

The Rev. Benjamin R. “Ben” Wright

The St. James’ Church Rector, Ben Wright, was born, Baptized, and Confirmed in the Episcopal Diocese of Rio Grande. He is originally from Alpine, Texas where he was reared in the faith at home and as a communicant of St. James’ Episcopal Church. He was Confirmed by The Rt. Rev. Charles J. Kinsolving III, the then Bishop of the Diocese of New Mexico and Southwest Texas. Ben was educated in the Alpine Public Schools graduating from Alpine High School in 1964. He earned a B.B.A. from Pan American College (now the University of Texas – Pan American) in Edinburg, Texas in 1968. His primary areas of study were business management and economics. Ben was chosen as a graduate assistant at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He completed one year of work towards an M.B.A. before the Viet Nam conflict and the military draft cut short his graduate studies and thus accelerated his entry into the U.S. military in 1969.

Ben served on active duty in the U.S. Air Force for twenty-two years. After commissioning, he completed pilot training at Laughlin Air Force Base (Del Rio), Texas. He initially served as a T-37 Instructor Pilot at Laughlin Air Force Base and then flew C-130’s in Southeast Asia out of Clark Air Base in the Philippines. He also flew C-130’s in the U.S. and Europe out of Dyess Air Force Base (Abilene), Texas. After a tour at Military Airlift Command Headquarters at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, Ben returned to Air Training Command as a T-38 Instructor Pilot and wing staff officer at Vance Air Force Base (Enid), Oklahoma. Ben completed his military career as the Deputy Base Commander at Bitburg Air Base, Germany.

After retiring from the U.S. Air Force in 1991, Ben entered Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania and became a Postulant for Holy Orders in the Diocese of Wyoming. He completed a Master of Divinity in 1994 and was ordained as a Deacon on the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, June 29th, 1994 and was ordained as a Priest on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6th, 1995 at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Casper, Wyoming where he served as the Assistant Rector until 1996. Ben was the Vicar of both The Church of the Good Shepherd in Sundance, Wyoming and Christ Church in Newcastle, Wyoming until 2001. He was a Deputy to General Convention 2000 in Denver and has completed several Doctor of Ministry courses at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. During 2001-2006, Ben was the Canon Missioner for the Southern Partnership in Ministry in the Diocese of West Texas. He simultaneously served as the Vicar of each of five congregations: All Saints’ – Pleasanton, Good Shepherd – George West, St Matthias’ – Devine, St. Michael’s – Lake Corpus Christi, and St. Timothy’s – Cotulla. He became the Rector of St. James’ Church in Clovis, New Mexico and the Team Leader for the High Plains Team Ministry (St. James’ Church – Clovis, St. John’s Church – Fort Sumner, and Trinity Church – Portales) in October 2006.

Ben’s greatest gift is that he is married to Beryl Joyce (Pretty) Wright who is originally from England. She was educated in an Anglican convent school near London and has a Domestic Science Degree from Atholl Crescent and a Teaching Certificate from Moray House College of Education, both located in Edinburgh, Scotland. In 1970, Beryl immigrated to the U.S. and in 1973, became a U.S. citizen in Wyoming. She has both a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Accountancy from the University of Denver and is licensed as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) in Colorado. Beryl has managed a Christian pre-school; managed a child care center; plus she has taught Business Administration and Accounting courses at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas; Coastal Bend College in Pleasanton, Texas; Clovis Community College in Clovis, New Mexico; and Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, New Mexico.

Ben and Beryl have four adult children: Audrey Watters of Eugene, Oregon, Rhett Wright of Austin, Texas, Fred Watters of Brooklin, Maine, and Ryan Wright of Jackson Hole, Wyoming. They also have five grandchildren: Isaiah (Eugene, Oregon), Ashley and Alec (Austin, Texas), plus Emmett and Amelia (Brooklin, Maine).