

## **Fr. Wes Shields**

Fr. Shields earned his undergraduate degree from North Carolina State University. He received his Master of Divinity from the University of the South in Tennessee, Sewanee in 2003.

He married his wife Laura in 2000 and they have three children, a 13-year-old daughter Emma, a second daughter, Cody who is 10, and a son, Tucker who is 8.

His first position after ordination was Associate Rector at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Gastonia, North Carolina from May 2003 to June 2004.

He then became Rector of St. Andrews in the Pines Episcopal Church in Pinedale, Wyoming, from June 2004 until September 2009. While there, the parish transitioned from mission to parish status. He grew the Christian education program and developed a once a week after school program with an average attendance of over 30 students. He also served several times as a camp chaplain. In addition to St. Andrews, he restarted St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church in Big Piney, Wyoming, which had been closed for several years. He served as Vicar there from January 2007 until September 2009.

Fr. Shields then became Rector of St. Columba's Episcopal Church in Boothbay Harbor, Maine where he served from October 2009 until June 2011. At the time of his arrival the church was running a large financial deficit. Some of his accomplishments during his time there, were producing a balanced budget by 2010, raising the funds to pay off all debts and retire the mortgage on the church building and growing the parish by 40%. The church was able to get completely off diocesan support and moved from Mission to Parish status. He also began the first youth group of about 16 students with an average attendance of 12.

Unfortunately, in 2011, the Shields suffered the loss of an infant daughter and a few months later Laura's dad was diagnosed with a terminal illness which prompted their return to North Carolina to be with family. While waiting for a local Rector position to become available, Fr. Shields began a period of bi-vocational ministry starting his own general maintenance business while working part time as a youth minister for three Episcopal churches and functioning as a supply priest on a regular basis.

From April 2014 to the present, Fr. Shields has been the Rector of the Church of the Transfiguration in Bat Cave, NC. He can be attributed with many wonderful accomplishments there. Working with two separate neighbors, the campus property was expanded from 2.5 acres to 20 acres with little or no cost to the parish. The endowment has grown approximately 500%, the parish has grown by 60%, the outreach budget expanded from \$2,000 to \$10,000 and maintenance issues were addressed. Numerous ministries began: Backyard Sports, Firewood Ministry, Mature and Motivated, Accountability and Discipleship Groups, and Bare Necessities. He started a weekly Bible Study and Adult Sunday School along with monthly Wednesday night dinner and teaching series. Fr. Shields is also a diocesan youth camp chaplain. He serves the local community as a North Carolina certified firefighter, a US Forest Service certified wildland firefighter and Captain of the Chimney Rock Volunteer Fire Department.

We are very blessed to have Fr. Shields and his family join St. Augustine of Canterbury!