

Parish Profile

St. John's Episcopal Church

123 N. Michigan Avenue, Saginaw, MI 48602

Who We Are



St. John's Episcopal Church in Old Town Saginaw, Michigan has been serving Christ for 170 years as a congregation that is committed to caring, sharing, worshiping, celebrating, and loving.

We are:

- Proud of our Anglican heritage and accepting of all
- Supportive of each other: median age 60 plus; 95% white
- Established in our city and expanding service to our local community



Our Strengths and Challenges



Worship: Each week we offer one service on Sunday (Rite II) in our inspiring, beautiful nave. A core of members participates in worship by serving as ushers, lectors, acolytes, eucharistic ministers, altar guild, and choir. In the absence of a rector, our staff of three Assistants to the Rector—one for Liturgy and Music (our choir director and organist), one for Pastoral Care, and one for Christian Formation—lead worship and assist various supply

clergy. We use the traditional Book of Common Prayer and the 1982 Hymnal. The Choir supports the congregation in song as well as by singing a weekly anthem.

Our music program is strong and vital, with exceptional leadership. We would like more youth engagement in the liturgy, and to that end have held a recent “boot camp” for young members



to learn the various active roles they can take in worship. We hold weekly devotions at our local university, Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU), and could perhaps strengthen those ties.

Christian formation: During the school year we offer Sunday School to young children during the first part of the Sunday service, and Youth Group one evening a week. Various programs for adults have been established that support people at all places along their spiritual journeys with education and discussion. These are ready to be reinvigorated.

Community: Our membership consists of individuals, multigenerational families, and members of the LGBTQ+ community who consistently give of their time, talents, and treasure. We welcome all.



Outreach: A dedicated group of people from the congregation plans and participates in a monthly food give-away that feeds 75 families in the Saginaw community. It functions well with very active support, although we could coordinate more with similar efforts of other organizations in our area. We would also like to expand our outreach to include the educational and social needs of our neighbors, which would help us to use our physical spaces to the betterment of our community.





Building: Our beautiful historic building with large stained-glass windows is accessible to all, with an elevator to the narthex that was installed in 2010. The worship space seats approximately 180 people. People enter the church through our spacious community room which is used for our fellowship events. The church buildings are also increasingly utilized by outside organizations for meetings and musical rehearsals. Adjoining our Community Room is a 3-story building which houses newly renovated children’s formation rooms, offices of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan, and offices of the St. John’s church staff.



Naturally, our historic building needs regular maintenance. Some of the stained-glass windows have recently been refurbished, and the original slate roof was repaired in 2020-21. A new boiler was installed in 2020, and portable air conditioners keep the sanctuary pleasant during the summer. Our organ had extensive work done around twenty years ago.



Other Challenges:

Our largest challenge is growing and maintaining the Church’s congregation and making our Church relevant to the community in which it resides.

In our church’s long history, Saginaw has gone from being the center of the lumber industry in the 1800s to the center of the automobile industry in the 1900s, and it has now become the healthcare hub for the region. The population of Saginaw County has fluctuated in response to

the economic changes, and is now 188,000 (from the ESRI Community Profile). The church is located in Saginaw city, hence the “Old Town” in our name. “Old Town Saginaw” is a historic district with many signs of revitalization despite the tough economic times. Most members of our congregation live not in the immediate neighborhood but in surrounding communities. Saginaw city is racially and culturally diverse, but our congregation does not reflect that; we would like it to change. Many of our parishioners have been members for many years and several generations, but some members are new, drawn to the Episcopal Church, and especially *this* Church, by its welcoming stance. We recognize that families with young children are our lifeblood and we wish to attract and keep more young families from Saginaw City and the local townships.

Skills & Characteristics We Seek in our Next Rector

St. John’s is seeking a rector with strengths in relationship building and community outreach, who respects parishioners’ preferences for traditional worship styles, and who supports people of diverse lifestyles.

We are looking for a rector who values building and strengthening relationships, both internally in the congregation and externally in the community. This includes both the local community and those people who can be reached through our digital ministry. The rector will uphold and promote our welcoming of all people, including LGBTQ+ persons, and guide us in increasing the diversity of the congregation. The rector will have an interest in congregational growth in all areas, including families with young children.

The congregation values the weekly sermon and desires a rector who is a good public speaker who is able to give clear and concise messages to make the Word relatable and relevant. They should also be comfortable being informally accessible to the congregation and willing to listen. The rector should possess a personal vision of outreach that can be fitted to our local circumstances and a desire to become an integral part of our community.

Our City and Surrounding Area



Michigan is a beautiful place with cities, small towns, big lakes, small lakes, dunes, and many beaches. We have four seasons and sporting activities for each one. We exemplify the 'friendly Midwest'. Our State is shaped like a



mitten, and we hold up our hand to give directions! You will find Saginaw centrally located between the thumb and forefinger of your left hand, very near the Saginaw Bay of Lake Huron, one of the Great Lakes. It is a short drive 'downstate' to the metropolitan areas of Detroit and Grand Rapids or 'up north' where tourists flock to enjoy our natural wonders and friendly towns.



In 1966 Simon and Garfunkel called us to 'look for America' in Saginaw. Saginaw is an ethnically diverse city of 43,000 (2020 census) with surrounding townships, smaller towns, and farmlands. Saginaw County's population is 188,000. Many members of St. John's Church live in the surrounding areas such as Saginaw Township, Frankenmuth, Freeland, Hemlock and Bay City. Frankenmuth, a German heritage town, is a tourist attraction with restaurants and waterparks.

Those areas, as well as the city, have award-winning school systems, and boast a range of International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement classes as well as strong arts and athletic programs. St. John's Church is located in historic Old Town, a 12-block historic district with coffee shops, diners, boutique shopping, and restaurants. Formerly a lumbering capital, then a world headquarters for General Motors, Saginaw now enjoys a growing medical services industry with two hospital systems and Central Michigan University's College of Medicine leading medical education. The area maintains one large automotive assembly plant and has several small manufacturing facilities. Delta College, a large community college, and Saginaw Valley State University are located nearby.

The attractions of Saginaw are many! We enjoy affordable housing and a low cost of living. The SVRC Marketplace has been open for several years offering a variety of restaurants, shops, and an outdoor farmers' market. Our Dow Event Center has a 2,200-seat theater and a 7,000-seat arena (home to the Saginaw Spirit, our OHL Hockey team). We also have an outdoor amphitheater and the historic Temple Theater located in our downtown area, with the Saginaw

River running past. Nearby Celebration Square hosts many cultural events. Enjoy visiting our accredited Saginaw Children's Zoo, the Japanese Cultural Center and Tea House, the historic Castle Museum, the Saginaw Art Museum, the Anderson Enrichment Center, Ojibway Island, Garber Tennis and Pickleball Courts, and over 540 acres of park systems which include Haithco beach, several splash pads, and a large skate park as well as rail trails to bike and hike, and rivers for fishing and boating. We have community festivals, parades and fireworks on holidays.



The Castle Museum, Saginaw, Michigan