



St. Brendan's Episcopal Church, Franklin Park  
2365, McAleer Road  
Sewickley, PA 15143

October 8, 2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

As most of you know, St. Brendan's has been engaged for some months in the first stage of a discernment process, the ultimate goal of which is to call a priest to succeed Fr. Regis as our priest-in-charge. The Discernment Committee leading us on this journey is chaired by Allison Kline and has as its members Annemarie Malbon, Kevin Boyd, Mike Wick, Pat Carl, Tammy Spoonhoward and Tony Turo.

Much of the Committee's work has been carried out "behind the scenes," but some weeks ago I was able to share with you the results of a parish survey they had conducted (and to which almost 70 Brendanites contributed their opinions). Today, I am happy to attach a document that was uploaded last week to the database of the national church's Office for Transition Ministry. This is one of several sources of information for priests who are looking for new ministries to pursue. You will see how much careful work has gone into developing this sketch of our parish—within some very tight constraints on the length of the answers we were allowed to upload to the OTM site.

On Tuesday of next week, the Discernment Committee and I will meet with Rev. Kim Karashin, the Canon who advises and oversees searches for clergy throughout our diocese. I gather from her that we still have a couple of (hopefully brief) tasks to complete before we can formally announce our position. We were not aware of these extra steps, but I am still hopeful that we will get everything done within two weeks or so. This would put us only about three weeks behind the schedule we had originally laid out.

As we move into the search phase of this process, the Discernment Committee will be unable to share information with us. Strict confidentiality is critical for our candidates and for the integrity of the discernment process itself. This, therefore, would be the time to raise any questions you may have about the process. Please feel free to address them to Allison or to me; if we don't know the answers, we will be happy to research them and get back to you.

When you have the opportunity, please do take a moment to thank Committee members for the time and effort they are devoting to their charge. And keep them, our future candidates, and our parish as a whole in your prayers as we walk in love towards whatever future the Holy Spirit has prepared for us.

Yours in Christ,

Tim Austin  
Senior Warden



Office for  
Transition  
Ministry

# Ministry Portfolio

*Full Portfolio (last updated Oct 4, 2021)*

## St. Brendan's, Franklin Park, Pittsburgh

2365 McAleer Road, Sewickley, PA 15143, United States

Contact:

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

stbrendanssearch@gmail.com

Weekly Average Sunday  
Attendance (ASA)

**110**

Number of Weekend  
Worship Services

**2**

Number of Weekday  
Worship Services

**7**

Number of Other per Month  
Worship Services

Current Annual  
Compensation

Cash Stipend

Housing / Rectory Detail

Utilities

SECA reimbursement

Compensation Available for  
New Position

Housing Available for

Pension Plan

**We're in compliance with  
CPF requirements.**

Healthcare Options

**Negotiable**

Dental

**No**

Housing Equity Allowance in  
budget

**No**

Annual Equity Amount

Vacation Weeks

**One month, including 5  
Sundays (standard)**

Vacation Weeks Details

Continuing Education Weeks

Continuing Education Weeks  
Details

Continuing Education  
Funding in budget

Sabbatical Provision

**No**

Travel/Auto Account

**Yes**

Other Professional Account

**No**

*Assumes avg. of 29 hours worked per week. All aspects of compensation are open for discussion.*

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

In 2017, our English as a Second Language program, Conversation Friends, was started by lay parishioners to benefit our local immigrant community and provide a personal, active ministry for parishioners. Many immigrants have used the ministry to acclimate to our culture and learn to navigate their way through life in the U.S. One special moment in this ministry occurred when a participant, Isaac, was nervous about his Temporary Protected Status check-in, because he heard many Haitians were being deported due to the government policies. Six parishioners went with Isaac to support him. Isaac was going to be held for deportation at the county jail, but our Brendanites would not leave and kept asking what was happening. Isaac was released after just a few hours. Now, about 15 parishioners take turns accompanying Isaac to check-in hearings. And Isaac, with fellow Brendanites, organizes a drive for goods and supplies to send to Haiti twice a year. As illustrated by Isaac's story, Conversation Friends is more than just an ESL class, it is an opportunity for volunteers and students to build connections and community and to change lives.

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

While no one can predict the future, we think it wise to use our reason to see prevailing trends and movements in the world. In this age of growing technology, St. Brendan's has become adept at combining pre-recorded material with the live service to create a seamless livestream experience. While we have resumed many in-person services, we believe that virtual worship is not going away, and we plan to continue offering the livestream option. We also experiment with musical styles in an attempt to attract a younger and more diverse crowd. St. Brendan's strives to be very inclusive, so as to provide people who have not felt comfortable at other churches a place where they can feel at home and share their unique gifts. Our social justice stance and actions define St. Brendan's as a worship community that is trying to make the future better for those who have been unrepresented and/or underserved in our society. For anyone not satisfied with the state of the world today, St. Brendan's is a place working for a better future for all.

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

inclusive, engaging preacher, approachable, spiritual

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

St. Brendan's liturgical style is a blend of traditional and contemporary, which reflects our diverse and independent-thinking members. On Sundays, we have an 8 a.m. in-person Rite II Eucharist and a 10 a.m. in-person and live-streamed Rite II Eucharist featuring a diverse selection of music, ranging from Traditional to Spirituals to Modern. We have a special Children's Liturgy once a month, where the children and youth of the parish take active roles in every part of the service. Wednesdays at 7 p.m. is an in-person Evening Prayer which is replaced once a month by a meditative Taizé service. From Monday to Saturday at 8:30 a.m. there is a Zoom-only Rite II Morning Prayer. Whether a parishioner participates in person or virtually, there is a range of liturgies, prayers, and music for everyone's taste to praise the name of our Lord Jesus.

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How do you practice incorporating others in ministry?

St. Brendan's is dedicated to actively promoting lay leadership in all ministries. Parishioners are called to ministry through announcements during services, email blasts, the Little Log weekly newsletter, and personal invitations. Although major decisions require Vestry approval, most of the ministries and social groups are led by parishioners. St. Brendan's leadership has always been willing to listen to its members' ideas and has supported their efforts to create, improve, and expand ministries. In fact, all of St. Brendan's active ministries were started by lay people from the congregation. All parishioners are welcome to join in any ministry to share ideas and volunteer. St. Brendan's also welcomes lay leadership in our pastoral care initiatives and during worship services—sharing musical gifts, reading lessons, acting as lay Eucharistic ministers, and designing, leading, and participating in special services.

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

Fellowship is an essential part of our emotional, social, and physical well-being – not just at Sunday Coffee Hour. Regular groups include a book club, a knitter's club, a men's breakfast group, Brendan's Boots (a hiking group), the Green Thumb Gang (which takes care of the church's grounds), and the Garden of Hope. Spiritually, our Eucharistic Ministers help take care of parishioners' spiritual needs at home, and after Sunday services, altar flowers are taken to the homes of parishioners facing challenges. Morning Prayer is offered daily via Zoom, and a group of parishioners are committed to offering prayers daily for members. We have the Modern Episcopalians Group, a religious book club, and Bible-study classes, all enhancing our knowledge of our faith. We are also fortunate to have a Pastoral Counseling intern this year who is available to parishioners who desire help with personal and family issues. "Merry Meal Makers" volunteers provide home-cooked meals for those who are homebound or going through any physical hardship. St. Brendan's also provides a special discretionary fund for the Priest-in-Charge for members and families going through any financial setback.

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

Many of our ministries focus on providing pastoral care for local communities. A monthly meal is cooked and delivered to Miryam's Place, a Pittsburgh women's shelter. Donations are made weekly to the North Hills Food Bank, and our Garden of Hope contributes fresh produce during the summer. The parish's children and youth annually visit the Concordia nursing home in Wexford and distribute gifts while singing carols with the residents. We host weekly AA and OA meetings. The English as a Second Language group offers invaluable service to our local immigrant communities, providing opportunities for language development. St. Brendan's has a history of offering pastoral care to those in hospitals, nursing homes, and prisons. This ranges from counseling prisoners and patients, to providing services and the Eucharist, to cuddling NICU babies born with addictions. Going beyond our local communities, St. Brendan's pastoral care includes sending donated goods and clothing to Haiti. There have been a variety of drives to provide clothing and other necessities to those in need.

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

St. Brendan's is involved in both the local community and the Diocese of Pittsburgh. We have partnered with Unitarian and Lutheran churches in Franklin Park to host educational social justice panel discussions for the local community. We have partnered with a local mosque in order to learn about the Islamic religion and our Muslim neighbors, so that we can better understand their community and fight prejudice. We adopted a section of highway and assist with the clean-up of a local interchange as part of our commitment to environmental issues. St. Brendan's celebrates the feast day of St. Francis by hosting an animal blessing for our parishioners and neighbors. Our pet fair has become a manifestation of our call to be "stewards of the earth." Every summer, our vegetable garden, the "Garden of Hope," produces pounds of fresh vegetables weekly for the North Hills Food Bank. Brendanites serve (and have served) on many diocesan committees and boards. St. Brendan's has also hosted several diocesan events, demonstrating our strong characteristic of hospitality and openness.

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

A few years ago, many of St. Brendan's members felt called to take a more active role in social justice activities as a church community and formed a Justice Ministry. The group explored several areas including voter registration, immigrant rights, separation of immigrant families at the border, and gun violence. After the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, St. Brendan's made a public statement by putting up a "Black Lives Matters" banner and hosting a public forum to help educate our members and the broader community about what the Black Lives Matters movement is and why St. Brendan's believes that Black lives matter. Since then, our Justice Ministry has hosted monthly online forums with a range of guest speakers and in partnership with other churches. Topics have included voter suppression, the climate crisis, policing practices, food insecurity, and racism in education. As we return to more in-person services and activities, the Justice Ministry is continuing to explore ways to engage St. Brendan's members in the ongoing work of social justice. Ginny Volponi is currently the chair of St. Brendan's Justice Ministry. She can be reached by email at [ginny4045@gmail.com](mailto:ginny4045@gmail.com).

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

Our stewardship philosophy is rooted in the concept of giving time, talent, and treasure. Voluntarism is a hallmark of St. Brendan's, which relies on the laity to provide volunteer service in worship, community support, and general operations. We maintain a directory of current ministries to help members identify opportunities for volunteering and engagement. We also hold an annual Ministry Fair where members can learn about the many different ways they can support the congregation or the surrounding community. St. Brendan's hosts several year-round fundraisers, such as grocery store gift card sales and other events. Our Cookie Walk brings together the abilities of many members who bake cookies, make crafts, and prepare soups to sell during this annual fundraiser. The Brendan's Family and Friends (BFF) Fund accepts donations to support special projects. Each fall, the Vestry encourages members to pledge what they can through an annual pledge to support the operations and ministries of the church. Unique to St. Brendan's, and a founding principle, is St. Brendan's commitment of 10% of its total revenue to local, national and international charities and groups.

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

People often do not want to think about conflict in a worshipping community because of the negative connotations that "conflict" can evoke. However, conflicts in St. Brendan's history have been handled as opportunities to communicate and grow. Twenty years ago, a major conflict experienced by Brendanites was the decision to expand the church building. Some were opposed to building the addition to the church due to the financial hardship, while others saw it as an opportunity to grow. The conflict was handled through discussion and a survey to ensure that everyone had a chance to express their voice. While other smaller conflicts—such as the choice of music for liturgy—may have been brought to light through "grumbings," the resolutions have been handled with surveys and meetings, leading to the adoption of a blended style in order to include everyone's preferences. Conflict can be slightly painful, but in St. Brendan's history, conflict has never led to unhealthy division, but rather to opportunities to hear everyone's voices and ideas. This approach to conflict is aligned with the overall inclusivity that is a characteristic of St. Brendan's.

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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?

St. Brendan's is not afraid of change and seeks to work together as a community to find creative and inclusive ways to face the future. When we had to cancel in-person worship due to COVID-19, our clergy, staff, and lay leaders responded promptly to switch to live-streaming of our worship services and to come up with new ways to virtually engage our members. Our virtual choir and instrumentalists, additional Zoom prayer services, and creative video of the Easter story by St. Brendan's youth for Holy Week 2020 were met with enthusiasm from the congregation. Many of these changes have now become permanent ways that St. Brendan's is more digitally inclusive. However, as the pandemic has dragged on, we have faced challenges in navigating opinions about risk levels with re-opening and engaging all members of the church, especially children and youth. Nevertheless, what has been clear throughout these changes is that our leaders and members all have our shared vision at heart—to be a welcoming and loving community of faith, as Jesus is welcoming and loving.





# Ministry Portfolio

Full Portfolio  
(last updated Oct 4, 2021)

## St. Brendan's, Franklin Park, Pittsburgh

Contact:

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### Prior Incumbents

| Name         | Position Title                                | Date Begun | Date Ended |
|--------------|---|------------|------------|
| Regis Smolko | Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge (Part-time) | 2017-01    | 2021-12    |

| Name             | Position Title | Date Begun | Date Ended |
|------------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| Theodore Babcock | Interim        | 2016-01    | 2017-06    |

| Name          | Position Title                    | Date Begun | Date Ended |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Scott Russell | Rector / Vicar / Priest-in-Charge | 2013-10    | 2016-01    |

| Church School                  | Number of Teachers/Leaders for Children School | Number of Students for Children School |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Sunday School; Adult Formation | 5  | 25                                     |

| 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 |
|---|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| 2   | 5   | 3  | 25                                   |

*Several of our adult formation groups are led by qualified and experienced laypeople. In 2019, we created a paid position of Coordinator for Children and Youth Programs.*

| 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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Transition  
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Contact:  
stbrendanssearch@gmail.com

Worshipping Community Web site: [www.stbrendans.org](http://www.stbrendans.org)

### Media Links:

> <https://www.instagram.com/stbrendanspgh/>

### Online References:

> [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UckCY2BEJXlqMoVc\\_nXXG7ew](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UckCY2BEJXlqMoVc_nXXG7ew)

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

Languages Significantly Represented:

English

Provide Worship or Classes in:

English

### References

Bishop:

The Rev. Dr. Ketlen Solak  
(Bishop-Elect)

412-721-0853 ext. 251 [ksolak@episcopalpgh.org](mailto:ksolak@episcopalpgh.org)

Diocesan Transition Minister

The Rev. Canon Kimberly  
Karashin

412-721-0853 ext. 254 [kkarashin@episcopalpgh.org](mailto:kkarashin@episcopalpgh.org)

Current Warden/Board Chair

Tim Austin

508-688-9554 [austover@gmail.com](mailto:austover@gmail.com)

Previous Warden/Board Chair

Tom Waseleski

412-741-8727 [twaseleski@comcast.net](mailto:twaseleski@comcast.net)

Search Chair

Allison Kline

412-475-5494 [aaklrn@comcast.net](mailto:aaklrn@comcast.net)

Parish/Institution

Mary Bertucci

773-220-5102 [mary.bertucci@hotmail.com](mailto:mary.bertucci@hotmail.com)

Local Community Leader

Jon Delano

[jon.delano@verizon.net](mailto:jon.delano@verizon.net)