



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Sep 23, 2021)

St Stephen's Episcopal Church, North Carolina

82 Kimberly Drive, Durham, NC 27707, United States

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 10/17/21.

Weekly Average Sunday Attendance (ASA)	Number of Weekend Worship Services	Number of Weekday Worship Services	Number of Other per Month Worship Services
81	1	1	
Current Annual Compensation	Cash Stipend	Housing / Rectory Detail	Utilities
\$106000			
SECA reimbursement	Compensation Available for New Position	Housing Available for	Pension Plan
	\$106000		We're in compliance with CPF requirements.
Healthcare Options Clergy+1	Dental	Housing Equity Allowance in budget	Annual Equity Amount
	Yes		
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

Percentage of family health plan is negotiable.

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

In the Fall of 2018, we had great success with an intergenerational outreach activity that arose from a formative focus on love. Sunday School children were asked to describe an urgent need for the community, did some research, and learned that socks are the most requested item needed by homeless shelters. They then organized and led a sock drive, getting all of the parish engaged. The drive ended when a truckload of new socks was delivered to Urban Ministries in Durham. It was a great synergy of formation, outreach, worship, parish and community. The pandemic revealed to us new ways to connect with each other and support our worshipping community virtually. Parishioners and staff learned to ZOOM, and this became a vital tool for our established Bible studies. A church is a gathering of people and this was a way to make that happen, to keep things together during a difficult time. In response to ongoing local food insecurity, the Mission & Outreach committee recently sponsored a food drive with a goal of 200 lbs of food donations for Urban Ministries. The drive ended with 500+ lbs of food. When needed, St. Stephen's is a congregation that shows up with resources and participation.

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

Communication: Our SSEC website was recently updated and launched in December 2020. We moved to a more user-friendly platform (Squarespace) that enables us to make updates more easily and frequently. SSEC has a presence on a variety of social platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn with emphasis on the first two) with active and consistent posting and engagement. Services are available online through livestreaming and archived via Vimeo enabling participation for those who are unable to join us in person for whatever reason. This also provides an avenue for those considering attending SSEC to see what worship is like. We are striving for a deep integration of all these digital media and communications efforts, so that St. Stephen's has a clear and accessible online presence that is both reflective of and rooted in what happens on campus. In other words, we're trying to embrace and move toward a hybrid future. **Campus:** An active Property Committee is working through a comprehensive plan to improve our grounds and address problematic areas. With 14 acres, SSEC has the space and potential for growth and new missions.

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

outgoing, compassionate, transparent, humble, joyful

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

Our liturgical style and practice is traditional “broad church” form, following the Book of Common Prayer and generally using the 1982 Hymnal. Pre-pandemic, we offered an 8:00 AM Rite I service without music followed by a 10:30 AM Rite II service with music. We also offered a Thursday Eucharist followed by lunch. Currently, we offer a single service on Sunday with music, and is now live-streamed! Children’s Chapel is offered during the Sunday sermon. The Thursday service is now being held via ZOOM as Noonday prayer. We have youth-led services multiple times a year. Music, especially traditional music, has always and continues to be a large part of our style and practice. We have a beautiful Flentrop organ and have been blessed with many brilliant musicians among our staff and congregants. Our Music Director of many years has recently retired. The Music Director was also the organist and was assisted by our Choir Director. We intend to hire an interim organist, leaving the decision for a permanent Music Director to the new Rector. The present Choir Director will act as the Music Director until that selection is made.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

We at St. Stephen’s (SSEC) are eager to grow spiritually through relationships with each other. This has been a continuing desire for our parishioners as identified in a 2014 Strategic Plan Initiative, a 2018 Renewal Works survey, and in our recent listening sessions for the Rector search. Our abundance of spiritual ministries is an excellent way to encourage participation and growth as a church family. The Christian Education and Mission & Outreach committees provide numerous opportunities to serve. We make these known through our weekly bulletin, announcements during worship services, and by individual invitations from ministry leaders. A few examples are Ushers, Greeters, Choir, Lay Readers, Eucharistic Ministers, Acolytes, and Altar Guild. We include children whenever possible. At the present time, our interaction with new and younger members is lacking, and some committees and ministries have struggled to remain engaged and active during the pandemic. This is especially true when it comes to participation outside the church service. A small group of engaged parishioners carry out the lion’s share of laity tasks as we begin to meet again after the pandemic closure.

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

Worship services focusing on the Holy Eucharist empower parishioners to address the challenges of everyday life. Eucharistic ministers make visits to homebound parishioners bringing the sacrament and the bulletin to those who would otherwise be unable to receive it, along with flowers from the altar to brighten their day. SSEC provides numerous opportunities for Christian formation including regular Sunday School and Bible studies as well as special programs and interactive experiences. An unfinished example from early 2020 is a parish-wide program entitled Creative Belonging, developed by our Director of Education, which used a theo-aesthetic approach to create ways to draw us closer to God and to one another. It focused on creating the conditions for belonging in order to build and sustain a community across lines of difference, especially race. Our 14-acre campus offers many locations for quiet contemplation and physical activity. It includes an outdoor chapel, meditation trail, Stations of the Cross, labyrinth, Memorial Garden, playground and basketball court. These areas of the campus provide parishioners and our neighbors a peaceful center in an urbanizing area.

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

SSEC actively supports Urban Ministries, Housing for New Hope and Habitat for Humanity. Whether serving food, donating money, or working alongside those in our community, SSEC is making an impact. Each spring, SSEC provides Easter baskets to local children's hospitals. These baskets go to patients to show Christ's love and lift their spirits. Our reception desk volunteers direct visitors to a variety of social services. We have traditionally served lunch after our Thursday noonday service, where all are welcome. Since 1962, SSEC had passionately operated and supported a ½ day preschool, which many parishioners and their children attended. Open to all of Durham, it was a safe place where children in our community could come to learn with a faith-based approach. In July of 2021 the Vestry made the incredibly difficult decision to close the school, leaving a void in our body that needs filling. Whether that is with another attempt at a preschool or a fresh approach to our community's needs is unclear. SSEC is taking time to mourn and discuss how we should move forward. Our next Rector should play a role in this decision.

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

SSEC has local and international outreach initiatives including Housing for New Hope, Urban Ministries of Durham and Durham Congregations in Action. These programs reach those homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in Durham; provide shelter for the homeless and programs to help people transition from homelessness to independent living. We gather food and clothing for the Food Pantry, the Clothing Closet and the Community Kitchen. SSEC volunteers routinely assist Urban Ministries of Durham to prepare and distribute food to the needy. The international reach has encompassed medical mission trips to Honduras. The Duke Divinity School allows SSEC to be a religious home for one or two seminarians each year. This exchange allows SSEC to experience fresh theological minds and the seminarians return to their own geographic homes with practical experience. St. Stephen's has sponsored a popular and financially independent concert series for the last 25 years. The 5 concerts include the Frank Kenan Memorial organ recital. All are generally followed by a festive reception. These concerts are well attended by people throughout the community.

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

Accessibility Ministry During the pandemic we recognized a need for an "Accessibility Ministry." A concerted effort has been made to make participation more accessible. Virtual services allowed continued parishioner engagement and involvement when unable to be physically present. Challenges presented by COVID restrictions spurred us to find new ways to engage, and pre-recorded virtual services have now evolved into live-streamed services. Communications Ministry A spin-off effect from work to be more connective has been a focus on communications, and new efforts have grown, including a revamped e-newsletter, renewed social media campaign, home faith kits, and a new staff position. Thinking about worship more expansively led us to find ways to get more people of all ages involved. Community Fellowship Events and projects of recent years may expand into an evolving ministry around community fellowship. Previous projects include an Oktoberfest, a Valentine Dance, church yard sales & auctions, and an Eagle Scout project that utilized QR codes to provide information about church history and landmarks along the Meditation Trail. Committee chairs can be contacted for information.

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

St. Stephen's is blessed by two funds which help secure our future. The first is called the St. Stephen's Foundation, which was established early in the life of the parish. It funds maintenance of the Nave, including its stained glass, the organ, and the music program. The second is called the St. Stephen's Durham Endowment which can be used more broadly. However, the existence of these accounts may cause some parishioners to be less committed to support the parish through the annual pledge campaign. The 2021 pledge campaign fell considerably from previous years and has left the parish in serious shortage. To address this before the end of the year, the congregation has been asked to give more. So far, the congregation is responding, and we expect that the need will be met. As have many other parishes, St. Stephen's experienced 2021 campaign effects from the pandemic and lockdown. For the 2022 Fall pledge campaign, we intend to emphasize the sacramental aspects of a pledge. We hope that our new rector will embrace our parish life and lead us in giving time, talent and treasure.

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

Personnel management has been a major area of conflict and distress for our parish. In the history of the church there have been multiple instances of sudden staff dismissals that led to congregants leaving the parish. For remaining congregants, there has been a sense of bewilderment, as they did not know or understand the reason for the unexpected changes. In some ways our parish community has not yet recovered and is looking for an opportunity to heal. Another area of conflict has stemmed from addressing uncomfortable topics. Although some congregants appreciate sermons that include controversial topics (e.g., racism, politics, current events), some others disagree. Congregants have generally appreciated the opportunity for discussions outside of liturgical services such as during Sunday School, Book Clubs, Adult Formation, Bible Studies and other special programs. A lack of transparency into multiple areas of the church has caused frustration for parishioners and Vestry members. SSEC would benefit from a rector who is a strong communicator, who will empower the vestry through open collaboration and who will encourage and develop lay leaders within the congregation.

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 community feels that change has gone well when people have chances for their voice to be heard. For example, listening sessions prior to the Episcopal Church recognizing same-sex marriages in 2003 gave people a forum to discuss this major change. Change has gone poorly when there have been sudden unexplained changes in staff. Difficulties have also occurred when people are involved in committees or activities in conflict with their position or relationship to the church. Historically, SSEC has done an excellent job with planning around change or improvements but has struggled with implementation. For instance, SSEC conducted a Strategic Planning effort in 2014 and a Renewal Works plan in 2018 where many issues and opportunities were identified. While some changes and improvements have been made, SSEC still suffers from lack of execution in some important areas of our parish life.



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Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
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Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
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Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
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Preschool was in operation from 1962 to July of 2021.

Church School yes	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School 2	Number of Students for Children School 20
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Number of Teachers/Leaders for Teen/Young Adults School 2	Number of Students for Teen/Young Adults School 5	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Adults School 3	Number of Students for Adults School 30
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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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Worshipping Community Web site: <https://www.ssecdurham.org/>

Media Links:

> <https://www.facebook.com/ssecdurham>
> <https://twitter.com/ssecdurham?lang=en>

Online References:

> <https://vimeo.com/ssecdurham>
> <https://www.instagram.com/ssecdurham/>

Languages Significantly Represented:

Provide Worship or Classes in:

References

Bishop:

919-834-7474 sam.rodman@episdionc.org

**The Rt. Rev. Samuel E.
Rodman**

Diocesan Transition Minister

919-834-7474 catherine.massey@episdionc.org

Canon Catherine Massey

Current Warden/Board Chair

Mr. Ian Shearer

Previous Warden/Board Chair

Search Chair

Mr. Michael Brewer

Parish/Institution

Local Community Leader