**St. Brendan the Navigator**

**Minutes of the Special Vestry Meeting**

**with**

**The Right Reverend Thomas James Brown, Bishop of Maine**

**July 31, 2019**

Present: Lis Ingoldsby, Miriam Antich, Meg Graham, Bill Scaife, Tom van Buren, and Barbara Kourajian.

Also present: Bishop Thomas Brown, Rev. Edward Dufresne, Stewart Pierson, Julie Pierson, Patricia Donahue, Diane Greenlaw, Skip Greenlaw, Pete Dane, Judy Miller, Luke Williams, Marilyn Verhey, Mickey Jacoba and Woody Osborne.

 Senior Warden Lis Ingoldsby welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m. Bishop Thomas Brown gave the opening prayer. Everyone introduced themselves and made brief comments about their association with St. Brendan’s.

**Comments/observations from Bishop Brown on his first 30 days as Bishop**

 Bishop Thomas opened by saying how grateful he was for our presence at this meeting. He said his job was to help us get the resources we need to do what we want and need to do. He expressed his deep thanks to Bishop Lane for his guidance through the transition period. Thomas shared with us he missed Bishop Lane the first week on the job. He felt some sadness, a little fear, and had some feelings of inadequacy; the last three weeks these emotions have given way to excitement. He mentioned that preaching will be a challenge for him – this is the first time in his life he is preaching to a congregation he does not know.

**Looking ahead: Challenges and Opportunities for St. Brendan's**

 Edward Dufresne suggested a way to frame this discussion with these questions:

 1) What do you think the Bishop really needs to know about St. Brendan’s before

 he leaves?

 2) What do you need from the Bishop?

 3) What can we offer each other in mutual ministry?

      Lis drew our attention to a summary (see pages 3 and 4) of the feedback she received at the Annual Meeting on the challenges and opportunities facing St. Brendan’s. The discussion that followed focused primarily on the Worship & Music Ministry and the Outreach Ministry.

 Barbara Kourajian, Vestry liaison to the Worship & Music Ministry, stated the issue their ministry wrestled with this past year was the assigned Old Testament lessons in the Revised Common Lectionary. The bottom line – we are looking for more freedom for experimentation in the Liturgy. Discussion ensued which included the role of laity (“local formation”) and even the possibility of raising someone up from St. Brendan’s to be ordained. Thomas stated the Bishop’s office has to be willing to say: one size does not fit all.

  Edward reminded us not to sell ourselves short when it comes to worship. He noted worship at St. Brendan’s is 1) fun, 2) distinctly Episcopalian, and 3) a spiritual experience.

 Tom van Buren, Vestry liaison to the Outreach Ministry, asked: “What can we do in our relationship with the outer world (what deeds can we do) and what does it do with our relationship with each other?” He added: “If the “deed" is particularly good, it will do the work of the evangelizing.” Tom mentioned St. Brendan’s history of giving money to worthy causes. He remarked we have a new shift going forward: what we can do to help these organizations we have supported? We need an awareness of what other churches and people are doing -- what is our role in that? Are we competing?  Are we supporting? We need to keep our antennae out as to what is going on in the community.

 Mickey Jacoba asked how the Diocese could help outreach. She continued: “Do we have an identifiable St. Brendan’s Outreach? Is it recruitment or is it addressing needs or is it both?” Bishop Thomas asked:  “Is Outreach a service?  Is it a way to attract newcomers?” Edward stated we talked about Outreach and Evangelism when we developed the ministries; they were combined under one ministry because we did not want to have too many committees due to our small size.

 Patricia Donahue reminded us that a number of Ministries practice Outreach. The Educational and Spiritual Development offerings (e.g. Merton series) are open to the public and this is a form of Outreach. Lis commented on the use of our building for Outreach. She said we are working on “getting feet in the door.”

**Closing Remarks**

 Bishop Thomas asked us to go around the circle and answer: “What would you like me to know or what do you need from me?” Responses were honest, informative, and heartfelt.

 Thomas stated that healthcare and housing are two big concerns for him. Both are issues for parishes looking for priests. He also challenged us to reframe our thinking about distance, saying it is overemphasized and becomes an excuse for not connecting. “If you invite me, I will come,” he said. “We can continue to have all types of conversations about our future.”

 Our meeting closed with a prayer and blessing offered by Bishop Thomas. The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

 Barbara Kourajian

 Clerk

**St. Brendan’s Parish Input: Challenges and Opportunities 7/28/19**

**Worship – Challenges:**

Work cooperatively with the Diocese in offering innovative liturgies

**Worship – Opportunities:**

 Explore ways of alternative worship services and music – attract the unchurched?

 Move liturgy into new forms- appreciate historical liturgy while challenging

 ‘worn out‘ forms

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**Education & Spiritual Development – Challenges:**

 Active biblical studies – leveraging members to lead programs

 Bible studies with a life application, versus deep theological/historical focus

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**Outreach - Challenges:**

 Develop Outreach Ministry /seek opportunities to connect within & without

 Focus on attracting/welcoming newcomers

 Barrier between local/’from away’ people

 **Hall** –

 Increase awareness and encourage greater use of facilities

Use facilities to better serve those in need on the island

Excellent facilities & location - commercial kitchen, etc.

 Management of rentals**/**Upkeep/maintenance

**Outreach - Opportunities:**

 Grow our Outreach efforts in/with the community

 Reach into the community to identify and address needs

 Leverage recent connections developed through outreach ministry/activities

 Environmental Stewardship - ‘Green Team’

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**Overall Growth - Pastoral Care & Welcoming / Finance & Stewardship**

 **Challenges:**

 $ and members

 Barrier between local/’from away’ people

 Need for relevance in a polarized society

Summer/ Winter dynamic

 Values based parish: Treat each other in accordance with our mission and

 values

**Pastoral Care & Welcoming / Finance & Stewardship**

 **Opportunities:**

Celebrate existing energy – time, talent $ growing –

Increase lay led participation in all aspects of church life

Nurture culture of GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION toward each other

Leverage strong involvement, support & current energy

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