



## St. David's Episcopal Church and School 2021 Vestry Candidates

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Jennifer Bluhm



Jenkins Cooper



Anne Shively

### **Jennifer Bluhm**

Longevity with the St. David's community is the most prominent feature I bring as a vestry candidate. My family has attended St David's for 26 years!

I grew up in a church-going family, attending an inter-denominational protestant church. My husband, Andy, grew up in a progressive Catholic church. Years ago, we were invited to visit St. David's when in the area for a job interview. It was Easter Sunday and it was the inspiring, welcoming place we know today. When we moved here, we already had our church home. Later, I was received at St. David's into the Episcopal community.



Professionally I am a middle school French teacher and I recently added a certificate in Translation with an eye toward branching out. I retired from teaching a year ago but took a long-term sub job last year so this my first year in a long time not teaching. I love languages and language learning, and I believe that communication and the understanding you get from speaking a local language is the best way to connect people and to build a peaceful global community. It's essential that young people engage with the world. We all can benefit from seeing perspectives outside our own day to day routines.

I have a second job which is related to my husband Andy's work. I am co-coordinator of a dental study club which provides continuing education for dental professionals in Loudoun County. My role is a combination of project management, event planning and bookkeeping. Andy and I have two grown children, Connor and Amanda, who grew up attending St. David's. I am also a new dog mom for the rescue pup we adopted in September.

Over the years I have been involved in many areas at St. David's including newcomer coffees, childcare, altar guild, Journey in Faith, VBS, welcome committee, and most of all, choir and music. As a family we participated in youth group and Reach youth mission trips and I personally attended Reach trips two different years. I also went on one of the Honduras mission trips.

My skill set tends toward the analysis, organization and presentation side. Teaching has allowed me to find clear ways to communicate information and to find relevant ways for a variety of people to engage with a topic. I have computer literacy and tech skills. I tend to use words carefully and sometimes get a reputation for being the diplomat in situations. It's a key to earning trust which is a baseline value to me that you don't put at risk. I like to promote community and have done that in small ways: I have organized things in my neighborhood - trash pickup, cookouts, and street meet-ups (during the pandemic) to make sure everyone is ok.

St. David's is such an exciting place to be. I have seen so many people find a home in this community. The invitation to God's table and recognition that we are all on a spiritual journey opens the door to faith for so many people. The sermons, music and prayer are for me the most meaningful highlights of our services. The way we reach out to each other and engage newcomers is just the essence of who we are and it inspires me. I accepted the vestry nomination because I feel that most everyone should be willing to take a turn shouldering our community's responsibilities, but I also feel I want to see this community continue to thrive in this time of transition back to in-person services. I feel I can bring a voice of experience on the music ministry side. I am also very interested in continuing our great history with outreach – both distant and local. I think it's important to offer many ways for every person and family to get involved whether through a regular weekly option or a one-hour initiative. It's a privilege to be part of this very special covenant community and I look forward to the possibility of serving.

### **Jenkins Cooper**

Dear St. David's parish, I write this letter to thank all parishioners for electing me to serve on the vestry for a year. Under the leadership of Rector Mary Kay Brown and Senior Warden, David, Sheatsley, the vestry has accomplished a lot during the COVID-19 Pandemic and closure of the sanctuary for in-person worship (successful launch of 2020 stewardship campaign; approved budget of \$964,427; successful Zoom 10:00 am worship services and outdoor in-person worship services; paycheck protection program (PPP) loan/grant to balance the budget; infrastructure updates to the sanctuary; purchasing of streaming equipment to stream; held successful BINGO night for fundraising, etc. etc., etc.). I am honored and blessed to have been a part of this vestry, that worked very hard to make things run as efficiently as possible during this "new normal." I am also thankful for the opportunities given to me to serve as Secretary of the St. David's Chapter of Brotherhood of St. Andrews (BOSA), and as the first Chairman of the newly established St. David Men's Fellowship (Fr. Emmanuel Johnson Chapter)



However, my work is not yet done on the vestry and serving the parish. God is still leading and pushing me to serve. I hope that electing me for a further term on the vestry of the St. David's parish will allow me to continue serving God and the St. David's parish as we try to understand clearly, "where God is calling us as a congregation" during this challenging period of political uncertainty and racial tensions, exacerbated by the pandemic. I am willing to continue to work hard in "caring" and ensuring that the church is managed well and that its operations and activities are firmly under the "control" of God.

My wife, Cecelia and I are devoted Episcopalians, growing up in homes with parents that dedicated their lives to the Episcopal Church in Liberia. We followed Father Johnson to St. David's, where we have now made this Parish our home in the US.

Both Cecelia and I are active members of this Parish, serving as Ushers. I also serve as a member of the “Welcome/Connect” team and an Usher. I attend church regularly and am current with my pledge.

My vision for St. David’s is to help grow its spiritual awareness of Jesus as Lord our Savior and God as our Maker. We should also continue striving to build a spirit of unity and cohesiveness in the church that transcends economic status, race, gender, or politics. If we can build such a church and environment, we can build a membership base that will be sustainable for years to come. Building this base also comes with the added responsibilities of sustaining and even expanding this base—enhancing our various ministries, providing better services and care for parishioners, trying to meet the spiritual and emotional needs of all members. This will require added financial resources. I am prepared to continue to work on the vestry to explore diverse and innovative means of fundraising and stewardship to support the various operations and activities of St. David’s on a daily basis and for long-term sustainability.

My career in international development has shaped my life to help care for the needy and God’s children. I am an Economist, and Lawyer with 40 years of experience designing, developing, implementing and monitoring a wide range of international development projects funded by USAID, the Department of Health and Human Services, and other donor agencies across the globe. These projects in health; education; community service; governance, rights, and democracy; economic growth; and humanitarian assistance. Over the past 30 years, I have worked as a senior staff member of The Mitchell Group, Inc. (TMG), a Veteran-owned business, and am now serving as TMG’s Vice President/Operations with responsibility for providing overall support for TMG’s contracts and subcontracts, of which more than 80 percent has been with the US Government (USG), including complex/global contracts with ceilings hitting the \$3 billion mark.

As TMG’s Vice President/Operations, I have presided over an expansion of the company’s project portfolio, gaining further insights and experience in interacting with USG officials involved with these projects as well as other stakeholders and beneficiaries overseas, including women and children. I have also coordinated the fielding and supervision of multiple long-term and short-term teams working on these contracts and have learned from the challenges and opportunities involved in providing this level of technical assistance to our USG clients.

I hope that my experience to date as a vestry member as well as my vast and rich experience helping the poor and raising hundreds of people from poverty, educating kids from primary levels with life-changing skills, and providing access to health care for millions, will allow me to serve the vestry well, and give me the opportunity to achieve my vision for St. David’s.

### **Ann Shively**

My name is Anne Shively. I am originally from Long Island, NY, and was raised in the Catholic faith. My husband, son, and I moved to Ashburn, VA in 2001 after my husband retired from the Air Force. That same year, we were looking for a new church home. We discovered St. David’s nestled in the woods and have been attending ever since.

My professional background is in education. I have a master’s degree in Special Education. My most recent position was serving as Student Partnership Exchange Program Director at the George C. Marshall International Center in Leesburg. I am a



member of P.E.O. (Philanthropic Education Organization), Chapter AZ, Herndon, which supports women's education. We provide loans, scholarships, and grants to outstanding women at the high school through Ph.D. level. I deliver food to homebound residents and have driven the elderly and people with disabilities to medical appointments with Loudoun Volunteer Caregivers for the past nine years.

I have just completed a one-year term on the vestry and was co-chair of the Fundraising Committee. I created a virtual bingo night fundraiser to engage parishioners during the pandemic and support St. David's church and local outreach. I serve as the St. David's lead for the Alleluia Ministry, a Domestic Outreach joint ministry with St. David's and St. Gabriel's, which provides food and other necessary items to families in need in Loudoun County on a weekly basis and as a member of the Eden vegetable garden team. Earlier this year, I served on the Pastoral Care team. In the past, I served as a Hospitality Team ministry member, as the head of the Loudoun Hunger Relief and Good Shepherd Alliance ministries for Domestic Outreach and as a Sunday School teacher.

This year has been very challenging for our church due to the pandemic. I am motivated to continue to serve and be part of the leadership team to collaborate on solutions and best practices to keep our church vibrant and relevant. I would like to continue innovative ways to keep parishioners connected, prudent management of church resources and keep our strong involvement in the local community.