



Office for  
Transition  
Ministry

# Ministry Portfolio

*Full Portfolio (last updated Jan 23, 2024)*

## Blue Water Episcopal Covenant - Holy Family, St. Clair, Eastern Michigan

Contact:

[tlittle@eastmich.org](mailto:tlittle@eastmich.org)

Weekly Average Sunday  
Attendance (ASA)

**34**

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

**\$53615**

Housing Available for

Pension Plan

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

Healthcare Options  
**Negotiable**

Dental

Housing Equity Allowance in  
budget

Annual Equity Amount

Vacation Weeks

Vacation Weeks Details

Continuing Education Weeks  
**Other**

Continuing Education Weeks  
Details

Continuing Education  
Funding in budget

Sabbatical Provision

Travel/Auto Account  
**Yes**

Other Professional Account

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

From March 2020 to mid-2021 we worshipped virtually via Zoom during the pandemic. Thankfully we have strong lay leadership who value good communication, and we continued to work on relationship building using a phone tree, emails, mailings, prayer ministry, and other approaches in order to support each other and stay connected. We returned to in-person worship with grateful and thankful hearts and rejoiced in being back together. Currently we are meeting in the church using supply clergy and worship leaders to conduct services. We livestream via Facebook as well.

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

Formulating the Blue Water Episcopal Covenant is the church of the future, as more and more modestly sized parishes combine resources to enable a range of programs that extend ministry and mission to members and communities alike. An important focus is support of a rector. The document entitled Blue Water Episcopal Covenant and Operating Principles is available upon request and outlines the role of the rector as well as stipulating other principles of the covenant structure. We understand that live-streaming of services, activities, and meetings is now a way of life. We acknowledge the relentless expansion of social media and are looking for ways to take advantage of platforms and communications ideas. Broadcasting services by Facebook live is part of that effort. We are exploring innovative strategies to bring non-members into the church. As congregations with older members, we are looking for ways to attract younger people and families. Finding and building youth connections throughout the community is a focus. Revitalizing our physical plants is also important to keeping us looking inviting, active, alive, and vital.

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

Open-minded communication. Innovative. Passionate evangelism. Engagement of all.

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

Both Holy Family and Trinity are traditional but flexible. We typically follow the Rite II liturgy but often branch out to incorporate different worship rituals and styles. Both parishes hold a single service on Sunday mornings. Absent a priest, both parishes usually present Morning Prayer led by lay leaders, switching to a Eucharistic service when a supply priest is available. Lay readers are always part of our service. From March 2020 to June 2021, worship was exclusively via Zoom and Facebook due to the pandemic. As meeting in person has become safer, we are excited to reconnect as this allows us to build relationships more easily. We continue to offer virtual church as a way to connect with parishioners who are absent for health, travel, and other reasons. Holy Family invites church members to volunteer to provide music, including an 11-year old pianist. Ambiance is warm and relaxed; we are comfortable with worshipping together.

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How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

We identify new attendees immediately and welcome them to our fellowship. This kind of personal encouragement and interaction is central to the friendly atmosphere that surrounds everyone who enters our churches. Holy Family uses our annual stewardship drives as a survey, encouraging members to sign up to help in ways that interest them. Such opportunities are reading during the service, offering music, working the food pantry or church resale shop, making prayer shawls, participating in indoor and outdoor maintenance, inviting people to Bible study and seasonal groups, and supporting the Christmas wish program, among other activities.

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

Both churches have active prayer ministries that connect with members via email and phone. We also use traditional mail and personal visits to stay in touch and support those who do not have a computer. We have prayer shawl ministries that deliver hand-knit shawls and lap robes to those who are ill, experiencing distress, or in need of comfort. Our senior wardens and part-time administrators keep people connected through our websites, Sunday announcements, emails and mailings. We are resuming regular Bible study and similar groups as public health and leadership conditions allow. We talk with one another and share information about needs and conditions in our facilities and among members.

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## Blue Water Episcopal Covenant - Holy Family, St. Clair, Eastern Michigan

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

Our building is used for Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and Al-Anon meetings six days per week. We have an active thrift shop/re-sale shop that has been in business for 50 years and is used well by the community. The shop gives away goods to people who have lost possessions due to fire or other disasters, to local schools, nursing homes, county jail, and shelters. Eighty percent of earnings are returned to the community. We support our local St. Vincent dePaul Ecumenical Food Pantry by donating paper products year-round and volunteering to staff the pantry. We also adopt families at Thanksgiving and Christmas, providing goods and gifts. We support KIDS (Kids in Distress), a local program that provides clothing, bedding, and other items to children in need in St. Clair County.

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

Our buildings are used for Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Girl Scouts, and similar groups six days a week. Holy Family supports and active thrift/re-sale shop that has been in business for 50 years and is widely used by the community. The shop gives away goods to people who lost possessions due to fire or other disasters, and to local schools, nursing homes, shelters, and the county jail. Eighty percent of earnings from the thrift shop are returned to the community. Holy Family assists the local St. Vincent de Paul Ecumenical Food Pantry by donating paper products year-round and volunteering to work the pantry. We adopt families from St. Vincent de Paul at Thanksgiving and Christmas, Kids in Distress, a local program that provides clothing, bedding and other goods to children in need, is another active program we help. Our parishes work with other churches to sponsor community services and programs. Participation in ecumenical activities with area churches of various denominations is important. Members from Holy Family and Trinity attend special services and events within our communities as well as supporting other non-profit agencies.

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

Holy Family is a combination of three parishes, which has given us the opportunity to change, be flexible, grow, and explore new possibilities. We have relied on strong and capable church members to keep us moving forward and focusing on the future. We are willing to try new things and explore out of the box thinking. We look forward to this covenant agreement bringing a ministry to our church. We understand that livestreaming is a way of life now for the parish. We also are an older congregation. We are looking for ways to attract younger people and families to our church family.

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

Both parishes hold an annual stewardship campaign to gain pledges of financial support for the upcoming year. Pledge cards also provide an opportunity for members to commit their time and talent in areas of interest to the larger good of the church. Entering the Blue Water Episcopal Covenant recognizes our financial positions and the need to be purposeful stewards of available, limited resources to accomplish desired goals. Among those goals is sharing a rector who serves both parishes (Holy Family, St. Clair and Trinity, Lexington). Our senior wardens and other lay leaders attend stewardship training and share information with other local wardens. Senior wardens plan with the vestry and treasurer and keep the congregation abreast of relevant financial information. We are realistic about the financial needs of four parishes and recognize that monies are finite.

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

Both Holy Family and Trinity have had our share of changes and learned to deal with conflict. Holy Family came into being when three parishes were forced to close and combine as one. A priest was assigned and as part of the transition, two buildings were sold and a third was remodeled. The churches that combined had different personalities, traditions, activities, and services. We continue to discover who Holy Family is and work on relationship building. For both Holy Family and Trinity, the pandemic, which brought many restrictions and closures, was a source of conflict in that we could not, for many months, hold services in the building. The fact that both parishes are without clergy and thus unable to offer the Eucharist on a regular basis has also been a problem. Both churches thus have had to deal with the reality that change is constant and unpredictable and that open communication is key to figuring out what to do. We make efforts to talk to people, listen, and adjust based on what our congregations want. Because of Covid, we were forced to find new ways of keeping ourselves connected. In every instance, we direct our energies toward positive solutions.

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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 biggest change was when our former Bishop told St. Paul, All Saints, and St. Mark churches that we needed to merge into one church (now called Holy Family), and if we chose not to do this, we would be on our own without any diocesan support. The former bishop then selected his friend to become our new priest (no other options were given). These circumstances could have had catastrophic consequences. The lay leaders of each church had built trust within their respective parishes before all of this transition. Together, we learned that great communications and transparency were key to moving forward. To merge three separate, strong-willed (this is how we have always done things) groups of people into one cohesive unit that respects and listens to each other was no easy feat. We kept trying different things and building relationships. Then the pandemic hit - which could have derailed us - but we persevered. We had to have constant open communication. We had to make the effort to ask questions and listen to the answers and make changes. We had to learn to let go of some people that weren't able to see the new vision for our church.



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### Prior Incumbents

| Name          | Position Title                    | Date Begun | Date Ended |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| David Vickers | Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | 2017-01    | 2021-06    |

| Name | Position Title | Date Begun | Date Ended |
|------|----------------|------------|------------|
|------|----------------|------------|------------|

| Name | Position Title | Date Begun | Date Ended |
|------|----------------|------------|------------|
|------|----------------|------------|------------|

*Holy Family was formed in 2017 by combining three parishes into the new entity. There are no incumbents prior to 2017.*

| Church School | Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School | Number of Students for Children School |
|---------------|--|--|
|               |  | 5                                      |

| 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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Contact:  
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Worshipping Community Web site: [www.holyfamilybwe.org](http://www.holyfamilybwe.org)

Media Links:

Online References:

Languages Significantly Represented:

English

Provide Worship or Classes in:

### References

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Bishop:                                       | 989-752-6020 <a href="mailto:sadams@eastmich.org">sadams@eastmich.org</a>   |
| The Rt. Rev. Skip Adams<br>(Assisting Bishop) |   |
| Diocesan Transition Minister                  | 810-300-9177 <a href="mailto:tlittle@eastmich.org">tlittle@eastmich.org</a> |
| Tracie Little                                 |   |
| Current Warden/Board Chair                    | 810-275-3758  |
| Sandy Sladowski                               |   |
| Previous Warden/Board Chair                   | 810-434-1435  |
| Jacquie Ebelt                                 |   |
| Search Chair                                  | 810-275-3758  |
| Sandy Sladowski                               |   |
| Parish/Institution                            | 810-434-1435  |
| Jacquie Ebelt                                 |   |
| Local Community Leader                        | 810-434-1435  |
| Jacquie Ebelt                                 |   |