

Dan and I met a few years ago in Shirlington and decided to start attending Christian services together after we became engaged, seeking to have a strong religious background in place for our future family. We both came from families with a diverse array of Christian backgrounds; Catholic, Methodist, Episcopalian, Congregational. These varied backgrounds had given us different approaches and philosophies to religious practice, and so were seeking a church with both an atmosphere and a theology that would be comfortable and welcoming to both of our re-entrances to church life after a few years away. After giving it some thought and research we chose "the middle way" and decided to join an Episcopalian congregation.

Planning our wedding near Old Town Alexandria, as well as our desire to soon settle in that area, quickly led us to Emmanuel. Our first meeting with Chuck made it clear that we had found the perfect place to begin our religious attendance together as a soon-to-be family. From the start he was excited for us to join the community, and his friendly, welcoming communications and happiness in our choosing to attend Emmanuel made us excited to become part of the parish. Listening to our first few sermons at Emmanuel from Chuck, Joani, and Rosemari, and attending the coffee hours that followed, were equally comfortable and welcoming experiences. The atmosphere was a perfect blend of reverence and candidness, solemnity and joyfulness. We then knew this was the church where we wanted to spend our Sundays, get married, and eventually baptize our children someday.

After about a year of attendance I decided to take advantage of the opportunity to become confirmed in the Episcopalian Church by Bishop Shannon Johnston, which occurred this past November. In preparation for this I had the privilege of meeting several times with Chuck as well as one of Emmanuel's seminarians, Alex Allain. Together, they provided me and my fellow confirmand with a wonderful background on the Episcopalian theology and helped me fully appreciate the truly unique and valuable features of the Church. On the Sunday that Bishop Johnston visited Emmanuel, I felt ready, secure, and happy in my confirmation and excited to officially call the Church my home. Bishop Johnston was just as warm, welcoming and kind as every other member of the Episcopal Church that I had met since becoming part of Emmanuel, and I felt blessed to be confirmed by him.

As Dan and I continue to work with Chuck on our forthcoming wedding ceremony at Emmanuel, we only grow more excited about our place here. We look forward to continuing to become more involved in the community and feel that it is truly a comfort and a privilege to have Emmanuel as our "place" to be on Sundays.