



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Apr 16, 2025)

St. Stephen's, Troy, Michigan

5500 N Adams Rd, Troy, MI 48098, United States

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 06/01/25.

sshaefer@edomi.org

Weekly Average Sunday
Attendance (ASA)

70

Number of Weekend
Worship Services

2

Number of Weekday
Worship Services

Number of Other per Month
Worship Services

Current Annual
Compensation

Cash Stipend
\$65025

Housing / Rectory Detail

Utilities

SECA reimbursement
\$4975

Compensation Available for
New Position
\$70000

Housing Available for

Pension Plan

**We're in compliance with
CPF requirements.**

Healthcare Options
Full family

Dental
Yes

Housing Equity Allowance in
budget

Annual Equity Amount

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
Yes

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

Advent - On a cold December evening during Advent, our Music Director led our choir in a joyful Christmas Cantata "Because of Bethlehem" which ended with everyone boldly singing the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's Messiah. Buoyed by the finale, the full house of parishioners and visitors streamed to Fellowship Hall for refreshments. A pulsing sense of community was felt by all. Because this and similar events bring parishioners and guest together and move them closer to God, we spread several such events throughout the year. During Advent our community Outreach efforts kick into high gear! It began with a Thanksgiving food drive for Lighthouse. The parish donated over 80 grocery bags filled with 760 lbs. of food. Crafting Kindness made and donated mittens, hats and scarves to local shelters, and parishioners donated board games and gift cards for Bound Together's family holiday party. Using the Baldwin Center's wish list, we collected \$245 in gift cards plus clothing, games, puzzles, toys, ear buds for teens, flashlights for men and hair dryers for women. Food and personal items were collected, put into 60 "Blessing Bags" and distributed to the needy.

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

We intend to be a vibrant church in a changing world. The church of the future will need to include a strong "digital" presence. But it must also offer something more. To focus and drive change, we formed an Invite, Welcome & Connect Committee, which has been cultivating and growing our members' engagement, and finding better ways to message and communicate beyond our walls. Many people who are looking for a church are also lonely and looking for meaning in their lives. We have enhanced our messaging and website to make it easier for seekers to find us and see how we can help, even if "church" isn't their primary motivator. And we are using digital marketing tools to increase our appearances and accessibility. Connecting to a younger constituency is a high priority, but so are recent empty nesters and retirees [many with grandkids] who are looking for "something more." Many have drifted from church. Our messaging focuses on helping them connect with people who care, have fun together and with whom they can find and fulfil their purpose. We also show the Episcopalian views on matters that have led many to leave their previous denomination. These changes are showing results.

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

Prior Rector/PIC Experience and Participatory Leadership Pastoral Accessible Strong Interpersonal Skills

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

Sunday services are at 8 and 10 am using Rite 2, and monthly a healing service follows. But we vary our offerings with some services parishioners find comforting, and “seekers” find intriguing. The 8 am service is without music while the 10 am service features our acclaimed choir and Music Director. The music includes classical and contemporary hymns and occasionally vocal solos or instrumental pieces. Our popular “Ad Hoc Band” of singers/musicians occasionally fill in for the choir. Once a month we replace the Rite 2 services with a contemplative Celtic service with the Eucharist, lighting of votive candles and appropriate songs and instrumental accompaniment. The passing of the Peace robustly demonstrates our tagline “You Are Welcome Here!” Worshippers heartfully reach out to their neighbors and especially visitors to ensure no one is left out. An added draw for parishioners, their family, friends, and the public is our annual Bluegrass Mass on our spacious wooded grounds. Our Ad Hoc Band provides Bluegrass music for the service and a post-service concert while attendees enjoy a barbecue and camaraderie. Wonderful for “Inviting, Welcoming & Connecting.”

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

We have opened our arms to all. We have a blend of faith journeys [most didn’t start as Episcopalian], ethnicities, sexual orientations, and life experiences. We intentionally nurture a sense of family and make it easy for folks to find and fulfil God’s purpose without pressure or guilt. We work to be a “Household of God” where all give as they can and receive as needed. Our congregation prides itself on being welcoming and caring. They trust and enjoy each other. Faith and joy are not mutually exclusive, so many events are designed to be fun which makes it easy for folks to see each other as more than faces in pews [post-service fellowship, picnics, a “Greet, Eat & Meet” program of small group dinners at parishioners’ homes, Twelfth Night & Irish Night dinners with singing, outdoor Celtic concerts, etc.]. Our array of well-publicized ministries and small group activities feature a variety of content and roles. Small steps are fine as finding joy in Christian service lifts its priority in people’s lives. This applies to outside groups too. For instance, we engaged the Lions Club and Troy H. S. students to help us package bulk food into thousands of meals for the world’s neediest.

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

We support the general well-being of our members most basically by drawing them into caring relationships and helping them to fulfil their purpose. Sunday services and our more contemplative Celtic Service are live streamed and available on our YouTube channel. The services include prayers for the immediate concerns of parish members, long term concerns, issues related to our extended community and world-wide Christian missions. Healing services are held once a month to bring the power of prayer to our spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being. There are weekly Bible studies, 1 open to all and 1 to men. Our Pastoral Care Team and other ad hoc ministries seem to just miraculously appear to uphold and nurture those with an urgent need. Help includes such things as home/hospital visits and providing meals. They also send parishioners birthday, anniversary, sympathy and get-well cards. Parishioners are informed of these events via service bulletins and weekly email updates so they can also send cards or make contact. A parishioner hosts small grief & loss groups at her home for open support [1 singles, 1 couples]. We have a Ladies Lunch Bunch and Men’s nights.

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

Our worship and missions remind us of our Christian responsibility to our neighbors. Our clergy is typically the prime contact point for outsiders. The congregation, Outreach and Pastoral Care Committees also alert the clergy to individual needs. The clergy has the leading pastoral role, either directly or by finding others to do so. They can call upon all the resources of the parish depending on the pastoral care needed. Our Pastoral Team also helps provide volunteers and resources to pastoral needs. The congregation has historically donated generously to the Priest's discretionary fund. Our digital footprint continues to expand. We have a newly designed website, Facebook pages and a YouTube channel where services and special events can be viewed. We are more visible and accessible. All of this enables a connection to those who need pastoral care. Many Outreach programs provide external pastoral care, such as serving meals at shelters/kitchens and packaging meals to be sent to very needy people around the world. We also support external pastoral care by renting our facility for AA, a county-wide genealogy group, dog training classes and a classroom to a violin teacher.

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

Virtually all our involvement in the greater community is done through our Outreach, Hospitality, and more recently, our Invite, Welcome & Connect (IWC) initiative. The Outreach Committee works very hard to continue to meet the urgent and ongoing needs of our community. We strive to present meaningful opportunities for the congregation through volunteering, food distribution and packaging, collection and distribution of needed items, free will and gift card donations. Outreach encompasses the whole congregation and we are busy! Each of our Hospitality events is also an opportunity to invite someone to come be welcomed and make a connection. Our IWC Committee was created to benefit from the national church's efforts. Parishioners have learned how to effectively invite family & friends to our events & activities. IWC has helped us steer our outreach and hospitality work toward activities with visibility and to connect with people in the community. It has helped us improve our messaging to be more appealing to seekers. We are more intentional in our personal welcoming efforts. Several families have joined us this past year.

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

Rise Against Hunger (RAH) brought the congregation and community together for a 3rd successful year! This year we hosted two events, one in the spring funded by an endowment grant. We invited Troy High School students to pack 10,000 meals; 26+ students came and they found it a moving experience. In September we had our "usual" annual packing event. We had 46+ volunteers who packaged 15,157 meals. Since this ministry began, we have packaged over 50,000 meals! Rise Against Hunger is an international hunger relief organization that is growing a global movement to end hunger by nourishing lives, empowering communities, and responding to emergencies. They work with groups like St. Stephen's to package nutritious meals that are then distributed to their partners in need all around the globe. For each event we provided the funds to cover the costs of the ingredients and packaging, RAH brought all of the equipment and ingredients to host an impactful, easy service project. We are partnering with RAH to create an Outreach Program capable of involving the local community in packaging meals to be sent to the impoverished around the world. David Stein is the chairperson of this ministry.

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

Stewardship is an ongoing process of helping parishioners connect the joys and rewards St. Stephen's provides them, their families and "our neighbors" with their giving of time, talent and treasure. As the connection grows, so does all giving, including money. Evidence that this works is that many pledgers and regular giving non-pledgers consistently give more than pledged or given in prior years. And, initiatives such as Rise Against Hunger that rely on fundraising to buy bulk food, have regularly met or exceeded targets. Each fall we focus on financial stewardship because that timing ties with our budget development and overlaps with general feelings of thankfulness inspired by our national holiday. Our program begins with a letter reminding parishioners of their many blessings from God and thanking them for past support. A pledge card is included. Fall sermons tend to have stewardship themes, and Sunday services often include parishioner testimonials attesting to why St. Stephen's is important to them and their family. In late November we bless the pledges and host a Celebration Sunday brunch after the 10am service to thank everyone for their faithful pledging and support.

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

We have always believed & continue to believe that conflict is best dealt with openly, honestly, and respectfully with everyone at the table to listen and learn as much as to share. For example, we were divided when the first gay Bishop was called. During that time, when searching for a youth leader, a strong candidate was gay. We had heartfelt discussions and decided we were not ready. However, over time after prayerful discussions and listening we readily accepted a gay assistant priest. He & his husband were welcomed and enjoyed caring relationship with us. 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 Priest-in-Charge. Unfortunately, even with Diocesan assistance, we were unable to reconcile. In the end we decided not to call him as our Rector. This was a difficult lesson for us. We always felt we could work our way through conflicts to a positive outcome. This was a time we could not. Through open conversations, prayer and self-examination we are healing and moving forward.

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?

Our initial steps into the "digital" community have yielded good results and we are learning the scope of the opportunity that exists there. We want to ensure that seekers and our aged members can make and feel connected. We are committed to continuing this work. It 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. We have learned repeatedly that relying on personal evangelism and organic growth alone does not work. People need to be trained for this ministry and purposeful in doing it. Our most recent effort is our new Invite, Welcome & Connect initiative. This is still new and we are struggling to make the effort more cultural than a committee effort. We have also learned from experience that we require a priest that is in tune with the needs of our parish and able to create a vision of the future, collaborating with lay leadership and the Vestry to realize that vision resulting in spiritual and existential growth. We will flourish with a priest who understands our values and embraces our mission and community.



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Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Brian Alberti	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	2021-12	2024-10

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Sharon Voekler	Supply	2019-05	2021-11

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

Church School yes	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School 2	Number of Students for Children School 15
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Number of Teachers/Leaders for Teen/Young Adults School 2	Number of Students for Teen/Young Adults School 9	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Adults School 2	Number of Students for Adults School 16
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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.ststephenstroy.org/>

Media Links:

Online References:

> <https://www.youtube.com/@st.stephenstroy8376>

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

Languages Significantly Represented:

Provide Worship or Classes in:

References

Bishop:

bishopperry@edomi.org (313) 833-4400

**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

scottiemi06 (at) icloud.com 248-840-0408

Scott Armstrong

Previous Warden/Board Chair

alicehmoss (at) hotmail.com 248-840-3630

Alice Moss

Search Chair

dcs53td (at) gmail.com 248-346-4126

David Stein

Parish/Institution

Local Community Leader

info (at) crossroadsofmichigan.org

Mariah Moore