

St. Brendan the Navigator
Minutes of the Special Parish Meeting
Sunday, August 26, 2018

Senior Warden Lis Ingoldsby called the meeting to order at 11:42 a.m. A quorum was present – 32 members were in attendance. Fr. Edward Dufresne led us in reading Ephesians 4:1-3, 14-16, together.

The purpose of the meeting was:

1. To report to the congregation concerning the Vestry/Renewal Team's follow-up on the congregation's action to create a Discernment Committee;
2. To vote on a proposal from the Vestry/Renewal Team about the next steps to achieve Renewal Goal #5;
3. To vote on a proposal to bring the congregation's Renewal Period to a close.

Lis Ingoldsby gave us some context for the proposal:

The Vestry/Renewal Team met August 8th with its main agenda item to address the vote and will of the Parish to form a Discernment/Search Committee 'within a month' to begin a formal search process for a one-third time Priest. Fr. Edward Dufresne participated in the meeting, providing guidance and counsel regarding the most efficient and expeditious path in moving forward.

After a lengthy discussion, the Vestry/Renewal Team reached a consensus to recommend to the congregation that the Discernment Committee be established once the search process has begun as outlined by the Diocese in its *Transition Guidelines*. In reviewing the *Guidelines*, it became clear the first step will be to reach and confirm \$16,000 in additional funds required, at which time permission will be granted by the Diocese to begin the formal search/discernment process.

While there are more discussions to be had over concerns of sustainability, considering creative alternatives with Castine, and seeking greater clarity on what we are looking for, the encouraging and positive response from the recent survey results gives us reason for cautious optimism the goal can be met.

Barbara Kourajian, Clerk, read the Proposed Resolution:

Proposed Resolution

In response to the strong will and appetite to move forward expressed by Parish members at the Annual Meeting, the Vestry of St. Brendan the Navigator Episcopal Church recommends the following resolution for members' consideration at the August 26, 2018 special congregation meeting:

Whereas the Diocese of Maine has given its consent for St. Brendan's to begin a search process for a 1/3-time priest-in-charge once the full funding for this ministry is secured in confirmed pledges;

And, whereas the Vestry has confirmed that, while conducting its own Search process, St. Brendan's may partner with Trinity Episcopal Church, Castine to secure, if possible, a single priest to pursue two separate part-time ministries in each congregation;

It is therefore resolved that St. Brendan's will conduct an every-member-contact stewardship campaign beginning Sunday, August 26 in order to secure the required \$16,000 in additional pledged giving that will be necessary to support a 1/3-time priest in charge;

And, it is further resolved that, once the goal of \$16,000 in confirmed pledging is reached, the congregation will immediately enter into a Search process and appoint a Discernment Committee under the direction of the Diocese for a new priestly ministry;

And, finally it is resolved that, once the pledging goal is reached which will complete goal #5 of the St. Brendan's Renewal Plan, the congregation's renewal period will come to a close with all eleven Renewal Goals achieved.

Curtis Flowers moved to approve the Resolution. Judy Miller seconded the motion. A lengthy discussion followed. There were many comments and questions:

- There seemed to be confusion over the word "Discernment." Parishioners had different interpretations of what the Discernment Committee (approved at the Annual Meeting) was charged to do. A sentiment expressed by several members: the Discernment Committee would tell us what our options are, not necessarily hire a one-third time priest. Some saw this as a golden opportunity to look at alternative ministries/structures before we make a commitment to hire a priest.

Fr. Dufresne clarified that the Diocesan process includes the Discernment process. What sort of priestly presence we want and need will be addressed in the search process. He stated: If you want a priest and vote "yes" on the proposal, you will be able to define what type of priest you want. If however, you

feel you are not even ready to consider the possibility of a priest at this time but feel you must consider other options, you wouldn't vote for this proposal.

- The financial aspect of this proposal was raised. Can we sustain this? We don't have a growth-plan nor a financial plan to go with the growth-plan. There was difficulty in developing a budget for this year; adding \$16,000 is not a one-time increase.
- Other concerns: our aging congregation, a need to grow the church, donor fatigue, members financially supporting two churches.
- Hiring a one-third priest doesn't solve all of our problems.
- Several members said a priest would provide important spiritual and administrative leadership; we have benefited from the leadership of Fr. Dufresne and Vesta Kowalski. Priestly leadership may help grow the church. Miriam Antich said this is the best moment to make sure St Brendan's will survive beyond our lifetime. She added that we all have invested time, treasure, and talents to St. Brendan's – we don't want the church to die.

Fr. Dufresne stated it is important to figure out where we are now. He reiterated: a "yes" vote indicates you are ready to hire a priest once our pledging is confirmed. If you feel you are not ready, that we need to do our own parochial discernment process and this proposal is premature, you would vote against it.

Tom van Buren moved to amend the second to last paragraph to read:

And, it is further resolved that, if the goal of \$16,000 in confirmed pledging is reached, the congregation will consider entering into a Search process and appointing a Discernment Committee under the direction of the Diocese for a new priestly ministry;

Peter Tarlton seconded the motion. More discussion ensued. The vote was taken with 22 in favor, 3 opposed. The amendment was approved.

Bunny Reardon raised a question on the last paragraph of the Resolution: are we really finished with the Renewal Plan? Fr. Dufresne said we would have completed Goal #5. He stated that many of the Renewal goals are ongoing and will continue to be addressed; that is the spirit of renewal. The formal plan will be finished.

The vote to approve the Resolution as amended was taken. 24 voted in favor; 1 opposed. The motion passed.

The Stewardship Team passed out the Stewardship letter and pledge forms. We closed the meeting by reading the Prayer of St. Brendan together. The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Barbara Kourajian,
Clerk