

From: Christ Church, Waco admin@christchurchwaco.org
Subject: Announcing Our Rector-Elect
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To: gailratz@gmail.com

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Dear Christ Church Family,

The Vestry of Christ Church Waco, with the Consent of Bishop Ryan S. Reed, is pleased to announce that Father Nicholas Chandler Athanaelos, known to most as “Father Nick,” was unanimously elected to be called as the Rector of Christ Church Waco. He will officially start serving in that role on or before May 1, 2024.



A native of Augusta, GA, Fr Nick has served as Rector and Dean of Saint Stephen’s Pro-Cathedral in Athens, Georgia for 13 years. He is also the Archdeacon of the Anglican Catholic Church (ACC), Diocese of the South and Chairman of the Commission for Ministry. The Anglican Catholic Church is a province of approximately 275 congregations and 60,000 people.

Saint Stephen’s is a parish in the heart of a college town (University of Georgia) with a present membership of 230 souls made up of 70% college students and faculty. The Parish has a vibrant college ministry, multiple mid-week and Sunday Bible studies, daily Holy Communion, and adult and youth choirs. Under Fr Nick’s leadership the parish grew in numbers, and also completed \$1.5 million in renovations, including building upgrades, a bell tower, playground, the addition of a cemetery, and gardens.

Fr Nick brings a wealth of long-tenured pastoral and parish leadership experience to Christ Church. His stated ministry philosophy is that growth happens when a congregation has a focus “of love, caring for each other, and spreading the Gospel.”

Prior to serving at Saint Stephen’s he served as Rector of Saint Andrew & Saint

Prior to serving at Saint Stephens, he served as Rector of Saint Andrew & Saint Margaret of Scotland Anglican Church in Alexandria, Virginia for 10 years. During his tenure, he established a strong youth program including a home-school program that eventually organized a full-time school which brought folks from many backgrounds to the Parish.

Fr Nick commented that what he views as the most significant achievement at St. Andrew & Saint Margaret was completing the merger of two parishes into one. He stated that, "This was indeed a challenge as one parish was Anglo-Catholic and the other very Low Church. The Holy Spirit worked miracles and the parish continues to thrive today."

He holds an AAS in Criminal Justice from Georgia Military College, a BS in Philosophy from Western Illinois University (honors) and an MA in Theology from Loyola University, Chicago (Cum Laude). He has taken additional coursework from St. John Vianney Seminary in Miami, Florida, Mount Saint Mary's, Emmitsburg, Maryland, and The Catholic University of America in Washington DC.

Fr Nick was ordained a deacon in 1999 by Archbishop Mark Haverland (ACC) and a Priest in 2000 by Archbishop Haverland and Bishop John Charles, Church of England, later ACC.



Fr Nick is a member of The Society of the Holy Cross (SSC) and serves in an officer role as the

Provincial Secretary of the SSC. Additionally he is a member of the Provincial Masters Council, and serves as the SSC Local Chapter Vicar in Georgia.

Fr Nick has embraced the White Rule of Celibacy through the SSC, originally wanting to have a wife and family but ultimately determining that 100% devotion to the ministry and flock was the providential path for him.

Before starting his final trajectory to theology studies and ordination, Fr Nick worked in the "family business" of law enforcement as a detective in the Augusta, GA police

department vice and narcotics division for eight years. His experience helped solidify his calling to the ministry. He also holds various leadership and volunteer roles in non-church organizations and is involved in a number of ecumenical initiatives with other church pastors and leaders.

Fr Nick sensed a call to the priesthood at an early age. He has an amazing testimony of his journey to the Anglican Church after growing up in the beauty and holiness of the Roman Catholic Church where his originally Greek Orthodox father and Methodist mother settled, all the while heavily influenced by Baptist grandparents.

The vestry was impressed by Fr Nick's transparency, humility, maturity, and trust in the Holy Spirit. His professional and personal references spoke of his kindness, personal integrity, communication skills, and character. We have so much more we could say, but we will leave that to future communications and parish visits and conversations with Fr Nick!

This decision and rector search process was months long and involved reviewing 11 extensive formal applications as well as a very fruitful prayer, discernment and interview process with Fr Nick. Special thanks should be given to Dr. Toby Coley for his tireless and thoughtful work on the Parish Profile and in his role as Co-Chair of the Rector Search along with Co-Chair Tony Gerber's steadfast spiritual and practical leadership in so many ways.

We are honored and humbled by the Godly priests who applied for the Rectorship of Christ Church and discerned with us in this process. Each of these men have remarkable talents to offer to the Body of Christ and our prayers and support go with them as they exercise their gifts and ministry in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

We are so very grateful to Bishop Reed, Archdeacon Hightower, the Diocesan staff and Fr Robert Young for their wise and Godly counsel and extensive help with background and reference checks. We also want to express our gratitude to the Christ Church Rector Search Advisory Team and the entire Christ Church clergy, staff and congregation for your faithful prayers and input, including the congregation's thoughtful and extensive participation and comments via our Parish survey over the 2023 Spring and Summer and additionally your individual input and encouragement.

Thanks be to God for his provision beyond what we can ask or imagine as we enter this new chapter in the life of the family and parish community known as Christ

Church Waco!

The Vestry of Christ Church Waco

Allison Buras

Toby Coley

Elizabeth Corey

Molly Fogleman

Tony Gerber

Doug Getson

Gail Ratzlaff

Jeff Wallace

Dylan Washington

The Eve of the Conversion of Saint Paul, AD 2024

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