The leadership team at St. Andrew’s Episcopal School sets the tone and culture for the entire community. Learn a little more about their philosophies and beliefs in this spotlight series.

**WHITNEY KIRBY**  
Chaplain, Upper School

The Reverend Whitney Kirby is thrilled to have her first school chaplaincy be at St. Andrew’s Episcopal School, where she is serving in her third year. After studying and living in “Texile” in Virginia and Arizona, she is happy to be back in her beloved Austin, where she studied at the University of Texas. Mother Whitney has worked in the Irish Parliament, hiked the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, and once sang “The Gambler” to Kenny Rogers himself in a Mexican airport. Her Boxador, Boo Radley, serves as her faithful, ridiculous sidekick.

In your own words, what is the mission of St. Andrew’s?

The mission of St. Andrew’s is to help young humans become good people by expanding their minds, strengthening their bodies, encouraging their hearts, and enriching their spirit. Our Episcopal tradition provides a solid foundation for this dynamic enterprise because of its devotion to using our hearts and reason to shape our daily living into lives of purpose and compassion.

What do you see as the most important thing St. Andrew’s does for our students?

I think the most important thing we provide for our students is a comprehensive education in a place filled with people who love them and love what they do. Every day, our students get to see and be in relationship with adults who are enthusiastic about their jobs? What a fantastic gift to our students, our families, and as colleagues. Secondly, Chapel. Shocking, I know, but I cannot imagine how differently my life might be if as a child and young adult I had purposeful time every day to engage in community, dream on big questions, and share the rhythms of the year and of life. It’s a profound practice, and I’m incredibly proud that we do this.

What do you want each student to feel when they come onto campus each day?

At the opening Chapel every year, I make sure to tell students and faculty, “If you’re here, you belong.” I want every student at St. Andrew’s to know that they are integral to our community, and to feel celebrated, encouraged, challenged to grow, and loved. I want every student to feel empowered to grow further into the people they are being called to be and leave this campus knowing how to continue that good work in their lives, their communities, and the world.

What are the qualities you hope every student shows upon graduation?

I hope our students graduate as passionate and compassionate people. I want them to go out from this place knowing what it means to pursue and do good work - work that feeds them and feeds others.

What is your vision for the future of St. Andrew’s?

When I think of the future of St. Andrew’s, I immediately picture the Century Oak on the 31st Street campus and the hundreds of Oaks out on Southwest Parkway. If we remain deeply rooted in our Episcopal tradition and our commitments to education and whole-child development, then we cannot help but continue to grow and flourish with strength and grace. I envision that we will continue to be dependable, life-giving, and heart-warming staple of the Austin landscape.