



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Dec 18, 2024)

Church of the Incarnation, Michigan

3257 Lohr Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48108, United States

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge (Part-time) | Receiving Names until 02/15/25.

sshaefer@edomi.org

Weekly Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) 42	Number of Weekend Worship Services 1	Number of Weekday Worship Services	Number of Other per Month Worship Services
Current Annual Compensation	Cash Stipend	Housing / Rectory Detail	Utilities
SECA reimbursement	Compensation Available for New Position \$24508	Housing Available for 4	Pension Plan We're in compliance with CPF requirements.
Healthcare Options	Dental	Housing Equity Allowance in budget Yes	Annual Equity Amount \$409
Vacation Weeks One month, including 5 Sundays (standard)	Vacation Weeks Details	Continuing Education Weeks 2 (standard)	Continuing Education Weeks Details
Continuing Education Funding in budget \$501-\$1000/year	Sabbatical Provision Yes	Travel/Auto Account Yes	Other Professional Account

This compensation package is intended for a half-time position, based on use of the rectory housing

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

Our founders originally came together because of their desire to provide active service to the community. Since our early days of advocacy and service for incarcerated people, which continues today, our members have continued being active on both the direct service and advocacy fronts. We were integral in the founding of FOSNA (Friends of Sabeel North America) in order to support Sabeel, an ecumenical liberation theology group in Israel, advocating for Palestinian rights. Our most recent Sabeel led trip to Israel was in the summer of 2023. We have taken part in work on behalf of LGBTQ equality, including a successful campaign to expand equal rights language to include the LGBTQ community in Ypsilanti. We have more recently launched a Creation Care Committee to engage in environmental activism around water, especially protesting about Enbridge's Line 5 pipeline that goes through the Straits of Mackinac. In the last 10 months we have increased our efforts on many fronts to call for justice for the Palestinian people, including an effort to get a local civil rights attorney elected to the University of Michigan Board of Regents.

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

ECI has embraced an inclusive and accessible model of fully hybrid services. Although COVID was the impetus for this development, we recognize that this enables participation by elderly or disabled church members who otherwise may not be able to attend in person. Our mission to be radically inclusive of people of other faiths and of atheists also prepares us for a future in which people are more mobile in terms of finding spiritual connection. Most of our small groups are also hybrid in person/online, for example our bi-weekly online Spirituality discussion. We have also spent the last year brainstorming and experimenting with opportunities to better engage youth and families, since we recognize that children both brighten our services and community and that young families will sustain us in the future. We hope our new priest-in-charge will bring energy and ideas to further develop this mission.

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

Activist, Radically inclusive, sharing.

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

All of our worship services (and many of our small groups and meetings) are offered both in person and online. We have a relaxed, welcoming worship service that incorporates inclusive language and a variety of musical styles including traditional and Gospel hymns and folk music from many cultures. Lay people read the lessons, lead prayers, and there is a time of communal reflection after the sermon. Children collect the offering. Generally we gather in a circle around the altar for the communion liturgy. We are continually experimenting and evolving to find ways to be more inclusive of our entire membership, which includes Episcopalians, people of other faith traditions, and non-believers alike. Our sermons and prayers often focus on social justice messages. Throughout the year we have special services where, for example, we have blessed our pets and our children returning to school, and we hold special prayer vigils during times of great concern, like national elections.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

Our congregation partners with our clergy to shape all aspects of the worship experience; a variety of music, diversity of voices, inclusive language; and collective reflections are all integral to our worship and our identity. During each worship service, there is a time of collective reflection during which participants speak about the day's message or other issues on our minds. Members also often take a turn preaching and leading worship, particularly when our pastor has a Sunday off. Overall, we follow a very distributive model of leadership, with individuals coming together to create small groups, including building & grounds, creation care, food and faith garden, hospitality, HR, marketing, meal ministry, men's group, pastoral care, prophetic voice, spirituality discussion group, stewardship, vestry, worship and music, youth advisory, and periodic topical groups (recently one on responding to Christian Nationalism). All of our outreach to the local and wider community has been initiated by congregants with a passion to seek justice. We strive to include the voice of every member: Christian and non-Christian alike.

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

We live in a society that stigmatizes asking for help, and so we live as a community of mutual aid. We try to model both the joy of sharing with, and the grace of receiving care from others. We have an active Pastoral Care Committee and a Pastor's Discretionary Fund; both work to care for our members in time of emotional, practical, or spiritual need. We also have an active Meal Ministry program for times when someone is ill or needs additional support including phone calls, visits, and of course, meals to get them through stressful times. During COVID, we established a special fund to help congregants who were economically impacted by lockdown, arranged for regular phone calls to all church members, and distributed spring plants to brighten up everyone's homes. We have members who will routinely send cards and call to keep in touch with people who may be feeling isolated. And we hold each other in prayer, celebrating and grieving together.

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

Most of our members are active in community organizations and activist organizations beyond Incarnation. Our members have been or are engaged in prison ministry, partnership with our sister church in Nicaragua, work to combat Christian Nationalism, and Fed Up Ministries, a partnership that provides free food truck meals to our homeless neighbors. Our former pastor and many members were involved in founding Friends of Restorative Justice, an organization that members are still involved with and which has been integral in supporting local criminal justice reforms. We have people who are active with voter registration, giving seniors rides to medical appointments, and fostering kids. ECI members have actively circulated ballot proposal petitions on issues including ending gerrymandering and enshrining the right to abortion in the state's constitution.

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

We have tried to follow in the spirit of David and Leticia Byrd, who believed that God's new creation can emerge out of the people and materials society has rejected. David Byrd, a nationally-recognized Black architect, designed and built our church using discarded materials as part of a program to help people of color enter the building trades. Incarnation members can frequently be found at demonstrations on issues ranging from environmental protection and protecting our democracy to LGBTQ equality and the war on Gaza. We support Fed Up (a local food truck supporting the unhoused), and are in conversation with a refugee resettlement organization about possible use of a small house on our grounds for interim housing (although this could also be used as a parsonage). Our Creation Care committee in particular is active with the wider Deanery. We have worked with the Poor People's Campaign, for criminal justice reform, for a restorative justice center, and to partner with a church in Nicaragua. We rent our church to a Korean Seventh Day Adventist congregation, & we share grounds (& a parking lot) with the African American Cultural & Historical Museum of Washtenaw County.

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

Since 2022 the Creation Care Ministry (CCM) has connected members of ECI to the global movement for transformative environmental and social justice through art and community engagement. Their work includes petitioning, phone banking, sending postcards to elected officials, and sponsoring community events promoting defunding from fossil fuel infrastructure. They also collaborate with other groups, faith-based and secular. They believe it is profoundly important to bear witness to the threat our planet already faces and implement as many changes as needed to create a global ecosystem for all creatures. We are one of the original sponsors of the FedUp food truck and FedUp's new shower truck. We are currently renovating the "Small House," a home on our property which may initially be used as affordable housing for immigrants and/or low-income people. (NOTE: to contact the current leaders of these ministries please email: admin@incarnationannarbor.org)

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

Our outreach, and often our inreach have been initiated by congregants following their call to share their gifts and their passions, trying to become better stewards of our community and our world. We are currently working to become more open about money; not just as part of our upcoming stewardship campaign, but in terms of what it will take to be the church we want to be now and in the future. Our former pastor, who retired last year, de-emphasized fundraising for the church in favor of community support and activism. We have learned the importance of balancing both, and are actively working to put what we're learning into practice. Our current stewardship efforts have four areas of focus: money, time, talents and relationships.

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

In Dec. 2022, as we were preparing for the retirement of our long-time pastor, we discovered that our bookkeeper had embezzled significant funds. As a church founded by leaders in the Restorative Justice movement - but which had grown since then to include a significant number of people not involved in that movement - we had conflict about the best approach for dealing with the person who stole from us. There were several full-congregation meetings on this issue. Ultimately, we used a Restorative Justice Process that resulted in the return of the vast majority of our funds, with no involvement in the criminal legal system. We did lose some members as a result of this experience; however, those of us who remain are even more strongly bonded with one another and are passionately invested in the continued growth, mission, and success of this church. Our church routinely engages in dialog among its congregants, and there are often divergent opinions. However, most of us are drawn to ECI by the fact that we learn about ourselves, others, and the broader world through such dialog, and that we believe we can weather any storm by facing it together.

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?

Ours has been a church in constant change, from our start as a small group breaking away from a more tradition-bound, large church, to being the host of the ordination of Michigan's first partnered lesbian priest, for which the bishop and our pastor were reprimanded. She was a beloved co-pastor for many years. We became known throughout the State and Episcopal Church of the United States for our work with criminal legal system-impacted people and LGBTQ inclusivity. We commit ourselves to being change agents as the church moves forward. Since the retirement of our former pastor in 2023, we have been experimenting with changes to the format of our worship services; instituting regular communications policies between Vestry and congregation; and in virtually every other way are busy re-visioning what we want Incarnation to be while staying true to our values of radical inclusion and social activism. Given that we are still in the midst of this work, it's premature at this point to state declaratively what is and is not going well. We hope our next pastor will be actively involved in this process.



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Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Dean Aponte-Safe	Interim	2022-08	

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Jospeh Summers	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	1987-09	2023-06

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
E. James Lewis	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	1984-01	1985-01

Church School	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School	Number of Students for Children School
	2	10

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

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: <https://www.incarnationannarbor.org>

Media Links:

Online References:

> <https://www.facebook.com/ECIAnnArbor>

Languages Significantly Represented:

Provide Worship or Classes in:

References

Bishop: 818-833-4435
The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie A. Perry

Diocesan Transition Minister sshaefer@edomi.org; 313-833-4424
The Rev. Canon Susie Shaefer

Current Warden/Board Chair revricklansing [AT] gmail [DOT] com vickiesuewellman [AT] gmail [DOT] com
Rick Boyd, Vickie Wellman

Previous Warden/Board Chair huronjoel[AT]gmail[DOT]com
Joel Barson

Search Chair ohenewah49 [AT] gmail [DOT] com gretchen [DOT] kep [AT] gmail [DOT] com
Edie Lewis, Gretchen Keppel-Aleks

Parish/Institution

Local Community Leader
Pastor Anna McCants

Founder of FedUp Ministries, we are official sponsors of the food truck, we are on their board, and work with them weekly.
pastoranna@fedupministries.org