# Reverend Robert Cooper
# First Rector of St. Michael's Parish

The Reverend Robert Cooper served as the first Rector of St. Michael's Parish, officiating at the first service held in the new church on February 1, 1761. He played a foundational role in establishing St. Michael's as one of the most important Anglican parishes in colonial America.

Born in Wales in 1731, he studied at Jesus College, Oxford, and was subsequently ordained in the Church of England.
He moved to Charles Town and were called to St. Michael's church in 1761. Cooper's early years as rector was marked by expansion and growth. During this period Anglican clergy found it increasingly difficult to remain neutral amid divisions between Loyalists and Patriots. True to his upbringing and ordination vows, Cooper maintained his allegiance to the Crown.

On June 28, 1776—the day of the Battle of Sullivan's Island—Cooper, conducting regular services, offered prayers for the King. This act was interpreted as support for the British forces and resulted in swift action by the vestry. On July 2, 1776, he was dismissed from his post after fifteen years of service.

Cooper relocated to England, where he received a stipend of £100 per year as a Loyalist. He later returned to Charles Town and served as rector of St. Philip's Parish during the British occupation (1780–1782). Following the British evacuation, he returned permanently to England, where he became rector of St. Michael's, Wood Street, London. He died on August 25, 1815, at the age of 84.