

## **Rev. Dr. S. David Cox**

Fr. David was born in Johnson City, Tennessee, in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains near North Carolina, Virginia, and Kentucky. After a few childhood years in Texas, he grew up in Kingsport, Tennessee, a town of about 40,000 people not far from where he was born. Fr. David grew up in the Baptist Church from whom he learned many valuable things, especially the value of scripture and discipleship.

Fr. David's connection to the Baptist church continued when he attended Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee. At this small Baptist liberal arts college, he learned not only about the roots of the Baptist tradition, but of the Anglican tradition as well. From the early Baptists, Fr. David learned the meaning of religious liberty as the cultivation of an open, free space for the Holy Spirit to move among the people, inspiring them to a relationship with God. His interest in the Anglican and Episcopal Church only grew after his senior thesis on William Temple, an Anglican priest, bishop, and ultimately the Archbishop of Canterbury during World War II. Known as "the people's Archbishop," Temple was known as a gifted theologian, an advocate for workers and the poor, and a spiritual leader. These early academic experiences shaped how Fr. David thinks about ministry, the church, and the spiritual life.

After college, Fr. David attended Princeton Theological Seminary, where he received his Master of Divinity in 1998, and met his wife, Amy. Fr. David bought his first *Book of Common Prayer* during his senior year at Princeton. He hasn't been without one since.

Following seminary, Fr. David attended East Tennessee State University, where he earned an M.A. in Sociology in 2001. He then pursued a Ph.D. in Religion and Ethics, which he completed in 2007, from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. His dissertation was about the role of attention in moral life and how attention is part of the Christian tradition of hospitality.

Fr. David and Amy were married in 2000, just months before she graduated from Princeton Seminary and he began his studies at Vanderbilt. Amy was ordained in the Presbyterian Church and served as an associate pastor in Nashville, where both of their children (Abby and Simon) were born. By the time the family left Nashville in 2008, Fr. David was beginning to discern a call to the Episcopal Church, though uncertain what that might look like.

In 2008, Fr. David and his family moved to Sedalia, Missouri so he could take a teaching position at the community college there, teaching sociology, religion, and ethics courses. His family also joined Calvary Episcopal Church, where Fr. Bill McVey (a former member of St. Michael's) was serving as part-time rector. Conversations with Fr. Bill led to Fr. David's entry into the ordination process of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of West Missouri. After completing a year of Anglican Studies and nine months of clinical pastoral education, Fr. David was ordained to the priesthood on December 1, 2012.

The following spring, Fr. David was called by St. Michael's and Mo. Gail Greenwell to serve as assistant rector. He began his ministry as assistant, and later associate, priest on June 1, 2013.

Over the last six years, Fr. David has served St. Michael's in a variety of ways as the parish has moved through multiple transitions. He has been blessed and challenged in his associate ministry and looks forward to more blessings and challenges as the rector of this faithful community.

Today, Fr. David and his family continue to live in Overland Park. He and Amy have two children: Abby (almost 17), an upcoming senior at Shawnee Mission South; and Simon (13), an upcoming 8<sup>th</sup> grader at Indian Woods Middle School. Amy, also an ordained priest (having transferred her ordination into the Episcopal Church in 2013), is working hard toward a master's degree in clinical counseling. David and Amy will celebrate their 20th wedding anniversary on January 15, 2020.

Fr. David enjoys hanging out with his family, for whom he feels especially blessed. He likes going to the movies, especially with his family, and reading science fiction and nonfiction of all sorts. He also enjoys writing. He loves trees, flowers, birds, and sunny days in the 60s (or rainy days in a comfortable chair with a good book). He loves the atmosphere at a Royals game but prefers to watch Chiefs games on television. He misses the ancient ferns and fog of the Smoky Mountains, visiting them when he can. Fr. David enjoys stimulating conversation about the things that matter in life—values, meaning, and purpose—but without taking it all too seriously. Most of all, Fr. David loves to learn new things.