



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Sep 28, 2022)

St. Matthew's By-the-Bridge Episcopal Church, Iowa

501 Railroad St., P.O. Box 206, Iowa Falls, IA 50126-0206, United States

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge (Part-time)

mwagner@iowaepiscopal.org

Weekly Average Sunday Attendance (ASA)	Number of Weekend Worship Services	Number of Weekday Worship Services	Number of Other per Month Worship Services
7	1		
Current Annual Compensation	Cash Stipend	Housing / Rectory Detail	Utilities
SECA reimbursement	Compensation Available for New Position	Housing Available for	Pension Plan
	\$35000	3	We're in compliance with CPF requirements.
Healthcare Options	Dental	Housing Equity Allowance in budget	Annual Equity Amount
Negotiable		Yes	\$7200
Vacation Weeks	Vacation Weeks Details	Continuing Education Weeks	Continuing Education Weeks Details
Other	3		
Continuing Education Funding in budget	Sabbatical Provision	Travel/Auto Account	Other Professional Account
		Yes	

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

After a two year hiatus because of Covid, we again offered our three concert Summer Organ Recital Series featuring talented organists from around the Nation and Europe. It is our principal outreach activity within the greater community. It again proved to be a success with financial support from three local charitable organizations, and better than expected attendance. Given our small congregation, the social impact on our community is encouraging and it is an outreach activity in which each of us can participate, support, and enjoy. We put on a well planned and well executed reception after each concert where the attendees can meet the visiting artist up close, and enjoy a scrumptious repast. The reception is well looked forward to and helps increase the attendance; the concert draws people not only from our county but from adjacent counties as well, most all of whom stay to visit and socialize with each other usually for over an hour. We are very pleased with the acceptance by the general public with the Series.

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

No one knows what the Episcopal Church of the future will be. We are concerned about the decline of Episcopal church membership nationally and locally, particularly among Generation Z, and about the current cultural shifts in the larger society. The Church will have to adapt to the changing demographics and widen its doors for all of humanity if it is to remain relevant, all to be done without sacrificing our theological principles, our sacred liturgy, and our Scriptural foundations. God help us.

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

pastoral care, community outreach, church growth, 1. Preaching

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

In a usual four Sunday month, we have two services of Morning Prayer (Rite I) and two Eucharistic celebrations (Rite II). Lay Ministers from the congregation lead the Morning Prayer services. One of the Eucharists is celebrated by a visiting supply priest; the other is with lay distribution using reserved Sacraments by Lay Eucharistic Ministers authorized to do so by the former Bishop of Iowa. Our style is traditional and formal. We utilize our members as acolytes, Lectors, and to lead the Prayers of the People. We employ two organists who share the organist duties. During Holy Week, we celebrate Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday (with the stations of the Cross), and, of course, a Joyful Easter Sunday. We also hold an Ash Wednesday evening service with the imposition of ashes. During Advent we hold a Service of Nine Lessons and Carols and invite non-member residents to read the Lessons and local musicians to join our own with strings and brass. The public is invited by newspaper ads and the event is well attended. It is also followed by one of our festive receptions.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

We believe that we are a very welcoming congregation; no visitor leaves without being introduced to and conversing with all of the members then present. Anyone is welcome to worship with us, we never exclude any person, and we always invite any visitor to join us in the Undercroft for coffee, juice, pastries, respectful wide-ranging discussions, friendly conversation, and good fellowship immediately after the service. Our coffee hours often become an extension of the worship service with continuing discussions on how we can apply the Lessons and the Sermon heard that day to our daily lives, to current events, to present day social and cultural issues, and to keep our members informed about each other's interests and viewpoints. Each and all of God's children are welcome to worship with us and to join our church family. We cannot be fairly described as either uppity or elite.

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

We intensely care for and about each other in our small congregation. Anyone who is suffering in any way receives emotional, spiritual, and prayerful support from everyone else. Copies of the Lessons and the Sunday Sermon are sent to the homebound members, and those in the hospital or care facilities are visited.

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

We take part in the local Meals on Wheels program signing up to deliver meals for a month at a time. Our members donate unneeded items to the local Thrift Store (operated by the local Church Women United Organization) and also help to staff the Store's retail operation. We keep a large laundry basket at the rear of the church to hold our gifts of food and paper products to help restock the local Food Pantry, and one Sunday a month the basket is brought forward to the Altar as an offering before being taken to the Food Pantry. In the past our priests have been active members of the Iowa Falls Ministerial Alliance, and we make a monthly monetary contribution to that group's work.

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

We participate in Diocese of Iowa events, including training sessions, and regional Chapter meetings. We send a delegate to the annual Diocesan Convention, have never missed paying our Diocesan Assessment in full, and try to stay up to date with what's happening within the National Church.

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

We have not started any new ministries within the last five years, but have continued and maintained (in the face of a dwindling membership) our outreach efforts delineated above. We have a new person attending our services who is an ordained Brazilian Baptist, and who has received our permission to use the church to conduct a Bible study group for other Brazilians to be conducted in Portuguese or Spanish or both.

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

Since we are a small congregation, there is no official pledge drive. We review our expenses for the previous year at a Bishop's Committee Meeting, and each person makes their personal decision of financial support. The collection plate is passed each week, and funds are received in it or checks given to our church treasurer. At the end of the year if there is any shortfall, the treasurer announces this and each member is invited to contribute. We always meet our current expenses and always pay our entire diocesan apportionment.

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

Disagreements are rare. Most decisions are arrived at by consensus or show of hands at periodic Bishop's Committee Meetings. If disagreements do occur, we try to resolve them on a personal basis. Only one disagreement in the past several years has not been resolved successfully in this manner.

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 local congregation has complied with all changes made at a national level. We have had several women priests, use both Rite I and II in the current prayer book, and gladly welcome all who wish to worship with us. Locally, we have arrived at covid restrictions for our worship by consensus and tried to follow the rules put forth by the diocese. Communication, reasons for changes, and consensus building seem to have worked for us.

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Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Nicola Bowler	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge (Part-time)	2019-08	2021-12

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Elliot Blackburn	Supply	2007-06	2018-06

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Netha Brada	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge (Part-time)	1994-09	2007-09

We have never had a Day School. Our Sunday morning Church School is currently not in session since our children have aged out of this activity. We do have two rooms of dedicated space for Sunday Morning Church School.

Church School	Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School	Number of Students for Children School
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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
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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.episcopalassetmap.org/dioceses/diocese-iowa/list/st-matthews-bridge>

Media Links:

Online References:

Languages Significantly Represented:

English, Portuguese, Spanish

Provide Worship or Classes in:

References

Bishop:

The Rt. Rev. Betsey Monnot

515-277-6165 officeofthebishop@iowaepiscopal.org

Diocesan Transition Minister

The Rev. Meg Wagner

515-850-5220 mwagner@iowaepiscopal.org

Current Warden/Board Chair

Mr. Harvey Nicholson

641-640-7441 hnnich@gmail.com

Previous Warden/Board Chair

Search Chair

Mr. Harvey Nicholson

641-640-7441 hnnich@gmail.com

Parish/Institution

Local Community Leader