

**The Reverend Dr. Harold James Cobb, Jr.  
Biographical Statement**

When my wife Sheliah and I came to Grace Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Southern Virginia, our daughter Caryn was eighteen months old. We have come to love both the people of Grace Church and this Diocese of Southern Virginia.

I was born the son of a Baptist preacher and an elementary school teacher. My father was the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Burlington, North Carolina. Every week throughout my childhood I grew up going to church twice on Sunday: once for Sunday School and Sunday Morning Worship, and later that day for Evening Worship. My father was very involved in the Civil Rights Movement. When I was six years old I was able to have a conversation in our living room with Dr. Ralph Abernathy, Dr. Martin Luther King's top associate.

I initially attended Morehouse College in Atlanta. It was there that I sensed a call to preach. I preached my initial sermon and was licensed to preach. During my time also in Atlanta I was elected president of the Morehouse College Student Minister's Fellowship and elected the Student Representative to the Morehouse Board of Trustees. I later transferred to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

While still a college student I started Good Samaritan Baptist Church in Durham, North Carolina, by personal visitation and personal evangelism. Going from home to home throughout the community. My perseverance with this effort eventually led to the purchase a building. It was while pastoring Good Samaritan that I providentially met the Right Reverend Robert W. Estill, Episcopal Bishop of North Carolina. We developed a close friendship and mentoring relationship. He rekindled my belief in the Holy Sacraments that I first learned while attending Blessed Sacrament Roman Catholic School as a child. My parents sent me there because it was not only integrated but the best school in Burlington. I served Good Samaritan for seven years, my final year while simultaneously doing an internship at Saint Philips Episcopal Church, Durham, with my now longtime friend, The Reverend Dr. C. Thomas Midyette. I then attended Virginia Theological Seminary for my Master in Divinity. Bishop Estill would ordain me, marry Sheliah and me and baptize our daughter Caryn. Right after seminary I served Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church, Winston-Salem, for four years. This is also notably the first church that now Presiding Bishop Michel Curry served after seminary. In 1995 I accepted the call to be the Rector of Grace Episcopal Church, Norfolk. Except for my three years at Virginia Theological Seminary I have spent all of my adult life in full time parish ministry. I have always tried to prayerfully discern God's will and direction in each step of my journey. I believe that God is now calling me to serve as Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia. I will lovingly and faithfully serve as a mutual pilgrim on this journey of faith.