



Office for  
Transition  
Ministry

# Ministry Portfolio

*Full Portfolio (last updated Apr 28, 2021)*

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## St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Michigan

5500 N.Adams Road, Troy, MI 48098, United States

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 05/31/21.

[eekevag@edomi.org](mailto:eekevag@edomi.org)

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Weekly Average Sunday Attendance (ASA)	Number of Weekend Worship Services	Number of Weekday Worship Services	Number of Other per Month Worship Services
55	3	5	
Current Annual Compensation	Cash Stipend	Housing / Rectory Detail	Utilities
\$75000	\$75000		
SECA reimbursement	Compensation Available for New Position	Housing Available for	Pension Plan
	\$75000		<b>We're in compliance with CPF requirements.</b>
Healthcare Options	Dental	Housing Equity Allowance in budget	Annual Equity Amount
<b>Full family</b>	<b>Yes</b>		
Vacation Weeks	Vacation Weeks Details	Continuing Education Weeks	Continuing Education Weeks Details
4		<b>2 (standard)</b>	
Continuing Education Funding in budget	Sabbatical Provision	Travel/Auto Account	Other Professional Account
<b>over \$2000/year</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>

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Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognize as one of success and fulfillment.

The enthusiastic response to our online and live streamed activities and services: Streaming Sunday Services • Sunday Morning Prayer on Facebook has approx. 50 views each week. • Live (and recorded) streaming of 10am service on YouTube, Facebook & Instagram with over 50 views. St. Stephen's Facebook pages (private & public) • Posts on the public page are shared nationally through Episcopalian FB group. Over 150 followers. • Posts on the Private page 40-60 views, 150 members both current and past members. A very high engagement rate. St. Stephen's Instagram • Focused on new people, such as local Christian groups, Oakland University students, etc. 200 followers, mostly in metro Detroit area, posts are seen by approx. 50-70 viewers. St. Stephen's Pinterest account • Over 2,500 monthly views. Worldwide reach used to increase digital presence. More for inspirational messaging & linking to our website. Compline every weeknight on Facebook • Over 40-50 views every night, about 50% are former parish members; currently working to post Compline on YouTube.

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How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the future?

The church of the future must seek connections with people and community in new and innovative ways. Our initial efforts were to stream Sunday morning services into homes during the lockdown. This effort rapidly expanded into other ways to reach out and help people connect to St. Stephen's. Today, we have over 50 weekly views for Sunday services on YouTube, 35+ views for Compline offered weeknights on Facebook, and a 7:30am Sunday Morning Prayer service on Facebook for a loyal following of 40+ viewers. All this means nothing if our members cannot access it. We are working to ensure that our homebound parishioners have access to our social media channels. This means making sure they have the necessary hardware available to them and that they know how to use it. Recognizing the need to re-evaluate our external communications, a new committee was formed to focus on outward connections. This committee is cultivating relationships that will foster opportunities to do work in our communities. Connecting to a younger constituency is vital. Our Social Media Intern is reaching out to campus student organizations as a starting point. We are working to connect to one of these groups.

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Please provide words describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community.

visionary, communicator, Facilitator ( Partner & Inspire), Empathetic ( Supporter & Healer)

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Describe your liturgical style and practice for all types of worship services provided by your community.

"Tradition with humanity and humor" is our tagline. We • enjoy the traditional Episcopal worship format, • embrace each other as God's children with whom we rejoice & console, • look for reasons to burst out laughing. Services usually use Rite 2. The 4:30 pm Saturday service is informal. Worshipers gather around the altar for the Eucharist. The music varies: Sometimes a pianist, our "Ad Hoc Jug Band" or a guitar-playing folk-singer. The 8 am Sunday service is without music. The 10 am service is alive with music and youthful energy. Announcements are lengthy but inspiringly highlight our many activities & broad participation. Sunday school programs overlap it. Younger classes go until our wonderfully chaotic and joyous Passing of the Peace. The older kids leave for class after receiving communion. Music is an integral part of St. Stephen's. Vocal and instrumental solos by parishioners and guests as well as our bell, youth, and adult choirs are all part of the musical texture. We enjoy variations: • Youth Sunday • Temple talks (lay testimonials) • Christmas Cantatas • Easter Vigil • Foot washing & healing services • Laughing or crying

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How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

We strive to create a welcoming environment. "You are welcome here" is etched on our door and in our hearts. We believe it is important to provide services and sacraments that move people closer to God and each other. Although technically no longer a "program church", we strive to provide many diverse social and mission activities led by a strong laity. These provide opportunities for lay leadership & "small-step" involvement for all. Parishioners feel that as a Household of God, "We are St. Stephen's," and our hands do God's work. Personal invitations to social events or mission service are most powerful. We advertise opportunities at services and our website, email chain and social media. Social events provide easy first steps to inclusion (fellowship hour, potlucks, men's nights, ladies' lunches, youth auctions, a "greet, eat and meet" program for at-home small-group dinners, and more). Each major ministry has a Vestry liaison with the objective to broaden involvement. We also believe that our building is part of our ministry. We allow its use by outside groups including AA, the Troy Interfaith Group, Red Cross blood drives, and a genealogy society.

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As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?

We seek to be strong and warm in our care for each other. This creates a warm and accepting environment in which we willingly expose our vulnerability and share concerns. Our clergy play a key pastoral role shepherding and supporting: • Our Lay Caring Ministry doing whatever is needed to assist those in need - visits, calls, meals, groceries, cash for bills or health insurance, child care, transportation, and more • Our lay "Shared Ministry" team meeting to discuss openly any individual clergy's concerns. Past clergy highly valued this. • On line Compline weeknights, Morning Prayer Sundays • Spiritual discernment groups where parishioners confidentially discuss personal issues • Ad Hoc parishioner support - visits, calls, cards, kind words, prayers and hugs • Healing services • E-mail prayer chain and Facebook pages where parishioners ask for prayers, post updates and praise God for answered prayers • "Parties at the drop of a hat," celebrating transitions, holidays, or just because • Teen classes with confidential sharing of weekly highs and lows • "Youth Sunday" where youth share their faith via sermons and music, and are recognized.

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How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?

Many of our outreach programs provide an element of pastoral care; however, we haven't thought of this as an "external pastoral care" program. Such a ministry could be a great growth opportunity for us, and we would be happy to explore this more intentionally. Some ways our care extends beyond our family include:

- Seeking to attract those in need via our Website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest
- Hosting the homeless one week per year, exposing them to Christ's love, giving them their daily bread, a bed and transportation
- Providing food and workers to a local soup kitchen and food distribution center where we interact with clients
- Sending youth and leaders on pilgrimages and mission trips to support those in need around the country
- Supporting Detroit's Mariner's Inn pastoral care for indigent men in recovery
- Supporting Lighthouse Ministries in Pontiac
- Praying for non-parishioners via our prayer list, email chain, and Facebook
- Providing a meeting place for Alcoholics Anonymous
- Providing people/families coming to our door from off the street with gift cards or personal items such as hats, scarves and gloves

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Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider Church or geographical region.

Our Outreach Ministry is a cornerstone ministry for us. We continue to address Michigan's distressed communities and people, and needs elsewhere too. We:

- Open our doors to 30 to 35 homeless children and adults for a week as part of a countywide shelter program. Guests received transportation, food, shelter and exposure to Christ's love
- The Persian School uses our facility for classes and diners.
- Sponsor and lead youth on mission trips both domestic and the D.R.
- Support Mariner's Inn with cash and coats to aid recovering men in SE Michigan
- Give substantial funds to many local charities
- Support and host gatherings of Troy Interfaith Group
- Donate generously to the Rector's discretionary funds

Provide:

- o Holiday meals to needy families in bags our kids decorated
- o Gift cards to military families
- o Toiletries, infant blankets and diapers to a battered women's shelter
- o Christmas gifts to two area programs for the needy
- o Hand-made scarves, quilts, masks, preemie caps, etc.
- o Use of our fellowship hall to Alcoholics Anonymous

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Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this?

Connecting to our homebound members: Working with the Pastoral Team, we want to ensure that our homebound members are in regular contact with someone from the parish. We are also working to enhance their access to our social media channels. This means making sure they have the necessary hardware available to them and that they know how to use it. While this effort has been significantly hampered by the pandemic, we are committed to continuing this work. Point of Contact: Ken Fuhr, Jr. Warden.

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What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?

Stewardship is as much about personal engagement as it is about financial support. We usually focus our stewardship effort on helping people find ways to make a personal connection to their faith community. From this connection, their support usually follows. One of the more significant tasks for the year was to find a path forward that would include a full time Priest. After a bit of study, and a good bit of prayer, we put together a plan - a very challenging one to be sure, but a plan that if met could provide the resources necessary to support a full time Priest. The Vestry presented the plan to the congregation and launched an aggressive Pledge Campaign. Over 70% of the congregation increased their pledge! The amount pledged for the coming year is over 19% more than last year. At first glance, it might appear that we were focused only on the financial aspects of stewardship. However, that would be missing the underlying commitment to the ongoing efforts to energize and support the ministries and mission of the parish that this increase in pledges shows.

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What is your worshipping community's experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?

We have always believed and continue to believe that conflict is best dealt with openly and honestly, with everyone at the table to listen and learn, as much as to share. Years ago, our membership was divided when the first gay Bishop was called. When searching for a youth leader, a strong candidate was gay. We had heartfelt discussions, and decided we were not ready. After prayerful discussions and listening over time, we readily accepted the Bishop's offer of a gay newer assistant priest to give him parish experience. He and his husband were welcomed. More recently we had a renaming ceremony for a transgender teen. The heartfelt support of the congregation was a powerful showing of godliness for the teen by the congregation. Recently we struggled to reconcile our expectations for pastoral leadership with our Rector's. Unfortunately, even with Diocesan assistance, we were unable to reconcile. This was a difficult lesson for us. We always thought we could work our way through conflicts to a positive outcome. This time we could not. Through conversations, prayers and self-examination and healing, we find ourselves humbled but wiser.

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What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?

Membership aging and decline is changing how we think of our mission and ministries. Gone well: moving into the "digital" community and realizing the scope of the opportunity that exists therein. We want to ensure that all our homebound members are in regular contact with someone from the parish. We are also working on a plan to ensure and enhance their access to our social media channels so they can continue to participate with us as active members. This means making sure they have the necessary connectivity and hardware available to them, and know how to use it. We are committed to continuing this work, which will be even more important as we seek to expand our offerings using streaming, Zoom, YouTube and other methods for connecting with folks remotely for services, education, pastoral care, social events, outreach and more. Gone poorly: We have learned time and again that relying on personal evangelism and organic growth does not work - in spite of our repeated efforts. People need to be trained for this ministry and purposeful in doing it.



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### Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Rev. Sharon Voelker	Supply	2019-05	

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Rev. Susan Anslow Williams	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	2012-09	2018-06

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
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*We do have a school wing with a library/meeting room, nursery, chapel and 5 classrooms. We currently use this for our Sunday School programs.*

Church School		Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School	Number of Students for Children School
		<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>

Number of Teachers/Leaders for Teen/Young Adults School	Number of Students for Teen/Young Adults School	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Adults School	Number of Students for Adults School
<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>37</b>

Day School	Number of Students for Day School	Number of Teachers for Day School	Number of Total Staff for Day School
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Worshipping Community Web site: <http://www.ststephenstroy.org/>

Media Links:

- > <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEPVondvW2OcyxgDtmTg ekA>
- > <https://www.facebook.com/ststephensepiscopaltroy>

Online References:

- > <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEPVondvW2OcyxgDtmTg ekA>
- > <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJ1CYcJdu4A&t=3s>

Languages Significantly Represented:

**English**

Provide Worship or Classes in:

### References

Bishop:

**The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie A Perry**

Phone: 313-832-4400 Email: [bishopperry@edomi.org](mailto:bishopperry@edomi.org)

Diocesan Transition Minister

**The Rev. Ellen Ekevag**

Phone: 630-258-8882 Email: [eekevag@edomi.org](mailto:eekevag@edomi.org)

Current Warden/Board Chair

**David Stein**

Email: [dcs53td@gmail.com](mailto:dcs53td@gmail.com)

Previous Warden/Board Chair

**Scott Armstrong**

Email: [scottiemi06@yahoo.com](mailto:scottiemi06@yahoo.com)

Search Chair

**Ken Fuhr**

Email: [kfuhrs3@gmail.com](mailto:kfuhrs3@gmail.com)

Parish/Institution

Local Community Leader

**Chuck Moss**

Phone: 248-462-1820 Email: [cjmoss20@hotmail.com](mailto:cjmoss20@hotmail.com)