

## **The Rt. Rev. Matt Gunter Autobiographical Statement**

I grew up on a farm in northern Indiana.

Faith began to come alive for me when I joined a Bible study in high school. I encountered peers whose commitment to Christian discipleship inspired me to dig deeper into the faith I had grown up taking for granted. I eventually became a leader of this group which cultivated in me a life-long love of and interest in the Bible.

I attended Indiana University where I earned a BA in History. I continued involvement in Bible studies while there, attending and leading a college group sponsored by a local church. I also had my first experiences in evangelism and apologetics in college. It was there that I met my wife, Leslie, who I married in 1981.

After college, I attended Gordon-Conwell Seminary. While there, we attended an Episcopal Church. I was taken with the beauty of the poetry and drama of the liturgy. I appreciated the participatory nature of the worship. Indeed, I felt it was the first time I had truly worshiped. I also felt connected to the communion of saints in a way I had never felt before – communion with the saints of the past and communion with contemporary saints around the world through the Anglican Communion. I began to appreciate the centrality of belonging and community for Christian faith and life. I also became aware of the centrality of the Eucharist.

During this time, I also went through a significant reevaluation of my faith which included questioning whether I believed the Christian story. As a result, I did not finish seminary at that time.

In the midst of this, I received one of the more profound spiritual experiences of my life. I do not remember the sequence of thought or emotion, but I was overwhelmed by an intense awareness of God's grace – God's relentless, unshakable love – in a way I had never known it before. Chains of fear and guilt melted away allowing my spirit to soar. Paradoxically, my questions did not go away.

We moved to California where I taught high school. For several years in the latter 1980's we were members of a Lutheran church where I volunteered as the youth leader. Still, I wavered between faith and unbelief. Though I came close to abandoning Christianity, I eventually resolved the most pointed doubts and regained confidence in the good news that in Christ God is reconciling the world to himself. Simultaneous with this renewal of faith was a renewed interest in the Anglican tradition. We joined an Episcopal church and were confirmed in 1990.

I began to attend again to promptings from others and my own heart suggesting I consider ordained ministry. I responded to God's call on my life to be a preacher, teacher, pastor and priest sharing the transforming power of God's reconciling mercy and grace.

I graduated from Virginia Seminary in 1996 and served in the Diocese of Chicago for eighteen years. During my ministry in the Diocese of Chicago, I served as Spiritual Advisor for the Chicago Episcopal Cursillo, as Dean of the Aurora Deanery, as Deputy to three General Conventions of the Episcopal Church, as one of the chaplains of the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church. I also served as a member of the Diocese of Chicago Commission on Global Ministry and lead an official delegation from Diocese of Chicago to the Diocese of Renk, South Sudan in 2005.

I served as Rector of St. Barnabas Episcopal Church in Glen Ellyn, Illinois from 2000 until moving to the Diocese of Fond du Lac in 2014 to become the bishop of that diocese. As bishop, my focus has been on strengthening congregations, supporting the clergy, calling the diocese to a deeper engagement with worship and prayer and the life that flows from them, and reclaiming a missionary identity.

Along with being Bishop of the Diocese of Fond du Lac, I am also the episcopal visitor for the Community of St. Anselm at Lambeth Palace, London. I am also serving on the Task Force on Liturgy and Prayer Book Revision.