



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Jan 14, 2026)

St James, Dexter, Michigan

3279 Broad St, Dexter, MI 48130, United States

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 03/15/26.

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
37	1		
Current Annual Compensation	Cash Stipend	Housing / Rectory Detail	Utilities
	\$46271	\$16226	\$3600
SECA reimbursement	Compensation Available for New Position	Housing Available for	Pension Plan
\$4710	\$50981	4	We're in compliance with CPF requirements.
Healthcare Options	Dental	Housing Equity Allowance in budget	Annual Equity Amount
		Yes	\$990
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

Rectory is available but not required, compensation without housing is \$66,276 inclusive of SECA

St James, Dexter, Michigan

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 03/15/26.

Contact:
sshaefer@edomi.org

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

One example is the success of St James' in providing a supporting and inclusive environment for persons identifying as LGBTQ+. We have celebrated a same-sex commitment ceremony and supported a same-sex marriage. We have held Pride Picnics on our lawn and formed the Open Hearts Club, an open and affirming group, as a drop-in safe space for middle and high school students. The Covid closure interrupted our activities, and not all have restarted, but we still have a great feeling of fulfillment from what we have accomplished. Another example of success and fulfillment is the provision of Sunday services via Zoom, starting within two weeks after the Covid closure began, so we could continue to worship together. Our choir became a virtual choir. We have greatly improved the Zoom services through investments in technology and related processes, and we continue to provide Zoom services to those who cannot attend in person. We also have a Youtube channel of recorded services available for viewing at a later time.

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

As a small congregation in Dexter, a quaint town outside the Ann Arbor city limits with its own school district, we strive to continually increase our numbers—specifically aiming to attract young families to continue the legacy of St. James'. A new housing and apartment development here has meant more people moving into the area. We find ways to be welcoming, supportive, and inviting to these new members of our community. Our devoted Tech Team supports Zoom, our website, and our Facebook page while our new Office Manager maintains St. James' many administrative responsibilities. St. James' members ambitiously aim to be more involved in community outreach and to offer unique programs. To mitigate burnout, we look for partnerships with other churches and organizations as well as offering more "one off" events that help us garner fresh enthusiasm and successfully achieve our goals. We encourage the diverse use of our sanctuary and parish hall. This leads to increased revenue as well as increased awareness of St. James'.

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

engaging, collaborative, empathetic, invested

St James, Dexter, Michigan

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 03/15/26.

Contact:
sshaefer@edomi.org

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

We follow Rite II in The Book of Common Prayer, along with Enriching Our Worship and any other sources approved by the General Convention. We are willing to be flexible within that framework. During the past few years, we have sung hymns from the 1982 hymnbook, Lift Every Voice and Sing, and Wonder, Love and Praise, supplemented occasionally by other approved sources. Anthems and other music have come from a variety of sources, including Scott Joplin, John Rutter, and George Frideric Handel. To assist guests, particularly those “trying out” an Episcopal service, we print our entire service in the bulletin each week, including the hymns.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

St. James’ is always seeking ways to reach people of varying interests and encourage them to connect with the church in different ways such as participating in the service, outreach in the community, and assisting with pastoral care. During the season of stewardship, the congregation is asked to prayerfully consider their gifts, talents, and ways they can give back to the church and community. Many parishioners are involved in one or more of the ministries because they understand the need for involvement with such a small close-knit community of God. Often people volunteer and other times people are recruited joyfully to serve in some capacity. St. James’ offers children’s faith formation called “Catechesis of the Good Shepherd,” or nursery, depending on the age of the child. The children have been involved in the service during special celebrations. Our interim Priest has started inviting the children up to the altar, sharing the gospel in child-friendly language, and allowing them to take on various jobs during the service. Our congregation has really enjoyed it.

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

The spiritual well-being of the St. James’ congregation is cared for by joyful, musical, Sunday services which are highlighted by wonderful homilies by our interim vicar. In addition to Sunday service, St. James’ offers a weekly Bible study, in warm weather a monthly “Oneness, a Prayer for Peace” that invites anyone interested to meet on the front lawn of the church, and a monthly “Still Waters” - a time for prayer and a light meal. In order to care for the Parishioners’ spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being, the Pastoral Care Committee’s 14 members’ activities include: visiting parishioners who are hospitalized, homebound, or living in nursing facilities (senior citizens make up much of our congregation); taking meals to individuals or families when indicated; driving parishioners to hospital or doctor visits when needed; sending birthday cards to all parishioners; and driving parishioners to church on Sunday morning when needed.

St James, Dexter, Michigan

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 03/15/26.

Contact:
sshaefer@edomi.org

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

For the past two years, St. James' has partnered with Church at Crossroads in Detroit, whose mission is to nurture church and community leaders from under-resourced urban communities. In the summer, volunteers drive to Detroit to serve lunches and interact with the community, providing clothing, household items, and non-perishable groceries. We also strive to make St. James' a welcoming space for the community. During Dexter events like the Dexter Bicentennial Days and the annual Dexter Summer Festival, we offer lawn games, free water, shaded seating, indoor cooling areas, and bathroom access. Our front yard features a Little Free Library and a Little Free Food Pantry with inviting seating areas. Prior to Covid, our Parish Hall hosted events such as art classes, weekly AA meetings, women's therapy groups, and a garden for contemplative prayer. While the shutdown halted these activities, St. James' is currently discussing restarting many of these community outreach events. Additionally, the Rectory, now called the Mission House, provides inexpensive temporary housing for adults or families in transition.

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

St. James' supports housing and housing assistance in our Dexter community. Hilltop Apartments is for income-based applicants such as military veterans in need and others who have experienced food and housing insecurities. Our St. James' Bishop's Committee and church membership wrote many letters and attended City Council meetings in support of the development. As Hilltop opened, our Outreach Committee provided the furnishings and household necessities for one single mother moving into a Hilltop apartment. We also provided a tool kit and a first aid kit for every apartment. St. James' has long supported the food insecure with local food pantry Faith in Action (FIA), with volunteer labor, food, cash donations, and other identified needs. We volunteer weekly at FIA, now operating the food pantry within Hilltop, as well as participating in Hilltop community events. FIA's director has called St. James' "the little church that can and does." Beyond FIA and Hilltop support, St. James' engages with our community in our Pet Blessings, Coffee & Conversations, and Dexter Days. We engage with other faiths within the Dexter Ministerial Association and our "Oneness" group meetings.

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

Dismayed by the increasing tendency of people to talk only with people of similar political views, St James' decided to present a series of programs on current topics in the hope that people could discuss political differences respectfully with each other. Coffee & Conversation was born. Coffee & Conversation hosts programs on various topics presented by knowledgeable speakers, with many topics that are specific to Michigan. The programs are open to the public and designed to give attendees the opportunity to connect with each other, ask questions, and have a respectful exchange of views. Examples of past programs include: Michigan Voting Laws - a review of new voting rules and election security procedures in effect for the 2024 election Human Trafficking - A general discussion of human trafficking and one person's story Pipelines in Michigan - The federal approval process for oil and gas pipelines and the problems it creates Climate Change and the Auto Industry - the impact of automobiles on global warming and ways to reduce it Kids and Guns—the effect of gun violence on children For more information, contact our Coffee & Conversation Coordinator at office@stjamesdexter.org.

St James, Dexter, Michigan

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 03/15/26.

Contact:
sshaefer@edomi.org

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

St. James' promotes stewardship as an awareness of God's abundant blessings rather than operating out of fear of scarcity. As such, we encourage a more holistic approach to stewardship, which encourages not just cash contributions through the weekly passing of the plate or annual pledges, but also takes into consideration our relationship with ourselves, our communities, and the world through physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual giving. This past Autumn, we celebrated The Season of Stewardship. We used the symbol of the acorn that represents the promise of growth in spirit and in relationship with our neighbors. We aim to be the oak tree that offers shade to those who seek rest or have a need. Each Sunday we explored a variety of ways we are called to be stewards of our Christian faith through our personal relationships, with our faith, towards our neighbors, of the legacies left to us, and with ongoing financial support. Despite our small size, St. James' enjoys the generosity of members contributing constantly and consistently, either with their alms, their time, or their talents, that make St. James' the vital and vibrant community it is.

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

While rare, St. James' has experienced conflicts between congregants, vestry and/or the rector from time to time. Our last significant conflict was with a priest in charge 14 years ago, one year into her service. When that conflict escalated, we engaged prayerfully with our Diocese, ultimately resulting in separation from that priest with a fair, negotiated resolution. In subsequent prayerful congregation meetings, we concluded that we needed to improve our communication skills and adopt better conflict resolution methods. Our congregation committed significant resources engaging the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center (LMPC) in Conflict Resolution Training. We learned to speak to each other openly without rancor and to avoid triangulation. We also engage in assisting with goal-oriented conversations. Since this trying time, we used LMPC-type conversations to resolve concerns with our succeeding priest (who was with us for over 10 years) with positive results and without losing sight of our Godly mission as a congregation. Our congregation remains more sharply focused on our values and, as a result, our relationships have grown stronger.

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?

The above priest conflict held a few silver linings. We now understand that while difficult, the priest guided us to extend our Outreach Program based in Social Justice. Before her tenure, we contributed monthly to the St. Andrews' Breakfast Fund, but little else. With prayerful conversation, St. James' now has an increased commitment to Social Justice, locally and within our Diocese, demonstrated by our FIA, Hilltop, and Crossroads at Detroit examples despite our small size. Our priest stress came at a cost to membership and financial support. We were reclassified as a Mission rather than a Parish. However, this change led our lay ministries to adopt new practices. We turned our Mission partnership to our advantage by developing relationships with the Diocesan staff. As we restored our congregation, an improved level of financial stability allowed us to make our part-time rector to full-time. We also began making our full Diocesan Pledge, which will allow St. James' to reclaim Parish status. Like many congregations, enduring COVID reminded us that we can do hard things. We learned to face fear, smile through our discomfort, and adopt 21st century technology—all for the better!



Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio
(last updated Jan 14, 2026)

St James, Dexter, Michigan

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 03/15/26.

Contact:

sshaefer@edomi.org

Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Stacy Salles	Interim	2024-08	

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Carol Mader	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	2010-03	2024-03

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Cynthia Garman	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	2007-01	2009-01

Church School	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School	Number of Students for Children School
	3	6

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



Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio
(last updated Jan 14, 2026)

St James, Dexter, Michigan

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 03/15/26.

Contact:
sshaefer@edomi.org

Worshipping Community Web site: <https://stjamesdexter.org/>

Media Links:

Online References:

> <https://www.youtube.com/@saintjamesepiscopalchurch6396>

Languages Significantly Represented:

English

Provide Worship or Classes in:

References

Bishop:

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie A. Perry

bishopperry@edomi.org 313-832-4400

Diocesan Transition Minister

The Rev. Canon Susie Shaefer

sshaefer@edomi.org 313-833-4424

Current Warden/Board Chair

Julie Lowery

julie.lowery13 (at) gmail.com

Previous Warden/Board Chair

Search Chair

Michael Champ

michael.champ (at) comcast.net

Parish/Institution

Local Community Leader