

Reverend Robert T. J. Childers

Written response to a question from the Search Committee:

'What particular gifts do you see yourself offering to our parish?'

I have a deep and abiding love for the Episcopal Church. As I read your parish profile, I could sense that the people of Good Shepherd shared that love for the larger church, not to mention your local parish. In spite of the various challenges facing the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion, I believe our church has so very much to offer those who are searching for God and a deeper relationship with God.

At the conclusion of your profile, you indicate you want a "teacher", an "educator", a "dynamic preacher", and someone who will "challenge [you] to embrace an all-encompassing stewardship". I believe I have gifts in each of these areas and could offer these to Good Shepherd.

Through preaching and teaching I have been able to share my understanding of scripture and my faith in Christ with the people I have served since ordination. One of the problems many of us have with our faith is that we are unable to make the connection between what we hear in church and our daily lives. I try to make that connection whenever and wherever I can. Forgiveness, joy, peace, love, patience, and perseverance are all gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. If we have these gifts, and they flourish in our lives, won't our lives be different?

In my teaching, I have been drawn more and more toward spiritual formation and discipline. More often than not we are all too eager to accept Jesus as our Savior, but less likely to embrace him as Lord. In short, we would rather believe in him than follow him. I am convinced that we will not experience the joy of his Kingdom or know the peace that passes all understanding unless and until we make the choice to follow Christ and allow him to transform and renew us.

Increasingly, I am teaching classes that look at how our faith can mold, shape, and transform us into the children of God that Christ calls us to be. This has been an exciting journey as I have watched myself change and grow. As a teacher and pastor it has been equally exciting to watch the participants experience similar changes in their lives.

Finally, in the area of stewardship, I have been a Stewardship Consultant since 2003 and have worked with parishes on their Stewardship Campaigns. The more I talk about stewardship, and our giving to the church, the more convinced I am of the direct correlation between our giving and our spiritual health. If we are not prayerful, reflective and serious about our giving, then we are in danger of missing that connection.