



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Jun 30, 2021)

St. Margaret's, Maine

95 Court St, Belfast, ME 04915, United States

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge (Part-time) | Receiving Names until 08/02/21 | inambler@episcopalmaine.org

Weekly Average Sunday Attendance (ASA)	Number of Weekend Worship Services	Number of Weekday Worship Services	Number of Other per Month Worship Services
46	2	0	0
Current Annual Compensation	Cash Stipend	Housing / Rectory Detail	Utilities
SECA reimbursement	Compensation Available for New Position	Housing Available for	Pension Plan
	\$48375		We're in compliance with CPF requirements.
Healthcare Options	Dental	Housing Equity Allowance in budget	Annual Equity Amount
Full family	Yes		
Vacation Weeks	Vacation Weeks Details	Continuing Education Weeks	Continuing Education Weeks Details
4		2 (standard)	
Continuing Education Funding in budget	Sabbatical Provision	Travel/Auto Account	Other Professional Account
\$501-\$1000/year	Yes	Yes	

CPG assessable compensation = \$32,250 for 1/2 time, \$48,375 for 3/4 time

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

At St. Margaret's we have an annual Blessing of the Animals every fall. Here, Chris Quigley talks about how this event brought her to regular attendance (and becoming a Vestry member!) at our church: "When I first came to Belfast I was hoping to find a church where the people made me feel welcome and had similar views on being a true Christian. After bringing my dogs to the blessing, I was invited to come the next day. I stated that I was raised as a Lutheran. I was told that St. Margaret's has parishioners representing several different backgrounds. The people were friendly and welcoming. I did notice that the congregation consisted of many people my age or older. I went to Coffee Hour afterward. That's where I became "hooked" on St. Margaret's. I spoke with and listened to a variety of interesting people. What impressed me was that the congregation is composed of people with such rich background stories, and they still participate in activities which benefit others. I think that what inspires me the most is that the parishioners of St. Margaret's are not only Sunday Christians. They behave in a Christian way on a daily basis. They serve others and do not judge."

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

The St. Margaret's we know today is already evolving to reflect trends rippling from the greater church and churches in general. After a year like we had in 2020 and spilling into 2021, we know that among the things we have learned and will likely take with us into our future state, is a greater ease with online and streaming technology as a useful supplement when needed for ministry, education and fellowship. Additionally, we see and are nurturing a steady and exciting rise in lay leadership. Whether regularly stepping to the lectern to deliver a sermon or homily, leading adult education or calling out to a shut-in, those with special needs or anyone nursing pain or a life change, we have commitments by many to be the church in these moments. The discernment process we are using to call a new priest is itself a way for the parish to examine itself and re-imagine who we are called to be at this time and going forward. A recent Sunday Zoom call with members gave ample evidence of our passion for engagement including recognition of small group gatherings as a way to meet our diverse interests; Care groups, Morning Prayer, compline, knitting, adult education and many more.

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

visionary, empathic, sense of humor, anchored

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

"Here is the Church, here is the steeple, open the door and see all the people". A parishioner includes the nursery rhyme describing his first visit to St. Margaret's. The rhyme is a metaphor for what he and his wife experienced. Finding this intimate, eminently approachable, neighborhood church led to an open door and the openhearted people found inside. It was a human scaled place that welcomed them warmly and authentically that day. St. Margaret's status as an inviting, village church is further invoked through the style and substance of its worship. Like wiggling fingers from a children's rhyme, parishioners sit closely, creating togetherness and celebrating a liturgy that is not rigid, yet rooted in tradition. A love of music permeates, shown through an active choir and enthusiastic participation from members. Parishioners certainly enjoy an impactful sermon, but don't rely solely on leadership from the pulpit. With a dynamic cross-section of motivated members, lay leadership is sought out and nurtured. Whether in the conduct of Sunday service, community outreach or educational offerings, the church benefits from active lay participation in all facets of parish life.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

Amanda's Story: Her St. Margaret's story starts two generations ago when her grandfather, quite literally, walked into a church service as a young boy. He found solace from a difficult home life, felt a sense of comfort and later in life a calling to serve. He served as usher and sexton for years. "I remember coming to the church early Sunday mornings to salt the walkways in the winter. My father followed his father's path and served as usher and cup minister. I was encouraged as a young child to participate in worship which fostered my sense of ownership even as a young child. St. Margaret's has perfected the "art of the ask." New lay roles have developed recently, and St. Margaret's parishioners have answered the call. These new roles include Zoom operators, lay worship leaders and preachers. An example of this is when we had a class for people interested in becoming Eucharistic visitors and 10 people answered the call. My children have also been encouraged and have participated in worship through serving as acolytes and reading. St. Margaret's "art of the ask" extends beyond worship and is our way of welcoming and including newcomers in worship and fellowship."

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

Knitting is just one way we care for the many facets of our life and work together whether in-person or virtually. Pre-pandemic, Knit the Community met in the parish library bi-weekly. Now it meets virtually. Spanning the age spectrum, those that gather - and they may or may not be St. Margaret parishioners - offer a supportive community in ways practical - how do you do brioche stitch? - to spiritual and emotional as life stories are shared over yarn turned into beautiful handiworks. Twice a year there is an all-day Knit-a-thon. A local non-profit is identified as the recipient of funds raised and people get sponsors for the time they knit. KnitMaine-ia, the group's annual fashion show fundraiser, highlights the community's handiworks and funds raised benefit New Hope for Women, a local domestic abuse treatment center. A yarn bombed bicycle stands outside the function room, a homage to the fun and creative spirit inside. Prayer shawls have been made, blessed and stored under the altar, available as needed. The parish sent one shawl to the Tree of Life synagogue in Pennsylvania after the 2018 shooting, along with a handwritten note from the parish.

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

We are especially involved in two local organizations: The Game Loft, founded by two of our parishioners as a “a place for kids to meet and play games” has since morphed into a place for teens to gather, eat, play non-electronic games and “has become a model for independence, creative vision, and community involvement.” St. Margaret’s has funded various endeavors and parishioners have volunteered on many different levels -making casseroles of tasty food on Foodie Friday or being a member and mentor on a middle or high-schooler’s Circles of Care Board. Many of these commitments have lasted upward of five years. We have a special relationship with Restorative Justice and the Mid-Coast Re-Entry Center, a residential program providing support for an inmate’s successful re-entry into the community. Pre-COVID we held monthly board games evenings where parishioners interacted through games, chat, and snacks with as many as 10 or 12 men; some of them also attend our International Potluck dinners. Our space is available for their circles and meetings and many of them go to AA meetings in our building. Twice a year we collect clothing for them, and in winter we collect hats and gloves.

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

St. Margaret’s parishioners are known throughout the community and beyond as “doers” and this is demonstrated by our active involvement as well as our generosity. The majority of our parishioners are involved in multiple community programs or activities. We have long been a member of the Greater Bay Area Ministerium ecumenical group which runs the local food bank and more. Members have been in leading roles and others always respond when there is a need for either volunteers or donations. Several members were instrumental in forming a Soap Closet to help provide toiletries to those in need. Our town hosts several fairs and festivals during the summer months and we’ve taken part in several of these by selling strawberry shortcakes, jerk chicken, or lemonade to raise funds for local needs. Our popular and “very proper” annual teas have drawn members of the community and beyond for decades and we have many return visitors year after year. We march with our special rainbow banner in the annual Pride Parade, we tutor students at the middle school, we are involved in Senior College and Hospice Volunteers. Some parishioners grow vegetables that are donated to the local Soup Kitchen.

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

St. Margaret’s Outreach Committee was awarded in 2019 a grant of \$5k from the Diocese to fund a new initiative “For Goodness Sake,” addressing food insecurity in Waldo County through a hands-on, family cooking experience. Coordinating with WCAP’s Headstart for Hunger (where Outreach Committee members had already been packing weekend food bags for some time) we identified families in need. Our program included educational segments on nutrition, shopping, meal preparation, and cooking skills in St Margaret’s kitchen for 5 sessions for up to 10 families. Because of the pandemic only three sessions were held and remaining \$ were returned to the Diocese. Support from the parish for these sessions including writing and editing the proposal, supplying recipes, hosting, entertaining children with snacks and music, and doing cooking demonstrations.

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

St. Margaret's has inviting architecture and parishioners who practice stewardship by sharing their time, talent and financial resources within the parish and larger community. Whether it's hosting international dinners or working at the community food pantry, people are actively engaged. Two years ago, the parish received an anonymous gift of \$500,000 to improve the physical plant. The Vestry commissioned an engineering review and prioritized projects. Contractors were vetted and the work has been done in a thoughtful, systematic fashion. As the pandemic raged, the parish literally was revitalized from the foundation up. The Vestry deliberated whether the Discernment Committee should search for a full or part-time rector. Given St. Margaret's active lay leadership and prudent approach fiscally, a unanimous decision involving the entire parish was made to seek a part-time rector.

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

Our parish experienced conflict during the short tenure of our last Rector. Issues arose between the Rector and the Vestry which were not apparent to the rest of the parish. When the rector preliminarily shared his intent to leave the parish, there was a clear level of shock and lack of understanding by many in the parish. The parish became divided between those who supported the Rector and those who did not, and a lack of transparency from the Vestry caused additional rifts. The Bishop and Canon to the Ordinary spoke with the parish several times, but the relationship between the Rector and the Vestry became increasingly estranged. Following his departure and the calling of a seasoned priest as Transitional-Priest-in-Charge for three years, the Vestry reached out to parishioners individually to hear their thoughts and concerns and vowed to maintain a transparent reporting of issues going forward. They did this by creating a special e-newsletter "from the Vestry," and making weekly announcements during worship.

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 vast majority of Episcopal churches in Maine now have part-time priests. Our current Priest in Charge is part-time. The Vestry wrestled with this question. We invited the parish to read the book *Part-time is Plenty* by Jeffrey McDonald and held a meeting to hear pros and cons of the Vestry's decision to call a part-time priest. The Vestry saw that part-time would offer more flexibility for the congregation with personnel and the annual budget. For a number of years, we attempted to attract young families. We tried an alternative Saturday service, offered child-care during Sunday services, and were welcoming to the few young families that showed up. However, we continue to attract people approaching retirement or newly relocated retirees from a variety of denominations. We also have a several retired clergy attending. Intellectual curiosity and professional history are often the backgrounds of those who join us. Over the past five years we find we are retaining our numbers. The demographics may change as many remote workers are moving to Maine since the start of the pandemic. We have learned that transparency and good communication are especially important.

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Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
John S. Nieman	Interim	2019-03	

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Tom Duplessie	Deacon	2004-06	2018-03

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Christopher Szarke	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	2015-07	2018-03

Church School	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School	Number of Students for Children School

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
			10

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: www.stmargaretsbelfast.org

Media Links:

Online References:

Languages Significantly Represented:

Provide Worship or Classes in:

References

Bishop: 207.772.1953 ext 125; tbrown@episcopalmaine.org

**The Rt. Rev. Thomas J
Brown**

Diocesan Transition Minister

**The Rev. Cn. Michael
Ambler**

1-207-233-7555 (mobile); 1-207-772-1953 ext 123 (office, for
post-pandemic); mambler@episcopalmaine.org

Current Warden/Board Chair

Previous Warden/Board Chair

Search Chair

Parish/Institution

Local Community Leader