



St. Brendan's Episcopal Church

**Franklin Park, Pennsylvania
Diocese of Pittsburgh**

Parish Profile 2013

Revised and expanded from 2010

**St. Brendan's Episcopal Church
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*All the quotes included in this text are comments parishioners made in either our survey or in our small group sessions, conducted by the Self-Study Group which prepared this profile.



*"The worship service feeds my needs.
I am appreciated for what I can do.
God lives at St. Brendan's." ☆*



Who we are

Our mission statement speaks to our identity and vision:

“Jesus said, ‘I have come to give life – life in all its fullness.’” John 10:10

Our mission is the realization of fullness of life through:

- Worship of God
- Service to the world
- Active concern for each other
- Education to expand the mind and spirit

A typical week at St. Brendan's begins each Sunday morning with the Rite II Holy Eucharist at 8 and 10 o'clock, following *The Book of Common Prayer*. Choir practices for adults and children and adult education classes take place between the services. The 10 a.m. service, with music and nursery care, is typically followed by a social hour with coffee, juice and baked goods.

“We are at St. Brendan's because we feel it is important to raise our children in faith. We wanted deep community roots. Our faith has always been strong, but we wanted a place to share it.”

“The table [Eucharist] feeds every human being that God created.”

“It's a terrific place to support parenting; it's been great to have my child involved with such good people.”

Sunday school, comprising children age 4 through the 5th grade, takes place in our classrooms during the 10 a.m. service but allows children to return to their parents before the Eucharist. Our Rite 13 Program serves children in grades 6 to 8; Journey to Adulthood is for 9th and 10th graders; and juniors and seniors are in the Young Adults in Church Program. All of these meetings are held Sunday evenings. In 2013, we have approximately 37 students enrolled in these classes, and several children age 3 and under who are cared for each Sunday in the nursery.

Early Morning Prayer is observed at 8:30 on Tuesdays, and there is a Wednesday evening Rite II Holy Eucharist at 7 p.m. The building also is used during the week to host diverse community activities, such as an after-school program, private music lessons, yoga groups, an Indian dance group, contemplative prayer and senior health screenings. The parish hall is used as a public polling place twice a year by the Allegheny County Elections Bureau.





History

Brendan the Navigator was a fabled Irish saint credited with extensive travel and the establishment of monasteries and churches throughout Ireland and Scotland. His travels in the mid-sixth century likely took him to Iceland and Greenland, and some even credit him with discovering America centuries before other explorers.

Brendan's strong desire to reach out to new worlds prompted the name of the mission church to be planted in Franklin Park. Bishop Alden Hathaway formally approved this outgrowth of Christ Church in January 1987, with the Rev. Dr. Patricia Carnahan in the lead. From small beginnings and borrowed worship space, the congregation grew to 120 members within three years and was able to build its own space. Groundbreaking was held in May 1991, and on Palm Sunday 1992, the bishop joined the congregation for a Service of Dedication and Consecration.

With the mission church firmly established and thriving, the Rev. Pat Carnahan retired and St. Brendan's began its search for a new rector in 1997. The Rev. Catherine A. (Cat) Munz was called in January 1998. The late 1990s and the years following were a growth period for St. Brendan's. Under Cat's leadership new traditions were established including women's retreats and the use of various supplemental worship services. We watched as the children of our families graduated from the nursery to Sunday school to our youth programs and began their service as acolytes and choir members. Youth education programs thrived and groups of our kids went on pilgrimages to destinations including California, Boston, New York City, South Dakota, and Italy.

As we grew we challenged the space erected for St. Brendan's, and plans were adopted for an addition to include a chapel, new worship space, kitchen, and expanded space

for youth. Groundbreaking ceremonies for this addition were held on September 5, 2001. With workers deep in the "hole" that would become the foundation of our new sanctuary, news broke of terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. A special Evening Prayer service was held the following night, as members of St. Brendan's became more cognizant of our need for our church and the importance of its work.

In September 2002, the expanded St. Brendan's was consecrated. While we were building, however, we had begun feeling the impact of division within the Episcopal Church USA. Our growth was stunted as our diocese struggled with political and financial decisions that were splashed across headlines throughout the area. Without the continued growth expected when the decision was made to build the addition, the financial burden of its construction became heavy. Available resources were





precious, and we worked through new methods of fundraising and new approaches to evangelism.

Still, we celebrated our accomplishments. In February 2003, members gathered to sing outside the home of a parishioner on her 100th birthday. In June 2003, the congregation celebrated the 10th anniversary of Cat's ordination. We celebrated baptisms, confirmations and weddings and continued the work of our church.

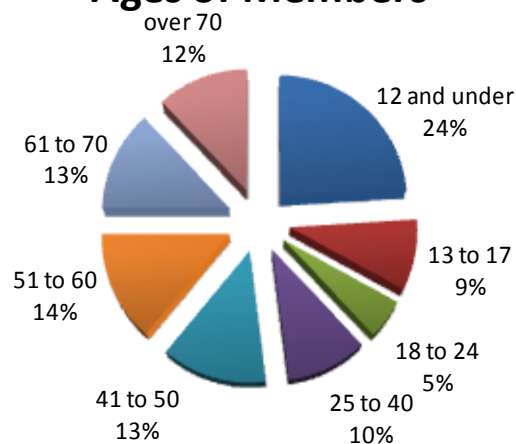
In 2008, the Rev. Munz accepted a new call. Losing a rector under any circumstances is a challenge for a

congregation, but ours responded as it always has: we joined together more firmly than ever and looked forward, accepting God's will.

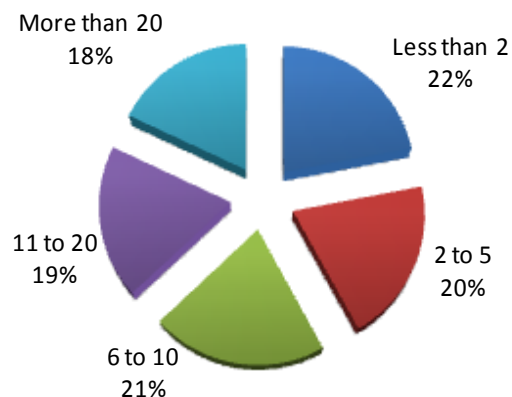
The Rev. Dr. William Pugliese joined St. Brendan's as interim rector in November 2008, and we have enjoyed having him as our new leader while the Pittsburgh diocese went through a transition and St. Brendan's made plans for its future. With Bill's gentle guidance and experienced leadership, St. Brendan's is attracting new families and is focusing on our work as a church in a very determined way.

As we change and grow we consider our namesake. Various accounts of Brendan call him the Navigator, the Wanderer and the Voyager. He's also been called Brendan the Bold, reflecting his will and determination to spread the Word in the early days of Christianity in Ireland. St. Brendan's community embraces these traits. We celebrate the feast day of our patron saint on May 16, and anticipate our many journeys ahead.

Ages of Members



Years of Membership





Spirituality

St. Brendan's describes itself as open and welcoming. To that description add spiritual, although our spirituality expresses itself primarily in liturgy and in service to our own community.

Many of St. Brendan's members have also expressed a strong desire to reach out and be of service beyond our immediate community. We are extremely generous: generous with time, with funds and with engagement in our community activities. This is St. Brendan's spirituality in action.

"It's a continual journey of discovery.

It's up to you to take what is given to you and work with it and apply it to your own life.

This church allows you to think and question."

Many Brendanites have a desire to "go deeper" in our spiritual experiences. We want to know more about being Episcopalian and how

to be followers of Jesus. We desire leadership that will educate, encourage and model a life that imitates that of Jesus in the gospels. Support for growth in prayer and contemplation, as well as a lively liturgical experience, are important to us. New members are not only welcome, but they also are seen as the fruit of our spirituality.

"Worship is what you come to do, but spirituality is what's in you."

Strengths

God has blessed St. Brendan's with a committed core of members, a strong sense of community, a generous and caring spirit, a warm and welcoming personality, and location in a fast-growing suburb.

Our building, which was doubled in size in a capital construction program, is flexible, multifunctional and hosts an after-school child care

program. Visitors as well as members find the spacious sanctuary, with its high ceiling and large windows that look out to the woods, an inviting place in which to worship.

"People here engage me personally and remember me from week to week; it's not a 'drive by' church."

When the national church was faced with turmoil and division in recent years, the controversy split the Pittsburgh diocese, causing many parishes to leave ECUSA. St. Brendan's, however, remained firmly allied with the national church, stayed committed to an Episcopal theology and today thrives on a spirit of inclusion.

"I wanted a church that is not only welcoming but inclusive.

I was fortunate to find St. Brendan's."





Resources and Stewardship

Although St. Brendan's celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2012, it remains a young congregation without an endowment, and resources must be carefully shepherded. Our leaders are challenged to work within our existing financial constraints, while paying the bills and maintaining vital outreach efforts.

The 2013 budget for St. Brendan's shows a projected income of \$228,697 and projected expenses of \$244,687, for a deficit of \$15,990. The bulk of the shortfall can be attributed to \$15,000 in expenses to cover the search for and moving expenses of a new rector. St. Brendan's always budgets conservatively, how-

ever. For instance, our chief fundraisers, the annual Yard Sale and Holiday Happening, were expected in last year's budget to deliver \$15,000 and \$4,000, respectively. Instead, they raised \$30,148 and \$6,894, with the surpluses deposited into separate accounts that may be expended only at the discretion of the vestry.

Two major components of the annual budget are \$53,479 to cover our two mortgages and \$105,100 to cover salary and expenses of staff, including an interim rector for most of the year followed by a new rector for several months in 2013. The Vestry was successful in refinancing the church's chief mortgage at West

View Savings in 2012, replacing the former rate of 7% with a new rate of 4.375% and resulting in annual savings of \$26,000.

As the table illustrates, we've experienced stable pledge levels in the last four years. Pledging households jumped by almost 12 percent in 2011 to a total of 57, followed by a loss of one in 2012, then a loss of two in 2013. Even so, the dollars pledged in 2013 rose by 8 percent. This improvement occurred despite a stagnant economy which, in most churches and non-profits, created a decrease in revenue. In the last several years St. Brendan's enjoyed stability under our interim rector, Father Bill Pugliese. At the same time, the division, malaise and uncertainty ended in the Pittsburgh diocese with the installation of Bishop Dorsey McConnell in 2012. We can once again focus on the true mission of our church. New members are joining, and our average giving per pledge unit stands well above the average for Episcopal churches.

With the refinancing of our chief mortgage, increased giving by our members, successful stewardship on other fronts, and a secure diocesan future, St. Brendan's is ready to seek its next rector.

MORTGAGE INFORMATION

<u>Lender</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Annual Payment</u>	<u>Payoff Year</u>
Diocese of Pittsburgh	\$ 83,303	3%	\$11,479	2021
West View Savings	<u>\$607,000</u>	4.375%	<u>\$42,000</u>	2033
	\$690,303		\$53,479	

PLEDGE HISTORY 2010 TO 2013

	<u>Year 2010</u>		<u>Year 2011</u>		<u>Year 2012</u>		<u>Year 2013</u>	
Pledge	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	No.	Amount
\$7,000 & up	7	\$85,010	6	\$69,370	6	\$57,480	8	\$75,640
\$4,500-6,999	3	18,240	6	33,460	5	27,000	4	22,200
\$3,000-4,499	9	32,780	7	25,320	6	20,420	5	16,832
\$2,000-2,999	3	6,940	5	11,100	6	13,452	7	15,710
\$1,500-1,999	4	7,380	6	10,200	3	5,340	5	8,520
\$1,000-1,499	12	14,660	14	16,500	15	17,576	14	16,520
\$500-999	12	7,290	10	6,670	12	8,452	9	6,415
under \$500	<u>1</u>	<u>240</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>780</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>830</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>730</u>
Totals	51	\$172,540	57	\$173,400	56	\$150,550	54	\$162,567

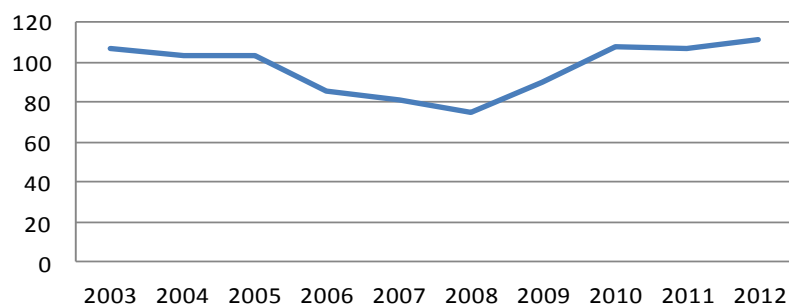


Challenges

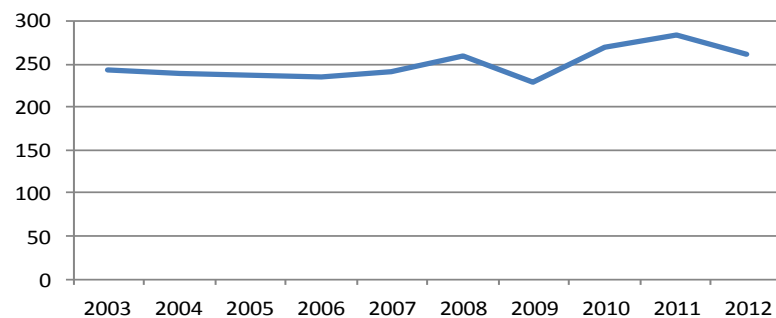
St. Brendan's weathered a period of trial in the Diocese of Pittsburgh which resulted in the departure of the majority of parishes for the breakaway Anglican Church in North America. Our parish stood firm with ECUSA, and along with 36 other churches in the area formed the reconstituted Pittsburgh diocese.

St. Brendan's can now demonstrate it is a stable, welcoming community where newcomers and longtime members can find inspiring liturgy, spiritual growth, fulfilling outreach and a rich life in Christ. Our new rector must be eager to minister to the parish and spread the good news about St. Brendan's among our neighbors.

Avg Weekly Attendance-Regular Services



Total active baptized members



Although a building campaign resulted in a bright and beautiful sanctuary that opened in 2002, St. Brendan's has been able to achieve only modest growth in active membership. Any growth during a rector interim is good, but we'd like to do better. Fortunately, we were able to refinance our larger mortgage last year, which freed up revenue in our budget for the rector search. It would be desirable someday to be able to afford a youth minister or a marketing campaign that might deliver significant new enrollment.

Fortunately, St. Brendan's is a warm and inviting church in which parishioners have a deep commitment to stewardship in all of its forms, and a high level of involvement (occasionally too high for those who are being spread thin). To appeal to more young families, St. Brendan's must invigorate its Sunday school and teen programs; to be a hit with more adults, it must refine its approach to adult education and other activities.





Dreams

Although St. Brendan's members have a positive and loyal feeling toward their parish, there is a sense that we haven't reached our potential. A spirit this warm should draw more members and a building this attractive should have more worshippers, particularly in a community with as much growth as ours.

To achieve that, we need a rector who will focus on the needs at home instead of activities or agendas far from St. Brendan's. We need a leader who can build membership, inspire personal involvement and support ways to further retire our mortgage debt.

St. Brendan's is a small, comfortable congregation that has not quite completed the transition from pastoral-size church to program level. Our fervent hope is that our next rector will help us to grow not only in numbers but also in spirituality, mission and devotion to Christ.

Our Next Rector Must Be

A priest whose professional focus will be on the needs of St. Brendan's

Someone who is loyal to ECUSA

Someone who is committed to diversity and inclusion

A person who will reach out to bring in new members

A friendly, compassionate, warm and personable rector

A good preacher and energetic pastor

Someone who fully supports the parish's fiscal strategies to enhance its mission

A person who enjoys parish life and activities beyond official duties

Someone who values our youth and their contributions to parish life





Ministries and Outreach

Our church is led by an elected vestry of nine members. Serving in 2013 are: Tom Waseleski, senior warden; Roger Botti, and Daniel Moore, co-junior wardens; Janet Fesq, Mary Haider, Phoebe Juel, Lynne Mercer, Karen Schmidt and Debbie Wunsche.

“CRIES Advocacy is impressive. The church demonstrates stewardship despite our own financial needs.”

- **Acolytes/Crucifers:** These members, typically our youth, assist the priest during the services.
- **Adopt-a-Highway:** Volunteers meet four times a year to clean a section of I-279, which runs through our community.
- **Altar Guild:** Teams take care of the altar and chapel.
- **Circle of Women:** An informal group meets for dinners at local restaurants, visits interesting and historical places, and watches and discusses movies together.
- **Coffee Hour:** Volunteers prepare coffee and snacks for the social hour, which is open to all parishioners following the Sunday 10 o'clock service.
- **CRIES Advocacy** (Christians Responding In Emergency Service): Adult parishioners meet to decide how to distribute 10% of St. Brendan's operating budget to those in need. In 2012, CRIES provided \$11,429 to relief organizations and others.
- **Fellowship in God (FIG):** A social group for young adults meets for fellowship and service.
- **Flower deliveries:** Volunteers provide and arrange flowers for the altar and later deliver them to a church member who is being remembered by the church family that week.
- **The Green Thumb Gang:** This group ministers to our outdoor chapel, peace garden and rolling church grounds through the changing seasons.
- **Lay Eucharistic Visitors:** Trained volunteers visit shut-in parishioners with elements from the Holy Communion service.
- **Liturgy Committee:** Committee of staff and laity assists the rector by managing service details.
- **Lectors:** Trained readers lead us through the lessons and our various prayers.
- **Men's Night Out:** A social group that meets monthly for fellowship.
- **Miryam's:** Parishioners donate food or money each month so that a meal can be delivered to a downtown shelter for homeless women with mental illnesses.
- **Mobile Meal Makers:** Volunteers provide home-cooked meals to parishioners in need.
- **Musical Maniacs:** Our children's choir sings once a month at the 10 a.m. service.





- **New Member Committee:**

These people welcome newcomers and help them learn about our church.

- **The Nursery:** Volunteers take turns assisting a paid member of our congregation caring for our youngest members during the 10 o'clock service and at other times.

- **Reiki Ministry:** These ministers help members with physical or emotional needs.

- **Saturday Suppers:** Small groups meet in homes and occasionally larger groups meet in our social hall for pot-luck suppers and social interaction.

- **St. Brendan's Scholarships:** Youth are eligible for scholarships to college or trade school based on their activity and participation at church.

- **Senior Choir:** All adults who enjoy singing are welcome to join this choir.

- **Sticks & Strings:** This is a crafters' group that works on individual as well as collective projects.

*"We come here because
we want to connect to the
larger world in some way;
we need to put our hands
in action."*

- **UP for Reading:** Our volunteers support the Urban Program for Reading, an after-school tutoring program hosted by an inner-city Episcopal church.

- **Ushers:** This team assists parishioners as needed, distributes the service bulletins and takes the collection plates to the altar.

- **Vestry:** Nine members in good standing who are at least 18 years old may serve for a term of three years. Three new members are elected yearly at our annual meeting.

In addition, we rent space to Young World, a licensed child care center, to run a **children's after-school program** in our building five days a week. The program serves nearby parents who are still working when their children finish the school day. At St. Brendan's the students either do their homework or enjoy other supervised activities while waiting for a ride home.

St. Brendan's traditionally organizes and staffs two major fundraisers each year, **Pittsburgh's Classicst Yard Sale** in August and the **Holiday Happening & Cookie Walk** in November, which are important to our budget. And while donating food to local pantries, supporting community-run charities and collecting plate money for relief funds, St. Brendan's volunteers also have responded to national disasters, by supporting relief workers at Ground Zero in New York City after the 9/11 attacks and by rebuilding homes in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.





Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh



The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh consists of the local parishes and related diocesan organizations and institutions that chose to remain with the Episcopal Church USA when the majority of parishes chose in 2007 to form the Anglican Church in North America. St. Brendan's remained firmly within the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh and ECUSA. The diocese was officially recognized in 2009 by the General Convention of ECUSA for having weathered the turmoil.

Led by Bishop Dorsey McConnell as of 2012, the diocese consists of 36 parishes, Sheldon Calvary Camp, St. Edmund's Academy and a number of other organizations and institutions.

Recent court rulings have affirmed that the assets of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh should remain with the diocese and all investments and trusts are under diocesan control.

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh continues to reach out, offering and seeking reconciliation with all those parishes that have left the diocese.





Community - Pittsburgh and Southwestern Pennsylvania

St. Brendan's is a 20-minute drive from downtown Pittsburgh, one of America's best-known comeback cities. Although most of the nation remembers it as the Steel City built along three rivers, Pittsburgh has undergone a transformation that left it far less reliant on the production of steel, coal and related industries. Today robust growth in the city's university, medical and technology sectors has fueled new job opportunities.

While successive waves of Old World immigrants built Pittsburgh

and its manufacturing base, in the 21st century ethnic diversity, cultural pride and rich traditions live on in their descendents. This heritage is preserved in colorful celebrations, food festivals, close-knit neighborhoods and a strong preservation ethic. At the same time, old wealth from the days of the industrial barons left a legacy of civic treasures like the Carnegie museums, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the opera, the ballet, the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium, the National Aviary, Phipps Conservatory and a variety of theaters. Three major-league sports teams give fans a rooting interest, while rich natural assets provide outdoor-lovers with rivers, lakes and trails to enjoy. Numerous universities, colleges and technical institutes educate students from around the world.

St. Brendan's sits in Franklin Park, which has 13,500 residents in a suburban area called the North Hills. The borough and nearby municipalities like Wexford, McCandless and Sewickley are predominantly white, upper middle-class commu-

nities with a fair number of families who are corporate transfers. Franklin Park is served by the North Allegheny School District, which has a sterling academic reputation and six national Blue Ribbon Schools of Excellence.

The North Hills has a well-developed road infrastructure, public transit system, government services network and ever-growing retail corridor.

Parks, libraries, golf courses, swimming pools, tennis courts and skating rinks abound.

Although millions of residents in the metropolitan area call themselves Pittsburghers, the region is a varied texture of friendly city, smart suburbs, old river towns, sleepy hollows and sprawling farmland. Rand McNally, in its latest analysis of U.S. metros, declared Pittsburgh America's most livable city based

on a wide range of criteria. In 2009, the British magazine *The Economist* said the same thing, and in the fall Pittsburgh hosted the world leaders of the G-20 summit. In February 2010, *Forbes* magazine



named Pittsburgh the best place in the country to buy a house.

The region still has its challenges, but its appeal is broad-based and well-known. Brendan Gill of the *New Yorker* magazine wrote that if Pittsburgh were "situated somewhere in the heart of Europe, tourists would eagerly journey hundreds of miles out of their way to visit."

For additional information, visit these web sites:

Pittsburgh, PA -

www.visitpittsburgh.com

Franklin Park, PA -

<http://www.franklinparkborough.us/>

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette -

<http://www.post-gazette.com>

Pittsburgh Tribune Review -

<http://www.pittsburghlive.com/>

Pittsburgh Today: Key indicators for Understanding the Region -

<http://pittsburghtoday.org/>



St. Brendan's Episcopal Church

Self-Study Committee

Tom Harvey

Kevin Hurley, spiritual advisor

Rob Latta

Debbie Mistick

Beth Snyder, chair

Tom Waseleski



Vestry

Term Expires

Mary Haider

1/14

Lynne Mercer

1/14

Tom Waseleski

1/14

Roger Botti

1/15

Phoebe Juel

1/15

Debbie Wunsche

1/15

Janet Fesq

1/16

Daniel Moore

1/16

Karen Schmidt

1/16

