

## Alumni Spotlight: David Hanke (MDiv '07)



**Current title:** Rector at Restoration Anglican Church

**Family:** Wife: Laurel (married 27 years), Children: Macrae (23), Bennett (20), Helen (17), and James (14).

**Favorite professor:** I loved my Biblical Studies professors: Dr. Hafemann, Dr. Nicholl, and Dr. Stuart. I was honored to be a Byington Scholar under the guidance of Dr. Scott Gibson, and I loved learning to preach from Dr. Robinson and Dr. Arthurs.

**Favorite class:** 2 Corinthians with Dr. Hafeman was the most challenging and rewarding academic endeavor of my life.

**Favorite memory:** It was such a sweet season for my family. We had two young boys, and we lived in Graham Hall. The community of fellow students was so rich. I loved leading a small group as a Pierce Fellow.

### **Would you tell us about the church you are currently serving?**

My first position out of Gordon-Conwell was at The Falls Church, outside of Washington D.C. in Northern Virginia. During my time there, I was ordained in the Anglican church and went through a 'curacy' or pastoral internship.

In January 2009, I led a team to launch a new church in Arlington, VA called Restoration Anglican Church. By the grace and power of God, it has thrived over the last 15 years. We have grown in numbers and impact on our community. We built a building in 2014. In 2016, we created Restoration Immigration Legal Aid (RILA) which applied the legal expertise of men and women in our church to the great need of immigrants and sojourners who are working their way through the immigration process to work and live in the United States. That organization has also thrived and grown in its impact on our community. In 2018, we planted a church in another part of our county, Incarnation Anglican Church. I am so grateful for the way God uses that church to reach another neighborhood with the love of Jesus and the transforming power of the Gospel. This November, we will celebrate our 15th birthday. We are delighted by what God has done and we are making plans, with great anticipation, for what might happen in the next decade.

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

I am so grateful for the way God has used Gordon-Conwell in my life. First, the Pierce Center and leadership of Dr. Macchia created a place where the care of my soul was at the forefront. Dr. Macchia asked great questions and led us through helpful readings - both ancient and modern. I loved the regular retreats to pay attention to what God was

doing in me. I have retained that practice over the last 20 years - carving out time to be still, to listen to God, and to pay attention to what He is doing in me.

Second, I am so grateful for the ways my professors pushed me to work hard and “do it better.” I remember getting my first paper back from Dr. Nicholl with shock and awe. I couldn’t believe how many comments he had made—and they were all good and necessary! Having come from a strong undergraduate program, I thought I was a good writer, but my professors gently and firmly pushed me to get better. Learning how to be a careful translator of Greek and Hebrew, as well as a careful expositor in the papers I prepared, greatly helped me to be a clear communicator with my congregation.

Third, I love “Big Idea” preaching. I love crafting the subject and complement each week. Writing the exegetical idea and the homiletical idea brings so much focus and clarity to my weekly sermons. The method of sermon preparation that I learned from Dr. Robinson, Dr. Gibson, and Dr. Arthurs has stayed with me and shaped every week of the last twenty years. It is remarkable to have someone’s voice in your head that often. I am glad it’s the voices of these three gifted and Godly teachers. They remind me that the hard work is worth it, that my congregation needs it, and that our Lord is worthy of it.

Finally, I have joyfully returned to Gordon-Conwell as a Doctor of Ministry student under the care of Dr. Dave Currie. For a long time, I thought I was too busy to do it, and if I’m honest, I arrogantly thought I didn’t need it. I was so wrong on both counts. The DMin program has infused exuberant life into my ministry. I needed the accountability to refresh my reading list. I needed the opportunity to write about ministry topics that I am dealing with every day. I have relished the conversations that I have had with my cohort as we talk about the glory and grind of shepherding people and ideas in this particular cultural moment. God’s timing is perfect and this program has been as well. I am deeply (and appropriately!) challenged by the forthcoming Thesis project. Hoo boy! Let’s go!



**What do you love about the ministry work you are doing now?**

I love pastoring a congregation that wants to keep thinking about creative ways we can love our neighborhood. I am grateful that we have been able to assemble a staff team that values excellence and leads with humility. They are so good at what they do. It’s a challenge to stay ahead of them and to keep helping to further their development! They have such great ideas.

**What are the particular challenges of serving in a large church in general, and in your specific context?**

Restoration has an enviable problem. We have outgrown our building. We exist in a dense suburb of Washington D.C. that has very little unclaimed space for growth.

Currently we offer three services on a Sunday morning. It works, but it is labor intensive. We ask a lot of our volunteers and our paid staff. We feel called to stay in the neighborhood where we are. We also feel called to send out younger clergy with church plants.

I have found that church planting is a great idea and also a great challenge to get people to adopt. They don't necessarily want to leave this church that they love! Our church is able to offer programs for kids, youth, musicians, and artists that a church plant can't offer right out of the gate. Thus, part of the challenge is helping congregants embrace a vision for 'what could be' when 'what they want' is what they have.

**What piece of advice would you give to young alumni who are beginning in ministry?**

This doesn't feel novel or unique, but I think it is really important: Ministry is inherently lonely. You are needed but not known. You will have pain and you will have opportunities to share it from time to time. But most of the time, your church will expect and need you to be strong—in your dependence on the Lord, yes, but also in your capacity to serve the needs of your congregation.

Thus, it is critical for you to have a place where you can be fully known, that is among a few people who are committed to walking with you. Find them as soon as possible. Consider not leaving Gordon-Conwell without a few people that you will covenant to know and be known by. Commit to being honest with them no matter what. Don't lie. Commit to allowing them to speak advice, wisdom, and suggestions into your life that actually affect the way you schedule and do your work. Commit to not being alone in this calling that pushes us to aloneness.

I have a group of four others whom I meet with twice a year. We've been doing it since 2007 (when I graduated from Gordon-Conwell). At times, they have been the grace that God has given to save my life and my ministry. None of us lives close by. I only see them for our biannual gatherings. I am so grateful.

**Do you have any publications or links to share?**

This is our church [website](#). I recently did a podcast for our denomination on the distinctive features of Restoration that could be reproduced in other churches. It's in three parts and called "[Biblical Values for any Church of any size that's anywhere.](#)"