



## Bishop to ordain two new deacons

*Frank Lyons will be at St. Andrew's Sept. 10 for the ordination service.*

*Here the candidates reflect on the Lord's hand on their lives.*

## Discovering the joys and challenges of living as a servant



*Kelly with (left to right) Eugenio, Maricela and Sara*

By Kelly Langdoc

One of the great treasures in reading Scripture is that we are able to see into the lives of ordinary people whom God called and invited into fellowship with himself. Some years ago I picked up on a common response these ordinary people had when they encountered the Lord.

In the Old Testament, for example, God speaks to folks in an audible voice, a vision or even a burning bush. Then they respond with the simple phrase, "Here I am, Lord."

I like that phrase. It's more than a description of geographical location, I think. It's a description of the state of the heart. It's a way of saying, "I'm here, Lord. Here to serve and follow as you lead. You've got all of me. I'm listening."

In the New Testament, the angel Gabriel approaches Mary and explains how her life will be forever altered as she carries

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## Finding a new church home in the Anglican tradition

By Michael Matlock

Reflecting back on my journey with Jesus Christ, there have been many important events and experiences that shaped my Christian faith. I was baptized into the faith as an infant in the Presbyterian Church. My parents, siblings and church family helped shape me and gave me opportunities to receive a personal saving relationship with Jesus. At age 7, I repented of my sins, was regenerated, justified and adopted as God's child, received assurance from the Lord that I was saved and was initiated into the sanctification process.

I received an initial call to full-time Christian service at age 12. Through this experience God granted me a partial sense of a vocational call to serve him. However, my recommitment to follow Christ at age 21 was needed because of my pulling away from Christ's leadership of my life during my latter teenage years. During my recommitment, I gained an awareness of the great mystery of God and the extraordinary

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*Michael and Robin with (left to right) Isaac, Madeline and Raleigh*

Join us at 6:30 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 10, for the ordination service and reception afterward.

## LIVING AS A SERVANT

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the Son of God in her womb. She responds, "I am the Lord's servant, let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). It sounds to me as if she's saying, "Here I am, Lord."

And so, I reflect on my life and my spiritual journey as a series of "Here I am, Lord's." All that I've learned and experienced and enjoyed comes as I respond to the Spirit's different ways of leading and inviting me into fellowship with the Godhead.

I was blessed to grow up in the church and in a Christian family. I met many people who were responding to God. They modeled obedience and love for Christ. They showed me how to say, "Here I am, Lord."

As a teenager I participated in short-term mission trips and learned the joy of serving the Lord. On one such trip in college I knew the Lord was nudging me, inviting me, to surrender my entire life to him.

"Here I am, Lord," I said. I laid my hands open in front of me and consecrated my hands, my feet, my voice and my life to him and his service. Since then, Jesus has been drawing me closer and teaching me more of what it means to belong to him completely. Along the way, he's shown me more and more how sweet it is to say simply, "Here I am, Lord."

The Lord continues to give me opportunities to respond

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## ANGLICAN TRADITION

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preciousness and sacredness of human life. I became alert and wide-eyed to the danger and futility of living my life apart from the Lord's saving grace.

Next I married Robin at age 22, and I have shared with her all things that matter most for the last 25 years. Robin's commitment to the Lord has been an important mirror and springboard for my own spiritual growth. Without her, I would never have arrived where I am now, serving the Lord and his body, the church. Becoming the father of my three children, Madeline, Raleigh and Isaac, with their unique personalities and choices, I have learned more deeply how to love unconditionally as God the Father relates to us.

During my late 20s I earned a Master of Divinity degree at Asbury Seminary, which provided sound training for Christian ministry, while I served in several churches for interim periods. After graduation, Asbury hired me as a full-time instructor of biblical Hebrew and Greek. I have taught Asbury seminarians since 1998 – first full-time for three years, then part-time for seven years, and now full-time for the last nine years.

The next year I was ordained as an elder in the Wesleyan Methodist Church. My vocational ministry to teach seminarians the Scriptures has been beautifully wed to my call to serve in the church through the proclamation of God's Word and celebrating Holy Communion. In addition to serving in

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to his invitations to be involved in his kingdom work. At one stage in my life it meant serving him as a public school teacher. At another stage it meant moving overseas as a missionary. When he asked me to go to a new land and learn a new language, he had already earned my trust. "Here I am, Lord," I responded.

Then he opened the door for me to attend seminary and face new challenges back in the U.S. "Here I am, Lord." When he nudged me to take a position at St. Andrew's, I was slow in responding. But finally with his help I got to the "Here I am, Lord." When I discovered that three of our Avanza children were in need of love, comfort and a safe place to live, the answer came as natural as any, "Here I am, Lord."

And so, a couple of years ago I started initiating. "Here I am, Lord. What's next? How shall I serve you?" It seemed he was leading me in the direction of ordination. I sought his will through prayer and wise counsel. He continued to lead in the same direction. As I've prepared for ordination to the diaconate, I've become more and more excited to see what kinds of things he invites me into through ordination.

One thing is sure. I'll continue to serve the Lord at St. Andrew's. Oh, and another thing: by his grace I'll continue to respond, "Here I am, Lord."

the local church, I have presided over many daily communion services at the seminary. I subsequently earned a doctorate in the History of Interpretation in the Hebrew Bible at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati.

After a long circuitous journey and sensing a call to a denomination with a more robust liturgical practice, we began worshipping at Wilmore Anglican Fellowship in 2014. Since then, we have been feasting on the riches of the Anglican liturgical, theological and missional focuses and practices.

I have made the Daily Office my primary, individual devotional practice. The theological statements of the Thirty-nine Articles and the Book of Common Prayer have provided me additional steadiness in reflecting and living Christianly. As these theological works exhibit proper articulation and strong support for fundamental Christian issues like

the Trinity and salvation process, I have increasingly found in them a means to guard and guide my identity in Christ.

After finishing the initial phase of the ordination process and having been approved and accepted by the Anglican Diocese of the Carolinas, Robin and I felt the Lord leading us to worship and become members at St. Andrew's and thus complete my ordination transfer into the Diocese of the South. I have learned many important truths about the Lord and myself during my ordination journey, and I look forward to how the Lord will use me at St. Andrew's and the broader Anglican Church in North America.