



## Weekly at St. Brendan's

**Sunday 10:00 a.m. Worship, via live streaming**

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkCY2BEJXlqMoVc\\_nXXG7ew](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkCY2BEJXlqMoVc_nXXG7ew)

**Monday 8:15 a.m. Daily Morning Prayer, via zoom**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4796201105?pwd=bXM5OHJ2UEh4TXhQT1RkZnVrQWNVdz09>

Meeting ID: 479 620 1105 Passcode: 092720

**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>

## Sunday, December 20, 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

**We've Come So Far...Don't Give Up Now!** PLUS-Read the PS-Put the Dec. 24th Singing Activity on your schedule for 6:30 PM

I'm recalling how two winters ago, Tom Waseleski, Annemarie Malbon and I labored over a major decision at the time that came upon us due to a Sunday morning snowstorm. Should we or should we not close St. Brendan's for worship? Our historians confirmed that we had only made this move once before in our 30-year history. "Oh what a heavy decision!" we thought. After we had decided to close, the question now was: "How do we get the word out?"

This last year, I can't tell you how many times Tim and I had to face this question, though getting the word out hasn't been too big of an issue.

We've come a long way. We've bitten the bullet over and over. All those smelly face masks, fogged-up glasses and frustrated, acting-as-if-only, fake hugging gestures! "OK, if we have to, we'll do Easter through live streaming." But who could have imagined back then that Christmas, almost ¾ of a year later, would be live streaming only too! We've been thru a lot—and today, this very day, is worse than any day of the pandemic ever! "Covid fatigue? At least!!!"

And yet there's a gentle, from-time-to-time voice down deep in me saying, "Tell them, Regis, not to give up 5 minutes before the miracle occurs." We're also there, Sisters and Brothers. The vaccine is happening, and there are many voices and experiences speaking and showing confidence about it. There does seem to be hope. Most of us will very likely get to witness the outcomes and results of the first vaccine recipients before our turn to get vaccinated comes around. I had a video conference with my doctor yesterday. I trust my doctor because he has helped me make sound healthy choices for over 15 years. He discussed the pros and cons. I was encouraged to share my concerns. After we concluded, I was totally convinced to get the shot when my turn comes. This is not a presumption that you should conclude similarly, but it is a recommendation that you afford yourself a similar process of discernment to the one I gave myself.

I heard an engineer once explain the concept of "project lag." He described it this way. It takes 100% of your energy to accomplish 99% of the project and the other 100% to finish the remaining 1%. I stare at this phenomenon every day as I look up at our loft. Ken and I built this 25 years ago and we really did a great job. We had one more thing to do that would finish the project—put cushioning around two short beams that are lower than the others and invite an occasional head bump when someone over 5'10" walks under those two beams. After all these years—that finishing portion of the project still remains undone. I have smashed my head well over 50 times in the last 25 years. The cushioning is still not up.

So, Brendanites, we are so close to making it through this long pandemic. Don't give up now nor let your guards down—not even for a minute. I've heard many people who came down with Covid 19 say it was at that funeral or friendly get-together or that birthday party. "We were all wearing masks. Just before we left, without even thinking about it, I hugged three family members before I even realized I did it. One of the trio was an asymptomatic carrier." It happens that fast. As Tim reported in his Covid 19 update to our Reopening Committee this week, if you are at a gathering of 25 people in Allegheny County right now, the Georgia Institute of

Technology and Stanford University project that there's an over 90% chance that at least one of those 25 will have Covid 19 and be asymptomatic and contagious.

The state of Pennsylvania, and our three counties (Allegheny, Butler and Beaver) are at their highest levels of risk for the virus since the pandemic began. This will pass eventually. It will get better. But until it does, please follow the recommended guidelines: masks, social distancing, avoiding crowds of 10 or more indoors, avoiding public singing, celebrating Christmas only with family members you're currently living with. There are so many good reasons to be hopeful about the future; so as we get closer and closer to this hope's fulfillment, two traits are particularly called for now. These are resilience and self awareness.

Resilience is the ability to cope with the stress of life by bouncing back, trying something important one more time, getting back on that horse. It's an important tool to help us deal with COVID and its implications, even if we have to force ourselves to do it. Self-awareness is the other needed ability to get through to the hopeful end. This is the ability to hit the pause button and notice what is going on for us and around us. "Oh. I left my car without my mask on—no problem, just turn around, go back to the car and put one on." Remember: noticing alone is not enough. It's what we do when we notice things that have positive or not-so-positive implications. We had some furniture delivered recently. We were so excited. The two guys carrying the new couch were very friendly. I didn't even notice they only had their masks around their necks—not on. Finally I realized this and knew I should say something, but a rationalization started: "They'll be out in 30 seconds. It's too late now; they breathed several breaths already." At last I came to my senses and said, "Gents, your face masks will look better on!" Both said, "Sorry—so easy to forget." Off they went and out came my Lysol spray.

We're going to make it through this. We've done well for 9 months so far. Stay positive. Optimism affects our wellbeing and is good for us. We have every reason to believe that positive things will happen in the future.

**Regis+**

**PS: HERE'S A GREAT THING TO DO ON CHRISTMAS EVE AT 6:30PM:**

Our candles still glow, and a pandemic can't stop our song. Join Christians across the Pittsburgh region for a safely distant, yet spiritually together, Silent Night Sing this Christmas Eve.

On December 24 at 6:30 pm, you and your household are invited to sing with us. Light a candle and stand at the end of your sidewalk, on your front porch, or in your driveway. Together—socially distant but spiritually united—we'll sing Silent Night.

We'll be a sign for one another of unity and hope, welcoming the Christ child into the world with one voice. You can find lyrics and prayers at [casp.org/silentnight](http://casp.org/silentnight). Help us spread the word about this simple, compelling way to be in community, even in times like these.

*Gifts of Joy and Wonder*  
*December 17*



Just as the snow arrived in Pittsburgh on Wednesday, beautiful white blossoms began to appear among the leaves on our **Gifts of Joy and Wonder** tree—each blossom representing a pledge from another Brendanite. **Thank you** to those who sent in their pledge cards or visited the [Tithe.ly.com](http://Tithe.ly.com) pledge site.

We are still short of our goal for 2021, so if you have been putting off making your pledge, please take a moment this week to consider what you might be able to do to help St. Brendan's in the coming year.

If you need information about how to pledge, simply call Katie Cervone at the church office. We're happy to help. Thanks!

**If you have not handed in your pledge card for 2021, feel free to print this one and mail it to church.**



**ST. BRENDAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
**2021 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN**

*Gifts of Joy and Wonder!*

In 2021, I / We pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ annually to St. Brendan's.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name \_\_\_\_\_



**Thank you** to all who attended the Eviction Forum! We were able to collect \$3,325 for those people who are in danger of eviction because of the pandemic. If you have made a pledge, please send a check to Katie at St. Brendan's, payable to PURR (Pittsburgh Union of Regional Renters). If you have not made a pledge, and would like to help those families, you can still send in a check. Thanks again to all who participated in this important educational and fundraising event!



**Vestry Meeting.** On Monday, December 14, the Vestry held its routine monthly meeting via Zoom. The following were among the topics we discussed: (1) When to schedule the **Annual Parish Meeting**, since COVID restrictions make it impossible for us to meet in person following the 10:00 service. **We agreed to hold this important meeting by Zoom at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 24. Please mark your calendars!**; (2) What steps to take towards presenting a draft **2021 Parish Budget** for approval by the Vestry at its January meeting and subsequent consideration at the Annual Parish Meeting; (3) Items related to the compensation of our incredible staff; and (4) Possible fundraising events for the first quarter of 2021 that we could plan so that they would flex with changing COVID restrictions. As always, the full Vestry Minutes are available for those who would like a more detailed account.

## Children's Corner

### Stars & Angels



What do you put on the top of your Christmas tree – a star or an angel?

This week, we have the importance of both stars and angels in the Christmas story. Early in the week, Mary is visited by an angel. By Christmas, the wise men are guided by a star to the manger where the baby Jesus is sleeping. So, angels or stars?

Mary was a small-town girl, minding her own business, getting ready to get married, when one day an angel appeared to her. The Angel Gabriel – one of the Archangels – kind of like the supervisor of angels – arrived and told her God had found favor with her. Well Mary was confused and wondered about this – after all, she was just an ordinary person who had never done anything special and she did not know why God would find favor with her.

And that is what made her special. She was just. . . Mary, the girl down the street. She was doing the right things, following the right ways, but she was not holding up any signs that said, "Hey, look at me, I'm doing what God wants me to do" or "I'm the good one." She was just living her life the best way she knew and following God.

So when an angel appeared, Mary's first thought was probably, hey, what is going on? So the angel said, "'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.'" The Bible tells us that Mary was frightened and confused by the angel's greeting. Well, who would not be frightened by an angel just showing up out of nowhere and talking to us?

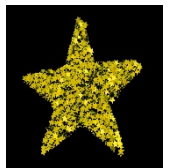
Then she thought I'm the favored one? Why me? This time the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary." It was as if the angel read Mary's mind, saying don't be afraid. Again, she probably thought, why me? I live in this small town, I am not anyone special, why did God pick me?



But don't we often think that we are not special? But to God all of us are special. We are God's beloved and God wants us to be the best we can be, just like Mary was the best she could be. As a reminder to be our best, we put an angel on the top of our trees.

But later this week, after Jesus is born, another group of ordinary people, shepherds, are in the field watching their sheep when another angel tells them to follow the star to find the baby. So more ordinary people, people just like you and me, are selected by God to be the first to know about Jesus' birth. Now, they did not know who this Jesus baby was, but they knew that

Jesus means "God is with Us" so they followed the star to find God.



So, we put a star on our tree to find the baby Jesus and to remind us that God is with us.

**Merry Christmas,  
Julie+**



Every year St. Brendan's accepts monetary donations towards the purchase of our **Christmas Flowers, Greens and Poinsettias** in memory of those who have died, those who have made a special impact on our lives, or because we love them. If you would like to contribute to the greening of the church and have your announcement in the bulletin on Christmas Eve, please contact Katie with your information [StBrendansKatie@gmail.com](mailto:StBrendansKatie@gmail.com) and submit your contribution of any amount to the office. On Christmas Eve the names are printed in the bulletin, the tree lights are lit, and our beautiful church glorifies the birth of Christ.



**Replacing a laptop?** Many folks will be updating their home technology this season. If you're upgrading to a newer device, please consider donating the old one to the Conversation Friends ESL program. Some of our students have trouble joining our Zoom classes on cell phones while other prospective learners may not sign up at all because they know their technology is inadequate. We will work with you to ensure that your hard drive is wiped clean. Contact Tim Austin at 508-688-9554 or [austover@gmail.com](mailto:austover@gmail.com) to discuss this possibility.

It's easy to join our mailing list!

Just send your email address by text message:

Text  
**EPISCOPALPGH**  
to **22828** to get started.



Our diocese distributes a newsletter, **Grace Happens**. It contains news about upcoming programs and services; updates from parishes around southwest Pennsylvania (including St. Brendan's, of course); and information about important developments such as the ongoing search for a new Bishop. To receive future editions electronically, simply follow the instructions in the box to the left.

Message and data rates may apply.

**CRIS Advocacy.** (Christian Response In Emergency Situations). This week we are supporting the work of the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, an organization that strives to lead the community to eliminate food insecurity and help people stabilize their lives.



Let's get St. Brendan's free money while doing our last-minute online Christmas shopping. If you use Amazon Smile (not just Amazon), it will cost you nothing (that's right! zero dollars!) but St. Brendan's will receive a modest donation based on the price of whatever you buy.

Signing up initially is simple. Search for Amazon Smile in your Web browser, then log in to Amazon Smile just as you do to Amazon-same email, same password. (You will have to create a login if you're new to Amazon altogether.) After signing in to Amazon Smile, you will be taken to a screen where you can select the Charitable Organization you wish to benefit. Type in St. Brendan's and then scroll down to find St. Brendan's Episcopal Church, Sewickley, PA. Click on this as your organization to ensure that we receive donations for every order you place.

After you have set yourself up in this way, all you will have to do is to log in through Amazon Smile each time you do your online shopping. Please tell your family, friends, co-workers and neighbors. Click here for detailed instructions [AmazonSmile](#).



**Do you have a special prayer request?** Contact Ruth Horton [rvhorton@gmail.com](mailto: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.

## Senior Warden's Corner



A total of eleven years of my life have been spent in Central and Western Massachusetts. One of the more remarkable traditions of life in those parts is the Town Meeting. Although towns and villages may have "selectmen" to administer affairs on a day-to-day basis, they still rely on direct democratic rule for their most significant decisions. The whole community, that is, gathers in one space at least once a year to discuss and vote directly on the business at hand. Norman Rockwell, himself a resident in Western Massachusetts for half his life, made such a Town Meeting the subject of one of his paintings (left) and not much has changed in the years since!

St. Brendan's, it turns out, is not unlike a small New England town. The priest-in-charge, the wardens and the vestry handle routine matters. But once a year, we meet as a parish to discuss and act on any business with significant or long-term implications. Indeed, our Bylaws describe the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) before they move on to talk about the Vestry. The agenda of each APM must always include the election of three new vestry members and the approval of a budget for the coming year. But this gathering also allows Brendanites to ask questions and address concerns (for which purpose, we circulate an Annual Report shortly before the meeting).

St. Brendan's 2021 Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 24 at 1:00 p.m. This will be the first time we have hosted our APM on Zoom. I encourage you to mark your calendars now and to plan on joining us. We try hard to be efficient in our use of time while still recognizing the importance of allowing everyone who wishes to speak to "have their say." After all the acrimony of this year's political elections, here's a chance to participate in democracy in its most basic and inclusive form!

# ANNUAL MEETING

All ministry leaders are asked to email Katie [StBrendansKatie@gmail.com](mailto:StBrendansKatie@gmail.com) a year-end summary of their 2020 group's activities by **January 2, 2021**. These reports will be included in the annual report that will be emailed to the congregation prior to the Annual Meeting. Upon request, a copy of the Annual Meeting from last year can be e-mailed to you by contacting Katie [StBrendansKatie@gmail.com](mailto:StBrendansKatie@gmail.com).



**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.



**The Haitian project.** All items that will be shipped to Haiti are being counted. There are many donations that can be used by the people of Haiti. There is too much to list here but to give you an idea, we are sharing the count so far for a few of the items. So far we have 174 women's tops, 37 pair of men's shorts, 345 clothing items for girls and 518 items for boys. We have 101 pairs of shoes for children, 120 clothing items for babies, and 145 washable diapers and covers. We continue to count and organize the items. Thank you for your help and keep your donations coming. For more information, contact Joyce Donadee.

## We want more books!

*Prisoners at Allegheny County Jail are not able to receive books directly anymore, however, ACJ will be accepting book donations for their library until Dec 28, 2020.*

**Paperbacks preferred!**

**Magazines like:** National Geographic, the New Yorker, gossip mags, fashion and beauty, etc.

**Books like:** self-help, mystery/thriller, sci-fi, novels, poetry, comics, etc.

**Anything, except for:**

Violent imagery, including weapons, drugs/paraphernalia.

### Drop off Locations:

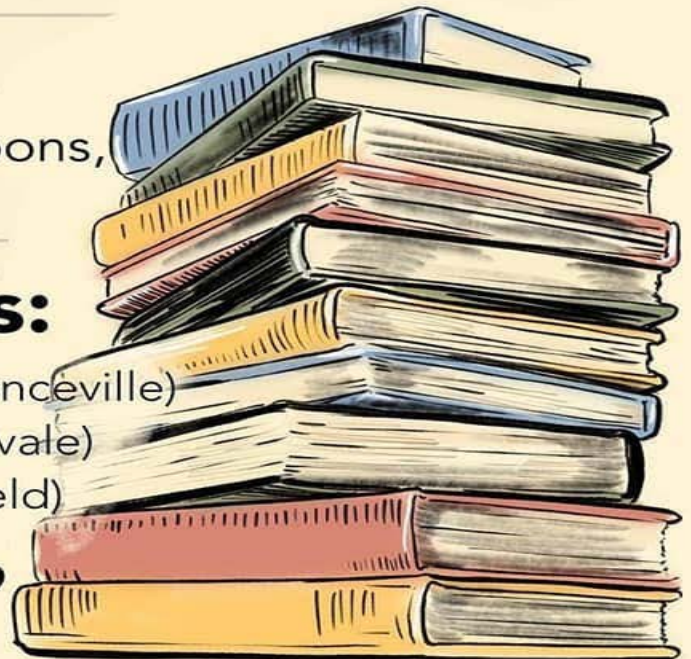
**Black Cat Tattoo** 3439 Butler (lawrenceville)

**Pageboy Salon** 420 North Ave (millvale)

**The Big Idea** 4812 Liberty (bloomfield)

*Questions, or to arrange pick up*

**Call: (412) 376-5168**



**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.

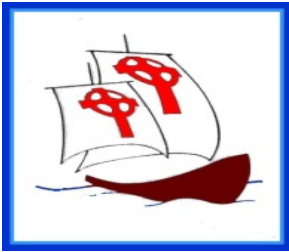
We are grateful for their selfless dedication and ask that God watch over them, keep them safe and give them both strength and rest. We hope that you will join the church in thanking and praying for:

- |                  |                                 |                   |   |                       |
|------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 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 Judson                  | Luke O'Neill      | Kim Pierce                              | Becca Sands           |
| Warren Sands     | Andrew Smith                    | Justin Zeigler    | Cindy                                   | Jennifer              |
| Julie            | 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.

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### **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.

### **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: Libby Juel  
Sylvia Affleck  
Scheduler: Kelli Cerra  
Ushers: Eric Helmsen

### **PARISH LIFE MINISTRY LEADERS**

Audit: Kevin Boyd  
Book Club: Pat Carl  
Book Discussion Club: Julie Smith  
Brendan's Boots: Tom Waseleski  
Dinner Group: Janice Moore  
Finance Chair: Eric Helmsen  
Green Thumb Gang: Dan Moore  
Historian: Ellen Groves  
Holiday Arts & Crafts & Cookie Walk: 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

### **OUTREACH MINISTRY LEADERS**

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

### **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>

Online Parish Directory ~ <https://www.stbrpit.com/> (authorization required for access--apply online)

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](mailto:regisjs@verizon.net)

Youth Education Director, Julie Smith ~ [jlsphone1@gmail.com](mailto:jlsphone1@gmail.com)

Parish Administrator, Katie Cervone ~ [StBrendansKatie@gmail.com](mailto:StBrendansKatie@gmail.com)

Music Director, Daniel May ~ [bluesub@verizon.net](mailto:bluesub@verizon.net)

Nursery Director, Meghan Thompson ~ [meghanthompson328@gmail.com](mailto:meghanthompson328@gmail.com)