



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Dec 23, 2015)

The Rev. Christopher M. Garcia, Virginia

Priest, Since Dec 11, 2010

Preferred Contact Information

5547 Wyant Lane
Charlottesville VA, Virginia 22903-7325
United States

cmg22153@gmail.com

540-471-7445

Here I am Lord / Is it I Lord? / I have heard you calling in the night. / I will go Lord / If you lead me / I will hold your people in my heart.

Current Compensation
\$90000

Required for New Position

Negotiable

Healthcare Needed
Negotiable

Housing/Rectory
Housing Allowance

Housing/Rectory Detail

Housing Required for
2

Education

2007-2010 M.Div. cum laude, Virginia Theological Seminary

1987-1990 J.D. cum laude, Law, Cornell University

1980-1982 M.B.A., Public Administration, Cornell University

1977-1981 A.B., International Affairs, Cornell University

2011 Youth Ministry, Princeton Theological Seminar

2011 Premarital/marital counseling, PREPARE / ENRICH

2012 Trainer, Safeguarding God's Child, Diocese of Washington

Position Preferences

Bishop Suffragan

Open to Consider New Position

Not currently in search

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Work History and Skills

Rector / Vicar /
Priest-in-Charge

Oct 2013

Emmanuel, Greenwood

Liturgy and preaching; pastoral care; teaching; administration

Helping this pastoral size church (average Sunday attendance 150) grow back to program size. Only full-time priest for two years; recently called a full-time assistant. Two other full-time and three part-time staff members.

Assistant / Associate /
Curate

Jul 2010 to Sep 2013

Christ Church, Georgetown

Washington, District Of
Columbia

Liturgy and preaching; youth and family ministry; pastoral care

Share in all liturgical leadership, preaching, pastoral care, and program administration in a busy urban parish (4-6 Sunday services and 18 weekday offices and services). Special focus on youth and family ministry - recruiting, training, equipping, and supporting volunteers and paid staff for nursery through high school ministries.

Seminarian

Sep 2008 to May 2010

St Peter's

Purcellville, Virginia

Preaching, liturgy, pastoral care, youth ministry

During two years of seminary, observed and assisted with as many areas as possible in this small-town church. Preached; assisted with liturgical leadership and pastoral care. Assisted with youth programs. Sat in with vestry and leadership meetings. 12-20 hours per week.

Seminarian

Jun 2009 to Jul 2009

St Mary's

Arlington, Virginia

Chaplain, Hospital

Jun 2008 to Aug 2008

Washington Hospital
Center

Washington, District Of
Columbia



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Other Contact Information

P.O. Box 38
Greenwood, Virginia 22943-0038
United States

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540-471-7445

Date of Last Background Check
Fri, 2010-01-01

Company performing check
Oxford

Diocese requesting
Virginia

Sermons Preached:

> <http://emmanuelgreenwood.org/worship/sermons/>

Resources Created:

Online References:

What Others Have Written:

Groups and Associations:

Languages Written

English

Languages Spoken

English

Languages in which you are able to Lead Worship

English

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Describe a moment in your recent ministry that you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

We have had twelve funerals at Emmanuel Church during the past year. Every one has been difficult, yet every one has been grace filled. Some have been for active parishioners, well known in the community. Others have been for those more distantly connected to the parish - those who have moved away and a few for burials in long-held family plots. Although the time demands are sudden and substantial, I have found success and fulfillment in working with families, helping them use the funeral liturgies to find meaning, peace, and healing. In several cases, we have seen these funerals themselves serve to invite family members or friends back to active life in the church. Encouraging others to take active roles has helped the parish family grow in its capacity to provide pastoral care. Being able to serve survivors in times of acute need, walk with them in deep grief and sadness, and to begin to see them through to the other side has been profoundly gratifying and a great privilege.

Describe your liturgical style and practice.

“Broad church.” Many relocations during my childhood and my own military career brought me to more than 20 congregations across the liturgical spectrum. All those churches have left their mark on me. My instincts are neither particularly low church nor high church. I am comfortable with and enjoy some traditions that some would call high (sung liturgy, incense, traditional choral literature). I have also come to enjoy contemporary praise music, informal non-liturgical style, and spontaneous worship. Liturgy is always the work of a community and it must reflect that community. Rather than insisting on any particular style, my goal is always to give God the very best our tradition has to offer - the best preaching, the best music, and mindful, attentive, intentional worship - joyful, graceful, natural, and accessible.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

Listen. Help others see and name their own gifts. Train, equip, and support. Encourage. A recent first-grade Sunday School class was unusually large and boisterous. Their classroom space amplified the noise and encouraged rambunctiousness. As a result, teachers and parents were frustrated. Spring fever didn't help. When I learned of the problem, I helped teachers and parents brainstorm a solution. Together, we decided to pull out about one-third of the class each week for a rotating series of enrichment activities, taught by additional volunteers. We recruited more volunteers and helped them identify age-appropriate activities that appealed to their interests. I helped our support staff equip the volunteers. This was a huge success. Volunteers loved their well-defined roles, the chance to do something they enjoyed, short-term commitments, and working with small groups. Teachers appreciated the smaller, quieter class that allowed more one-on-one teaching. Kids were more engaged, liked the extra activities, and were calmer in the “regular” class.

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How do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?

I try to maintain a balanced pattern of life - working reasonable hours, staying physically active (running and swimming), eating reasonably, and maintaining daily time for prayer, quiet, and reflection. I have friendships and mentors outside of the church where I work and I tend to those relationships. I take time with my wife and family. I take time each year for continuing education and for a personal spiritual retreat. I have learned what happens when I let my life get off balance and I don't like it. I have learned that by taking reasonable care of myself I have more to give to others. My weight has not changed significantly since college or active duty and I require no "maintenance medications."

Describe your involvement in either the wider Church or geographical community.

I have served on the Applicant Advisory Committee supporting the Bishop Suffragan for the Armed Forces and Federal Ministries since its inception in 2010. Upon our graduation, my seminary classmates elected me to the Virginia Theological Seminary Alumni Association Executive Committee. I was recruited as an adjunct liturgics instructor at Virginia Theological Seminary. I volunteered as an Episcopal Chaplain at the 2010 and 2013 National Boy Scout Jamborees. I volunteered for training in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington as an instructor for "Safeguarding God's Children." In the Diocese of Virginia, I was invited to be part of a think tank, visioning how the diocese can be the church of the future. I am active in the Western Albemarle Ministers Association, an ecumenical group of pastors in our county.

How do you engage in pastoral care for others?

Pastoral care is different for every person and every encounter. Pastoral care is first a ministry of presence, of relationship, of simply being with someone. God gave the ultimate pastoral care for humanity by being fully present with us in Jesus Christ. God calls all of us (lay and ordained) to incarnate that reality to others. I live this out by keeping in touch with as many members as possible, by following up on contacts, leads, and absences, by visiting, by calling, by sending notes and e-mails. Some of my typical pastoral encounters include meeting a busy executive for coffee downtown, celebrating the Eucharist in a hospital room for a sick child and her mom, taking Ash Wednesday ashes to a shut in, praying with a jittery bride (and her mom) just before a wedding, and playing Frisbee with teenagers. "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

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Tell about a ministry project that exists because of your leadership. What was your role in its creation? Who can be contacted?

I introduced the Bible Reading Challenge at Emmanuel in January 2015. About 35 of us read the Bible together, from January through December. A few years ago I learned of a reading plan and materials offered by the Center for Biblical Studies, St Thomas, Whitmarsh, Philadelphia. I decided to try it at Emmanuel. Interest quickly blossomed and we continued to get sign-ups throughout the year. Some people are reading the Bible for the first time; others have read it many times before. Each month I send out a letter of encouragement and a reading plan. Each day I send an e-mail with the day's readings and a brief reflection or commentary. We gather to check in, ask questions, and encourage each other. Readers have invited friends beyond our parish. I remind participants that any reading – no matter how little – is a success. The response has been outstanding. People appreciate the arc of the biblical narrative, see connections to lectionary, liturgy, and prayer book, reclaim stories lost since childhood, and feel a kinship with other readers. I have enjoyed seeing the idea catch hold and take root.

How are you preparing yourself for the Church of the future?

I stay in touch with young friends and seminary classmates. I listen to teenagers and young people, including my own children (both now in college) and youth in our church youth groups. I read blogs, books, magazine articles, and newspapers. My continuing education has included study in Youth and Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary (with yet another group of young classmates), and Virginia Theological Seminary's "e-Formation Learning Exchange." My time at Emmanuel reminds me that the church of the future like the church of today is multigenerational. So I challenge myself to think about how we can involve retirees and beyond in ministry; how we can meet their needs and keep them informed, involved, and active. The church of the future, like the church of today and the church of yesterday, exists for one purpose: to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ crucified. Our message does not change, yet we must always be ready to share our Good News with the changing world around us.

What is your personal practice of stewardship and how do you utilize it to influence your ministry in your worshipping community?

My wife and I tithe my total church compensation (salary, housing, and SECA reimbursement) to our parish. We give additional money each year to other charitable organizations (relief organizations, a Christian radio station, etc.). I share my own journey to the tithe and our own tithing practice with parishioners when it comes up in conversation or otherwise feels natural. This gives me the freedom to recommend the tithe as a personal discipleship practice. I preach on stewardship routinely as simply one example of all-around Christian discipleship.

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What is your experience of conflict involving the church? And what is your experience in addressing it?

As a lawyer, I learned to analyze problems from multiple points of view. Respectful engagement goes a long way to resolve misunderstanding and nip problems in the bud. Although I don't seek out conflict, I will engage it when it comes. Most conflicts do not go away nor do they improve with age. When I sense that someone is upset or an issue is brewing, I reach out rather than draw back. "Can we talk, please?" "Is something bothering you?" "Please help me understand this." When same-sex blessings and marriage arrived in 2014 and 2015, both ends of the spectrum expected me to adopt their position. I did not want to create winners or losers, so I worked hard through conversation and discussion, letters, sermons, and vestry and parish meetings to get the parish to understand that we need to live together, to listen to each other, and love one another - especially those with whom we disagree. I am committed to welcome, respect, care for, and love everyone, even though I hold a traditional understanding of marriage and sexual ethics. People with very different points of view are working and staying together, and I think our parish is stronger for it.

What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

"If you don't take the time to do it right, you'll have to take the time to do it over." Change in the church can be threatening because people turn to the church for security, reassurance, and stability - not for change! Yet all of life is about change. My 25 years on active duty saw huge changes, and as a life-long Episcopalian, I have seen huge changes in our church. We do change well when we are sensitive to peoples' needs and fears and offer a safe way to name and address them. People want to be kept informed, heard, treated with respect, and loved. We do change best when we take the time to let the Holy Spirit work, listen to all voices, and build consensus. We do change poorly when we create winners and losers by rushing the process.



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References

Bishop:

The Rt Rev Shannon Johnston

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Diocesan Transition Minister

Active Clergy:

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Colleague in Church Governance:

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Colleague in Church Governance:

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Former warden and search chair

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