

## “Fond Memories of My Childhood Episcopal Church”

Before I share my upbringing in the Episcopal Church USA, I ask that you please read this article from a woman named Alice P. Linsley who helped me edit the first blog. I personally know her and think highly of her because of her convictions. She was an Episcopal priest for 16 years and left the day Gene Robinson was consecrated. Her article creates the proper setting for my upbringing in the Episcopal Church USA in the 1970s and 80s.

[https://jandyongenesis.blogspot.com/2009/04/why-women-were-never-priests.html?fbclid=IwAR16VcmCVgSH1F\\_dcJcwDFEtNJ2Swo82s\\_EwtujYpa1ejqt0Oz1qxxfG3OI](https://jandyongenesis.blogspot.com/2009/04/why-women-were-never-priests.html?fbclid=IwAR16VcmCVgSH1F_dcJcwDFEtNJ2Swo82s_EwtujYpa1ejqt0Oz1qxxfG3OI)

At the age of three in 1974, our family moved to Austin, TX. The first thing my parents did was join a wonderful Episcopal Church in which I spent my entire childhood. My parents were diligent about bringing me to church every Sunday and making sure I "robed" as an altar server/acolyte. My mother grew up Methodist, a denomination with historic connections to the Church of England (Anglican). My dad was a cradle Episcopalian who was spiritually formed by the 1928 Book of Common Prayer.

At the age of five, I was accidently burned from the flames of a candle. My injuries were so severe that I spent three months in hospital rehabilitation and salt baths. I was thankful that my dad caught the fire in time and rolled me on the ground to extinguish the flames.

My parents stayed by me and loved me through that difficult time. After three days, the doctors were not certain that I would survive, but by the grace of God,

I survived and even thrived. I remember that our dear Episcopal priest visited me regularly at the hospital, and my best friend Holly kept me company as I healed and recovered at home.

My Episcopal Church family prayed over me regularly and supported my parents in a number of ways for which I will always be grateful. I was confirmed in the Episcopal Church at the age of nine though I didn't fully understand what confirmation meant. I thought it was something everyone did at a certain age.

In the 1970s, girls started serving at the altar (see picture) in Episcopal churches across the nation. This was happening in other parts of the Anglican Communion, but the Episcopal Church USA (ECUSA) became the gateway for modern innovations, such as the ordination of women to the priesthood, something that had never been practiced in historic Christianity.

In 1983, at the age of twelve, I loved serving at the altar with a new a godly Episcopal priest until I graduated from high school in 1990. That priest expended much time and energy at the national level trying to protect our parish and diocese from the inroads of modernism, pro-abortion, and gay activism. The Episcopal Church was attempting to be “prophetic” by introducing women's ordination, radical changes to the Prayer Book (1979) and idolizing “diversity”.

Girls serving at the altar tended to lead us in different directions. Some sought ordination. Others simply wanted to be near the presence of the Lord. Thankfully, for me, altar service lead to loving Jesus and the Eucharist Feast.



Me as an acolyte/altar server in 1980.

In the late 1970s, I experienced changes in the liturgy and the worship music. Both were more contemporary in style and in the language. This is the time that women's ordination started, and it was the Episcopal Church USA that opened the doorway to this dangerous modern innovation. I didn't understand that women's ordination to the priesthood was not Scriptural and that it departed from the historic Christian faith.

Throughout my elementary and middle school years, I picked up on certain doctrines about salvation, baptism, and Communion. I was taught that salvation was ongoing and that someone could fall from grace if they gravely turned away from God and never repented. Although I didn't know what sins of grave matter were, I heard occasional references to the Seven Deadly Sins. I was also taught that water baptism was required for salvation and that the elements of Communion somehow changed at the altar, but I wasn't sure how that mattered. I didn't understand that one's heart needed to be prepared to receive Communion, that sins should be confessed and fully repented before receiving the Eucharist. General words of confession became less and less evident with the 1979 Prayer Book.

I didn't know at the time how serving at the altar would have such a great impact on my Christian faith. It instilled a steady attraction to the altar and mostly to Jesus Christ. I cannot thank my parents enough for getting me to the acolyte room on time at least twice a month and Church every Sunday because being an acolyte profoundly shaped my faith

After my ten years of altar service, I earned this custom-made James Avery cross. It is now on a rosary that I use regularly to pray.

In my teen years, I experienced moderate to liberal teachings from the youth leadership on sexuality at the Austin Episcopal diocesan-wide level. This was the trend in other Episcopal dioceses as well. Sadly, throughout my active church involvement, I never opened a Bible or learned much about the Christian faith at my church youth group. Thankfully, parts of the 1979 Prayer Book retained Scripture which I memorized and have never forgotten. This played a huge part in my later faith journey.



In 1990, I moved into the freshman dormitory at Baylor University. I was soon approached by Evangelical Protestants who lead me to a radical conversion experience. I had never seen or heard of Billy Graham or his style, but this all woke me up to God's Word and reading the Bible for the first time.

Reading the Bible led me to understand that if I truly loved Jesus, I would obey His commandments. I knew from that point on that I also wanted this for my future family, so I prayed for a godly man that wanted the same thing. I finally understood that I couldn't live a secular lifestyle and profess Christ with my lips at the same time, so I gave my life to Christ and became Baptist through Believer's Baptism at the age of 19.

I didn't understand that at that point that I was leaving behind the ancient faith of Christianity... the altar, and the Eucharist, but I tried to live for Jesus and I developed a personal walk with Christ which was strongly encouraged in the Baptist world. I am grateful for that time in my life.

I joined the Baptist Church, but I married in my childhood Episcopal Church in 1994. Our children were baptized in that Episcopal parish in 2001. Our dear priest did this for us because he knew we would raise our children in a Christian home.

For me, the love affair with the Episcopal Church died when Gene Robinson was consecrated the Episcopal Bishop of New Hampshire in 2003. We was a partnered gay man who had left his wife and children was hailed as a hero. I knew that I couldn't raise my children in that environment. Along with women's

ordination, the Episcopal Church opened the door for sexual immorality to be accepted as normal.

In spite of the Episcopal Church's departure from "the Faith once delivered," I remain grateful for my childhood parish because there I first gained a hunger to better know the Lord and this was strengthened at Baylor University. I thank my parents for sending me to Baylor because it helped me in my spiritual walk. The most important thing the Episcopal Church taught me is that all Christians who profess Christ, do their best to live for Him, and are baptized in the Trinitarian formula are brothers and sisters in Christ. This is the spirit of Vatican II in the Roman Catholic Church, something I will address in a later blog post.



Wedding Day  
I married Grant in 1994 at my childhood Episcopal Church



Sam being baptized at my childhood Episcopal Church at 1.5 years of age

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Years in the Baptist Church until 2012

After our journey completely ended in the Episcopal Church in 2003, my husband and I started our family in a Baptist Church in Beaumont, Texas. I ate up learning God's Word and hearing straightforward sermons. I also loved listening to Billy Graham sermons and his conviction to live a godly lifestyle. And that is precisely what Grant and I intended to do, raise our children in the Baptist Church so there was no misunderstanding on morals,

especially about sexuality as there was in the Episcopal Church.

Grant and Janie, Baptist Church



There were many good things about the Baptist Church: the encouragement to live holy lives, to read God's Word, to serve, to go on the foreign mission field, and to evangelize. The first thing I noticed when we came to the Baptist Church from the Episcopal/Anglican Church were huge differences in doctrine: how we are saved, how we are baptized, is the Eucharist Real Presence or symbolic, what happens directly after we die, emphasis on certain sins and not on others, and many other MAJOR doctrinal differences between the Anglican/Episcopal tradition and the Baptist tradition totally unrelated to the progressive morality in the Episcopal Church.

I also noticed that there was not an altar with the Eucharist in the Baptist Church which became more and more significant for me as time went on.

Before I had children, young moms were talking about what type of artificial contraception they were using and who was getting introfertilization or tubal-ligations. I did not understand that contraception was considered immoral by all Protestants and Catholics until 1930 or even later. It wasn't until after that time that the Episcopal Church USA opened the gateway for all of Protestantism to accept contraception as the norm. Only the Roman Catholic Church has upheld the teaching on contraception until this day.

In 2003, our youngest child was diagnosed with Autism. He went through years of intensive therapies, tutors, and special treatment. Praise God he is attending Sam Houston State in the fall of 2019. Back to the Baptist Church.....

When our children were all little, I went through a mini faith-crisis because our children were not baptized young. The Baptist Church taught that



water Baptism was done at the age of reason when someone "accepted Jesus into their heart as personal Lord and Savior." The Baptist Church also taught that water baptism was not required for salvation while the Episcopal Church taught water baptism was necessary for salvation, and it needed to be done at infancy, preferably the eighth day of life as circumcision (Colossians 2:11-14) was done on the 8th day in ancient Judaism and baptism is the new circumcision.

As I stated in the Episcopal Church blog, I had my children baptized anyway in my childhood Episcopal Church, all three of them at ages 3--1/2, 2, and 1. I had a sense that they were safe until they could claim their Christian faith on their own when they were ready, especially since Sam had been sickly as a young child. All three children made the decision to get baptized and follow Christ on their own later, even our Sam with his Autism at age 12.



Janie and Sam at Believer's Baptisms

About the time our youngest child Sam decided to be baptized in the Baptist Church, I started having odd neurological problems. The doctors discovered that I had neurological symptoms for years prior, but the symptoms became quite noticeable in 2012 and difficult to manage. After six months of doctors' visits and a trip to Houston, TX, I was diagnosed with Early Onset Parkinson's Disease. At that time, I finally could go no longer without the Eucharist and the altar in the Church, especially after a new Parkinson's diagnosis.

Our family then found a local Anglican Church in a missionary diocese outside of the Episcopal Church USA which was very conservative morally and high Church in worship which I loved. The priest was very attentive to the

needs of the people. He also prayed over my Parkinson's regularly. This Anglican Church was the restored Episcopal/Anglican Church of my upbringing which we all fell in love with, so all five of us were confirmed in 2013. Our family starting serving in various Church capacities within a year. My husband and Sam became altar servers while I became the Children's Directress. After also falling in love with the people also and serving in our roles, it was time for me to have Deep Brain Stimulation Surgery for Parkinson's Disease by 2016.



Within two weeks of my surgery, I made a return visit to our Anglican Church. Out of respect, I cannot give too many details, but essentially while I was in neurosurgery, the Anglican Church abruptly split over significant theological disagreements and Church rebellion. Within a short time, a good part of our faith community was shattered all over the city of San Antonio. Our family stayed in the diocese but did not feel spiritually safe enough to stay in the same church after the split.

Our family relocated in the same missionary diocese to a new Anglican Church plant with few people and a solid Anglican priest. It was at that time that I spiritually shut down and just tried to make the best of the circumstances after losing our previous Anglican Church home. Little healing was happening. After a year of serving in the Church plant with small growth, our family finally broke down and "Went to Rome" through the Anglican Ordinariate. <https://ordinariate.net>

After the first council with the Ordinariate priest, he knew I was ready for confirmation. I had been studying the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church because I had been teaching Church history and catechism in the Anglican Church. There are centuries of history between these two Church bodies. It's a little different for Anglicans to be confirmed into the Ordinariate because they can be received year-round on a case-by-case basis if they take RCIA

catechism classes afterwards. Grant and Sam were not ready for confirmation yet, but I was.

My first confession involved confessing every remembered sin I had ever committed since the age of reason. Not only did this require an hour-long confession, it required returning every week for three months because I continued to remember new unconfessed sins that I had committed over a 40-year period. After three months of this, I decided I could never hold unforgiveness against anyone ever again. If the Lord could forgive all of my sins that were too numerous to count, there is no way I should not forgive others.

At that point, I just wanted the Lord to remember me in His kingdom as the thief on the cross did. I was finally able to forgive the rebellious people that were largely responsible for the split in our Anglican Church because of the cleansing and forgiveness process I experienced. The Lord spiritually healed me through the Sacraments and the beauty of the Ordinariate, Our Lady of the Atonement in San Antonio, TX.



