

The Rev. Dr. Grace Burton-Edwards
Rector, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Columbus, Georgia

*The Church shares in God's mission through empowering liturgy, transforming education, radical welcome, and public witness.
I lead the faithful stewardship of these gifts and invite others on the journey – prayerfully, joyfully, together.*

Ministry Specialties

New Ministry Development

- Launches ministries of formation and service that connect church members to one another and to the wider community.
- Guided current congregation to develop family ministries, racial justice initiatives, multiple adult formation offerings, and soccer and tutoring with low income children.

Church Growth

- Influences congregations to welcome new members, averaging thirty to fifty each year.
- Designed new member processes, supported welcome committee, and altered communication patterns within current and previous congregations to invite and incorporate new members.

Ministry Partnerships

- Links congregations with ministries and organizations that serve the wider community.
- Supported current partnerships with Mayor's Commission on Unity, Columbus Parks and Recreation, Young Life, Circles of Columbus, Chattahoochee Valley Episcopal Ministry, Wynnton Neighborhood Network food and utility assistance, and Valley Interfaith Promise.

Teaching

- Expands learning for children, youth, and adults in school and congregational settings.
- Organized youth and adult confirmation, Bible studies, theology, and classes on Episcopal identity in church settings. Taught Bible, world religions, American religious life, faith and justice in school setting.

Evangelism and Justice

- Proclaims the good news of God's transformation of this world in ways that invite people to share it through baptism and commitment to the Baptismal Covenant.
- Advanced current congregation's justice work to include dismantling racism, promoting marriage equality and freedom, addressing poverty, and caring for creation.

Staff Supervision

- Orchestrates partnerships with staff to promote teamwork, reduce conflict, and increase effectiveness.
- Established a personnel committee, regular staff meetings, clear job descriptions, and regular coaching and review conversations with staff of seven at current congregation.

Endowed Parishes

- Celebrates possibilities and challenges of endowed institutions. Served three congregations and a school with significant endowments who used these gifts in different ways.
- Encouraged current congregation to preserve and increase value of endowments in anticipation of greater need in the future.

Financial Stewardship

- Practices and invites giving to support God's mission in the church and in the world.
- Nurtured a culture of giving at current congregation by talking about giving throughout the year, inviting gifts for special projects, and seeking legacy gifts.

Education

Wabash Pastoral Fellow, 2010

Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana

Two-year ministry fellowship for early career clergy in Indiana from multiple denominations sponsored by Lilly Endowment focused on congregation's role in public life. Cohort continues to meet annually.

Doctor of Ministry in Congregational Development, 2005

Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois

Three-year course of study exploring clergy leadership, congregational systems, new church and ministry development, and theology of evangelism.

Master of Divinity, 1994

Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana

Academic focus on biblical and historical studies. Teaching assistant in church history. Also attended the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Recipient of Fund for Theological Education Fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation.

Bachelor of Arts in English, 1989

Mississippi College, Clinton, Mississippi

Presidential scholar. Member of inaugural London study abroad program.

Ministry Experience

Rector 2014 to present

St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Columbus, Georgia

Associate Rector 2007 to 2014

Trinity Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, Indiana

School Chaplain 2004 to 2014

St. Richard's Episcopal School, Indianapolis, Indiana

Director of Christian Education 2004 to 2007

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, Indiana

Director of Davis Park Ministries 1998 to 2004

First United Methodist Church, Anderson, Indiana

Youth Minister 1996 to 1998

Adams Street Kids Ecumenical Youth Ministry, Plymouth, Indiana

Interim Pastor 1995 to 1996

Emmanuel Baptist Church, Mishawaka, Indiana

Church Consultant 1995 to 1998

Parish Resource Center, Mishawaka, Indiana

Youth Curriculum Writer 1993 to 2003

Smyth and Helwys Publishers, Macon, Georgia

Judson Press, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania

Minister of Education and Music 1993 to 1995

First Baptist Church, South Bend, Indiana

Originally ordained by this congregation of the American Baptist Churches, USA in 1994.

Episcopal Church, Diocesan, and Community Involvement

Standing Commission on World Mission 2018 to present
Interim Dean of Chattahoochee Valley Convocation 2018
Diocese of Atlanta Congregational Assessment Tool Interpreter 2018 to present
Global Episcopal Mission Network Board member 2017, Vice-president 2018 to present
Absalom Jones Episcopal Center for Racial Healing Advisory Board 2017 to 2018
Diocese of Atlanta Executive Board 2016 to present
Columbus Police Pastors Academy 2016
Rotary Club of Columbus 2015 to present
General Convention 2015 Legislative Aide, Congregational Development
Episcopal Preaching Foundation Convener for Peer Preaching Project, 2015 to 2016
Diocese of Atlanta Global Missions Commission Member 2015 to present
Diocese of Atlanta Vital Statistics Task Force Member 2015 to 2016
Diocese of Indianapolis Global Missions Commission Member 2010, Chair 2011 to 2013
General Convention 2012 Clergy Deputy, Diocese of Indianapolis
Indianapolis Center for Interfaith Cooperation Board Member 2012 to 2014

Publications

Blogged at YeWatchers.com

The Screen of Common Prayer: Using Visual Media Technology in Episcopal Liturgy. Doctor of Ministry thesis, Seabury-Western, 2005

Bookmarks: Bible Explorations for Older Youth, Judson Press, curriculum writer, editor volume 3, 2000

Intersection for Youth, Smyth & Helwys Publishers, curriculum writer 1993 to 2003

Global Experience

Cuba, 2017. Joined Diocese of Atlanta visit to build relationship with Episcopalians in Cuba.

Israel, Palestine, and Jordan, 2013. Clergy leader for congregational pilgrimage.

England, 2012 and 2018. Clergy leader for choir pilgrimages to Coventry and Norwich.

India, 2010. Spent a week in Gujarat learning about Hinduism from religious leaders of the Swaminarayan tradition and a week in Kerala studying the early St. Thomas Christian tradition.

Brazil, 2010. Joined celebrations marking the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Brasilia and visited churches and ministries of the Diocese.

Mexico, 2009. Visited non-profits and community organizers in Chiapas and attended All Saints and Day of the Dead observances in church and community settings.

Family

Married to The Rev. Taylor Burton-Edwards, Consultant with United Methodist Communications. Secretary of the North American Academy of Liturgy. Chair of the Consultation on Common Texts which oversees the Revised Common Lectionary. Treasurer of The Liturgical Conference.