

PARISH PROFILE 2026

# ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

ROYAL OAK, MICHIGAN



# OUR WELCOME STATEMENT

Welcome! We are St. John's, a parish that invites you to enter the open doors of our community and warmly embraces you when you do. At St. John's, our history has taught us that accepting and embracing true diversity is challenging. As a result, we have come to claim a firm, undying commitment to inclusion. So here is our invitation to you: regardless of your cultural background, ethnicity, gender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or heterosexual identity, economic status, physical or cognitive ability - you will not be labeled, singled out, or excluded here. You will be welcomed, affirmed, embraced, and celebrated!

We will be better because you are here.



# OUR IDENTITY: *Who We Are*

[St. John's Episcopal Church](#) in Royal Oak, Michigan,  
is a healthy, vibrant congregation with a rich history and a hopeful future.

We are many things: radically welcoming, compassionate, friendly, diverse, justice-oriented, faithful, inclusive, social, and intellectually curious.



In all we do, we seek to live out our Welcome Statement with authenticity, prioritizing relationships and supporting one another and our neighbors through meaningful community outreach.

# OUR IDENTITY

At St. John's, we proclaim a loving God and thoughtfully explore the relevance of faith and scripture in our daily lives.

We understand faith as a journey of discovery, where questions are welcomed and diverse perspectives are valued.

We love to gather, worship, and laugh together, finding joy in community and purpose in service.



We currently employ one full-time interim priest, though our typical team includes two full-time clergy, one of whom serves as a curate, learning under the guidance of an experienced rector. Our dedicated staff includes a music director, thrift store manager for our [New to You Shop](#), and part-time positions of office administrator, youth & families director, facilities coordinator, bookkeeper, and two sextons.

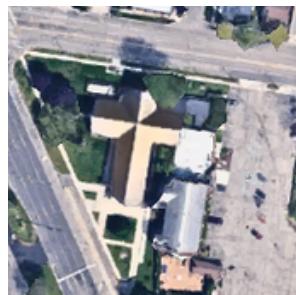
# OUR IDENTITY

Our shared identity is grounded in enduring values: faith, reflection, community, and growth.

St. John's began in 1902 as a mission of the Episcopal Church, when three families gathered in the basement of the old Royal Oak school building at 4th and Williams Streets. Among our founders was Mary Ann Armstrong Parr—a widow, mother of seven, immigrant, and entrepreneur—who hosted the first prayer meetings in her home. In 1920, St. John's became a full parish in the Diocese of Michigan, and in 1923 Mary donated a parcel of land for our current site on Woodward Avenue, a major thoroughfare in southeast Michigan.

## **Our story is intertwined with both inspiration and challenge.**

The land on which we worship was once part of the territory of the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples, taken through so-called treaties and later granted to early settlers. We recognize this complex history, one shaped by both visionary leadership and colonial injustice, and we continue to reflect on what it means to honor that legacy faithfully today.



The first worship service in our church building was held in 1926, and over the past century, our space has grown and evolved alongside our congregation. Seen from above, the building forms a cruciform shape—a visible sign of our faith and mission in the heart of Royal Oak.

At St. John's, we embrace our past with honesty, live our present with joy, and look toward the future with hope and purpose.

# LIVING OUR MINISTRY

Ministry at St. John's is the shared work of all God's people, clergy and lay alike, drawn from diverse backgrounds, faith journeys, and gifts.

We believe that God has called us together in this place for a meaningful purpose: to worship, to learn, and to serve in love.



## *Worship and Music*

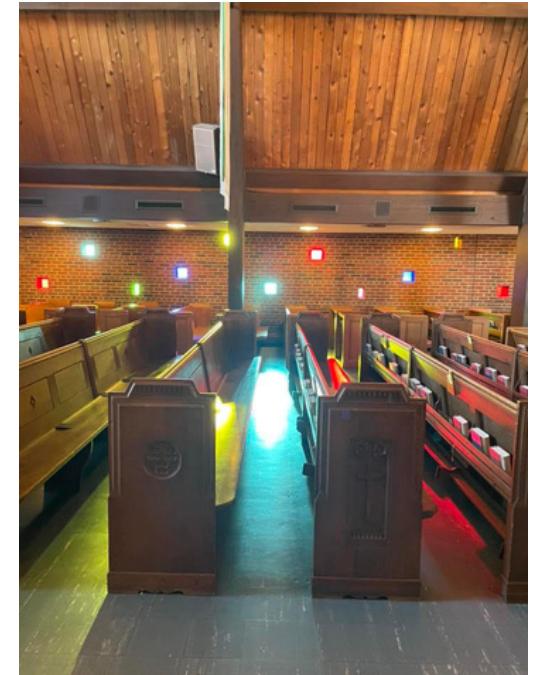
Worship at St John's is rooted in the rich tradition of the Episcopal Church, the Rite II from the 1979 BCP, while often incorporating resources such as *Enriching Our Worship*, the New Zealand Prayer Book, and other contemporary sources. This combination welcomes both rootedness and creativity, making our worship experience reverent and joyful.

We come together for three services each week.

Our earlier Sunday service offers a quiet and contemplative atmosphere, with a silent procession and a reflective tone.

The later Sunday service includes lively congregational singing, led by our chancel choir, accompanied by piano or organ. We are blessed to have a dedicated music director on staff and regular paid section leaders. The Altar Guild works committedly, tending to the sacred space.

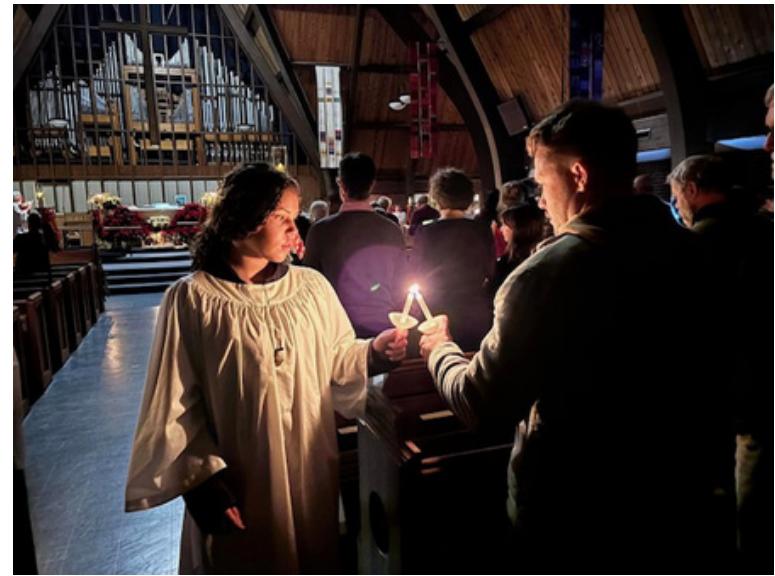
On Thursday mornings, a group of faithful people gathers in our chapel for a healing service. This service, led by lay congregants, provides us with a space to pray for one another, our broader community, and the world.



## *Worship and Music*

Seasonal offerings, including special liturgies during Advent, Lent, and Holy Week, deepen our connection to God. We are exceptionally inspired by the use of music, art, and drama, particularly during the Easter Vigil and Christmas Pageant, which bring our faith stories to life.

Lay participation is central to our worship. Parishioners of all ages serve as lectors, intercessors, acolytes, healing ministers, and Eucharistic ministers. The Tech Team helps us stream our services to those who are near and far. Through all our worship, we invite all people to experience God's transformative love and to carry that love into the world.



# *Lay Leadership*

Leadership at St. John's is a shared ministry that is rooted in prayer, collaboration, and trust.

**Our Vestry** meets monthly to pray together, discern, and make decisions that help us live out God's calling for our community. This spirit of participation is reflected in our parish's strong engagement; our Annual Meeting often features contested elections, which is a joyful sign of commitment and service.

**The Finance Committee** serves as stewards of our resources, meeting monthly to review budgets and offer thoughtful recommendations to the Vestry. In collaboration with the Stewardship and Fundraising Teams, they help us create a culture of generosity that supports our ministries year-round. The recent Holiday Jam, organized by the Fundraising Team, brought our people together in a joyful spirit of abundance and a strengthened sense of community. The 2025 Annual Meeting Minutes and financial reports are available [here](#).



**The Lay Pastoral Care Team** shares compassion and support within our community. Collaborating closely with clergy, they visit the sick, share meals, and serve as Eucharistic Visitors, offering prayer and presence to those who are homebound or in need. Through their ministry, the love experienced in our worship extends beyond our walls.

## *Formation*

We believe that learning is a lifelong spiritual practice. For this reason, formation at St. John's is an ongoing journey of deepening our faith and expanding our understanding of the Divine.

Adult Formation primarily takes place on Wednesday evenings. A dedicated group of leaders works with the clergy to identify the formation needs of our community and design thoughtful programming. These sessions often bring together our parish and community voices for meaningful conversation and reflection.

The Bible Study group gathers weekly, both in person and online, reflecting on the Sunday lectionary with discussions that frequently inspire subsequent preaching.

From St. John's also emerged an Education for Ministry (EFM) group, which now includes participants from across the Diocese while maintaining its roots in our parish. This four-year program offers seminary-level study for lay leaders seeking to discern God's call in their daily lives.

# *Formation*



We are blessed to be a community that nurtures leaders who go on to serve the wider Church. In 2025, one of our own was ordained and now serves as rector of St. Andrew's in Waterford. In 2022, we were selected as one of two teaching congregations in the Diocese of Michigan, allowing us to support the formation of a curate under the guidance of an experienced rector for three years. Our former curate, who also served faithfully during the first part of the rector transition period, has now been called as rector of St. Stephen's in Troy. In all these transitions in ministry, St. John's is known for showing up, celebrating with joy and gratitude those we have been privileged to form and support.

Currently, three members of our parish are going through the discernment process, patiently trusting God's plan. Through these shared journeys, St. John's grows as a place of learning, vocation, and spiritual formation for all.

# *Ministries*

The foundation of learning and discernment at St. John's guides how we live our ministry within our community and the world.



## **Welcome and Hospitality**

From offering directions to assisting in accessibility for all, our greeters, ushers, and newcomer ministers embody the spirit of radical welcome that defines St. John's. Our newcomer ministers help each person feel seen and known. These ministries receive regular training in hospitality, safety, and accessibility.

## **Children and Families**

Children are at the heart of our community. We offer Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, youth group gatherings, intergenerational events, and Bouncing Youth Group in collaboration with other parishes in our deanery to foster friendship and learning among our youngest members. St. John's is currently in a time of transition in our Children and Family Ministry, supported by the Diocese and a dedicated team of volunteer teachers. We believe children belong everywhere in our church. Their voices and presence are celebrated in worship, whether they sit with family in the pews, explore the soft area of the sanctuary, or read from the children's library in the narthex. This approach, shaped by our families, creates a truly welcoming environment for all ages.



# *Ministries*

## **Fellowship and Community Life:**

Community is one of St John's strongest expressions of faith. The Fellowship Committee coordinates parish-wide events and celebrations. Our earlier Sunday service ends weekly with a coffee hour that many describe as legendary. First Sunday Breakfast gathers monthly after the later service, inviting our parish to share a meal and strengthen relationships. The 20s and 30s Group connects our younger adults for conversation and meaningful fellowship. Dinner groups bring together different people to the same table for food and friendship. The LGBTQ+ Ministry gathers around Pride and special events, offering a welcoming space for connection and support. The Day Trippers, The Book Club, and Meditation Group create space for community and grounding. The Hiking Group encourages us to connect with the Divine in nature. Weekday gatherings, such as Coffee with a Cause and Card Ministry, are places to gather, complete parish projects, and extend care through handwritten notes. Our ministries invite people into meaningful relationships and service.



## **Community Involvement and Justice:**

We believe faith is alive when in action, and through our work, we hope to build a more just and compassionate community. Faith in Justice brings parishioners together to pray and act for social change through the lens of our faith. In 2022, two of our members helped establish the Royal Oak Human Rights Commission.

Today, St. John's continues to be an active presence there, with parishioners serving as advocates for equity and inclusion within our city.

# *Ministries*

## [Open Hands Food Pantry and Garden](#)

one of St. John's longest-standing outreach ministries and now an independent nonprofit, feeds over sixteen thousand people facing food insecurity each year. Faithful parishioners and volunteers from across the community give their time to sort food, prepare bags, and tend the garden that provides fresh produce for distribution. Every two weeks, food distribution fills our parish parking lot with energy and generosity. Through Open Hands, we live out our baptismal promise to serve Christ in all people and to love our neighbors as ourselves.



## [The New To You Shop \(NTY\)](#)

founded by St. John's, operates as a thrift store dedicated to affordability, community, and creation care. Volunteers receive and organize donations, provide affordable goods, and model sustainable living practices through the reuse and reduction of waste. NTY contributes financially to St. John's and shares proceeds with local organizations working for justice, housing, and environmental causes.

# *Ministries*

## **Our Facilities:**

Our spaces also serve the broader community throughout the week. Mon Ami Daycare and Nursery brings families into our building each day, and several 12-step recovery groups meet in our parish spaces for healing and support. Our hall and commercial kitchen are rented by small food businesses that often grow to open their own establishments. These partnerships demonstrate that every part of our campus serves as a tool for ministry, a place where people find nourishment, restoration, and hope.

In collaboration with our facilities coordinator and sextons, the maintenance committee oversees the care of our buildings and grounds, ensuring they remain safe, welcoming, and beautiful. In the same spirit, Honey Doers gather seasonally for community workdays.

In all these ministries, St John's seeks to live out the call to love God and neighbor, turning faith into action and community into a reflection of God's kingdom.



# OUR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

At St. John's, we are forging a new path with faith, courage, and a deep sense of possibility. We know that God is calling us to grow—not only in numbers, but in spirit, purpose, and love. As we enter a new chapter in our shared ministry, we see both the challenges before us and the rich opportunities they hold for renewal and transformation.



Our foremost priority is to grow our congregation in ways that strengthen the fabric of our community and secure our future. We hope to welcome new people of all ages and backgrounds, with particular attention to youth and families, while continuing to nurture and support the members who already call St. John's home. We seek to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for reaching new people and fully incorporating them into the life of our parish.

# OUR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

We are also committed to maintaining and enriching our existing ministries—the heart of who we are. This includes supporting programs of worship, formation, service, and pastoral care, and expanding opportunities for meaningful connection. Our challenge is to achieve broader participation and engagement of the congregation in these efforts, particularly in the post-COVID reality that people are reprioritizing how they spend time across all domains. We envision new ways for parishioners to form relationships —through small groups, shared meals, retreats, and intentional spaces for fellowship and friendship.



Over the past 5-7 years, St. John's has fully transitioned from a pastoral-size church to a program-sized church. We recognize the importance of growing our leadership and staffing competencies to fully reflect our current needs. We hope to strengthen both clergy and lay leadership, ensuring that our ministries are supported by capable, collaborative teams. We also recognize the need to care for our physical space with a robust facilities management plan and budget allocations. Ongoing facilities management and maintenance are essential to preserving our aging but beautiful and historic campus as a welcoming place for worship and community.

# OUR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

Achieving these goals will require a renewed emphasis on stewardship—inviting parishioners to share their time, talent, and treasure in support of our mission. While our overall financial position is relatively strong, the current rate of growth in our annual pledge commitments is not enough to offset increasing costs and adequate staffing compensation. Further, a significant portion of our revenue is driven through building rentals, which can be volatile. We need a robust plan to increase financial participation and fundraising to address these concerns.

Finally, we hope to deepen our engagement with the wider community of Royal Oak and beyond. By strengthening partnerships and living our faith more visibly in the world, we can extend our impact, embody our values, and draw others into the joyful life we share at St. John's.

Collectively, these efforts will require a robust strategic plan and an inspiring leader who can lead our congregation to face these opportunities and challenges.

# OUR NEXT LEADER

As St. John's moves forward with faith into this new chapter, we pray for a Rector whose faith compels them to recognize God's goodness in all people, with a heart for service, rooted in a spiritual life that is inspiring.

We long for someone with a compelling vision, grounded in compassion and love.

Our parish survey and community conversations reveal what we seek in our next priest: a pastor at heart, authentic, caring, and approachable; a strong leader with a passion for working with teams, empowering others, and delegating effectively; a person gifted in administration, stewardship, and fundraising. We seek a priest who preaches with clarity and depth, connecting faith to everyday life in a meaningful way.



# OUR NEXT LEADER



Forming clergy and lay leaders has enriched our spiritual life, and we look forward to a rector willing to continue our legacy as a teaching congregation, viewing formation as a shared ministry of the whole church.

We pray for a pastor who will inspire us to grow in generosity of time, talent, and treasure, as joyful participants in God's mission—a faithful steward of our resources who can remind us to align our gifts with our calling consistently.

Finally, we pray for a rector who is both courageous and humble, a person who listens deeply, and carries a heart for justice, someone who sees the Gospel as a call to restore our lives, communities, and all creation to God. We hope for a leader with an open heart and mind, one who is hopeful and eager to engage our wider community, someone who will help us proclaim, through word and action, that God's love truly knows no bounds.

At St. John's, we understand ministry as a shared journey.

We seek not just a rector to lead us but someone to walk in faith alongside us.

# WHY ST. JOHN'S? *Mission Statement*

As members of the family of St. John's and followers of our Savior, Jesus Christ, we strive individually and collectively to grow and act as a Christian faith community.



Being God's stewards, we seek: To remain open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit as the world changes; to celebrate the diversity of all God's people; to communicate within and outside our immediate church family; to be mindful of our role as caretakers of ourselves, our community, and all God's creation; to provide a nurturing and caring environment for all; to take action to carry out God's challenges; and to welcome all persons to join in celebrating the joy and excitement in this carrying out of God's love.

# WHY ST. JOHN'S? *Our Church*



At St John's, you'll find an open-hearted and vibrant community, diverse in background, faith journey, and experience, yet united in purpose. We are a parish that strives to keep growing our love for God, our community, and our neighbors. Our people bring curiosity, depth, joy, and compassion to all we do.

We have a long history of curates serving on our clergy staff. As a teaching congregation, St. John's received diocesan funding to support a curate for three years. This opportunity was both a blessing and a responsibility that we took to heart. We hope to continue this ministry with our future rector as part of a calling to form and send forth both lay and ordained leaders, creating space for growth and discernment while equipping people to serve the wider Church faithfully. Our congregation views this as an important ministry.

We are a progressive parish in a progressive diocese, committed to listening to the Holy Spirit and faithfully following Her call to bring the margins to the center, honoring the dignity of every person. We hope for a rector who will help us to stay true to this commitment and challenge us to live it more deeply.

# WHY ST. JOHN'S? *Our Region*

Serving at St. John's means becoming part of a thriving parish and a dynamic region that blends history, creativity, and renewal. [Royal Oak](#) is a welcoming, walkable community in the heart of metro Detroit, known for its tree-lined neighborhoods, excellent schools, and active civic life. It's a place where families flourish, friendships form easily, and community engagement runs deep.

Just a few miles south, Detroit itself is experiencing a remarkable renaissance. As the New York Times noted in two recent articles, this is a city that "has seen tough times—but Detroit always rises again." The downtown area has been transformed, with a vibrant residential core, new restaurants, an award-winning riverfront, and cultural landmarks that celebrate both Detroit's legacy and its future (["36 Hours in Detroit"](#) and ["Downtown Detroit Is Back," NYT](#)).



Life here offers a rich mix of beauty and culture: world-class museums (including the Detroit Institute of Arts and The Henry Ford / Greenfield Village); the Detroit Symphony Orchestra; numerous theater, opera, comedy, and dance venues; a thriving indie music scene; and all four major professional sports teams (not to mention soccer's DCFC and the soon-to-arrive WNBA team). The region's parks and many lakes invite rest and recreation in every season, while its people embody a spirit of resilience, hospitality, and innovation.

Metro Detroit's progressive values and commitment to inclusion align closely with St. John's own mission of justice and welcome. The area in and around [Oakland County](#) offers outstanding healthcare systems, a hospitable climate—both environmentally and socially—and easy global access through Detroit Metropolitan Airport, a major Delta hub.

# WHY ST. JOHN'S? *Our Diocese*

St. John's is part of the [Episcopal Diocese of Michigan](#), a diverse and collaborative group of parishes in the southeastern part of our state, committed to embracing our neighbors with the unconditional love of Christ.

We are blessed to be shepherded by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Bonnie Perry, whose ministry reflects pastoral care and joyful leadership. Bishop Bonnie regularly visits her congregations, and we have also welcomed her at events like our Christmas Pageant. She is often joined by her spouse, Susan, who also serves on the board of Open Hands, and Tali, the Canine to the Ordinary.



For clergy discerning a call, St. John's offers the best of both worlds: a spiritually grounded, socially engaged parish community, set within a city and region alive with opportunity, energy, and hope for the future.

The College for Congregational Development (CCD) equips clergy and laypeople with the tools to foster healthier, more faithful, and effective congregations; several from St. John's have graduated from or are currently participating in this program.

From the Bouncing Youth Group in our deanery, to the shared Director of Family & Youth Ministries position with St. James, Birmingham, and our active participation in the Diocesan Youth Council, St. John's shows our creative commitment to engage our younger generations and our spirit of inter-parish and diocesan cooperation.

Our Diocese also collaborates on youth events with the Diocese of the Great Lakes (the other Episcopal diocese in Michigan's lower peninsula) at Camp Chickagami, as well as with our ELCA siblings. These partnerships are a witness of the way we live as part of God's universal Church.

# CALL TO DISCERNMENT

We invite you to discern with us and hear where the Holy Spirit is calling us next.



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) or mail: 4800 Woodward Ave, Detroit, MI 48201. It is very helpful 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 are at the candidate's discretion.
2. A current resume.
3. A .pdf of the candidate's current Office of Transition Ministries Portfolio, including answers to all of the narrative questions.



**189**

*Average Sunday  
ATTENDANCE*



**2**

BURIALS



**10**

BAPTISMS



**11,609**

*Items Sold at  
NEW TO YOU  
Thrift Shop*



AT A GLANCE

2024



**2**

CONFIRMATIONS



**16,000**

*People Served at  
OPEN HANDS  
Food Pantry*



**169**

PLEDGING  
HOUSEHOLDS



**\$2,593**

PER PLEDGE