



Weekly at St. Brendan's

- Sunday 10:00 a.m. Worship, via live streaming**
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UcKCY2BEJXlqMoVc_nXXG7ew
- Monday 8:30 a.m. Daily Morning Prayer, via zoom**
 Zoom website <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/4796201105>
11:00 a.m. Be a Modern Episcopalian, via zoom
 Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/4575423762>.
- Tuesday 7:00 a.m. AA meeting, via zoom**
 Dial in: 312-626-6799 Meeting Id:345 892 252
9:00 a.m. Staff meeting, via zoom
 Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/4575423762>
11:00 a.m. Bible Study, via zoom
 Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/4575423762>.
4:30 p.m. Book Club discussion, via zoom
 Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81484853481>
- Friday 7:30 p.m. Game Night, via zoom**
 Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/4575423762>

Sunday, August 16, 2020

Celebrant: The Rev. Regis Smolko

Participating and representing St. Brendan's in prayer and worship and receiving Holy Eucharist for all members and friends of St. Brendan's.

The Priest's Corner

Unbridled Compassion

My Spiritual Guide this week gave me three nuggets of Wisdom when I shared with him my hopes and concerns about what some Brendanites are now calling "our bannergate." Before I share the nuggets, I'd like to share the context. My Guide is steeped in Native American spirituality which has a strong leaning on the Divine "feminine" influence. For him "spiritual power greater than himself" is expressed in feminine pronouns "she, her, hers." His word when expressing this spiritual being is "Godess." I must admit—that took me some time to get used to. One thing I love about myself and my growth is that over the years as I age, I've notice I'm actually more and more open to many ideas and expressions and ways of being and doing things. I've heard "getting old" and "set in their ways" are synonyms. Not my experience!

So, as I was sharing not knowing what the next steps were, regarding things like should we or should we not involve the media as we work our way through our BLM banner dilemma, these ideas came through. As you know, a parishioner donated the entire cost for our first banner. However, we had to take it down due to a forgotten, yet never-before-enforced specification in our variance now being demanded. Here it is: Our banner content must connect to an event. So we complied and applied a 12-step spiritual principle to our response, "Be sure your side of the street is clean." So the next phase: The new compliant banner arrives, makes its debut in our church yard on Monday, and is stolen by Thursday. Vestry votes unanimously that we be persistent, "Get a new banner." My Spiritual Guide interrupts right around the time I was speaking this piece of "bannergate" history, saying, "Regis, dearest, what's coming on my heart so clearly is 'Start small.'" Noted!

The conversation continues and moves into some of the complaint calls and emails we've been getting. I find myself sharing almost verbatim, "You're a sorry bunch...they have the biggest mouths." My Guide breaks in with a story about the Dalai Lama. He even sounds like him on the phone as he blurts out over and over "unbridled compassion!" "Unbridled Compassion!" "**UNBRIDLED COMPASSION!**" What I noticed about hearing these words was that they became louder and louder while at the same time seemed gentler and gentler.

Of course, I asked for an interpretation. I had no idea "what the h...!" my friend was saying. He explained that reporters have from time to time tried their darndest to catch the Dalai Lama off guard, hoping he would besmirch the Chinese Government for their treatment of him and his flock. As you know, the peaceful Buddhist country of Tibet was invaded by Communist China in 1949. Since that time, over 1.2 million out of 6 million Tibetans have been killed, over 6000 monasteries have been destroyed, and thousands of Tibetans have been imprisoned.

Our situation pales in comparison, but some underlying similarities are evident. So how is such an affront best handled? The Dalai Lama says every being has the right to survive. (Survival = a desire for happiness or comfort.) Our survival then is based on hope – hope for something good: happiness. If the purpose of life is happiness, then hope and happiness are positive factors for our health. Health depends on a happy state of mind. Anger, on the other hand, is based on a sense of insecurity and brings us fear.

When we encounter something good, we feel safe. When something threatens us, we feel insecure and then we become angry. Anger is seen as deserved or even helpful as it kind of defends us from what harms our survival. But anger itself makes us feel bad and so, ultimately, it is bad for our health. Buddhism says that when negative emotion develops, we can't see reality. When we need to make a decision and the mind is dominated by anger; then chances are, we will make the wrong decision. No one wants to make a wrong decision and here's why compassion actually helps the brain function more smoothly; it also brings inner strength.

Unbridled Compassion is therefore the best way to handle those who oppose us.

The last thing I heard during my spiritual direction this week was another interesting way of viewing ourselves as we try our best to do what we can to take a stand against racism. The phrase I was last given was this, "You are the ones you've been waiting for." I suppose that means "we are it" in our small corner of the world. So there's no stopping now, as I see it. Let us be intentional in loving one another as we navigate these waters. If we disagree with someone on our same journey, be gentle with your disagreement and do your best to avoid being disagreeable. Let gentleness, compassion, open-mindedness, the "little means a lot" mentality be our way boldly forward.

Regis+

Announcements



Vestry Meeting. The Vestry held its monthly meeting—using Zoom, of course—on Monday, August 10. We discussed the most recent events in our efforts to **promote our September 1 Public Forum on systemic racism and racial inequality** (for more details, see the Senior Warden's Corner elsewhere in this issue of the Little Log). We reviewed two **recommendations from the Audit Committee** that had completed its work on our 2019 financial records. We heard about the work completed on **upgrading the sound system** in the sanctuary and **installing on a permanent basis the equipment we use to livestream our liturgies**. We also heard from Fr. Regis about the steps that he and Pr. Julie hope to take to **distribute the Eucharist to parishioners** on an individual or family group basis. And we discussed a proposal to **make the Parish Directory available online** (to parishioners only) but deferred action until we understand more about privacy protections. As always, the Vestry Minutes are available for those who would like a more detailed account.

Racial Justice course available: Stevenson School for Ministry (SSFM) in the diocese of Central PA is offering a 5 week course called *"Racial Justice and the Body of Christ"* in September via Zoom. The course is FREE and is being taught by Dr. Joshua Davis, an SSFM faculty member. Anyone can take this course. To register, go to the link below.
<https://diocesecpa.org/shaped-by-faith-courses/>

Anti-Racism/Black Lives Matter. In our first anti-racism/Black Lives Matter discussion on Thursday August 6th we shared our working definition of racism to be in line with Merriam-Webster's updated definition. Merriam-Webster's, one of America's most trusted dictionary, just this June updated their definition of "racism."

Their entry now includes this addendum: "2a: a doctrine or political program based on the assumption of racism and designed to execute its principles; b: a political or social system founded on racism." This is a significant departure from the earlier definition of racism, which still reads: "a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race."

For the purposes of our discussions we are using this updated version as we view the issues as systemic.

You do not need to have participated in the last discussion to be a part of our NEXT DISCUSSION – Thursday August 20th 4:30 p.m.

The **SPEAKER SERIES** is making it easy to participate and continue your path to learning. **Michael Waseleski** will present a series on Reconstruction on two consecutive evenings - **TONIGHT August 13th and TOMORROW August 14th** at 7:00 p.m. This presentation will challenge what we think we know about slavery and expand our knowledge and understanding of its legacy in the United States

We will hold our second discussion on **Thursday August 20th** and use the time to discuss what we learn from listening to Michael in the Speaker Series. Please come to the discussion whether you were able to attend the Speaker Series or not.

This learning journey will lead to action steps, both individually and collectively, in addition to those suggested by the Justice Ministry.

Contact Ginny Volponi if you have questions, ginny4045@gmail.com.

The Zoom link for the Antiracism discussions is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4796201105>. Meeting ID: 479 620 1105 One tap mobile +13126266799,,4796201105# US (Chicago) +19292056099,,4796201105# US (New York).

Senior Warden's Corner

A week ago, the banner that announced our upcoming Public Forum on systemic racism and racial inequality was taken from its frame during the night. The police were informed but it is unlikely that they will be able to identify who took it. The Vestry discussed

the theft at their meeting last Monday evening. We have already purchased a replacement banner and are looking into additional steps we might take to protect it when it goes up. We are also considering how else we might promote our September 1 Forum. *For fans of the 1960s TV series Dragnet, those are what Sgt. Joe Friday used to call "Just the facts, Ma'am."*

An emotional response to last week's events is natural, especially since they come on the heels of phone calls and letters decrying our support for Black Lives Matter and the selective enforcement of a zoning ordinance regarding signs on our property. At the very least, we are frustrated over the loss of our primary means for promoting an event that will allow us to explain our beliefs more fully to those who may disagree with us.

But I respectfully suggest that it will be important in the coming days and weeks not to adopt the very tactics that we criticize in others. We should not generalize the words and actions of a few of our neighbors as representative of the broader community. We should not allow an act of petty larceny to divert attention from our mission to correct a profound injustice and restore God's kingdom. Instead, we should be listening carefully for the voice of the Holy Spirit as we seek ways to engage with others in discussion, to hear their points of view, and to present our own arguments clearly and forcefully.

Members of the Justice Ministry, our Vestry, and our Clergy are all involved in the effort to discern the best way to move forward with "our eyes on *that* prize." Your support in prayer—as well as your involvement in other activities sponsored by the Justice Ministry team—will be much appreciated in the coming weeks.

Sr. Warden, Tim Austin

Collection for Haiti: We have resumed our collection of items to be sent to Haiti. Summer clothing, shoes and any medical supplies (walkers, wheelchairs, etc.) are especially needed. If you have items to donate, you can drop them off in the large blue bin on the front porch of St. Brendan's. Thank you for any help you can give!

CRIES Advocacy. (Christian Response In Emergency Situations) This week we are supporting the work of **Operation Safety Net** – a ministry to distribute food, blankets and medical care to the people who live under the bridges in Pittsburgh.



You can help. We have tubs outside to the right of the front doors for any food donations. Or, if you wish, checks can be sent to St. Brendan's and we will convert them into grocery gift cards. **We have now discovered a new mission. There are halfway houses in lower income areas who share any donations to them with their neighbors, and we will be supporting them with some of our food donations. This gives those residents a sense of meaningful purpose, being the ones to share rather than the ones in need.** We will continue distributing food to the North Hills Food Bank and the Community Outreach.

Need food? We can help. If you or someone you know has a food shortage, contact the church and we will be happy to help.



Do you have a special prayer request? Contact Ruth Horton rvhorton@gmail.com. Pastoral Care Ministry members will include those persons in daily prayers or send out a prayer via text or email to someone if requested. All prayers and requests are kept confidential.

Kid's Corner

Buoyed by Faith

Have you ever heard the phrase, "you'll have to eat those words"? This phrase means having to take back something you said – not really apologizing, but realizing you have made a mistake and said something to or about someone that you will need to later take back.

But it is also about saying something in the heat of the moment – maybe during an argument – and then later having to find a way to repair your relationship and make an amends to the person because of what you said.

This week's lessons offer us a couple of different ways to think about this saying "eating those words".

As we continue the story of Joseph in the Old Testament, Joseph has been kidnapped, abandoned by his brothers, and sold into slavery. This week, we jump ahead a few years, and find that Joseph the Dreamer has been faithful and good to the Pharaoh. So good that he now himself is in a position to help his family because their lands have had no rain and no water since his brothers sold Joseph.

So, when the brothers come to Pharaoh seeking help, Joseph initially stood back and watched. But very quickly he could not help himself; he pushed forward. He says, "Here I am! It's me, Joseph." And he asks, "Is our father still alive?"

What he does *not* do is blame his brothers for what they did, or be angry, or try to get even. He even says God sent him to Egypt to save his family. WOW. Imagine if he had tried to get revenge on his brothers instead of listening to God! That would have been a disaster! Over those past few years, he may have been disappointed, or angry, or even mad, but he prayed about it, and thought about it, and then responded to it. He forgave his brothers.

This is important because in the Gospel this week, Jesus tells us that it is not what goes in our mouths that defile us, it is what comes *out* of our mouths that defile us. Because what comes out of our mouths comes when we speak from our hearts. That is

what we really mean. So if we are angry or mad and say bad words, that is what defiles us. Now Jesus gives a list of the really big sins. The BIG SINS like murder, theft, and lying. But when we say something without thinking it through, to hurt someone's feelings, aren't we being like thieves, stealing from them a sense of love and security?

I don't know who first said this, but I think this is what Jesus is trying to get us to do, and this is what I try to practice,

Watch your thoughts, they become your words;
watch your words, they become your actions;
watch your actions, they become your habits;
watch your habits, they become your character;
watch your character, it becomes your destiny.

Peace & Love

Julie+

A BFF donation was given to support the continued live streaming of our Sunday Services and to thank the individuals that make it possible, by Roger Botti.



A donation to the Brendan's Family and Friends (BFF) fund is the perfect way to honor a special day or loved one while supporting unbudgeted building needs of our church. BFF funds have been used to purchase various items.

Thank you for making a difference at St. Brendan's by becoming a BFF donor. Contact Katie if you are interested in making a donation. stbrendanskatie@gmail.com.

Please consider applying for an absentee ballot. We want you to stay safe.

Registered voters can sign up today at votesPA.com/ApplyMailBallot.



5 things you can do in less than 5 minutes:

- Make your bed
 - Feed your dog
 - Prepare a bowl of cereal
 - Reply to your parent's text
 - Sign up to vote by mail in the November 3 general election
- votesPA.com

You Can Make a Difference. No matter your political preference, we all agree that voting is one of the most important civic responsibilities we have. And perhaps the most consequential election of our lifetime is coming up in November.

We need to do all we can to make sure that as many citizens as possible are registered to vote. Unfortunately, it is very difficult for some people to register. They work shifts, they lack transportation and many other obstacles stand in their way. You can help! We have voter registration forms with instructions available outside and in front of the building. We are urging each member of the parish to take 3 of the preaddressed applications and put a stamp on each. When you are out and about be aware of folks you meet who may not be registered and offer them an application. The cashier at the market, the Amazon delivery driver, the pizza delivery man, all these folks might welcome at chance to get registered to vote. Applications must be received by October 19, so we have lots of time. If everyone in the parish got 3 new voters, we could add almost 500 voters! Please do your part.

Dear Friends of St. Brendan's,

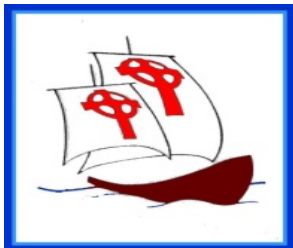
St. Brendan's Episcopal Church would like to thank, and request your prayers for, the following parishioners and friends or family of parishioners. Each is a medical professional or an emergency first responder who is helping people cope with the coronavirus outbreak. They are using their skills and risking their own well-being by tending to those whose health has been threatened.

We are grateful for their selfless dedication and ask that God watch over them, keep them safe and give them both strength and rest. We hope that you will join the church in thanking and praying for:

- | | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Kimberly Becker | Maddie Bell | Kate Burnett | Frank Casey | Bob Cerra |
| Brenna Conroy | Adele Cotter | James Cotter | Laura Dugan Demers | Nicholas Demers |
| Andrea Dickerson | Franklin Park Police Department | | Franklin Park Volunteer Fire Department | |
| Rebecca Donadee | Amanda Gagnon | Jeff Gagnon | Shelley Gagnon | Betsy Gentile |
| Lynne Gloor | Ann Hockenberry | Beth Lutz Hoffman | Eric Hood | John Jacobs and staff |
| Kerri Jensen | Dr. Ken | Luke O'Neill | Kim Pierce | Becca Sands |
| Warren Sands | Andrew Smith | Justin Zeigler | Cindy | Jennifer |
| Julie | Lane | Mike | Patrick | |

Prayer for our medical personnel and first responders.

Lord, please bless and care for all healthcare workers and first responders. Grant them wisdom, knowledge, skill and compassion so that they may be instruments of Your healing power for those they serve and care for. Give them strength and support. May they be able to do their work in a spirit of love and kindness and mercy. Keep them safe and well as they make personal sacrifices on behalf of Your community. Amen.



ST. BRENDAN'S MISSION

Jesus said, "I have come to give life – life in all its fullness." John 10:10.
Our mission is the realization of fullness through:
the worship of God; service to the world;
active concern for each other;
and education to expand mind and spirit.

PARISH LIFE MINISTRY LEADERS

Audit: Kevin Boyd
Book Club: Pat Carl
Brendan's Boots: Tom Waseleski
Dinner Group: Janice Moore
Finance Chair: Eric Helmsen
Green Thumb Gang: Dan Moore
Historian: Ellen Groves
Holiday Arts & Crafts Sale: Karen Dennis
Memorial Garden: Dan Moore
Merry Meal Makers (M&M's): Saundy Waseleski
Parish Profile: Inactive
Reiki Ministry: Melanie Popovich
Rental: George Snyder
Scholarship: Tom Waseleski
Sticks & Strings: Joni Reis
Debbie Jennings
Web Site: Kelli Cerra

VESTRY MEMBERS

Sr. Warden: Tim Austin
Jr. Warden & Secretary/Clerk: Ruth Horton
Adult Formation: Dean Peters
Audio-Visual Technology: Cameron Grosh
Communication: Annemarie Malbon
Finance: Mary Bertucci
Fundraising: Larry Toler
Inreach & Hospitality: Janice Moore
Newcomers: Mary Bertucci
Dean Peters
Outreach: Donna Aiello
Safety & Security: Tim Austin
Stewardship: Larry Toler
Treasurer: Ellen Groves
Assistant Treasurer: Roger Botti
Worship: Cameron Grosh

WORSHIP MINISTRY LEADERS

Acolytes: Anelisa Tarrant
Altar Guild: Anelisa Tarrant
Pastoral Care Ministry: Ruth Horton
Flower Ministry: Sylvia Affleck
Libby Juel
Scheduler: Kelli Cerra
Ushers: Eric Helmsen

ST. BRENDAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Corner of Rochester & McAleer Roads
2365 McAleer Road, Sewickley, PA 15143
Phone ~ 412-364-5974

Office hours ~ Monday thru Friday 8:00-2:00

Web Site ~ <http://www.stbrendans.org>

Facebook ~ <https://www.facebook.com/StBrendansEpiscopalChurch/>

Nextdoor ~ <https://franklinparkpittsburgh.nextdoor.com/pages/st-brendans-episcopal-church-sewickley-pa/recommend/>

Priest, Regis Smolko ~ regisjs@verizon.net

Youth Education Director, Julie Smith ~ jlsphone1@gmail.com

Parish Administrator, Katie Cervone ~ stbrendans@comcast.net

Music Director, Daniel May ~ bluesub@verizon.net

Nursery Director, Meghan Thompson ~ meghanthompson328@gmail.com

OUTREACH MINISTRY LEADERS

Adopt-A-Highway: Tom Waseleski
CRIES Advocacy: Ellen Groves
English as a Second Language: Tim Austin
Joyce Donadee
Linda Schneider
Garden of Hope: Tim Michael
Justice Ministry: Donna Aiello
Miryam's: Julia Wick
Rob & George Latta
North Hills Food Banks: Ruth Horton & Donna Aiello