

Fr. Steven Tighe

Give us a little background on your education and experience in ministry.

I grew up in the Episcopal church and came into a personal relationship with Jesus as a high school junior. Since that time, I've ministered to adults and young people, served as a vestry person, a diocesan standing committee member, and a staff member of large and small churches. I've taught in colleges and seminaries, done overseas mission work, and founded and led several non-profits that help churches and dioceses minister to teenagers. I have degrees in Electrical Engineering from Rice, an MDiv from Trinity School for Ministry, and a PhD from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

Currently, I serve on Archbishop Foley Beach's staff as the ACNA's Canon for Youth Ministry and lead an organization called "Young Anglicans." In that role, I've been responsible for the creation and development of the ACNA's ministry to young people.

Tell us about your wife, children, and personal interests.

Tricia and I met in Austin, Texas, through the young adults' group of the Episcopal church we attended. She is a writer, with six published young adult novels. She teaches the middle school Sunday School class at church, and teenagers *love* her. We have two sons and a daughter-in-law. Our youngest, Topher, works in computer science in the Dallas area. David and Megan live in Austin where he does computer security and she works as a landscape designer.

Tricia and I both enjoy travel and reading. I love mountain biking and backpacking. Tricia also likes to hike (but not to backpack, until I can fit hot showers and a king-sized bed into my pack). I enjoy playing and writing music and take great joy in building 6-foot-tall sandcastles at the beach. (Ask to see the pictures on my phone sometime...)

Describe the role of the Bishop in a diocese.

That role is described in the consecration service in our ACNA prayer book (page 497). My friend Jack Gabig, a professor at TSM, summarizes it like this--the job of the bishop is to protect the *witness* of Christ, the *community* of Christ, and the *mission* of Christ. Protecting the *witness* of Christ means diligently teaching the Scriptures and the life and resurrection of Jesus and confronting and gently correcting unbiblical teaching. The goal is for us to present an accurate and compelling picture of Christ to the culture and to each other. Protecting the *community* of Christ means supporting and caring for our clergy and addressing problems and helping churches work through difficult issues in godly ways so that our people thrive.

Finally, protecting the *mission* of Christ means working to keep the attention of the diocese focused on the mission that Christ has given us. That mission comes from Matt 28:18-20, and our diocesan mission statement says it like this: "The mission of our diocese is to support our congregations in extending the Kingdom of God by presenting Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit... ."

How do you think God could use your gifts to make the Anglican Diocese of the Southwest stronger and more faithful?

Because of our size, it's easy for our people to feel isolated and unsupported. I faced a similar challenge in my work as the provincial canon. The ministers working with the ACNA's young people are spread over an entire continent and felt alone. Forming a community for mutual support and mission required me to take a pastoral role in their lives as well as a lot of travel, phone calls, and texts, but I saw God do it.

Another challenge is our aging congregations and leadership. These people represent an almost immeasurably valuable well of experience and wisdom. We need ways to connect that Godly wisdom to a new generation of young leaders. Finding young leaders is another crucial thing I've seen God do through me.

Finally, our churches face huge cultural uncertainty including COVID, changing mores, the political chaos in the US, and the continued challenge of the drug cartels in Mexico. Confronting these issues will require new thinking and new ways of doing things as well as gifts in organization, communication, and motivation like those that God has given me.

What else would you like us to know?

Two things. First I am praying that you will know God's profound affection. I encourage you to take on as a spiritual discipline a daily prayer for God to show you the delight that He takes in you. Second, as we're praying for this process, don't forget that the prayers that most move God's heart are prayers for people. As you pray, include prayers for the people in our churches that will be blessed by the bishop that God has chosen--as well as the millions within the boundaries of our diocese who are frightened, in need of help, and desperately need a savior.