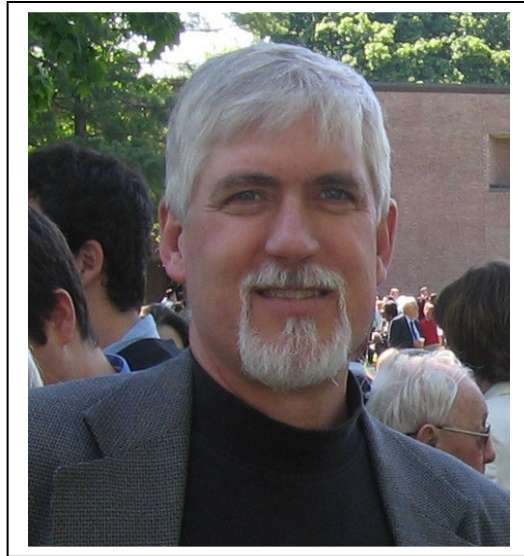


## The Reverend Matthew A. Gunter



**Age (at time of Nominating Synod):** 52

**Diocese of Canonical Residence:**

Chicago

**Current Position:**

Rector, St. Barnabas  
Glen Ellyn, Illinois

**Spouse:**

Leslie Renee Gunter

**Email:**

[mattgunter@aol.com](mailto:mattgunter@aol.com)

**Church Website:**

[saint-barnabas.net](http://saint-barnabas.net)

**Personal Website:**

[intotheexpectation.blogspot.com](http://intotheexpectation.blogspot.com)  
[covenant-communion.net](http://covenant-communion.net)

# Résumé

## Matthew Gunter

22W400 Hackberry Dr. / Glen Ellyn, IL 60137 / (630) 469-8683

### *PROFILE*

Priest with wide range of church experience with strengths in areas of teaching, preaching, pastoral care, and reconciliation. Married with three grown daughters.

### *PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE*

#### **Rector**

- St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, Glen Ellyn, IL** 2000 – present
- Rector of dynamic, diverse, “relaxed high-church” parish in western suburb of Chicago
    - Preaching, teaching, administering sacraments, administration, pastoral care, spiritual direction
    - Led parish to establish a sister-parish relationship with a congregation in the Diocese of Renk, Sudan – fund annual salary of pastor, raised funds for new church building, health clinic
    - Led successful capital campaign to raise funds for, and saw to completion, a \$3.2 million addition to the church building – 10% of last two subsequent successful capital campaigns designated for the Sudan
    - Raised public profile of St. Barnabas through recruiting a volunteer to attend to PR, overseeing development of parish website, various public events – music, speakers, seminars
    - Expansion of outreach and formation ministries

#### **Priest in the Diocese of Chicago**

- Spiritual Advisor, Chicago Episcopal Cursillo 2007 – present
- Member of Diocese of Chicago Commission on Global Ministry 2002 – present
- Dean, Aurora Deanery 2003 – 2009
- Deputy to General Convention 2006 & 2009
- Member of Diocesan Windsor Report Task Force 2005
- Led four-member official delegation from Diocese of Chicago to Diocese of Renk, Sudan February 2005
- Chair of Diocesan Annual Campaign 2001 – 2002
- Spiritual Director on several Cursillo weekends 1996 – present
- Spiritual Director on two Happening weekends 2000, 2004

#### **National Church**

- Chaplain, 75<sup>th</sup> General Convention 2006

#### **Assistant Rector**

1996 – 2000

##### **St. David Episcopal Church, Glenview, IL**

- Shared in total parish ministry of preaching, leading worship, teaching, counseling, pastoral care, officiating weddings and funerals
- Started and led weekly adult Bible study
- Director of Christian Education
  - administered church school program with average attendance of 80 with 19 teachers
- Youth Pastor
  - worked closely with lay youth leaders
  - doubled attendance of senior high youth group
  - organized and led annual week-long mission trip for high school youth to repair homes

**Ombudsman (assistant to the administration)** 1991 – 1993  
**Franklin High School**, Stockton, CA

- Organized and served as liaison for PTA which had been defunct for several years
- Recruited and supervised parent volunteers
- Chaired school restructuring planning committee
- Public relations liaison - worked with local media to make Franklin the most covered of Stockton's five high schools
- Crisis intervention

**Teacher** 1986 – 1991  
**Franklin High School**, Stockton, CA

- Taught English, ESL, history
- Helped design, and taught, a course for 9th grade students on interpersonal and other "life" skills and study skills

**Teacher** Summer 1987  
**Shandong Teachers' University**, Jinan, China

- Designed and taught, with three others, an English summer course for Chinese high school teachers
- One-on-one evangelism

**Teacher** 1985 – 1986  
**Edison High School**, Stockton, CA

- Taught English and journalism

### ***EDUCATION***

**Certificate**, Mediation Skills Institute for Church Leaders,  
 Lombard Mennonite Peace Center 2008, 2009

**M. Div.**, Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, VA 1996

- Selected to attend Excellence in Preaching Conference

**Clinical Pastoral Education** Summer 1994  
 Sibley Hospital, Washington, D.C.

**B.A.**, History, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 1980

### ***VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE***

Board of Directors – Ekklesia Project 2003 – 2006  
 Hand - to - hand volunteer for San Joaquin County AIDS Foundation 1990 – 1993

### ***AWARDS AND PUBLICATIONS***

Recipient of Second Annual John Hines Preaching Award, 2001

“The Wildness of God,” *Prism*, January/February, 2001, p. 10 – 11

“The Mystery of Suffering,” *The Living Church*, March 6, 2005, p. 16 – 17

“Taking Up the Cross in a Time of War,” *Sermons That Work XIII, 2005*, p.82 – 86,  
Roger Alling and David J. Schlafer, ed., 2005

“The Dance of Love,” *The Living Church*, June 11, 2006, p. 20 - 23

“God is Love,” *The Anglican Digest*, Transfiguration, 2006, p.55 -56

“Energized by the Spirit,” *The Living Church*, May 31, 2009, p. 8

## Written Responses to Questions by the Nominee

### The Reverend Matthew A. Gunter

#### 1. Who do you say Jesus Christ is?

Jesus Christ is the only Son of God, the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity. He is the Messiah – the one sent by God to free us from the power of sin, so that we might be restored to “harmony with God, within ourselves, with our neighbors, and with all creation” (BCP p. 849). Jesus is the Bridegroom come to allure Israel and all humanity back into right relationship with God. He is the Lamb that was slaughtered and worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing. He is the “Yes” to all God’s promises. Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord of all creation.

And he is my Savior and Lord. Jesus is the meaning of my life. I have known Jesus as Guide, Companion, Elder Brother, and Mystery. Through Jesus, I have known the forgiveness and healing of God’s mercy and grace. With Gertrud the Great, I can say, “Without Jesus, I have no consolation.” I know that without the fact of the incarnation and the redemption achieved in the crucifixion and resurrection, I would be unable to believe in God and without hope.

In the incarnation, God has come along side us in our sinfulness and brokenness and entered into the tragedy of human history. Having loved us, he loved us to the end, dying for us on the cross. In the resurrection, Jesus Christ has begun the transformation and healing of creation.

#### 2. What is the gospel message?

Praying the collects and the Easter Preface at the Easter Vigil reminded me afresh of the gospel and why I find the Christian story so compelling. It is beautiful and full of hope. It is the story of God as one who “wonderfully created and yet more wonderfully restored the dignity of human nature.” He did this through Jesus Christ who “humbled himself to share our humanity” that we “might share in his divine life.” He “delivered us from our enemy” and by his sacrifice has “taken away the sin of the world.” By his death he “has destroyed death and by his rising to life again, he has won for us everlasting life.” Through him “all things are being brought to perfection.”

God, who from all eternity is love, out of that love, has created us for love and has identified with himself with us in our failure to live into that love. He “poured his love out on the hard

wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of his saving embrace,” as one of the collects for Morning Prayer has it.

Because at the right time Christ died for us, we can stand in grace. Thus, the first word for Christians is grace, the last word for Christians is grace, and every day along the way is grace, grace, grace. God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. By that Spirit we are being healed and sanctified that we might live into the promised restoration of all things.

God has called us into a new covenant with himself – “a covenant of reconciliation.” Through Christ we have been “reborn into the fellowship of Christ’s body,” the “wonderful and sacred mystery” that is the Church. As members of his body we share in his ministry of reconciliation learning to love and serve one another as he has loved and served us. And by offering that reconciliation, love, and service to the world.

### **3. What is your understanding of “Mission” and “Ministry”?**

Mission begins with God. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has acted definitively to begin the healing of the great schism between humanity and God and all the consequent schisms between humans and between humans and the rest of creation. That healing will not be complete until the consummation of Christ’s return. But it has begun and God’s Spirit is active in the world, particularly through the Church in myriad anticipations of that final reconciliation.

As the body of Christ, the Church is the community of the expectation of the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21). As people of the expectation, the Church is a conspiracy to smuggle the joy of God’s kingdom into the world, to proclaim it, and to begin to live it in anticipation. As people of the expectation, the Church is the base of resistance against all that stifles or opposes the joy of God’s kingdom in the world. This means we take seriously Jesus’ commitments as he expresses them in his inaugural sermon in Nazareth in which he proclaims a new administration of God’s favor in the world (Luke 4:14-21). Whatever else that might mean, spiritually or metaphorically, it means that to follow him as people of the expectation is to begin now to seek justice, to seek relief for the poor, to bring sight to those who are blind, and release to captives. It means the Church is to be “a sign of Christ's love to this sinful and broken world, that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness heal guilt, and joy conquer despair” (BCP, p. 429). And we share the good news of this love, unity, forgiveness, and joy through evangelism.

Ministry is how Christians engage in the mission to which God has called the Church. As members of the body of Christ, each baptized believer is called to offer his or her distinctive gifts and perspectives for the edification of the Church and for serving the world in Christ’s name. Thus, all are called to serve, all are called to bless and pardon, and all are called to bear witness to the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church.

Out of the community of this fundamental call, some are called to be particular icons of these several ministries and to perform them with particular authorization. Thus the threefold ministry of deacons, priests, and bishops is a particular manifestation of what the body of Christ is called to generally. This threefold ministry in the service of the gospel and the body of Christ goes back to the earliest days of the church and indeed to Jesus' call of the Twelve.

**4. Provide an autobiographical sketch of your life, including those turning points which were significant in your spiritual development.**

Faith began to come alive for me when I joined a Bible study in high school. I encountered peers whose commitment to Christian discipleship inspired me to dig deeper into the faith I had grown up taking for granted. I eventually became a leader of this group which cultivated in me a life-long love of and interest in the Bible.

I continued involvement in Bible studies while in college, attending and leading a college group at a Presbyterian church. It was there that I met my wife, Leslie. While at college I also had my first experiences in evangelism and apologetics.

After college, I attended Gordon-Conwell Seminary. While there, we attended an Episcopal Church. I was taken with the beauty of the poetry and drama of the liturgy. I appreciated the participatory nature of the worship. Indeed, I felt it was the first time I had truly worshiped. I also felt connected to the communion of saints in a way I had never felt before – communion with the saints of the past and communion with contemporary saints around the world through the Anglican Communion. I began to appreciate the centrality of belonging and community for Christian faith and life.

During this time, I also went through a significant reevaluation of my faith which included questioning whether I believed anything in particular at all. As a result, I did not finish seminary at that time.

In the midst of this, I received one of the more profound spiritual experiences of my life. I do not remember the sequence of thought or emotion, but I was overwhelmed by an intense awareness of God's grace in which I became aware of God's relentless, unshakable love in a way I had never known it before. Chains of fear and guilt melted away allowing my spirit to soar. Paradoxically, my questions did not go away.

We moved to California where I taught high school. For several years in the latter 1980's we were members of a Lutheran church where I volunteered as the youth leader. Still, I wavered between faith and unbelief. Though I came close to abandoning Christianity, I eventually resolved the most pointed doubts and regained confidence in the good news that in Christ God is reconciling the world to himself. During that time I befriended the rector of an

Episcopal church who mentored me in many ways including helping to resolve some of my lingering doubt. We eventually joined the Episcopal Church and were confirmed in 1990.

I began to listen again to voices without and within suggesting I look again at ordained ministry. I stopped to listen to God's call on my life to be a preacher, teacher, pastor and priest. I had experienced the transforming power of God's reconciling mercy, grace, and love and was called to a vocation of being a matchmaker in the cosmic romance between God and creation.

I graduated from Virginia Seminary in 1996 and have served in the Diocese of Chicago since.

## **5. Describe your rule of life in detail.**

I rise at 5:30 AM

I spend some time reflecting on God's faithfulness over the last 24 hours and my faithfulness (or lack thereof) through an examination of conscience. I give thanks for God's mercy and grace, confess what needs confessing, and offer the coming day to God.

I read from either a spiritual classic (recently, William Law's *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, Isaac of Nineveh's *Direction on Spiritual Training*, and Gertrude of Helfta's *Spiritual Exercises*) or Scripture (recently, *Judith* and *Philippians*)

At 7:00, I walk, alone or with my wife, in the woods of Morton Arboretum (except on Thursdays when I celebrate Eucharist at 7:15, on Saturdays when I attend our men's Bible Study at 7:00 and on Sundays).

Upon returning from the arboretum, I spend 20 or 30 minutes in contemplative prayer.

I am currently between spiritual directors, but that has been an important part of my Rule.

I go on an annual silent retreat for extended reading and prayer.

Regular Eucharist and Morning Prayer are a given with my vocation, but they are an essential part of my Rule and my life just the same.

Tithing is also part of my Rule (in partnership with my wife).

Another aspect of my rule is participation in our clergy clericus.

**6. Based on your reading of the Diocesan Profile (including the Survey) and any other knowledge you have, what do you see that is positive and what do you see that is challenging for the next Bishop of Springfield?**

**Positive:**

Having read the profile, looked at parish websites, and read deanery reports to diocesan synod, it is evident there is a pervasive faithfulness and resourcefulness in congregations, large and small, in the Diocese of Springfield. I am impressed by the range of ministries conducted within a relatively small diocese. Throughout the diocese, the triune God is worshipped in the beauty of holiness, Christians are trained through varieties of Christian formation, the ministry of healing and reconciliation is performed through outreach and evangelism. Though the Diocese of Springfield may be small in numbers, it appears large in spirit. There is evidence that the diocese is primed for growth spiritually, numerically, and in mission

I love the pictures of the youth in the profile and on the website which are evidence of a vibrant youth ministry – something that I care deeply about.

On a more personal level, the Diocese of Springfield intrigues me because it is a Midwestern diocese and I am a Midwesterner. I grew up on a farm in northern Indiana and attended Indiana University. I have served as deacon and priest in the suburbs of Chicago. I have also lived outside of the Midwest having taught high school in a multi-ethnic urban setting in California and attended seminary in Virginia. But the Midwest is home. So, I am attracted to the mixture of urban, suburban, small town, and rural communities that make up the Diocese of Springfield. The fact that there are several universities in the diocese also suggests intriguing possibilities.

I find it hopeful that in spite of clear disagreement with decisions made by the Episcopal Church as a whole, there is still a strong desire to support the Episcopal Church.

**Challenging:**

It is clear from the survey that there is considerable disagreement in the diocese, particularly around issues of human sexuality. Therefore, a basic challenge for the next bishop will be the reconciliation and healing of these divisions. Reconciliation is a particular interest of mine. I have led a congregation in which there is considerable disagreement on these issues and others, but we have managed for the most part to stay together in worship and mission. We have built a major addition to our building. We have incorporated new members. We have expanded our outreach locally as well as globally through our involvement with the Episcopal Church of the Sudan.

Another challenge for the next bishop will be maintaining the balance of classic Anglican comprehensiveness (as opposed to an ambiguous lowest common denominator) in a time of divisiveness while remaining personally and spiritually centered.

Beyond these, there are the challenges facing any bishop in the Episcopal Church – declining attendance, aging congregations, and proclaiming the gospel in a time of general cultural shift to a post-modern, post-Christian, increasingly secular society.

These challenges are real, but so are the positives. And the challenges can be met by a church whose God has promised to complete the good work begun in it.

## **7. Describe your understanding of leadership, particularly as it would be exercised as a bishop.**

Leadership in the Church has a particular shape. As followers of the One who came not to be served but to serve, leaders in the Church must always bear in mind that our leadership is to be other than that of the Gentiles (Matthew 20:25-28). My style of leadership is characterized by collaboration and consensus building. I am not shy about sharing my own views, convictions, and desires. Still, as I make the case for my own, I seek to remain open to other perspectives and convictions. I am self-motivated. But, I prefer to build consensus before acting on initiatives. I like to gather teams of people together and work with them and enable them to minister on their own. Even so, as the leader, I am prepared to take responsibility for how things go.

I have served for the last ten years in a church named for Barnabas, the “Son of Encouragement”. I see a main role of a leader and of a bishop to be that of encouragement. That means, among other things, being present and visible to a wide variety of people in a wide variety of contexts. It means maintaining open communication and accessibility. It means encouraging the participation of all members of the diocesan community. It means encouraging people in their ministries and encouraging them in their seeking of holiness in their lives.

A bishop has the privilege of participating in many particular communities of a diocese and cultivating a sense of a larger belonging. There is the opportunity to help weave a fabric of common witness and service from the various threads that make up any diverse diocesan community. There is also the opportunity to encourage that witness, in both the local congregations and the diocese as a whole, such that we can indeed be a community participating in God’s ministry of reconciliation, healing, and justice in the world around us.

The ministry of bishop in the Episcopal Church today includes the unusual opportunity to remind our members, and proclaim to others, that our tradition bears the gospel of Jesus Christ in ways that are particularly attractive. Our balance of attention to scripture, beautiful worship, rooted-ness in tradition, and reasonable flexibility, speaks to the heart, mind, and imagination in ways that are compelling.

A bishop needs to be able to welcome the variety of Anglican theological dialects.

Given the comprehensiveness of the Anglican tradition and the particular shape that takes in the Episcopal Church, a bishop should be theologically multi-lingual and able to appreciate and respect the gifts various streams of the tradition bring to our common life.

**8. A bishop is called to “guard the faith, unity and discipline in the Church” (BCP 517). How do you understand this charge as it relates to the current crisis and other challenges within the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion?**

In the paragraph of The Examination following the one quoted in the question, the bishop-elect is charged, “With your fellow bishops you will share in the leadership of the Church throughout the world. Your heritage is the faith of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and those of every generation who have looked to God in hope.” This gets at what it means for a bishop to “guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church.”

To the extent the episcopate is a sacramental office, it is a sacrament of continuity with the faith inherited from the saints who have gone before us and with the Church throughout the world. This continuity challenges every parochialism of time and place and summons us into a larger community, the body of Christ.

While God always remains more than we can know, we also celebrate that God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. Faithfulness to that revelation does not – and should not – mean mere repetition of how it has been understood before. Still, there are limits to what can be believed and taught by a Church that claims a faith in continuity with the heritage of the saints. There will always be debate about where those limits are and Anglicans have historically been generous in that. But, limits there are. They are expressed most succinctly in the Creeds.

The current crisis in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion is about the shape of holiness, justice, biblical interpretation, and charity. It is also about how, within the diverse unity of the Church, the acceptable limits of disagreement about faithfulness in belief and practice are discerned and who is authorized to make that discernment. As those particularly charged with guarding the faith, bishops have this solemn responsibility – not any single bishop, not those of any one theological persuasion, not those of any one nation or province; but the bishops in fellowship throughout the world.

This cuts more ways than one in the current crisis. Those who to act in disregard for the larger body’s discernment, strain the Church’s unity. Those who decide on their own that the body should be divided, break that unity. Schism can be provoked as well as pursued, and we have experienced both over the last several years. But splitting the Church is a counter-sign that undermines whatever aspect of the gospel it hopes to preserve or advance.

In truth, I am sympathetic to the desire to find a more expansive understanding of faithful same-gender unions. But, I find the arguments and the means toward that end which have

dominated the Episcopal Church to be unsatisfactory and counter-productive. And it is not up to me alone anyway.

I support the Anglican Communion Covenant, not because I hope to punish the Episcopal Church, but because I hope it will set a firmer foundation of unity for the Anglican Communion from which we can together discern continuity with the faith inherited from the saints.

**9. Describe your liturgical style; include in your answer your understanding of the place of preaching and the use of music in the liturgy.**

Once you have gotten even a glimpse of the goodness, beauty, splendor, love and mercy of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, you are moved to worship with thanksgiving, joy, wonder and praise. Thus, Christians gather to pray and sing together, hear the scriptures read and expounded together, and celebrate the Eucharist together. In worship, we open our hearts to God that we might be drawn deeper into the heart of God.

I appreciate and am happy to worship in a wide variety of styles. My own liturgical style might best be described as “relaxed high church”. I am drawn to worship that is rich in the beauty, poetry, and drama of the Prayer Book and which engages the whole person and all the senses. Worship should be done with all the solemnity and care suitable for entering the presence of the One who rules the stars. But it should also be as accessible and welcoming as the One who set his heart on humankind and took on the lowliness of our flesh.

Careful attention to Scripture has always been a primary concern of Anglicans. While it has been typical to acknowledge the importance of tradition and reason in their interpretation, it is to the Scriptures themselves that we return again and again. I affirm with the Puritan, Thomas Manton, “The Holy Ghost rides most triumphantly in his own chariot”. We expect to engage and be engaged by the Spirit of Jesus Christ in the scriptures. In that engagement, we hear comfort, challenge, and call. The preacher invites the congregation to engage with that comfort, challenge, and call and have its imagination shaped by the story of God’s redemption of creation through the call of Israel, the sending of Jesus Christ, and the giving of the Holy Spirit to the Church.

Music is the language of the heart. As we gather to offer our hearts to God in gratitude it is natural that we lift our voices in song. St. Augustine said that those who sing pray twice. So, our music and singing should engage the range of our prayer – thanksgiving, praise, confession, yearning, joy, mourning, etc. At St. Barnabas, we seek to express these moods using the rich heritage of Christian music – from ancient hymns to Anglican chant to classic hymns to spirituals to Taize to the occasional contemporary praise song.