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Successful schemes of work are underpinned by a clear and persuasive liturgical argument.

The processes of developing your liturgical plan and testing emerging proposals against it, is beneficial to your projects.

We can help you develop your plan.

Download our guidance

- [Liturgical plans for cathedrals](#) (327.97 KB)

The fundamentals

Nature and purpose

Any liturgical plan should start with general theological principles.

It should answer three fundamental questions:

- What do you want your building to say about the nature of the Christian Gospel?
- What does your building say about the liturgy?
- What does the liturgy say about your building?

Buildings strongly influence how liturgy is conducted. You need to consider how best to celebrate the Christian faith in the 21st century in your own particular building.

A liturgical plan is an opportunity to think about the liturgical geography and purpose of your particular cathedral.

You should be mindful that liturgical customs change over time. Consider the likely lifespan of any changes you want to make.

Who is it for?

It's important for the plan to be agreed and 'owned' by the Chapter. The plan should be a standing document, reviewed and updated periodically.

All those involved in running the cathedral should understand the need for and central purpose of a liturgical plan. They should be able to comment on and contribute to it.

Write the plan to be intelligible and inspiring to the lay professionals and craftspeople involved with your projects.

Making sure all your policies and plans are consistent

Your liturgical plan should sit alongside your cathedral's:

- Conservation management plan
- Access audit
- Visitor engagement plan
- Arts policy

The liturgical plan will also feed into the brief set by chapter for any development project, and into supporting liturgical statements when any formal application is made for changes to the building.

Preparing a liturgical plan

Who should prepare the plan?

Primary responsibility rests with three people:

- The Dean
- The Precentor (the member of the cathedral's clergy staff responsible for liturgy)
- And the person in charge of cathedral music

Get advice and talk to your wider community

Get advice on how the liturgical history of the building is reflected in its fabric from:

- Your cathedral architect
- Your cathedral archaeologist
- Your Fabric Advisory Committee

Use the plan to cross-reference relevant parts of the cathedral's [conservation management plan](#).

Cathedral staff, volunteers and congregations should be invited to contribute. And you should seek the views of those in the wider community with an interest in the use of the cathedral for civic functions, tourism and pilgrimage.

[Contact the Liturgy and Liturgical Furnishings Group](#)

They will be very happy to advise you at any stage of the process of preparing your liturgical plan.

Members of the group can also visit your cathedral to discuss the process on site.

Please [contact the Commission's secretariat](#) to find out more.

What should it include?

[Initial questions:](#)

- What is your vision of your cathedral?
- What is the cathedral for?
- How does the cathedral work at present, and how do you want it to work in the future?
- Who "owns" the cathedral?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- What type(s) of liturgy are used at the cathedral?
- What variety of liturgical expressions is required?
- What do you want the cathedral to say in how the building is used? And to whom? (e.g. congregation, occasional worshippers, tourists, and those attending events)
- What is the role of music and performance in the cathedral? (e.g. regular services, special seasonal services, ordinations, and concerts)
- What is the role of liturgical movement?
- How does the cathedral fulfill its teaching role?

[More detailed questions:](#)

- What is the "liturgical geography" of your cathedral?
- What spaces does it comprise? And how are these spaces used?
- How do these spaces relate to one another physically and liturgically?

- What is the relationship between key liturgical furnishings? (e.g. altar, font, etc.)
- How are the various "rooms" used liturgically?
- Is there merit in trying to increase or decrease their number, or to change their use or relationship?
- Is there a suggested route that takes visitors round the building?
- How does the visitor route relate to the liturgical use of the cathedral?
- What are the implications of this for access and circulation?
- Is the liturgical furniture and its ordering appropriate to the spaces it occupies and the purposes for which it is used?

Contextual questions:

- What are the constraints in and on the cathedral (e.g. physical, architectural, archaeological, operational, liturgical, practical and financial)?
- How do uses beyond liturgy conflict with it, or how can they best be accommodated alongside it? (e.g. visitor uses)
- How does or should the cathedral interior relate to liturgical and other uses of the wider precinct?

How is a liturgical plan used in the approvals process?

When we consider an application, we expect you to provide supporting material which:

- Describes and illustrates your proposals
- Provides an overview of them
- And sets them into context

A liturgical plan can help with a statement of need or supporting liturgical statement.

It should help you articulate and justify your proposals to:

- Decision-making bodies
- The cathedral community
- And other stakeholders

A liturgical plan should not be used to justify a particular piece of work. It should provide an overview and understanding of the wider liturgical life of the cathedral and aspirations for its development.

Remember:

We will expect you to be able to show that you've taken the above guidance into account in your thinking before seeking advice on concrete proposals.

Also of interest



[Prepare your application](#)

[Find out what documents you will need](#)



[Consider God's creation](#)

[Make the environment a key liturgical message](#)

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