



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Apr 7, 2025)

St. Thomas, Trenton, Michigan

2441 Nichols, Trenton, MI 48183, United States

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge (Part-time)

sshaefer@edomi.org

Weekly Average Sunday Attendance (ASA)	Number of Weekend Worship Services	Number of Weekday Worship Services	Number of Other per Month Worship Services
32	2		
Current Annual Compensation	Cash Stipend	Housing / Rectory Detail	Utilities
	\$22500		
SECA reimbursement	Compensation Available for New Position	Housing Available for	Pension Plan
\$2286			We're in compliance with CPF requirements.
Healthcare Options	Dental	Housing Equity Allowance in budget	Annual Equity Amount
		Yes	\$600
Vacation Weeks	Vacation Weeks Details	Continuing Education Weeks	Continuing Education Weeks Details
One month, including 5 Sundays (standard)		2 (standard)	
Continuing Education Funding in budget	Sabbatical Provision	Travel/Auto Account	Other Professional Account
\$501-\$1000/year	Yes	Yes	Yes

Compensation package includes use of rectory. Cash stipend without rectory is 29,887

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

■ In support of the people of Ukraine, we decided to host a breakfast fundraiser for Ukraine. We advertised and had guests from other local churches. We were able to raise over \$1,000 dollars to donate to the people in Ukraine who have been impacted by the war. ■ Our biggest success recently has been in attracting some young families to St. Thomas. We went for many years without any youth as our congregation aged. We now have 2 families with school age children coming to St. Thomas. We have restarted our Sunday school program, and the children are even bringing friends. In addition, the children are taking part in services as acolytes, bringing youth and liveliness to our services.

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

We are upgrading our facilities into the 21st century. We recently upgraded many of our office systems, have invested in a new HVAC system and are slowly updating our electrical. After some necessary repairs, our men's room will be operational soon and we are back to worshipping in our main sanctuary (as opposed to our smaller chapel). We are also looking into ways to welcome and include Downriver's diverse communities into our St. Thomas family.

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

Free-thinking ■ Enthusiastic ■ Compassionate ■ Approachable

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

St. Thomas focuses on Holy Eucharist Rite 2 led by our priest, who has begun incorporating the use of bells into the worship service. Holy Eucharist is our primary worship service, performed at 8 am and 10 am 3 Sundays a month. The other Sunday each month we celebrate Morning Prayer, which can be led by lay ministers and we incorporate Morning Prayer with Lay Leaders. We actively incorporate music into our worship. We are looking to develop a service with more upbeat, contemporary music to better relate and attract younger worshippers.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

We invite people to take part in all aspects of St. Thomas' ministry. We have established a worship committee to actively involve members in planning our worship services, and people are encouraged to take part in the services in the roles of lay Eucharistic ministers and readers. Outside of worship people are invited and encouraged to join ministries for hospitality and outreach, facility maintenance and Bible studies. Aside from the worship committee, all groups and ministries are led by lay people. We have begun reaching out to marginalized groups in the community and inviting them to use the church as a safe refuge for meetings and activities.

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

St. Thomas has been a haven for many of us. There is much ministry that is done behind the scenes and very quietly. In an atmosphere of a loving community, encouragement and support abound. People have been accompanied to the ER or a doctor's appointments with the support of one of our members. Rides to services, private lunch meetings are just a small example of what goes on here. At our coffee hours, we get an opportunity to connect with each other and it is often there that we learn of the individual needs of the Parish. Spiritual support is offered in many forms and may include the use of the "Prayer Chain", at home communion, prayers for healing, and clergy that is lovingly available to offer support. Often at our weekly Bible study, deep questions of spirituality are discussed. In a non-judgmental and accepting manner, the group often offers their own experience, strength and hope to help each other to come to their own conclusions. We are also acquainted with our community resources and may refer people for needs such as clothing, food, mental health and social services.

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

St. Thomas has opened its doors to many groups over the years, including groups such as AA, Al Anon and classes for those in recovery. We ran a thrift shop for many years, where we often provided quality clothing and household items for no charge to those who were in need. We are a welcoming church to all people and have recently been working to develop ties to and support the regional LGBTQ+ community through participation in a recent LGBTQ+ parade. In addition, we provide support to the Episcopal Relief and Development fund that provides assistance to those in need when worldwide disasters occur.

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

St. Thomas works to bring the wider community into our church by hosting and sponsoring the activities of groups such as AA, Al Anon, classes for people in recovery, martial arts and exercise classes, and participation in community events such as local parades, garage sales and fairs. In addition, St Thomas supports local organizations such as providing donations and volunteering at local food pantries, First Step, and Crossroads. We participate in the Diocesan convention and have representation on various local diocese groups.

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

Building a sense of community and lifelong connections is important to the congregation of St. Thomas. Although not a new ministry, we are revitalizing our social ministry. After a hiatus of several years, we reinstated our Advent Tea and our youth group spearheaded our Pancake Supper before Lent. We have organized some of our favorite past activities like a trip to watch the Toledo Mud Hens baseball game and the church picnic with a train ride around a local park. We have also planned some brand new activities like Bunco Night.

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

Our stewardship practice is very collaborative. Members are encouraged to use their talents to help meet church needs, whether it is increased donations for a financial need or volunteer to serve on one or more of our committees. Communication is very open to the congregation about financial status, and needs for outreach, building, and other operational functions. Ideas for addressing these needs are heard with open ears and hearts to turn ideas into a reality. A strong feeling of community with our church members has resulted in updates to our building to continue to make St. Thomas a welcoming, comfortable atmosphere for our congregation and guests for today and supporting the future.

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

We had deep disagreements with a full-time priest, but we managed to remain civil and talking with each other. The priest was unwilling to take differing opinions into account, and got angry with people who disagreed with her. This created divisions within the congregation, but congregants worked hard to hear each other and treat each other with respect even as the issues with the priest festered. When the disagreements with the priest got too big, we reached out to the diocese for help in navigating the problem. The diocese sent representatives to hold discussions with the vestry and open meetings with the congregation to facilitate working the communication. With the diocese representatives, we worked together to find a way to talk and hear each other. People in St. Thomas are very open and willing to listen to each other, and comfortable with differing opinions.

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 congregation is usually open to change. If there is some resistance we look for a balanced path and compromise seems to solve any resistance. We currently have an interim minister who has brought several new traditions for worship which our congregation has embraced and discovered that we are indeed open to trying new forms of worship and services. During the last two years we have had to embrace change. Our heating system failed and worship in the main church was not an option. We have held Sunday services in our small Chapel. This has required great flexibility from all, especially during Easter and Christmas when the number of worshipers increases. It became necessary to create a worship space in our Guild Hall. Members pulled together to create an Altar, seating, music, and appropriate decorations. Over the years we have learned that flexibility, compromise, and being open to new ideas are strengths that we have nurtured and we as a congregation strive to possess.



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Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Mary Jane Peck	Interim		

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Shirley McWhorter	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge		

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
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Church School	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School	Number of Students for Children School
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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
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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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Contact:
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Worshipping Community Web site: <https://www.stthomastrenton.org/>

Media Links:

Online References:

Languages Significantly Represented:

Provide Worship or Classes in:

References

Bishop:

e-mail: bishopperry@edomi.org phone: 313-832-4400

The Rt. Rev. Bonnie A. Perry

Diocesan Transition Minister

313-833-4424 sshaefer@edomi.org

The Rev. Canon Susie Shaefer

Current Warden/Board Chair

Previous Warden/Board Chair

Search Chair

[pboylan \(at\) budogu.com](mailto:pboylan@budogu.com)

Peter Boylan

Parish/Institution

Local Community Leader