

The Very Rev. Shay Craig

Shay Craig was born in Omaha, Nebraska, the granddaughter of ranchers in western Kansas and farmers in northern Missouri. She was raised in suburban San Francisco where she was welcomed into the Episcopal Church at St. Stephens, Belvedere. Shay is a graduate of George School, a Quaker High School in Newtown, PA, and the University of Illinois at Urbana, where she earned a BA in English.

After college, Shay moved to Chicago, was married and worked in various administrative positions before staying home to raise her four children: Emma who now lives in Gainesville, Florida, Sam in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, Caden in Portland, Oregon and Jamie in Salina, KS.

Shay first felt a call to ordained ministry when her children were small, but circumstances were not right for her to begin her discernment. In the intervening years she was a lay leader at Christ Church in Winnetka, IL. She was a member of the Vestry, wrote curricula, taught Sunday School to middle schoolers and helped to create an infamous “Musical Journey through the Bible in an Hour.”

Shay attended Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, IL., earning a Master of Theological Studies in Hebrew Bible and graduating with honors.

Following Seminary, Shay worked as Development Officer for the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago, before she was ordained a priest in 2018.

Shay has spent her entire ordained life in the Diocese of Western Kansas and has worn many hats: as a priest in a parish; successfully revitalizing a rural church; and bi-vocationally, as Canon for Congregational Development and Vitality on the Bishop’s Staff. She has served as Standing Committee chair twice and currently serves on the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, on the Finance Committee. She co-hosts a monthly Zoom chat for small and rural churches in Province VII.

Shay has a passion for rural ministry and discerning the Spirit at work in small congregations in remote locations and with limited resources. She has worked with churches across her Diocese and Province on creating community, redefining vitality and sustainable leadership. She is truly called to serve God’s people in God’s country and could not be happy anywhere else.

She is married to John Houston, who is an Assistant General Counsel for the Kansas Supreme Court Office of Judicial Administration, and they live outside of Salina, Kansas with a half dozen dogs and cats. Shay likes a good thunderstorm and loves being snowed-in, she is not a fan of tornadoes. Shay has a green thumb, but she can’t cook and she can talk your ear off about Watergate, Sherlock Holmes and the Chicago Cubs. She is willing to learn about hockey.

Shay is looking forward eagerly to meeting the people who make up the Episcopal Church in North Dakota, hearing their stories, learning about their lives and glimpsing the vision of the Kingdom that God has in store for the Body of Christ here.