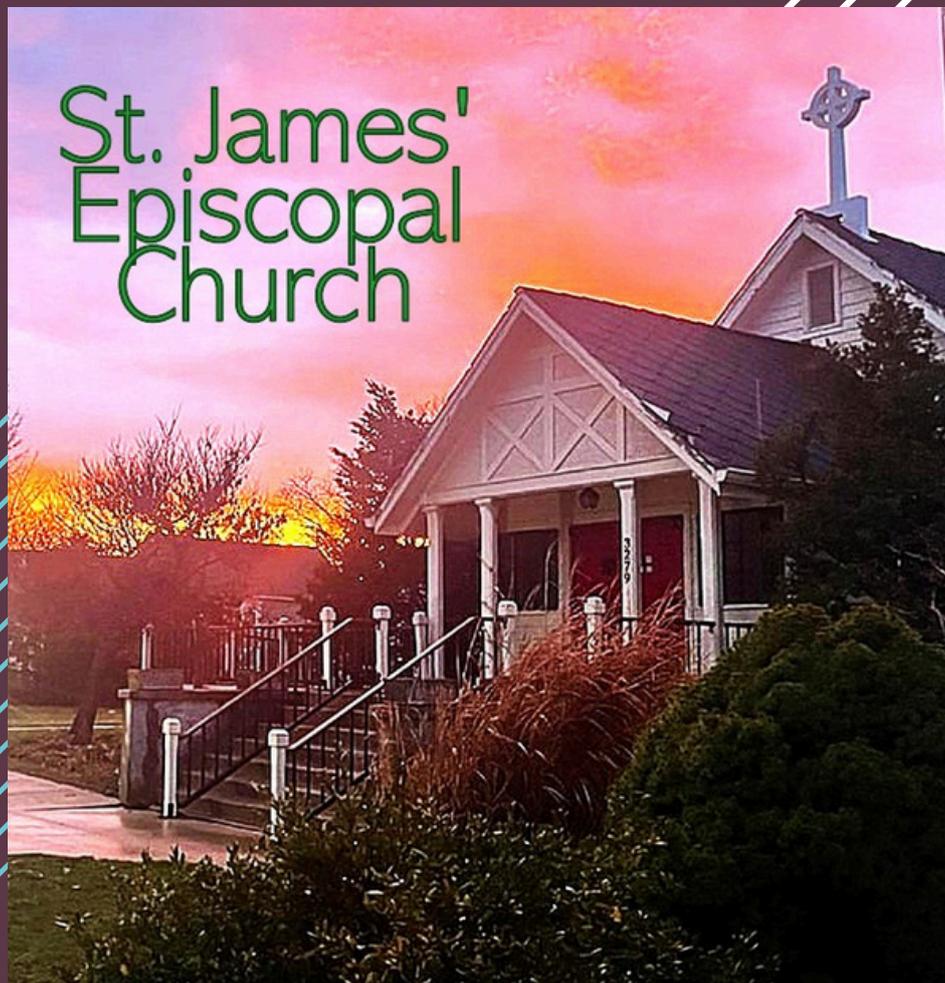


# ST. JAMES' PARISH PROFILE 2026

A MEMBER CHURCH OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF  
MICHIGAN RT. REV. DR. BONNIE A. PERRY, BISHOP



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# OVERVIEW

St. James' Episcopal Church is a small church in Dexter, a quaint town in southeastern Michigan located a few miles west of Ann Arbor, home of the University of Michigan.

We are an open and affirming church with a strong commitment to community service and social justice.

We are seeking a priest who is empathetic and collaborative with good communication skills. We are looking for someone who will provide spiritual leadership, help us meet our challenges, and take advantage of our opportunities, helping us grow and serve in accordance with God's word.



# ST. JAMES' HISTORY

Episcopalians have deep roots in the Dexter area. Soon after the 1824 founding of Dexter, visiting clergymen began holding occasional services at the invitation of local Episcopalians, meeting in private homes and also in a log schoolhouse (about one mile west of town). Services became more regular in 1835, a missionary came from Ann Arbor every two weeks using the village school as a meeting place. On March 13, 1837, the Rev. David J. Burger first organized St. James' as a parish church, serving as its resident priest. Immediately after the Articles of Incorporation were signed by the first Vestry, work began on a log building, which served as the church until about 1854 when a new building was constructed on land donated by Judge Samuel William Dexter (1792-1863), now the present site of our church.

The first service in this new building was held on June 24, 1855. The money for the construction was borrowed (at the rate of 10%, extremely high even by today's standards) but the parish managed to pay off the debt in December of 1858.

**We are an open and affirming church with a strong commitment to community service and social justice.**

The first Bishop of Michigan, the Rt. Rev. Samuel A. McCoskry, consecrated the church in 1859. The document of consecration, bearing the Bishop's seal, hangs in the sanctuary together with the articles of incorporation, both framed in panels taken from the church's original pulpit.

In 1926, St. James' assumed its present physical form through a drastic renovation prompted by serious structural flaws. The original bell tower was removed, the walls and roof were lowered, and the stained-glass windows were placed in storage. The undercroft (church basement)

# ST. JAMES' HISTORY ....

was excavated so that it could be used for meetings, and large hinged doors were installed so that the sanctuary could be separated from the undercroft, which was used for holiday parties, dinners, and other community events.

In 1959, the Parish Hall was added. This addition's upper level houses the library, Sunday school rooms, choir practice and robing areas, and offices. The lower level contains a commercial kitchen and a meeting/dining room with seating for 80 or more people.

The church sanctuary was lovingly restored 1973-1976. The beautiful stained-glass windows of the earlier church building (from 1855) were re-installed, the iron chandeliers (from the 1930's) were painted white and trimmed in gold, and the old oak pews were restored.

The construction of a handicap ramp in 1988, donated by Mickey Sloan, connected the church and Parish Hall with the street level



ST. JAMES' CIRCA 1888

sidewalk, providing access to those with mobility concerns.

In 1992, the Parish Hall was renovated to create the music practice area, classrooms, and the church office. A small Parish Hall addition was also added to create the rector's office and the vestments storage area. Also, an elevator connecting the Parish Hall upper and lower levels was installed and the restroom was renovated, making St. James' Parish Hall accessible and ADA compliant.

# DEXTER AND OUR WIDER COMMUNITY

Today, Dexter may just be the perfect blend of country charm adjacent to big city sophistication. Nestled along the banks of the Huron River and Mill Creek, Dexter beckons outdoor enthusiasts seeking active lifestyles with its picturesque rivers, lush pathways and scenic, wooded trails including the renowned Border-to-Border Trails, while still maintaining easy access to two internationally acclaimed Big 10 universities with in-state tuition, Michigan State in East Lansing and even closer, the University of Michigan in neighboring Ann Arbor.

Ann Arbor is consistently ranked in the Top Ten most livable cities in the country by U.S. News and World Report for its quality of life, with its thriving arts and culture scene bursting with museums, independent bookstores, theater, live music, and the annual Ann Arbor Art Fair. An increasing number of young families have been attracted to the area because of that proximity and because Dexter Community Schools are consistently ranked in the top quarter of all school districts in Michigan, boasting a high school graduation rate of 98%-with half of all students taking Advanced Placement or International



EASTER SUNDAY ALTAR

Baccalaureate classes. The extracurricular activities at DHS are also a huge draw, offering something for everyone. From highly competitive athletics to marching and concert bands, orchestra and choir, a robotics team to drama, and a host of clubs that celebrate diversity, students are sure to find “their people” here and feel valued and included. For older adults seeking fitness and social opportunities, the new Senior Center opened its doors in July 2025. The new Center is next to the Dexter Wellness Center, which offers personalized training, a weight room, pickleball and basketball courts, cycling and group classes as well as swimming pools for laps or therapy.

# DEXTER AND OUR WIDER COMMUNITY ....

While weekly farmer's markets showcase locally harvested produce and local crafts, don't let our pastoral setting of Michigan fool you, as the arts, music and culture scene is also abundant. Often the choosing is more challenging than the finding. From Friday night concerts in the town gazebo, intimate live-music clubs or stadium-sized concert venues drawing Grammy award-winning headliners, Dexter is not much more than a "rock skip" away from phenomenal musical performances, academically focused talks, and the arts. For live stage performances showcasing local talent, get ready to applaud the Encore Theatre in Dexter or, in nearby Chelsea, the Purple Rose Theatre, founded by actor and playwright Jeff Daniels. A bit further along the I-94 corridor, in under an hour's drive, is Metropolitan Detroit, boasting abundant shopping, dining, the arts, as well as the opportunity to cheer on the Lions, Pistons, Red Wings, and Tigers. When an escape is desired, travel buffs enjoy the easy access to an international airport to globetrot in about half that time.



In short, the strong economy, lively social scene, and impressive university education and healthcare systems nearby make Dexter and surrounding communities an obvious draw for professionals and families alike. With highly acclaimed schools, abundant parks, great community events, and a warm welcoming environment, Dexter is a perfect place for our next priest to call home.

# THE CONGREGATION AND OUR WORSHIP SERVICES

At St. James', we are dedicated to engaging with individuals from all walks of life, inviting them to be an integral part of our vibrant community. We offer numerous opportunities for involvement, by participating in our worship services, contributing to community outreach, and assisting with pastoral care. Our Sunday services combine Rite II from The Book of Common Prayer, with elements from Enriching Our Worship and other sources sanctioned by the General Convention.

We are open to exploring creative expressions within this liturgical framework to enhance our worship experience. To make everyone feel at home, especially those new to the Episcopalian tradition, we provide a comprehensive service bulletin each week that includes all hymns and liturgical elements. We invite all worship attendees to be a part of our journey as we grow together in faith and service.



ALTAR GUILD LUNCHEON

# MUSIC

At St. James', music is not just a part of our worship, it's a central expression of our faith. We are proud to carry on a rich tradition of musical excellence, led by our esteemed Music Director, Dr. Gwangwon Park. Our dedicated choir is often joined by guest instrumentalists and vocalists, enriching our worship with their diverse talents.

A highlight of our musical heritage is our historic organ, crafted in 1857 by the renowned New York organ builder Henry Erben (1800-1884). This remarkable instrument was lovingly restored by Dana Hull, organ restorer (1927-2024), and a group of parishioners, under the leadership of Mickey Sloan (1924-2014). In 1995, our organ was honored by the Organ Historical Society as "an instrument of exceptional merit, worthy of preservation." It is not only a cherished part of our musical legacy but also a vital element of our community worship.



Our repertoire is as diverse as it is inspiring, featuring hymns from the 1982 Hymnal, Lift Every Voice and Sing, and Wonder, Love, and Praise, alongside anthems and pieces by composers like Scott Joplin, John Rutter, and George Frideric Handel. If you share our passion for music and its power to uplift and unite, we invite you to join us in creating a spirited and dynamic worship experience at St. James'.

# EDUCATION OF ADULTS AND CHILDREN

St. James' offers children's faith formation through the program, Lessons That Work, an online lectionary based program. Church school meets the first three Sundays of the month during the service. On the 4<sup>th</sup> and any 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday, the children are in worship with all of us. Children hear a children's sermon at least once a month and are welcome to help ring special celebrations.



ASH WEDNESDAY

For adults, St. James' hosts a weekly Bible study. Recently, Bible study did a deep dive into the Gospel according to Matthew with particular focus in its connection to the Plan of God. There is indeed a Plan, of which we are a part, and these conversations invite us to spiritual growth. Our hour consists of communal prayer, attention to scripture as it applies to our lives, and fellowship.

# MINISTERING TO OURSELVES

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 priest. In addition to our Sunday service, and weekly Bible study, St. James', in warm weather, offers a monthly "Oneness, a Prayer for Peace" that invites anyone interested to meet on the front lawn of the church. We also offer a monthly "Still Waters"- a time for prayer and sharing of a light meal.

Additionally, in order to care for the Parishioners' spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being, our Pastoral Care Committee's activities include: visiting parishioners who are hospitalized, homebound, or living in support facilities (senior citizens make up much of our congregation); taking meals to individuals or families when indicated; driving parishioners to hospital or doctors visits when needed; sending birthday cards to all parishioners; and driving parishioners to church on Sunday morning when needed.



CHRISTMAS EVE



SOME OF THE COOKIE WALK CREW

# MINISTERING TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY

St. James' supports housing and housing assistance in our local 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 members wrote many letters and attended City Council meetings in support of the Hilltop development.

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 assisting with the operation of 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."

In 2025, St. James' established a new partnership with FIA, to provide the St. James' Morton Cox Legacy Scholarship for individuals seeking to further their education. The scholarship is intended to support those who have faced financial hardship and need assistance in pursuing their educational goals. To be eligible, applicants must be part of a household receiving services from FIA. This scholarship, which will be administered by FIA, was from a bequest of the late Dr. Morton Cox of Ann Arbor. Awards may be used for a wide range of educational purposes, such as tuition, technical training, certification,

**"the little church that can and does"**

GED classes and other educational enrichment opportunities. The award for 2025 was in the amount of \$2,500.

About six years ago, another ministry was born out of a wish to bridge the gap between disparate viewpoints and foster open dialogue during these polarizing times. We call it: Coffee & Conversation.

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 with differing opinions the opportunity to connect with each other, ask questions, and have a respectful exchange of views.

Examples of past programs:

Human Trafficking-A general discussion of human trafficking and one person's story.

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.

# MINISTERING TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY ....

For the past three years and even further afield, St. James' has expanded its ministry to a partnership with Church at Crossroads in Detroit, whose mission is to nurture church and community leaders from under-resourced communities. In summer, during the school break, volunteers drive to Detroit to participate by helping serve free lunches, and interact with the community, providing clothing, household items, and non-perishable groceries. We also provide Christmas gifts for a family selected by Crossroads.

We 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 restroom access. Our front yard features a Little Free Library and a Little Free Food Pantry with inviting seating areas.

As more national and global crises occur, St. James' encourages parishioners to support the broader efforts of the Episcopal Relief and Development organization.



CHURCH AT CROSSROADS FREE LUNCH



LITTLE FREE LIBRARY ON THE FRONT LAWN

# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

We are a small, aging congregation, which is a challenge in itself. Restrictions in finance and manpower reduce our ability to be as active in social ministry and community service as we would like. Snapshots of our financials and membership are attached at the end of this profile.

A major problem is a lack of visibility in Dexter. Even though we have been in the same location for 170 years, many people in this area don't know we exist.

However, there is a corresponding opportunity. The Dexter school district is growing in population as people move here for the schools. We can develop more effective ways of reaching out to people in our community. We have a website and a Facebook page so that people who do hear about us get information easily.

We can leverage the resources that we have by partnering with other organizations. For example, we can let other organizations use space in our Parish hall.

The most visible member of any church is its leader, so another way to increase our visibility would be by calling a priest who would become part of Dexter life and positively represent us to the community.



7.4K+

COMMUNITY  
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS

# WHAT WE SEEK IN A PRIEST

St. James' is seeking a priest who is engaging, collaborative, empathetic, and invested in both the church and the community. We are seeking someone with strong communication skills, an impactful sermon style relevant to modern life, and the ability to build meaningful relationships with all members. We need a leader who will guide us on our spiritual journeys and help us expand our pastoral care programs within and beyond our worshipping community.

Finally, we would like someone who would be a visible and active part of our community, who will shop in the stores and at the Farmers' Market, attend the Dexter Forum, participate in city and township events, and get to know people and be seen by them as a representative of St. James'.



THE MOST  
VISIBLE  
MEMBER OF  
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IS ITS  
LEADER

# THE NUMBERS

## Participants & Giving Trends

	# of Parishoners	# of Pledges	Average Attendance
2020	94	45	53
2021	88	42	31
2022	84	38	36
2023	82	40	36
2024	72	39	39
2025	72	33	39

## Operating Budget

	2023	2024	2025	2026
<b>INCOME</b>				
Pledge Payments	162,982	164,796	166,449	168,340
Plate & Special Offerings	4,203	4,535	7,877	6,000
Unrestricted Interest	7,547	16,202	8,042	8,000
Mission House Rental	13,000	17,250	16,050	15,900
Fundraisers	<u>4,851</u>	<u>3,361</u>	<u>3,115</u>	<u>3,000</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>192,583</b>	<b>206,144</b>	<b>201,533</b>	<b>201,240</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Personnel	146,114	89,154	98,882	127,062
Building & Grounds	7,501	13,247	21,589	27,690
Administration	30,912	32,627	23,093	25,612
Worship & Outreach	7,444	5,970	5,869	8,800
Diocesan Allocation	9,176	22,484	20,125	19,887
Depreciation	1,100	1,773	2,088	2,800
Other	<u>1,333</u>	<u>736</u>	<u>999</u>	<u>1,000</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>213,580</b>	<b>163,991</b>	<b>172,635</b>	<b>212,851</b>
<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<b>(20,997)</b>	<b>42,153</b>	<b>28,898</b>	<b>(11,611)</b>
<b>Assets</b>				
Cash	224,614.51	258,771.05*	107,082.76	224,395
Investments	19,560.16	21,667.47	217,605.86*	241,065
Fixed Assets	<u>58,685.54</u>	<u>60,660.87</u>	<u>61,828.47</u>	<u>63,309</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>302,860.21</b>	<b>341,099.49</b>	<b>386,517.09</b>	<b>528,769</b>
<b>Fund Balance</b>				
Operating Fund	232,250.33	211,253.10	266,484.28	253,848
Special Projects Savings	12,214.17	21,357.19	13,323.67	13,314
Capital Improvement				
Set Aside	14,327.19	14,327.11	14,327.11	14,327
Fund Restricted by				
Bishop's Committee	5,865.00	55,865.00	79,853.74**	84,316
Endowment Fund	19,560.16	21,667.47	0**	0
Memorial Fund Savings	<u>6,816.56</u>	<u>5,079.94</u>	<u>3,668.11</u>	<u>3,668</u>
<b>TOTAL FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>291,033.41</b>	<b>329,549.81</b>	<b>519,909.03</b>	<b>369,472</b>
<b>377,656.91</b>				

\*Funds were taken for cash and invested with the Diocese

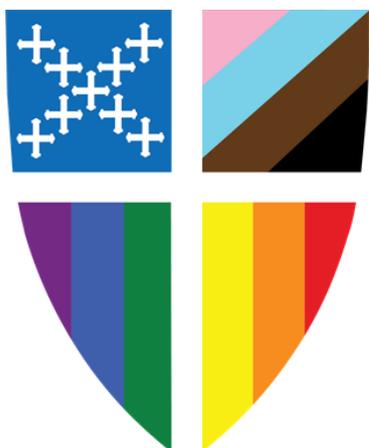
\*\*Funds from the endowment fund were transferred to the Fund Restricted by the Bishop's Committee

# DIOCESE OF MICHIGAN AND HOW TO APPLY

Episcopal Diocese of Michigan statement:  
Guided by our 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.

Interested clergy should send the following documents to the Rev. Canon Susie Shaefer, Canon for Transitions and Formation for the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan by email: [sshaefer@edomi.org](mailto:sshaefer@edomi.org) It is very helpful (though not required) if all three documents can be sent as attachments to a single email.

1. A letter addressed to the Search Committee in which the candidate a) offers a self-introduction, and b) describes why they feel drawn into discernment around this particular position. The specific form, length, and content of the letter is at the candidates discretion;
2. A current resume;
3. A .pdf of the candidates current Office of Transition Ministries Portfolio, including answers to all the narrative questions.



[WWW.STJAMESDEXTER.ORG](http://WWW.STJAMESDEXTER.ORG)