



The Trinity Times

December 2025/January 2026



The newsletter of Trinity Cathedral of the Diocese of New Jersey



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From the Dean's Desk

Dear Friends,

The Rev. Cameron Trimble wrote this fabulous meditation, which I'm delighted to share. As we journey together into Advent, please read, reflect and respond...

"Advent is the season of holy darkness, the time when truth hides in shadow and asks if we're willing to look. Each year it returns, not to redeem the world but to remind us that light is always being born through us, again and again.

Sarah Stillman's reporting in The New Yorker exposes one of those shadows: immigrants vanished by our own government—people taken from their homes, shackled, flown in the night to foreign prisons or dangerous borderlands in countries they have never known. They are not abstractions. They are mothers, students, grandfathers, musicians, seekers of safety. They have names: Jim, Miriam, Orville.

At the heart of these deportations is a moral collapse: the decision to make certain people unseeable. They are disappeared not just from geography but from moral imagination. The philosopher Emmanuel Levinas once said, "The face of the other is the beginning of all ethics." When we erase those faces—behind deportation orders, military flights, and shadow docket—we erase the possibility of goodness itself.

When George Washington toasted, "I had always hoped that this land might become a safe & agreeable Asylum to the virtuous & persecuted part of mankind, to whatever nation they might belong," ships were already docking in Charleston, heavy with enslaved Africans whose names were stripped away. America was conceived as sanctuary and as prison simultaneously, a contradiction that still shapes our collective soul.

Advent does not let us look away. It insists that we sit with the world as it is—messy, interdependent, aching for justice. The story of the Christ child begins with a refugee family fleeing state violence, carrying divine hope across a border at night. To practice Advent is to stand with every mother and father who still does the same.

There is a darkness God inhabits—not the darkness of cruelty, but the womb-like darkness of becoming, where truth begins to stir. We must enter that darkness now. Theologian Dorothee Sölle once wrote that "God has no other hands than ours." If that's true, then the work of Advent is not only to wait for light but to become it, to bear witness, to intervene, to name what empire disappears.

Still, I struggle to know how to act in the face of this atrocity. I want to stop these deportations, as I know you do too. There is no "solution" that fits neatly within the current political schema. But there are invitations, acts that stretch toward the world that could yet be born:

- Witnessing: not just in empathy but in embodied memory—refusing erasure. Remembering these people as people and telling their stories again and again.
- Reframing belonging: advocating for ways of belonging that do not depend on documentation, borders, or detachment from relational context.

Continued on next page...

- Denouncing extraction: calling out the logic that treats human beings as movable objects, as commodities.
- Centering relational safety: insisting that care is infrastructural, that protection, sanctuary, and access to justice belong to the commons, not to privilege.
- Weaving solidarity: building alliances between immigrants and communities that uphold the value of relational life over bureaucratic abstraction.

Howard Thurman said, “There must be always remaining in every man’s life some place for the singing of angels, some place for that which in itself is breathless and beautiful.” The singing of angels this Advent will not drown out the cries from Bundase Camp or the forests of Togo. But it can accompany them, reminding us that beauty and justice are not opposites. They are the same song, sung from opposite sides of the veil.

This Advent, may we refuse indifference. May we see the disappeared not as strangers but as Christ among us—exiled, hand-cuffed, and still carrying light.”

Faithfully in Christ,



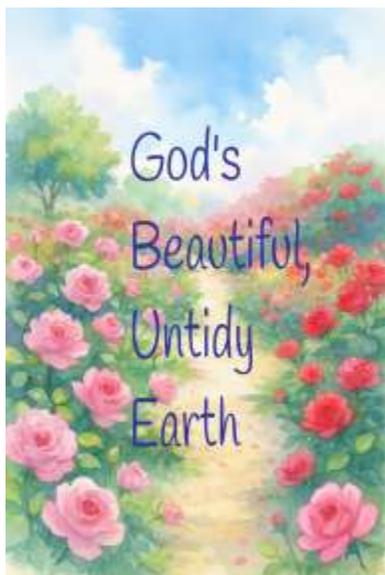
The Very Reverend René R. John
Dean



All services held in-person and livestreamed, when possible:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Sunday, December 21: | 8:30 am – Holy Eucharist, Rite I – Advent 4 |
| | 10:00 am – Advent Service of Lessons and Carols |
| Wednesday, December 24: | 4:00 pm – Christmas Eve (Family) Creche-Building Service |
| | 9:00 pm – Christmas Eve Festival Eucharist (8:30 carol prelude) |
| | with The Rt. Rev. Sally French, Bishop of the Diocese of New Jersey |
| Thursday, December 25: | 10:00 am – Christmas Day Worship |
| Sunday, December 28: | 10:00 am – Holy Eucharist, Rite II - 1 st Sunday after Christmas Day |
| Thursday, January 1: | 10:00 am – New Year’s Day Worship |
| Sunday, January 4: | 8:30 am – Holy Eucharist, Rite I – Baptism of our Lord |
| | 10:00 am – Holy Eucharist, Rite II featuring The Trinity Strings |

by the Rev. Dr. Peter Bridge



It's hard for us to understand that the preferred place for growth is in the very mess of our lives. Think of a garden that's just been turned over and tilled. Wise people are always trying to teach us this but it is a difficult lesson for us to learn. We insist on holding onto the belief that growth will only occur when we have eventually "got it all together" and when our lives have settled down somewhat. When things are smooth rather than rough.

KEATS, the great English poet, way back in 1817 in a letter to his brothers says what at first sounds to us like a very strange thing: "A man of achievement is one who possesses **negative capability**". A man of achievement: "negative capability". That doesn't sound right. But Keats explains. What he means by "negative capability" is the "capacity of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact or reason." In other words, not being overly discouraged by the uncertainties and confusions of life, but rather being ready at a moment's notice to discover truth and beauty in them.

JAMES FOWLER, who studied and wrote extensively on faith development, seems to confirm this when he tells us the sign of an advanced, mature stage of faith is not, as some might have expected, a smug fundamentalist certainty expressed as: "No more questions. I have it all worked out. God has spoken. That is good enough for me!" On the contrary, Fowler says that the sign of a highly developed mature faith is the humble, gentle, graceful ability to live with ambiguity and uncertainty. To be able to say with a serene and graceful smile: "You know, even after all these years I seem to have more questions than answers, and that's OK!"

MIKE IACONELLI, late author of "Messy Spirituality" puts it this way: "You and I are incomplete, unfinished, unfixed. And the reality is that that's where God meets me - in the mess of my life, in the unfixed-ness, in the brokenness! If you read the bible God was constantly showing up in people's lives at the worst possible time of their life. That's where God kind of broke through and connected to people."

Let Us Pray:

Lord, how we close our hearts in fear!

How we hold them tight against breaking!

Guide us gently that we may yet one day dare to pray that great prayer of Mother Teresa:

"Lord break my heart so completely that the whole world may fall in!"

Amen

It's almost time to "spruce" up the Cathedral for Christmas! Cn. Art Powell and our Flower Guild has been busy bringing in wreaths and greens and ordering poinsettias and trees! The greening of the Cathedral will take place on Saturday,

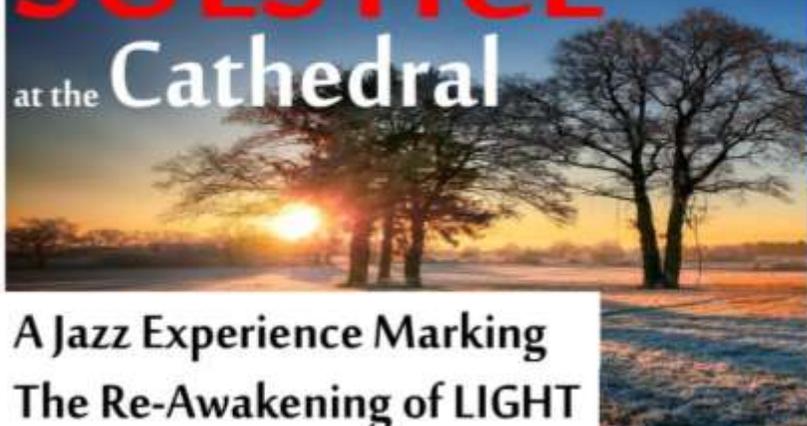
December 20 from 8:00 am—2:00 pm. Please join us if you can, as many hands make light work! It's always a fun time when we gather to make our Cathedral even more beautiful. If you would like to contribute greens to use around the building, donations are welcome—please drop them off here by Wednesday, December 17th. Contributions toward Christmas greens and our wonderful musicians, along with the names of who you would like to honor with those contributions, are due in no later than Sunday, December 14th—please see the form in your newsletter.



Thank you all for everything you do to make our Cathedral beautiful for Christmas!

SOLSTICE

at the Cathedral



Featuring Gwen Laster
& Friends

A Jazz Experience Marking
The Re-Awakening of LIGHT

Sunday, December 21, 2025
4:00 PM
Adults: \$30/Students: \$10



Trinity Altar Guild Shop Update: Check out the many items great for gift giving!

Christmas Cards starting at \$1 * Variety of Stocking Stuffers
Cathedral Lavender Bath Salts & Warmers Still Available
Advent Inspirational & Devotional Books

Weekly Specials are waiting for you!
The Shop will be open Sundays during Advent.



Need that unique gift? The Shop has a variety of nativities & ornaments from around the world. *The ornament tree is waiting to get bare!* Also featuring beautiful uncycled jewelry.

Free Gift Wrapping! Shop local; save gas, time, & money!

2026 Stewardship Update: We have received 64 pledges, totaling \$252,204, representing an average pledge of \$3,940 per family.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

If you would like a pledge card, please see an Usher.



The Return of the Light: Winter Solstice Jazz Concert at the Cathedral

Cathedral Arts Series At Trinity Welcomes Jazz Violinist And Her Ensemble For The Winter Solstice

The Cathedral Arts Series at Trinity (CAST) invites you to a performance by noted jazz violinist and composer Gwen Laster and her ensemble who will bring eclectic sounds of jazz, improvisation and music of the season in celebration of Winter Solstice—the start of a new solar year. Joining Gwen are pianist Manu Koch, bassist Damon Banks, and drummer Harvey Wirht. Laster is an award-winning violinist and was recently named a Guggenheim fellow for her extensive work in performance, recording, and teaching.

The performance begins at 4:00PM on Sunday, December 21 at Trinity Cathedral (801 West State Street, Trenton, NJ). Doors open at 3:30PM. Tickets (adults:\$30/students:\$10) may be purchased at the door or pre-ordered by calling (609) 392-3805 ext. 100. Free parking in the Cathedral parking lot and on streets around the Cathedral.



Stretto
presents

Winter Light - Winter Fun

Sunday, December 14th, 2025

6 PM

Trinity Cathedral in Trenton, NJ



Free and Open to the Public
Free-Will Offering

*Please join us as we perform
popular holiday pieces to
celebrate the season!*

strettoyouthchamberorchestra.org

Highlights of the November 2025 Major Chapter Meeting of Trinity Cathedral

Fourteen of the 26 members of the Major Chapter of Trinity Cathedral met via Zoom on Tuesday evening, November 18, at 6:30 pm. The Bishop presided and called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm and offered the opening prayer. The main agenda items were as follows:

Financial Summary. Treasurer Ron Zilinski presented a financial summary of the Cathedral's operations through October. Income totaled \$675k; while expenses were \$739k, driven by higher property and maintenance expenses.

Investments. Canon Paul Cooper presented an estimated summary of the Cathedral's investments through October, which totaled \$2.75M, 7.7% more than at the end of 2024. \$1,041k of the total is invested in *Diocesan Investment Trust* (DIT) funds, an estimated \$1.1M of the total is under the management of the trustees of the *Dean Adams Trust* (DAT), and \$510k is in a Wells Fargo brokerage account. The remaining \$97k is from a bequest of Jane Ramsdell in a PSEG stock account. The DAT estimate will be updated with actuals when available. A donation of about \$200k from Fred Rogers' estate remains outstanding.

Property & Maintenance (P&M). The Dean, reporting for P&M Chair Mike Raab, shared that the Cathedral is looking into a solar power installation; and requested and was granted approval to proceed with a non-binding exploration with Energyware. On November 11, our Church Insurance representative visited the Cathedral to review our insurance policy and tour the property; a summary of the meeting will be shared subsequently.

Fund Raising. The Dean shared that the October 20 Community Day Golf Outing was successful with an estimated \$30k raised. The final Golf Outing amount will be available after the committee closeout meeting on December 5 (*since moved to January 5.*) The October 25 African Festival was also successful, and the proceeds will be subsequently shared as well.

Dean's Report. The Dean reported that: a) the Cathedral Food Pantry was renamed in honor of Janet Thompson in September and expected to distribute 140 turkeys for Thanksgiving; b) the Cathedral recently hosted 2 Diocesan events—the Ordinations Service on November 8 and the Memorial Service of The Rev. Linda Moeller on November 15; and c) on behalf of Georgia Koenig (new Chair) and the Board of the *Trinity Cathedral Academy* (TCA), the TCA is operating with 2 classes of 15 students, and hopes to add a third classroom in January.

Bishop's Report. The Bishop reported that: a) the 242nd Convention of the Diocese of New Jersey will begin in-person on November 21 at Christ Church, Toms River featuring a keynote address by the Archbishop of Jerusalem; followed by an in-person and virtual meeting on November 22 also at Christ Church, Toms River; b) we heard from over 200 members through our Diocesan listening sessions which clearly showed that the Diocese can do more to support our congregations and communities, needs to do more to support our multicultural ministries, has more work to do to support leadership development and discipleship, and to provide appropriate care for congregations of all sizes; c) the Diocese has engaged with Vision, Inc. to begin an assessment of our multicultural ministries and anti-racism efforts; and d) the Diocese has hired a bilingual Finance Manager who will join the staff of December 1.

Old and New Business. The Dean shared that the Cathedral exceeded \$200k in 2026 Stewardship Pledges.

Next Meeting. The next Major Chapter meeting will take place on February 24, 2026, at 6:30 pm via Zoom.

Closing Prayer and Blessing. The Dean offered the closing prayer followed by the Bishop's blessing, and the meeting adjourned at 8:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Clerk Chinweze Ahaghotu. 8 December 2025.

Creation Care at Diocesan Convention

November 21-22, 2025. Christ Church, Toms River

In case you missed it, there were two important Creation Care happenings at this year's Diocesan Convention in Toms River.

Firstly, we displayed material from the Cathedral's two Creation Care tables as part of the Convention's Ministry Fair. Convention goers were able to peruse and take away our newly updated bifold flyer with helpful QR-code links, review climate related educational material for both adults and children, take away prayer cards, and sign up for our mailing list. Thanks to all those who stopped at the booth.



Secondly, and most importantly, the Convention passed Resolution 242-4, which seeks to include Environmental Stewardship as part of the diocese's ethical investment practices. Specifically, the Resolution asks 1) for a review of the diocese's current investments in fossil fuel companies, 2) to refrain from any further hydrocarbon-related investments, and 3) to develop a strategy to divest from fossil fuels by 2027.

An attempt at a similar Resolution in a previous year was voted down, so this year's success is an exciting and important step forward as we strive to become better stewards and carers for not only our money but also for God's Creation. Special thanks goes to Canon Barbie Bach who drafted the Resolution.

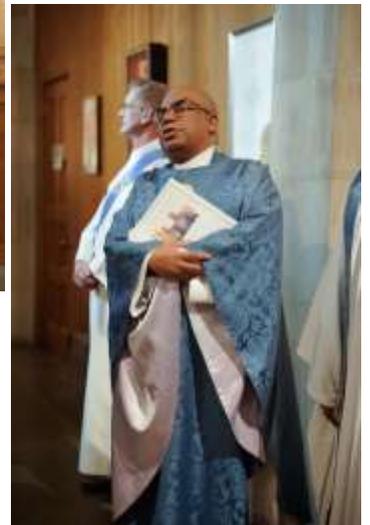
Dcn. Christopher Cox

ORDINATION ANNIVERSARY



Dean John and Canon Steve would like to thank everyone who participated last Sunday for their 40th Ordination Anniversary celebration, as well as the beginning of our new Liturgical Year A.

The worship, the food, and especially the fellowship was a wonderful beginning to the season of Advent. Thanks all. (Photos courtesy of Lee Whiteman, Aonik Moinul and Georgia Koenig for the photos!)







Lights... Camera... Action!

Trinity parishioner Jennifer Franks Ahaghotu is a Harvard graduate, filmmaker, and record-holding movement founder whose work turns visibility into sacred witness. From creating the *Black Women World Record* to storytelling in *This Is How We Win* and executive producing *After The Second Martini*, her art captures the moment when women stop performing who they've been and start remembering who they are. Her films, talks, and gatherings invite audiences to move beyond perfection and into presence — blending cinema, storytelling, and truth.



In August of this year, Jen and her production company brought a very exciting project to Trinity Cathedral! Jen's team spent the day filming scenes for an upcoming film in the beautiful setting of All Saints Chapel. We were happy to host this creative endeavor and can't wait to see the final product. After the filming, Jen reached out to tell us a little more about the film and what to expect next...

"On behalf of our entire team, I want to extend my deepest gratitude for your role in bringing my film, *After The Second Martini*, to life.

While the title may reference a martini, please know that this is a story of a Black woman's empowered journey of storytelling and transformation — and the cathedral scene has no references to alcohol. Your space was chosen for its beauty and reverence, which provided the perfect setting for a pivotal and sacred moment in the film where the protagonist has trouble speaking publicly — before ultimately finding her voice.

We are so thrilled with how beautifully the shoot came together. Every moment was infused with care, artistry, and collaboration, and it truly shows. We could not have done this without you.

We are now officially in **post-production**, carefully shaping the story. Our goal is to complete the first draft of the film early next year (January/February), and we'll be in touch with updates as we get closer to finishing the film.

In the meantime, we've selected a few **behind-the-scenes photos from your part of the shoot** for you to enjoy.

Thank you again for your generosity in opening the cathedral to us. This film is a story of transformation, and you helped bring that transformation to the screen. We can't wait to share the finished piece with you!



With gratitude,
Jen Franks Ahaghotu
Director/Producer
After The Second Martini





FUNDrive® Coordinator

Sherri Anderson
 (484) 467-9194
 strettoyouthchamber@gmail.com

Our Goal: \$1000
 250 Large Yard Bags (avg. 20 lbs.)
 75 Medium boxes (household goods)
Fundraiser Dates:
 10/31/2025 - 01/10/2026

Clean out your closets for Stretto Youth Chamber Orchestra!

Please help Stretto by collecting items you are ready to donate. Our collection date will be Saturday, January 17th, 9-10:30am at Trinity. If you need to drop off ahead of time please send and email to strettoyouthchamber@gmail.com

We are getting an extra bonus right now for books - empty those shelves!!

We will need volunteers to help load. If you can volunteer, please email.

We Are Collecting Clothes

men's, women's, & children's clothes, coats, shoes, scarves, handbags, wallets, fashion accessories, belts, backpacks, etc.

Household Textiles

bedding, comforters, blankets, sheets, towels, linen, tablecloths, curtains, pillows, etc.

Small Household Goods

kitchen items (such as pots/pans, dishes, silverware, glasses, serving pieces and hand-held appliances), home decorative items, knick-knacks, toys, games, and small electronics

Books & Media

paperback, hard cover - all genres
**media needs to be boxed separately*
**no encyclopedias or text books*

Please use bags for clothes and textiles and tightly pack boxes of small household goods. Separate books from household goods and media. All items must be clean and in sellable condition.

Tré' Devon Lane Foundation
 Supporting other families during these difficult times.

GRIEF

Support Group

SATURDAY
 December 13, 2025
 10:00am

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral Church
 801 West State Street Trenton, NJ
 Please use parking lot in the rear



Please bring a photo of the person you lost

For more information please contact Regina at
 609-209-2500

www.trdevonlane.org

A Special Offering for



Christmas

In grateful Thanksgiving for all of God's blessings on our life and our work,
please accept my offering of \$_____ to be used for (please check):

- Christmas greens & poinsettias
- Christmas musicians & music
- Split evenly between Christmas greens & music

My donation is in memory of / thanksgiving for (PLEASE PRINT!):

My name & phone#:

Offerings and this request form may be placed in the alms basin BY
SUNDAY, DEC. 14th or given to Patrice D'Angelo in the Cathedral office.



DECEMBER

birthdays & anniversaries

1	Mary Gay Abbott-Young	Birthday
1	Althia Muse	Birthday
3	Amy Elizabeth Wilson	Birthday
3	Dorothy Shean	Birthday
4	Janet Byard	Birthday
5	Hubert & Maureen Perry	Anniversary
6	Carole Porter	Birthday
7	Anthony Russo	Birthday
7	Jared Miller	Birthday
10	Albert Cooper	Birthday
10	Peter G. Lewis	Birthday
11	Fatu Ansah	Birthday
11	Thomas Scott Porter	Birthday
12	Jane Bridge	Birthday
12	Joyce Johnson	Birthday
13	Virginia (Ginny) Harmer	Birthday
13	Jackie Ketter	Birthday
14	Anthony Monte	Birthday
15	Andrea John	Birthday
15	Charles McIntire	Birthday
16	Anthony Richardson	Birthday
16	Charles B. Hopkins III	Birthday
16	Pamela Koenig	Birthday
18	Archie Ngwayah	Birthday
19	Chinwendu Opara	Birthday
19	Mike & Debbie Raab	Anniversary
20	Methuselah McCrownsey	Birthday
21	Philip G. Lewis	Birthday
21	David Eastmead	Birthday
21	Hilary Cox	Birthday
21	Ciera Bertheau	Birthday
22	Sharlie Ross	Birthday
22	Isaiah Muse	Birthday
23	Manuel Tejada, Jr.	Birthday
25	Scott Young	Birthday
26	Maria Newman	Birthday
26	Mike Raab	Birthday
27	Chris Kirmales	Birthday
28	Julia Bestman	Birthday
31	Samuel & Anastasia Richards	Anniversary



JANUARY

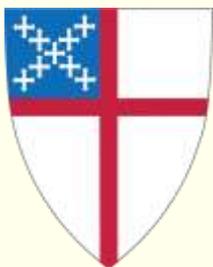
Birthdays and Anniversaries

1	Eanna (EJ) O'Suilleabhain	Birthday
1	Wolo Bestman	Birthday
1	John Gabbidon	Birthday
4	William (Bill) Harmer	Birthday
5	James Miller, Jr.	Birthday
5	Ra'shonda Washington	Birthday
5	Christopher Pearson	Birthday
7	Gail Lewis	Birthday
8	Dorothy Pinto	Birthday
8	Gilda Bertheau	Birthday
9	Bernard McMullan	Birthday
9	Hubert Perry	Birthday
10	Karen Callaghan	Birthday
12	Udter Victor	Birthday
12	Samuel Iverson Joseph	Birthday
12	Elizabeth Russo	Birthday
16	Sue Gummere	Birthday
19	Karen Armington	Birthday
20	Christopher Gregory	Birthday
20	Patrice D'Angelo	Birthday
20	Deborah McConnaughey	Birthday
20	Tripuella Dennis	Birthday
20	Christian Boczar	Birthday
21	Dr. Kemdi Opara	Birthday
22	Mark Snow	Birthday
23	Angela DiJoseph	Birthday
23	Jonathon Zilinski	Birthday
23	Sherri Anderson	Birthday
24	Marvin C. Porter, Jr.	Birthday
24	Ruth Councill	Birthday
25	Denise (Dennie) Higgins	Birthday
25	Emily Fineburg	Birthday
26	Jeremiah Miller	Birthday
28	Kelvin Blasse	Birthday
29	Donald Brokate	Birthday
29	Annette Carew	Birthday
29	Nomsa Nganang	Birthday
30	Bill & Ginny Harmer	Anniversary
31	Marvin C. Porter, III	Birthday

Trinity Cathedral

Of The Diocese of New Jersey
801 West State Street
Trenton, NJ 08618

Phone: (609) 392-3805
Fax: (609) 392-2305
www.TrinityCathedralNJ.org



Worship Schedule:

Sundays: 10:00 am - Rite II
In-person and livestreamed

Every 1st and 3rd Sunday:
8:30 am - Rite I
In-person only

Please go to
www.TrinityCathedralNJ.org
for information on how to join us
via livestream!

Our Vision:

A visible agent of God's love, joyfully embracing all people.

Our Mission:

God is here. Jesus loves you.

We are a welcoming, diverse community sharing God's love, spreading the Gospel and caring for all people and God's Creation. Come join us.

CATHEDRAL CLERGY

The Rt. Rev. Sally Johnson French, Bishop
The Very Rev. René Rory John, Dean
The Rev. Cn. Dr. Noel J. Amadi, Priest Associate
The Rev. Dr. Peter Bridge, Priest Associate
The Rev. Dr. John Luttrell, Priest Associate
The Rev. Cn. Bruce Montgomery, Priest Associate
The Rev. Christopher Cox, Deacon

CATHEDRAL STAFF

Patrice A. D'Angelo, Administrator
Dr. Kerry Heimann, Director of Music
Fay Manicke, Associate Director of Music
Al Shaw, Sexton
Tyree Bodiford, Associate Sexton

THE ACADEMY PRE-SCHOOL STAFF

Tossa Thorpe, Administrative Assistant