



OFFICE OF
DEVELOPMENT



The Episcopal Church at Work—a Newsletter from the Office of Development, April 2021

Meaning and Mission: The Rev. Ranjit Mathews Reflects on the Young Adult Service Corps Twenty Years Later

In 2001, the Young Adult Service Corps (YASC) was a startup. Today it is a vital program area of The Episcopal Church.

Its mission then and now is to offer young adults the opportunity to live and work alongside communities around the Anglican Communion, build relationships, and explore their faith in new ways. In 2000 the General Convention of The Episcopal Church identified the need to connect young adults ages 21-30 to mission outside of the United States, building faith relationships across the globe.

The Rev. Ranjit K. Mathews was one of that first group of YASCers (pronounced YAS-kers) in 2001. At the time, he was a recent business administration graduate from George Washington University; today, he is a married father of two and rector of St. James Church, New London, Conn. During the two decades in between, he has traveled many miles, seeking to bear witness to his faith and learn from the faith of others.

Place and people matter to Mathews. Throughout his faith and discernment journey he chose to live and serve in places that demanded he develop the skills of listening and watching in order to open his heart and ministry to those he sought to serve. This included working with Hope in Hollywood in Los Angeles, where the rhythms and poetry of hip-hop informed his witness, and serving on the streets of Cape Town, South Africa, as an intern through the YASC program. Throughout his discernment for ordination, one facet of his call was consistent -- to serve and observe how the Jesus Movement is practiced in other parts of the Anglican Communion.

In 2001, just as Mathews was looking for service opportunities, the newly formed Young Adult Service Corps was looking for young missionaries -- a perfect match. Mathews was introduced to the Rev. Canon Ted Karpf, the provincial canon missionary for HIV/AIDS and a deputy to the archbishop of Cape Town. Karpf needed an assistant as he embarked on a daunting task to address the health disparities of the HIV/AIDS pandemic that



Ranjit, Johanna, and their children today.



Ranjit and Johanna in Africa.

was ravaging Southern Africa. While Karpf focused his efforts on building alliances across the many Anglican dioceses, Mathews was tasked to work with faith communities in Cape Town. This experience of listening and ministering with young adult communities torn asunder by HIV/AIDS confirmed his vocational calling and his commitment to international service.

The experience created other opportunities for him, including working as the partnership officer of Africa for The Episcopal Church. He did another stint as a mission volunteer in Tanzania, this time with his wife, and now serves as the rector of an urban church. Twenty years after his time with YASC, Mathews credits the experience as foundational for his ministry as a priest and advocate for the realm of God.

This year, due to the pandemic, YASC has revised and extended its application and placement process.

We invite you share this story with someone you know who may be seeking ways to serve.

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