



Office for
Transition
Ministry

Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio (last updated Feb 24, 2023)

Northern Highlands Benefice, Eau Claire

510 S. Farwell Street, Eau Claire, WI 54701, United States

Contact:

Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | Receiving Names until 03/23/23.

onemacvet@yahoo.com

Weekly Average Sunday Attendance (ASA)	Number of Weekend Worship Services 4	Number of Weekday Worship Services 1	Number of Other per Month Worship Services
Current Annual Compensation \$59350	Cash Stipend	Housing / Rectory Detail	Utilities \$7000
SECA reimbursement	Compensation Available for New Position \$66361	Housing Available for 4	Pension Plan We're in compliance with CPF requirements.
Healthcare Options Negotiable	Dental	Housing Equity Allowance in budget	Annual Equity Amount
Vacation Weeks One month, including 5 Sundays (standard)	Vacation Weeks Details	Continuing Education Weeks 2 (standard)	Continuing Education Weeks Details
Continuing Education Funding in budget up to/including \$500/year	Sabbatical Provision Yes	Travel/Auto Account Yes	Other Professional Account

Following the issue and acceptance of a call, specific compensation numbers will be negotiated.

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

After Churches were closed due to Covid-19 Pandemic restrictions beginning March 23, 2020, St. Alban's, Grace, and St. Luke's began sharing a streamed service together. The service was streamed from Father Bauer's home from April 5 to April 28. After St. Alban's installed technology for online streaming the service originated there with recommended attendance guidelines beginning May 3, 2020. St. Alban's, St. Luke's, and Grace worshipped together online until each Church was reopened. Ascension streamed its service beginning in mid-April. St. Luke's began open air services in their cemetery on June 14. They continued until they moved back into their building on September 13. St. Alban's opened for general attendance on June 28. Grace began holding services on October 4. Ascension opened September 13.

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

We believe the very concept of the Benefice is a response to our view of the Church of the future. As smaller communities continue to age and shrink, the possibility of many parishes to support clergy diminishes. By structuring our combined relationship, we allow our congregations to use fewer resources in clergy support and more resources on ministry and outreach, while still providing full time compensation to our priest.

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

appreciative, communicator, visionary

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

The clergy schedule is setup along geographic lines with St. Alban's and Grace churches together and St. Luke's and Ascension churches together. On any given Sunday the clergy will be at St. Luke's at 8:30 and Ascension at 10:30. The other clergy will be at St. Alban's at 8:30 and Grace at 10:30. They next Sunday assignments are switched. This schedule allows the priest-in-charge to be at each of the churches for a minimum of 24 Sundays per year. The fifth Sunday in a month was used for laity led Morning Prayer. Common Benefice services include Easter Eve and All Saints. These services are normally held at St. Alban's which is approximately equidistant from the other churches.

How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

The Benefice Board, composed of two members from each church, approved the following mission statement: The mission of the Northern Highlands Benefice is to provide opportunities for fellowship between the Episcopal churches of northwestern Wisconsin and to provide an administrative structure to serve full-time pastoral needs of the four member churches of Grace, RiceLake; St. Alban's, Spooner; St. Luke's, Springbrook; and Ascension, Hayward.

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

The real difficulty in building and implementing the Benefice model was the initial process of broadening the view of parishioners to embrace their interdependence with one another. This called for some sacrifice of what parishioners have felt for generations was the hallmark of 'clergy care.' The transition from thinking of "my priest" to "our priest" is a difficult period. However, the existing structure of two deacons and a retired, Assisting priest actually built a foundation of shared spiritual care that helped bridge members of the various parishes together. That, in turn, allows for lay leadership in congregations to discern their call as one of leadership to the larger Benefice.

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

One of the foundational ideas behind the construction of the Benefice is to provide liturgical, ministerial, and pastoral opportunities for the broader communities in which our parishes reside. We hope to develop more programs that allow members of our separate congregations to work together in individual communities within our combined mission field to amplify and multiply our efforts.

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

Members of the Benefice are heavily involved in Diocesan Governance serving positions on several councils and committees and including the Diocesan Chancellor. Our members have also served as Deputies to General Convention. Each parish engages with their own community in separate ways, but we hope to develop larger community programs on the Benefice level as well.

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

Our entire Benefice is a new ministry! The Northern Highlands Benefice was built on the rough skeleton of the Welsh and Irish models of regional clergy oversight spread over several small parishes. The difficulties in constructing such a model extend from the administration of clergy compensation (for which The Episcopal Church is not currently suited) to the individual communities' sense of independence and self-governance. Through many prayerful and difficult conversations with leaders throughout the Church, a model was developed that would allow us to "test the waters" and determine the feasibility of the foundational ideas. From there, the Spirit has guided a sure evolution of our model into a form that allows for individual expression for the parishes as well as a communal identity within the Benefice. You can learn more about the development and implementation of the Benefice by speaking with Fr. Dave Bauer, Dn. Marlene Hogue, Cn. Aaron Zook, or any of the members of the Benefice Board that oversees the ministries of the group.

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

Our stewardship model is multi-tiered to encompass the financial needs and constraints of our member parishes, while also allowing for a legitimate contribution to the work and ministry of the Benefice as a whole. This literal 'buy-in' to the larger mission area moves the hearts and minds of our parishioners beyond the walls of their home church to include the needs of others in neighboring communities.

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

As one might imagine, there is an elevated risk of tension and conflict in the Benefice model than one might find in an individual parish. The Benefice is structured to ensure that members of one parish are regularly balancing their own needs and tastes with that of the other three parishes. This allows for many small conflicts to arise as some members of any one of the parishes can be driven toward an insular attitude. However, by building relationships between the parishes and cross-seminating the preaching and teaching via the rotation of clergy on Sundays, that conflict is lessened and leads to a greater sense of shared mission and ministry.

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?

We are in an active beginning of such a change. It has at times been difficult to develop some aspects of our Benefice model, such as the rotation for clergy coverage for Sunday services in four separate buildings. However, the love our parishioners have for their home churches has begun to spread beyond an appreciation of the other parishes and has started to develop into a sense of communal life, even with people they may only see once or twice a year. For quite some time, it has been believed that "yoking" churches was a sign of decline and a harbinger for their closing. It is clear from our work in the Benefice that there is actually a pathway for shared ministry that builds, rather than deflating, the hopes and ministries of small parishes.

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Prior Incumbents

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Meghan Farr	Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge	2020-08	2022-06

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Dave Bauer	Supply	2015-07	

Name	Position Title	Date Begun	Date Ended
Marlene Hogue	Deacon	2015-08	

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

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: <http://nhbenefice.org/benefice/web/>

Media Links:

- > <https://gracericelake.org/wordpress/>
- > <https://www.facebook.com/stalbansspooner/>

Online References:

- > <https://www.facebook.com/people/Northern-Highlands-Benefice/>

Languages Significantly Represented:

English

Provide Worship or Classes in:

English

References

Bishop:

The Rt. Rev'd Matthew Gunter

Cell: (920) 574-0930 bmgunter@diofdl.org

Diocesan Transition Minister
The Rev'd Canon Aaron Zook

(715) 835-3331 administrator@dioec.net

Current Warden/Board Chair
Mr. Dan Durand

ddurand68@gmail.com

Previous Warden/Board Chair
Ms. Jean Neste

jmneste193@gmail.com

Search Chair

Mr. Rob Funck

onemacvet@yahoo.com

Parish/Institution

Mr. Tom Yeakley

wtyeakley@gmail.com

Local Community Leader

The Rev'd Dave Bauer

(715) 699-6318 cdavebauer@me.com