

Alumni Spotlight: Brian Chase (MDiv '10)



Current Title: Rector, Christ the Redeemer Anglican Church (Danvers, MA—beginning in November)

Family: Wife: Amy, Children: Alaina, Alex, and Eli

Favorite Professors: Dr. Gordon Isaac, Dr. Sean McDonough, Dr. Ray Pendleton

Favorite Classes: The Book of Revelation and History of the Church of England

Favorite Memory: Living in Christian community in Building A with other great seminarians and friends.

What have you been doing since you left Gordon-Conwell and where are you serving now?

I graduated from Gordon-Conwell in January of 2010, and I was ordained a deacon in the Anglican Church in North America in June of the same year. Soon after that I took up a curacy at Holy Cross Anglican Church in Kent, Ohio. I was priested in December of 2010 in the Missionary Diocese of All Saints and began church planting in Canton, Ohio soon afterward.

All Saints Anglican Church was a “parachute-drop” church plant, and I was bi-vocational throughout our time at the mission. We started with no money and no people but grew quickly to an average attendance of about 25 parishioners. We were the only Anglican church in Canton when we started, but eventually there came to be as many as three separate Anglican church plants in the same area. All Saints continued for another four years after we left in 2016, when the membership of All Saints merged with St. John’s, another Anglican Church plant close by.

In 2016 I was called to become the rector at Church of the Good Shepherd in Wichita Falls, TX in the Diocese of Fort Worth. Church of the Good Shepherd is a beautiful, 137-year-old parish in downtown Wichita Falls. We spent seven years at Church of the Good Shepherd creating an “infrastructure for growth,” and I found that my experience as a church planter prepared me very well for what Good Shepherd needed.

In August of 2022, I received a new call to become the next rector at Christ the Redeemer Anglican Church in Danvers, MA, just a short way down the road from Gordon-Conwell. As a matter of fact, my family considered Christ the Redeemer our home church while we were in seminary, and now I am thrilled to be able to return to serve the very parish that was so key in my own priestly formation.

What do you love about your work?

I love being able to live fully into the Church’s liturgical and sacramental life as a priest. Through the church’s liturgies and daily prayers, which I am obliged and privileged to keep, I am continuously called back to God’s presence throughout my days—regardless of what is on my schedule as a pastor. Because of this, I am also able to invite my

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parishioners to join in this prayer journey to whatever degree they are able and to teach and train them up in a life of prayer. I love seeing people transformed by the prayer life of the church and develop from newcomers to informed, involved, and mature believers.

What were the particular joys and biggest challenges of planting a church in your context?

I was church planting in the context of the Anglican1000 Movement, which began with the call of Archbishop Robert Duncan to plant 1000 churches in five years, issued at the founding of the Anglican Church in North America. Upon hearing the archbishop's call, I felt a responsibility to do what I could for the cause. So, I threw caution to the wind and dedicated five years of my life as a young priest to the task of planting a church.



I am privileged to have been part of such a movement, but it did also come with many challenges. Those early days of the Anglican1000 Movement were somewhat disorganized, and I jumped in head-long with a less than ideal degree of preparation or oversight. It was before the ACNA had a prayerbook, catechism, or many other useful resources for churches and church plants. Church planting would have been far more effective and easier back then if I had all the resources the ACNA has since developed.

How has God woven together your Gordon-Conwell education with other life events to bring you to where you are now?

I feel that my experience as a church planter has made me a better rector. The job of a pastor today can no longer be a simple matter of prepping a homily and visiting the sick, as important as each of those tasks are. If existing churches want to fill the pews for another generation, then they will have to start thinking like church plants and fill those pews with people from outside the church's walls. With the rise of the "Nones," churches cannot coast on the inertia of cultural Christianity anymore. I think church planting has prepared me well for this modern ministry environment. Through church planting, I learned how to creatively approach challenges with an entrepreneurial spirit, get the church involved in the community, be perpetually concerned with forming new believers into mature Christians, go about the often-awkward task of raising money, and much more. I may have made some mistakes church planting, but having done so, the experience laid a solid foundation for what is necessary to be in ministry in America in 2022.

What has been Gordon-Conwell's biggest impact/influence on your ministry?

Gordon-Conwell's Anglican Studies Program prepared me well, not only for ministry in an Anglican setting, but also for church-planting. The Anglican Studies Program ran a

church planting class that was led by very experienced Anglican church planters. We not only received good training but were also provided with on-the-ground experience in actual church plants. I regularly make use of what I learned then in my ministry today.

The Anglican Studies Program also benefited a great deal from having its students integrated in parish life and ministry in local parishes. I learned as much from my involvement at Christ Church and Christ the Redeemer as I did in class at Gordon-Conwell. Now that I am coming back to New England as the new rector at Christ the Redeemer Anglican Church, I hope that I can carry on that work by continuing to provide Gordon-Conwell students with vital ministry experience and formation at Christ the Redeemer.

What piece of advice would you give to young alumni who are just entering pastoral ministry or are considering church planting?

Make sure you are properly resourced and trained before jumping into church planting. First, you should seriously consider having a sending church. “Hive-off” church plants are far more likely to survive and become healthy parishes compared to “Parachute Drop” church plants.

Second, you should make sure that you’ve been properly assessed and trained by a reputable church planting ministry, like Always Forward. Along those same lines, you should have a church planting coach or mentor who has been where you are and will help watch your blind spots and keep you accountable.

Finally, I would encourage any prospective church planter to not make the jump into church planting until they’ve fundraised at least a full year’s salary for themselves first.

Do you have any publications, links, or resources to share?

Learn more about [Christ the Redeemer Anglican Church](#), located in Danvers, MA.