



St. David's Episcopal Church & School 2022 Vestry Candidates



[Margot Culhane](#)



[Mike Gibson](#)



[Tanya Kerr](#)



[Dave Schmidt](#)

Questions? Contact Register@sdlife.org to be put in touch with the candidates.



Margot Culhane

After confirming my desire to serve on the Vestry, Katherine emailed a link to Vestry biographies. They were immediately intimidating. "Oh God, what have I done?" God answered! "I called you. I've been calling you and will continue to call you. "Just walk in faith." To which I said: "OK already."

I want to serve St. David's because of my deep and abiding love for this church, which saved my life. My desire for serving on the Vestry alongside the other members is to help ensure that the financial and business end of the church is robust and stable, enabling us to focus on being disciples of Christ to the community and beyond, growing our Church.

I worked in retail where I started as a salesperson and climbed the ladder to become assistant store manager at a large department store. During that time, I was tasked with opening a new store, which involved coordinating site construction, building a team from scratch and setting up an entire store of merchandise. Beyond retail, I worked in Operations Management with clients such as Boeing and Texas Instruments and their vendors on quality control and adherence to industry standards. I worked in Accounts Receivable serving as the liaison on the corporate steering committee. In my professional career, I've worked intimately with everyone from the line worker to the CEO, diligently working to build the big picture and iron out the details. I believe this will be an asset on the Vestry.

I was born in Winston-Salem, North Carolina and baptized Presbyterian. Early on, we moved to Falls Church and attended Falls Church Presbyterian where I sang in the choir. I did not want to move when my father – a Foreign Service Officer – was reassigned so I kept pulling up the for-sale sign. It didn't work.

Off we went to Saudi Arabia. I was in 2nd grade where there were 20 different nationalities and ethnicities represented by less than 30 children. Dhahran was an alien landscape. Outside our yard on the compound, the desert was inhabited by scorpions, swarms of dragonflies, even wild dogs! Practicing Christianity was illegal. Being Christian



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could be dangerous. I hid my cross when we went to church. My father told us to respect, accept, and celebrate with joy that other places had other languages, religions, and customs. We were guests in their country, representing the U.S. I loved it there. And Santa came on a camel!

We went on to live in Istanbul, Tel-Aviv and spent a summer in Beirut and Amman. The horror of Hitler and the dangers of being Jewish was reinforced in Tel-Aviv. We had classrooms in the bomb shelter at school, and soldiers were everywhere with weapons visible and ready. I was blessed with the opportunity to worship in Bethlehem and Jerusalem at Christmas and at the Garden Tomb in Gethsemane for Easter Sunrise service. Oh, it is wonderful to be Christian! We attended churches from Southern Baptist to Anglican. We left Tel-Aviv for Amman by car, crossing the Allenby Bridge. Along the way, we drove past a huge refugee camp. It is dangerous to be Palestinian! This brought me to a crisis of faith. How could this be happening here in the center of all Abrahamic faiths? Where was God? I was mad at Him and determined he must be dead. (Yet, I still talked to Him!?!)

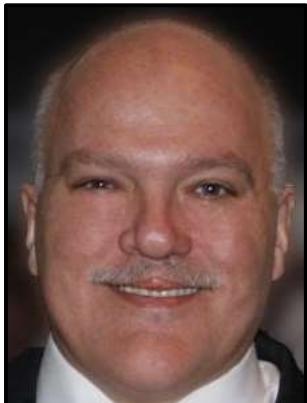
Back in the U.S., 9/11 backlash then taught me it was dangerous to be Muslim!

Because of these life experiences, I know to consider the other side(s) of the story and to be open to, and balance, opposing ideas. For over 40 years I wandered the desert of belief without faith or hope, a prodigal child of God.

Then, what felt like a lifetime later, I was in crisis and despair. My son was exploring spirituality and we attended an evening service at St David's. Throughout my life I was welcomed at all the churches I attended, but St. David's was a warm hug that doesn't let go. God called me home through Rev. Mary Kay and this congregation.

I was received into the Episcopal Church in June 2021. I have been online since the start of COVID and participated in a book group and the confirmation class. I look forward to returning and participating in person.

Thanks for your time and consideration. May God's will be done in our Vestry.



Mike Gibson

My name is Mike Gibson. I've lived in Ashburn and attended St. David's for over 20 years. I have 2 daughters, Holly (21) and Kelly (20), both of whom live with me.

I believe in service, commitment and giving back to others in all aspects of my life. Here at St. David's, I have served as the Director of Youth Ministry, Vestry Member, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Chair of the Finance Committee, Secretary for the Brotherhood of St. Andrews, Secretary for the St. David Men's Fellowship (current), and a member of the Prayer Team (current).

Outside of St. David's, I currently serve on the Board of Directors for the Goose Creek Village Homeowner's Association, a 656-home community in Ashburn. As Treasurer, I am responsible for developing and managing a \$600,000 annual community budget. I have held this position for 10 years and I have also served on the Board of Directors of 2 other Homeowner's Associations in Ashburn, holding various positions including President, Vice President and Treasurer.



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To me, service is not about being recognized for what you do. It's not about getting credit. It's not about getting a pat on the back. It's about lifting others up. It's about supporting the mission. It's about giving back selflessly. It's about doing the right thing. It's about looking for ways to impact those around you in a positive way. It's about changing lives.

This is a time of great change and great opportunity for St. David's. There is so much that our St. David's community has done to serve the Lord, serve our members, and serve our community, and so much more that we want to do! During this transitional period, we need to look for ways to harness the vast untapped synergies that exist among members and ministries, and I am blessed and humbled to be able contribute my experience, my energy, my passion, my vision, and my commitment to the St. David's family.



Tanya Kerr

My name is Tanya Kerr. I am a Navy Vet, AF wife, mother (2 college age kids), dog owner (2 jumbo size dogs), and Realtor. I was introduced to the Episcopal faith at the age of 28 by my husband Jim. After 2 years of his wonderful example, I decided I wanted the peace Jim exhibited in his daily for myself. I began my spiritual journey in 1999. I was baptized Lutheran at the Gloria Dei church in Hampton Roads, besides my newborn son in April 2000.

We first attended St. David's while our family was stationed in Hampton Roads (~2001). We were visiting my husband's parents for a holiday and Father Stephen won us over with a moving and enjoyable sermon, the people were welcoming and we were hooked. After that, we made sure to attend service any weekend we were in town. Being a military family, we went church shopping every 2 years, so we had a vast experience that made us truly appreciate how special St. David's was.

Several years later, in 2004, when my husband got stationed at the Pentagon, we made Ashburn our chosen spot, knowing we already had a church "home". I assisted in running the Sunday school (I think I was in charge one year, but the preschool years are a blur, lol) We were assigned to Texas in 2007 and regretfully moved on (and on). Then an old Ashburn neighbor reached out telling us that they were selling the home next door to the one we had rented all those years ago. We knew it was time to come home.

My husband retired from the Air Force in 2013 and we moved to Broadlands. We helped out with St. David's youth group and traveled to the Reach mission trips (4 or 5 times), but as our children grew older we had to work harder to stay connected in the church. I helped with Monday night Alleluia ministry and Jim got active with the sound team. I was also one of our voting delegates at the Episcopal convention in 2021 and will be for 2022. We also started doing Dining Outs and loved the Zoom calls for game nights during Covid.

I am so grateful for the peace my faith brings me and St David's part in that. I would be honored to ensure that St. David's continues to offer the highest level of care and service to support others in their journey of faith while keeping me connected in my own journey.



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Dave Schmidt

Personal / Professional Accomplishments related to my service on the Vestry: I have been a practicing Episcopalian (and very involved in the church) my entire life. As a young adult, I participated in the Young People's Fellowship (YPF, a ministry designed for the youth of the parish) and as an acolyte for many years. I served on St. David's Vestry from January 2012 through January 2015 and was appointed (to fulfill the remaining term of an elected Vestry candidate who had to resign) from January 2016 through January 2017. I previously served on the Vestry at the first Episcopal church that my family and I attended when I was growing up: Saint David's Episcopal Church, Gales Ferry, CT. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and sincerely hope to have the privilege to serve all of you, and our broader community, in this capacity at St. David's.

I have an undergraduate degree in Mechanical Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and an MBA from the Wharton School. I served in our nation's nuclear submarine force for 6 years to begin my career. Since then, I've held executive positions at several outstanding organizations, among them Gateway, AOL, Pearson (Education), and the company that I founded in 2015, Vality. I believe that my background and education would serve me well on the Vestry for our church. I feel that I would bring a strong sense of perspective, balance, and financial acumen to our church leadership team.

My involvement with St. David's: From October 2010 through January 2017, I enjoyed the privilege of serving as the Treasurer here at St. David's, working alongside our CFO, clergy, Vestry, and many others. I have been an active member of the St. David's community since 1995. During my time at St. David's, I have been active in many activities, among them (a) discernment committees for both Holly Hanback (the precursor to her candidacy for ordainment as an Episcopal deacon) and Maggie Parrott, (b) Truth or Consequences workshop facilitator, (c) active in support of our church's causes, programs, and charities, among them the Loudoun Interfaith Relief food pantry, Relay for Life, and Shepherd Group. I have always given of my first fruits to our church and our community.

Why I'm running for Vestry: I very much want to expand my Christian leadership in our church. I'm running for our Vestry for the continued opportunity to serve God, His Christian community, and each one of you. Our church and community are in critical times of transition, and we need hard-working, passionate leaders to fulfill the void left when our amazing shepherd Rev. Mary Kay Brown resigned in February.

My Vestry priorities: Continue to evolve and improve our Christian faith community, including the following: (1) work with the St. David's community to assist in hiring our next Rector, (2) continue our investment in, and recognition of, outstanding leadership for our church, (3) maintain and nurture a strong Christian foundation among our children and young adults, the future of our parish community, (4) support a strong financial framework for our church, and (5) build upon our momentum in spreading God's word, within our church, among other Christians, and among those who do not yet know Him.

I would be honored and privileged to serve all of you in this capacity if called to do so. Many thanks for considering my candidacy.