

# ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Plymouth, MI



St. John's Episcopal Church  
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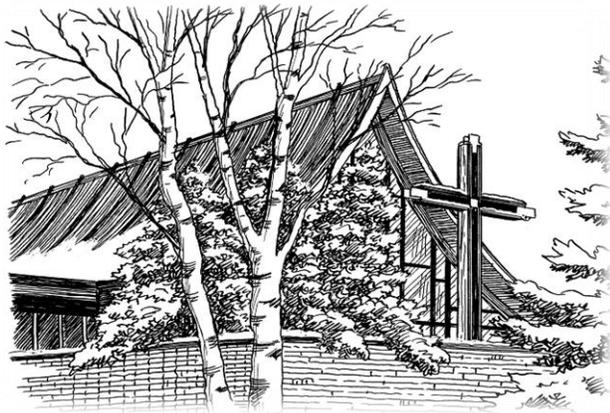
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*Our mission is to share the joyful love of Christ.  
Come walk with us.*

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## WHAT WE VALUE IN A FUTURE RECTOR

St. John's has a rich history of worship, community involvement, and service. Despite our challenges with many clergy changes in the last

several years, we have continued to do the work that is important to us to keep our church and programs intact and successful. We seek a

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There is something incredibly special about St. John's. Many people have expressed that they just feel different when they walk through our doors and sit in our sanctuary.

Whether it is watching the birds sitting amongst the first spring blossoms in the memorial garden or watching the snow fall on the lit cross during Christmas Eve service, it is a place that effects change. It is a place where you can truly feel God's presence when you take the time to listen. It is a calming balm to the soul and feels like "coming home and snuggling in God's arms" and "rejuvenates (the) soul".

Our worship service is particularly important and is the foundation of our faith that reminds us of our humanity and Jesus' teachings. This is what rejuvenates us to carry us through the next week to do God's work in our daily lives. We have always been

known for our wonderful music program and seek a Rector that can orchestrate a beautiful melding of message and music on our Sundays to inspire, teach, and heal.



St. John's is located in the thriving community of Plymouth, MI. We have a vibrant, young community with many families moving into the area. Unfortunately, few of those families and young adults participate in our church. Many churches across the country experience this. We seek a Rector that can work with us to reach out to this community and meet them on their level. There is most definitely a need. Our community is considered an affluent community, but we also have issues with poverty, homelessness, hunger, crime, gangs, sex trafficking, and drug abuse. Our high schools have both a food bank and a clothing bank. The last year has taught all of us that for some of our parishioners, physical and emotional needs are not being met. People need to learn to work together and seek help for basic needs as well as spiritual and emotional needs whether you are a religious person or a lost soul. We have

facilities, resources, and knowledge that can reach out and complete God's work in our community. We need new ideas and energy to help us make this work possible.

We need a Rector who listens and is willing to deal with all the difficult and messy emotions of life. The last year has taught us that this is important, and the messy emotions are getting worse. We need to cultivate an environment where people feel welcome to bring their messy life to God's table and experience love, understanding, and hope.

We are a progressive congregation that welcomes all God's people. Our message is not necessarily about religion. Our call is to follow Jesus' commandments and genuinely love one another as He loved us. Please come and help us to work God's message and to create his kingdom in our little corner of this big, beautiful world.

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## ST. JOHN'S PARISH COMMUNITY

"St. John's is a welcoming and enlightened community," declared a Plymouth Township official when asked to describe "who we are." He was not a member of our congregation but knew that we had made our church available for community groups when other churches and organizations in our area had turned them away. To us, it was the Christian thing to do. It is easier to entice our members to resupply our Food Bank, which is open to hungry families in and beyond our parish, than to support social gatherings. Several times during the year, our members reach out to prepare and serve meals to those who are hungry in Detroit. A group of our men raise enough money to provide more than 1,500 pairs of socks to help those in need every winter. These are just a few examples of what we do and what we value.



Our membership comes from many surrounding areas. St. John's has many highly educated members in a variety of fields who step up and offer their expertise and time when it is needed. The pandemic crisis made this even more evident.



The Sunday School Program at St. John's is small but important to us. We would love to attract more families with children to join our congregation. Each summer we have a Bible School week of activities with decorations and activities based on a fun theme. It is well attended by children from St. John's as well as the larger community.



We LOVE music and place a high premium on it to enhance our worship and for some additional concerts. Many parishioners are musicians and most look forward to having special live performances as a part of our services.

We deeply appreciate the temporary leadership of our interim, Father John, and all he has done to keep us together and raise our spirits during this difficult time. We are

eager to get past the pandemic and return to our full services with a settled Rector and our full church family together in person once again.



## THE PLYMOUTH COMMUNITY

The “Plymouth Community” includes the City of Plymouth, which has the main business district, and is surrounded by Plymouth Township. St. John’s Episcopal Church is located on the inner edge of the Township boundary facing the City and shares its northern boundary with West Middle School. The City and the Township share most amenities, but they maintain separate governments. There is a strong commitment currently to work together in many areas.

The City has a population of around 10,000 people living within its 2.2 square miles. Its business district surrounds popular historic Kellogg Park with its fountain. Many people are attracted to the numerous downtown shops, restaurants, festivals, concerts and other events. This is not a sleepy little village anymore. Known for its thriving business district, restored family movie theater, outstanding library, historical museum, large Community Band and professional Michigan Philharmonic, it is an exciting place.



The Plymouth Arts and Recreation Center (PARC), a

pottery center, the Cultural Center with its ice-skating rink and meeting rooms, the Community Arts Center and Gallery, and historic Old Village are all a short distance from the heart of the business district. The compact layout and central location of the downtown make Plymouth a walkable and bike-able town.



Covering 16 square miles, the Township has about 28,000 residents. It has a number of beautiful subdivisions and several parks. The largest park has 80 acres with water features, walking trails, several baseball fields, picnic area, etc. It is situated adjacent to the Township Golf Course. The Township has

recently become famous for several large industrial research parks populated with nationally known company branches. There are engineers of many nationalities working in these centers creating upscale jobs, making the area and our schools more diverse than in previous decades.

The Plymouth area combined with Canton Township has one of the largest public school districts in the state, as well as religious and private schools. The unique high school campus, called PCEP, has 3 high schools on one large college-style campus that educates approximately 7,000 students per year. Many colleges and universities are within easy driving distance, as are other institutions of interest. Some are: Schoolcraft College—one of the largest and most outstanding community colleges in the state—University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, Madonna College, University of Detroit, Wayne State University, and Lawrence Tech to name a few. The Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, St. Paul's Cathedral (and diocese offices), the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Detroit Symphony, Fisher Theater, Belle Isle, the Detroit Lions, Detroit Tigers, and Detroit Red Wings and much more are within 30 to 45 minutes of the Plymouth Community.

Plymouth residents and businesses have quick access to nearby major highways on the outskirts of the area which can quickly put them on their way to anywhere in the rest of the state they may wish to go. Detroit Metropolitan Airport (DTW) is about 20 minutes away.

## DEEP ROOTS

We are proud of our long history in the Plymouth community. Founded nearly 110 years ago, we are honored to have at least 2 parishioners who have been with us for about 70 years. The wedding photos



below were taken in 1962 in our current facility when it was just 2 years old. The “bride” is still a vital part of the St. John’s family, just as St. John’s has been central to her family life. She met one of her dearest friends the first time she attended a service here when she was just eleven years old; 70 years later, that friendship is



going strong. And, as you might imagine, she and her family have celebrated all of life’s most joyful, and sorrowful, moments at St. John’s.

We are humbled by and grateful for the many, many people who have called St. John’s “home” over the years. Each heart lifted in prayer and each voice lifted in song has left an indelible imprint of joy and hope that is palpable in our sanctuary.

## OUR VALUES

Perhaps longevity is one of our greatest assets. St. John's celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2012, and we've been in our current, beautiful, facility since 1960. Throughout this rich history, the congregation has consistently embraced three primary commitments: to God through lively worship & music; to each other in developing a rich social-spiritual life; and, to service to the community.



**Music** Central to our love of God is our appreciation for music's role in worship. Over the years, we've had amazing music directors leading a traditional choir, a contemporary band, a youth choir, and a handbell choir. In addition to our organ, a 1971 Gabriel Kney, 2-manual, encased, tracker action, 22 rank, 17 stop pipe organ (left), we are proud of our Kawai Baby Grand piano. Our music program is (was) something to behold!

**Community Outreach** Crossroads (social services agency in Downtown Detroit), Miss Millie's Closet (durable medical equipment), the St. John's Food Pantry. During the Covid lockdown, we've managed to keep all three of these important ministries active to some extent. Our pre-Covid outreach was much broader and we look forward to extending outreach again soon.

**Fellowship** Bible study, prayer groups, book clubs, prayer-quilt club and more are the staples of our congregation. Even during the early days of the Covid lockdown, groups stayed connected virtually for prayer, Bible study and book club. In fact, some virtual groups actually expanded during this time!

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

**Leadership** In recent years, been in a lengthy Transition period with clergy turnover and dwindling membership; we have been without a settled Rector since 2017. With each turnover, we've lost more parishioners. We are grieving the loss of our vibrancy and longing for the return of a more robust parish life. We crave the stability of our solid worship foundation and the strength it provides to build our community.

**Where *is* St. John's?** One of our biggest challenges is that many of our neighbors don't know we exist—even though we have been in our current building since June 1960! One community resident said he drives by almost daily, but has never been drawn to notice or read the sign in front. Our beautiful worship space, gathering hall and parish hall, combined with our working kitchen and spacious parking lot, equip St. John's to be hosts and partners to a wide variety of community events. A surprising lesson we learned during our Discovery Process that really resonates is "The longer a church has been in existence, the less connected it is to its community." We are primed and ready to connect!



**Music Program** The people of St. John's love music. However, we've been without a music director since the beginning of the Covid lockdown. Prior to the lockdown, an energetic, talented student served as part-time acting music director; he graciously stepped in to fill a void while earning his bachelor's degree.



Fortunately, our emergence from the Covid lockdown brings cautious optimism and renewed energy. With the help of an experienced volunteer, our Handbell Choir will soon be re-formed and the entire congregation is looking forward to this special complement to worship. Sadly, we are still



without a music director at this time, but look forward to future development of our program.

**Community Partnerships** While we are passionate about current programs, such as Crossroads, located in downtown Detroit, there is still much to be done in our own backyard. Although Plymouth is an affluent community, there is a disparity of wealth in the area. Many families struggle with issues of poverty, addiction and even homelessness. This is the part of Plymouth we don't like to see or talk about; in fact, many residents would be surprised to learn of this need. St. John's is in a position to make a bigger impact right here in our community where the need is surprisingly great.

**Community Growth** The recent growth in the Plymouth community includes many young families and young professionals. In this era when people feel they don't have time for or are losing interest in church, St. John's has an opportunity to connect with those seeking Christ and/or a church home simply by having more of a presence in the community.



## CORE VALUES

**Inclusivity** – We reach out to anyone who needs a safe and genuinely welcoming place to seek to know God.

**Worship** – We find God's presence in the traditions of the Episcopal liturgy, in the scriptures, and in the music and are instructed, comforted, renewed, and challenged by them.

**Discipleship** – We are called to share our personal relationship with God, through Jesus Christ, and to share Christ's love with all people through worship, education, and ministry.

**Caring and Compassion** – We are committed to serving and giving in the name of Jesus for spiritual, emotional, and physical needs in our parish, locally, and in the world.

**Community** – We come together as individuals to become the body of Christ. As such we use our spiritual gifts to rejoice together, mourn together, and to delight in each other, make others' conditions our own.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

	2005	2010	2015	2018	2020
<b>Operating Revenues</b>	\$471,232	\$ 445,791	\$474,776	\$357,119	\$287,077
<b>Operating Expenses</b>	\$442,040	\$425,751	\$467,377	\$326,126	\$257,295
<b>Non-Operating Revenues</b>	\$ 31,543	\$ 17,786	\$ 88,653	\$ 12,213	\$ 28,847
<b>Non-Operating Expenses</b>	\$ 43,268	\$ 43,573	\$ 32,340	\$ 6,591	\$ 27,984

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

	2005	2010	2015	2018	2020
<b>Baptized Members</b>	1,005	636	736	319	309
<b>Baptisms</b>	15	11	9	2	0
<b>Confirmations/receptions</b>	4	2	12	3	0
<b>Average Sunday Attendance</b>	236	211	220	134	108

## COME WALK WITH US!

We are already praying for you and look forward to the day you become part of our parish family!

## DIOCESE OF MICHIGAN INFORMATION AND HOW TO APPLY



### *Episcopal Diocese of Michigan Statement*

Guided by our newly elected bishop the Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie A. Perry, we are a diocese that values collegiality, creativity, and openness. We offer community organizing training, the College of Congregational Development, and ongoing collegiality and support. We invite you to come and join us as we embody the Gospel both inside and outside our church doors. Please send your Cover Letter, Resume, and OTM Profile to the Rev. Canon Ellen Ekevag, [eekevag@edomi.org](mailto:eekevag@edomi.org).