic volumes, the first volume could be described as “throwing open the drapes.” To me, it was important to be as honest and professional as possible regarding our financial situation and to shine a light on persistent issues that this institution has faced in its 100-plus-year history. It was also important to refresh our public perception and cultivate a genuine sense of hospitality and present a warm, welcoming institution that was more just a stone building. Together, I wanted us to claim our identity as a Christian community with a beating heart and a moral conscience.

In those early days, our annual budget was around $12 million. What happened in the years since then is a testament to your enormous generosity and our thoughtful planning. With a strong base of support, and careful financial and administrative oversight, we have grown that $12 million into a $22 million budget this year. Because of your faithfulness, because of your belief in what we’ve done and what we want—and are called—to do, we have the resources in place to envision and enact a Cathedral for the 21st Century.

During the height of the pandemic, it could be hard to remember if it was Tuesday or Wednesday, or if that one summer vacation was last year or the year before. Indeed, COVID-19 shifted our perception of time’s passage and created for many people a real sense of existential angst. If there is one thing that carried me through this journey, it was the power of God’s grace, found in human relationship. Perhaps the greatest irony of this pandemic is that at the time when we were most isolated, with the church doors closed, restaurants shuttered, and all of us learning how to exist on Zoom, this Cathedral was busy creating more new relationships than ever before.

It would be premature to give a title to my post-pandemic volume, but I can say the moment when it began: July 4, 2021. I have walked out on the Cathedral platform many times in my five years as dean, and few times were as memorable or as personally moving as when I stood and faced the congregation that joined us for our first in-person worship service after 15 months of online-only worship. Spontaneous applause erupted. An exhale of pure joy after carrying each other through a period of profound disruption. In the seats and on the screens, the depth and breadth of those relationships were made manifest: newcomers and old friends, from here in Washington and on the other side the globe, together as the body of Christ, as our faith intended us to be.

The greatest blessing of my ministry as dean is that, with each passing day, I get the chance to be in relationship with so many of you. It could be responding to an email from an online worshipper in Ohio or sitting down with a volunteer who has served here for 50 years. I get to learn about your history, your dreams, your faith, your passion for this place and all that it embodies. I am strengthened by your passion for what this community has accomplished and the ministry that we share. And, most of all, I am humbled by how important this Cathedral is in your daily life.

We often say that this Cathedral was entrusted to us by our forebears, that we stand on the shoulders of those who came before. That is certainly the case when it comes to the stones and stained glass that we tend to, the music and liturgies we uphold. The greatest responsibility, though, are the intangibles that you entrust to us—your stories, your hopefulness, your faith. We are honored to be the repository of these precious gifts, and every day I am more and more grateful for the honor of serving as your dean.

In thanksgiving for your friendship,
In March 2020, as the threat of COVID-19 loomed over Washington, DC, the Cathedral closed the doors to its building. Shortly thereafter, realizing that COVID-19 would impact every area of Cathedral life, preparation began on the Fiscal Year 2021 budget and operational plans.

A number of operational and financial scenarios were reviewed and discussed, including closure of the building for all of FY21, as well as partial closures with the building re-opening at various times through the year. All scenarios predicted significant deficits, with the worst case being the loss of an entire year of earned revenue, coupled with increased costs due to COVID-19; this scenario predicted a budgetary deficit of approximately $6 million. In a typical year the Cathedral receives approximately $5 million in earned revenue from visitors, events, weddings, funerals, retail, programs and concerts—all in-person activities.

To address the projected deficit, the Cathedral budgeted and executed an operational plan that focused on cost reduction primarily through laying off staff, temporarily reducing compensation, and implementing substantial furloughs across all departments, in addition to smaller operating expense reductions. The final, approved FY21 budget projected a deficit of $1.6 million.

One year ago, we reported that we were able to finish FY20 in the black, despite a sizable loss of earned revenue, due to significant, one-time contributions from a small group of leadership donors. Now, another fiscal year later, we were also able to finish FY21 in the black due to the awe-inspiring generosity of friends, new and old, who relied on the Cathedral’s message and ministries to carry them through this pandemic.

For the 2021 Fiscal Year (July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021), Washington National Cathedral reported an operating surplus of $2.7 million. Operating revenue for the year totaled $19.4 million. Operating expense totaled $16.7 million.

The Cathedral’s network of supporters grew virtually, and substantially, to include more national and international participants. Contribution revenue, with a goal budgeted at $7.3 million, exceeded all expectations at $12.1 million raised, more than closing the budgeted deficit. The Cathedral was able to re-direct $500,000 of unrestricted bequests, budgeted to partially fill the operating deficit, back to long-term needs and the preservation of the building. This is a tremendous testament to your steadfast support.

CONTRIBUTIONS 63%
ENDOWMENT DRAW 20%
RELEASES OF DONOR-RESTRICTED CONTRIBUTIONS 12%
EVENTS & FACILITIES 4%
MUSIC AND WORSHIP 1%
VISITORS 1%
During this uncertain time, we continued to prioritize core mission activities including worship, music, outreach and community engagement. Fewer demands on our physical space allowed more restoration and repair work to be undertaken and on shorter timeframes. Capital projects completed included earthquake repairs to the Way of Peace and work began in earnest on the former College of Preachers building, now the Virginia Mae Center.

Looking back on FY21 and forward to FY22, we are deeply grateful to those who expressed their love and appreciation for this Cathedral through philanthropic commitments, as gains in contributed revenue not only supplemented lost earned revenue but, as we move into FY22, are enabling us to responsibly reintroduce programs and offerings that had been curtailed during FY20. The FY22 budget is a break-even budget focused on greater investment in a sustainable digital presence for the Cathedral and in resources for a successful re-opening of the physical building (including for in-person worship, choral music, and revenue-generating visitor experiences and event rentals).

We have much to celebrate as we enter FY22. However, as we begin to re-open our physical building, we are being careful to invest responsibly and ramp up slowly, cognizant of the risks posed by the resurgent COVID-19 delta variant and appropriately responding to the continued concern in our communities. We are proud to stand as a symbol of enduring faith and hope for our nation. This year, especially, it was your faith and enduring hope that sustained us and led to a fifth consecutive year in the black. We are deeply grateful for the many ways that you express your love and appreciation for all that this Cathedral is and does.

Charlotte S. Atkinson
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER