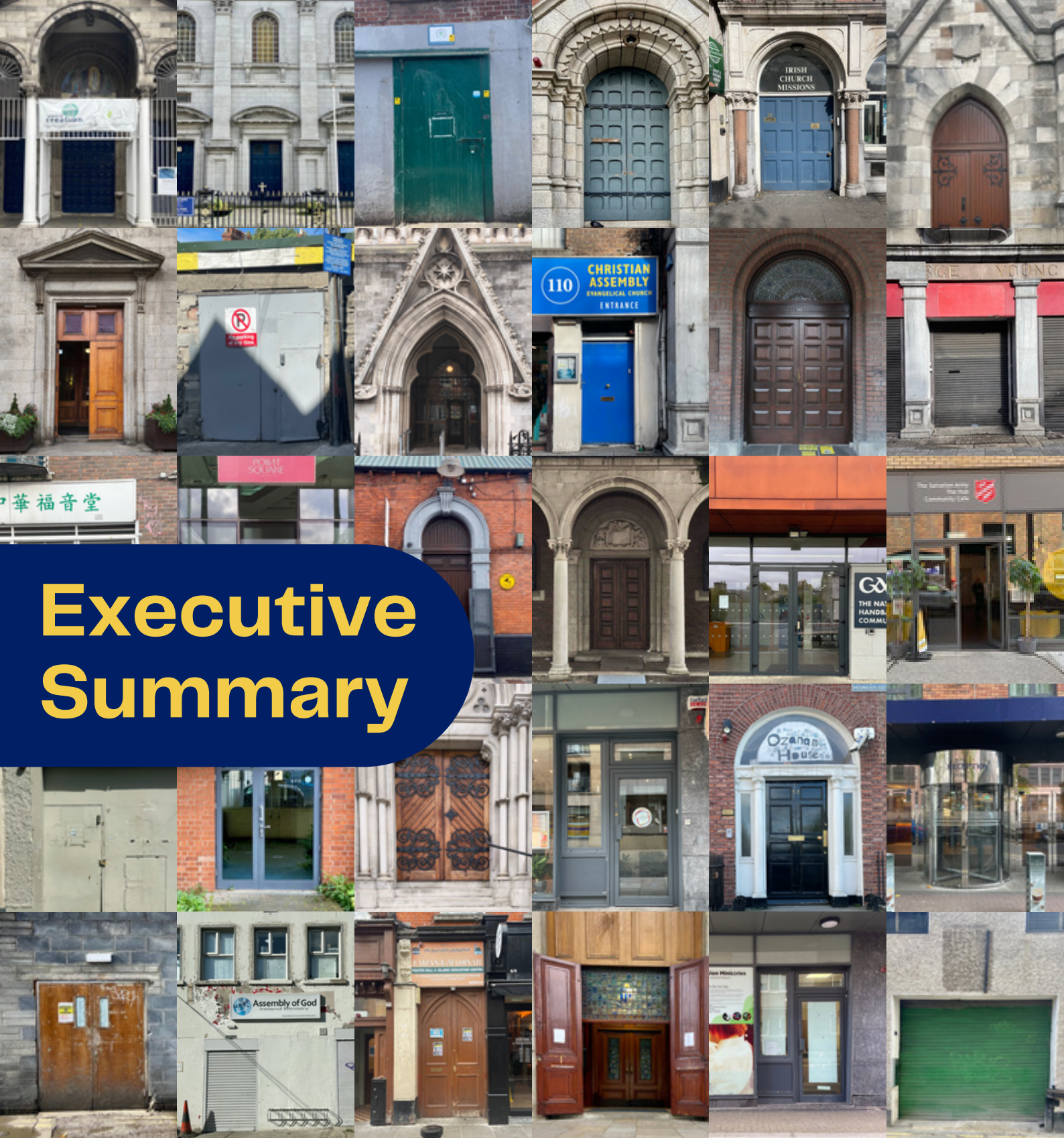




Executive Summary

Faith in the North-East Inner-City

How faith-based communities help Dublin to flourish

A Good Puzzle

In *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom mused that “a good puzzle would be to cross Dublin without passing a pub.”¹ Today, as pubs close and migration reshapes the city, a new puzzle might be to cross the north-east inner-city without passing a faith-based community.

This research identified 49 such communities active across the areas – churches, mosques, and meeting halls, serving both those who are recently arrived and those who have roots in the area over generations. Far from marginal, they are part of Dublin’s living social fabric. Their work helps newcomers settle, strengthens neighbourhood ties, and complements public services in ways that demand official recognition.

Key Findings

Conducted over six months and involving 30 interviews with the leaders and members of faith-based communities, along with a breadth of stakeholders, this research² has identified six major findings.

The First Ports of Call

1

Faith-based communities are often where newcomers turn first. They offer both spiritual and practical help – signposting to housing, healthcare, and education; assisting with paperwork; and simply welcoming. Their cultural fluency and trust make official systems easier to navigate.

Identity and Embeddedness

2

These communities are multi-national and multi-generational, with many members living and working locally. Sharing buildings is common, and inter-faith cooperation is routine. Leaders consistently expressed the desire to serve the wider community, not stand apart from it.

Finding Space, Finding Time

3

Access to secure, affordable, and appropriate premises determines what faith groups can do. Many rent short-term or occupy venues that are less than ideal, which constrains their visibility and capacity. Especially for the most marginalised population in our city, a central location is essential because of the financial and time cost involved in travelling.

¹ James Joyce, *Ulysses* (Random House Publishing, 1934), 58.

² Full report is available for download on the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice website.



Figure 1: How Faith-Based Communities Support Integration

Health Access and Support

Faith-based communities support public health by building trust and helping people to use health services effectively. Their everyday ministries – food banks, home visits, formal and informal counselling – bridge the gap between the State’s systems and the citizen.

4

Low Religious Literacy

Public bodies are consistently overlooking these groups, often because officials lack knowledge or routine contact with them. There is a blindspot between the operative understandings of what it means to be “secular” and the reality of religious diversity that must be addressed. The result of this weak engagement is that the potential of these groups to serve the common good of the city is reduced. Better liaison would make city services more responsive and improve efficiency.

5

Crisis Readiness

During the November 2023 riots, officials struggled to reach communities that were “hidden” from official view. Regular relationships with faith leaders could improve preparedness and calm tensions before they escalate.

6

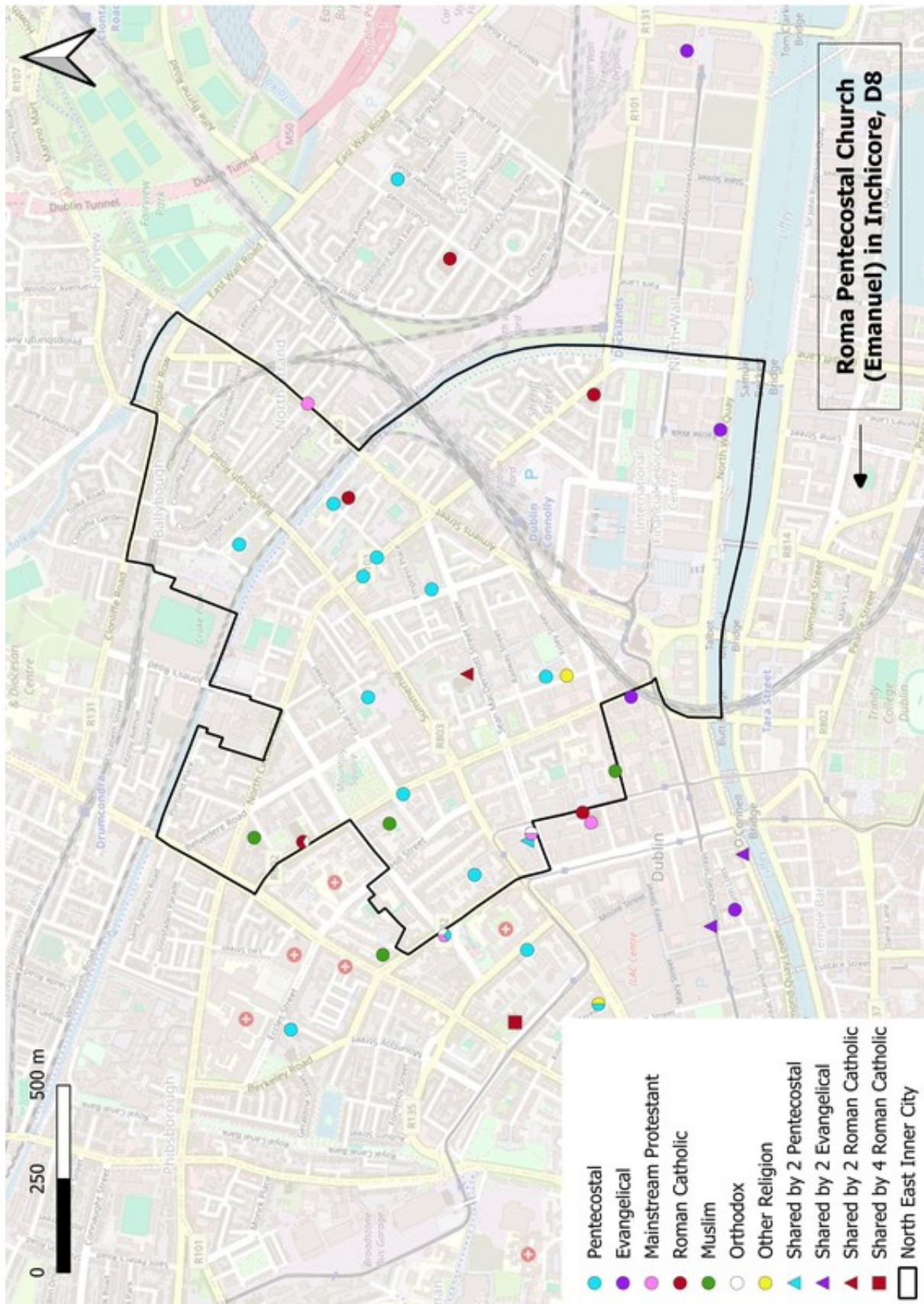


Figure 2: Map of Faith-Based Communities in the North-East Inner-City



Figure 3: Faith-Based Communities by Religious Tradition

Conclusion

Faith-based communities are a vital part of the north-east inner-city's social infrastructure. They act where the State cannot always reach. They intervene early and regularly, relationally and on the basis of trust. Recognising their contribution strengthens community resilience, supports integration, and enriches civic life. As one leader put it: "We have the resources to offer, to make Dublin a better place for all of us."³

Mapping Faith-Based Communities

One of the major contributions of this research is the development of an accurate and up-to-date map of 49 faith-based communities in the north-east inner-city (see page 3). While such a map could never be exhaustive and – in part because of the pressures of space identified so strongly in the report – the reality on the ground is always in flux, it serves to demonstrate the rich and varied nature of faith expression in the city. These communities make a positive social impact on the area and must be considered as integral to any vision for the renewal of these neighbourhoods.

Recommendations

The preceding analysis leads to a set of practical recommendations for policymakers, civic partners, and community leaders. These are summarised in the infographic on page 6. Each proposal is modest in scale but high in potential return, designed to strengthen recognition, communication, and collaboration between faith-based communities and statutory agencies in the north-east inner-city. Together, they trace an incremental roadmap of small steps which, taken as a whole, can foster deeper trust and broader participation across the area's rich tapestry of faiths and cultures.

³ FBC Member 6



Figure 5: Six Steps to Support Faith-Based Communities



The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice is an agency of the Irish Jesuit Province.

The Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice exists to promote justice for all through theological reflection, social analysis and research, action, education, and advocacy.

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ACET (AIDS Care Education & Training) Ireland is a faith-based organisation in the Christian tradition operating a range of projects responding to HIV, addiction and migrant health.

The work takes place not at a distinct venue or centre but at kitchen tables, community cafés, to and from hospital appointments and with established diaspora settings, particularly faith-based communities.

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