

Brian Prior: Autobiographical Statement

Life for me began in a small farm town in south central Washington State. I am the youngest of three boys who are the sons of a pharmacist and a second-generation veterinarian. My parents placed a high value on family, faith and the importance of education and travel. My siblings and my friends instilled in me the love of play and being a part of a team. The small town and church I grew up in instilled in me a strong sense of being in community.

At the age of ten one of two life shaping experiences took place for me. Much to my reluctance my priest “drug” me to camp. To my shock and amazement there were more than 50 Episcopalians! Even more significant - almost all of them were under 20. It was in this environment that my relationship with Jesus flourished, that my gifts for ministry were discerned and I came to know how God’s grace can work through us to do amazing things. From this came a life long passion for accompanying others in exploring these same things.

The second life changing experience was the sudden death of my father when I was thirteen. It became clear to me how important my faith, family and community were. Through my own grief process I was shaped with a much greater sense of empathy and compassion for the pain and loss of life. This was called upon shortly thereafter with the death of six friends within a period of five years. Each time I found myself surrounded by those who were grieving looking to my experience and my faith to assist them. It was during this time that the matriarch of my church “confronted” me and told me to make sure that I invited her to my ordination. I immediately ran to our priest and asked, “What’s an ordination and how come my brothers did not have to do it?!”

As I transitioned from high school to college, the camp and youth community of my childhood became center most for me. By God’s grace I became involved in the leadership of both by becoming the camp director at the age of twenty. These formational years were critical in my leadership development. Through insightful mentorship I learned about building a clear vision, working collaboratively, resolving conflict, encouraging, equipping and supporting others to use their gifts for ministry.

It was also during this time that I became aware of the depth and diversity of our Church. I was serving at a cathedral, working for the diocese, and participating and leading both provincial and larger church events, all the while growing in knowledge and relationship with the breadth of our Church. I also began to sense encouragement, clarity and affirmation of a call to ordained ministry. The seminary years that followed were truly transformational not only theologically but also in terms of solidifying my understanding of God’s inclusive love.

I was called back to the diocese that sponsored and supported me for seminary and blessed to serve as Associate Rector with one of the most pastoral priests I have ever known. I was then called to serve on the Diocesan staff working with clergy and congregations as well as raising funds and then rebuilding the physical plant and program of my childhood camp. While working with two congregations I received the call to be part of starting a new faith community including building a new church with a small school. Along the way I have also been blessed to share my gifts in everything from a long stint as the President of the Standing Committee to Mission, Structure and Budget, from Executive Council to Vice President of the House of Deputies.

Through it all, I have been beyond blessed to share the last 22 plus years with my “camp friend” Staci Hubbard Prior, who is smarter, much more attractive, and to my great envy, at times even funnier than me. We share our lives with two gregarious high school aged boys, one dog and one cat. I am also known to feed my passion for basketball by volunteer coaching a state ranked girls’ high school basketball team. I am truly blessed.