Trinity Episcopal Church
Houghton, Michigan

Search for a Priest

Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan
About Us

Trinity Episcopal Church in Houghton, Michigan is a small congregation with abundant potential. We are located in the Keweenaw Peninsula in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, in the heart of a vibrant college town home to Michigan Technological University and Finlandia University.

As a small community, we rely on the gifts of all, with collaborative ministry at the core of our being. All voices are valued in our community and we strive to make decisions by consensus.

In our common worship, we have used the traditional BCP in recent years, and have tried and liked alternatives at times; we are certainly open-minded about new ways forward as we grow. We have a beautiful worship space and are blessed with a gifted organist. Rich, theologically grounded preaching has been important in our life and ministry together. We pride ourselves in our spiritual practice of hospitality and welcome.

We are at a time of renewal, looking forward to redefining our mission and vision for our community. We are deeply committed to reaching out to the Houghton/Hancock community and engaging in missional work. Along with the diocese as a whole, ministries of reconciliation are a high priority.

Prior to Covid-19, we had a strong, diverse Canterbury House ministry, with activities for students taking place daily, including a weekly meal. While Canterbury House is a 501c3 with its own Campus Missioner and board, its relationship with Trinity is intertwined and has potential for our community.

We used to host a weekly meditation group for the community, which drew individuals who might not otherwise enter our doors. We hope to resume this important program when the public health conditions are favorable.
Who We Are Seeking as Priest

We look forward with eager anticipation to partnering with a priest who will lead us deeper into our own gifts of ministry and mission. We see great hope, and great need, all around us. We belong to the Diocese of Northern Michigan, a diocese with a rich history of shared ministry. We are hungry for renewal, but we are not looking for a priest to come in and save us.

We know that the institutional church is in decline these days, and that our future is uncertain. However, we see abundant life and spirit in our community and we believe that we have a part to play in it. More than that, we see that all the elements of thriving parishes elsewhere are in place here, and lack only a Spirit-filled professional minister to help us reach out, and to harmonize and amplify our work. We choose life over death and we are seeking someone with a positive perspective who believes in new life, even if it means we must let go of some of our old ways. We understand that serving the needs of one who serves our community are a given. Accordingly, we expect that the priest who answers this call will:

--Use all of their vacation time
--Make friends and family a priority
--Be equally devoted to spiritual, emotional, and physical health
--Share a contagious faith and seek spiritual direction regularly

Living in the Copper Country

Houghton was named one of the Top 100 Best Small Towns in America by Livability in 2015. Houghton is situated on the hills bordering the Portage Waterway, in an unusual geographic setting which offers recreational activities in all seasons. Houghton was named after geologist Douglass Houghton, who discovered the vast copper deposits in the Keweenaw Peninsula in 1840, which is when the town was established.
Today, Houghton County is home to approximately 36,000 people. Michigan Technological University and Portage Health Hospital are the two largest employers in the region, though the dominant year-round industry is tourism, especially from mid-May to mid-March.

The winters and the summers here are transcendentally beautiful. In the winter there is world-class Nordic skiing and a downhill facility right across the canal. There is hockey for all abilities, as well as snowmobiling, snowshoeing, and ice fishing. In the warmer seasons there are plentiful opportunities for mountain biking, hiking, camping, kayaking, and boating of all kinds. The beauty of the trees in the fall defies description. We truly feel blessed by our environment, though the winters are long and cold, with a yearly average snowfall of 220 inches. A five hundred year flooding event in the summer of 2018 significantly impacted our town’s infrastructure, but we are rebuilding and see that the community is strengthened by the effort.

Houghton is a very safe place to live and raise a family, with good schools and good health care for most services. It is a long way from almost everywhere. The closest big box store is more than a hundred miles away, and it is a full day’s drive from Chicago or Detroit, which for most of us is a blessing rather than a hardship. The cost of housing is low. The people are tolerant, laid back, and enormously creative. We value our rich human history, and share it freely. We welcome all who come to visit or come to stay, including a new priest who we hope will embrace all that is, and all that can be, in this magnificent corner of Creation.

*Each year, Michigan Technological University hosts an ice sculpture contest, which draws visitors and is a fun community event.*
History of Trinity Episcopal Church

Trinity Episcopal Church is housed in a Gothic Revival-style building located in downtown Houghton. During the mining boom that began in the 1840s, members of the Church of England migrated to the Keewenaw from Cornwall, England. Many miners, mining captains, and shopkeepers brought their Anglican heritage of faith and worship with them.

On July 17, 1860, nine locals and the bishop of the Diocese of Michigan met to establish a parish. When first established, Houghton was a wild mining town. The present church built of Jacobsville sandstone was completed in 1910, on the same site as an older wooden church. The church still has original stained-glass windows, hand-carved wood panels in the sanctuary by artist Alois Lang, and a fine Austin pipe organ.

Currently over 150 years old, the congregation proudly looks forward to the future in this church building that has served us well.

Diocese of Northern Michigan

The Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan is geographically located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (with a few outlying islands). We have 24 worshipping communities and are structured around a model of shared ministry. For more than 30 years, our congregations have engaged in local discernment, formation, and ministry, with missioners/ministry developers supporting the work of local teams. Our diocese is especially committed to issues of Care for Creation, Racial Reconciliation with Indigenous Communities, and other areas of social justice. Because we are a small diocese with few seminary trained ministers, we expect that the priest at Trinity Houghton will be actively involved in the life of the diocese.
What We Offer You

- A small group of committed followers of Jesus who will partner with you in this ministry
- Warm hospitality and deep care for our priest
- Direct communication and a willingness to work together to find consensus
- Open minds and hearts
- Financial assistance with moving expenses
- A base salary of $60,000, with full insurance, pension, and a low cost of living
- Support for Continuing Education
- 4 weeks paid vacation

Next Steps & Timeline

- Please send OTM profile and resume to diocesan transition officer Lydia Bucklin, lydia@upeepiscopal.org
- Profiles will be received until July 1, 2021
- Anticipated start in late summer/early fall 2021