

# *St. Brigid's Episcopal Church*



St. Brigid's Mission is:

*To Know, Live, and Share God's Love*

*Dear prospective Rector,*

*We at St. Brigid's prayerfully seek God's direction in our search process. We are a deeply caring and involved community who seek someone who can faithfully lead us into the future. In our parish profile, we have tried to accurately present both our strengths and weaknesses as we seek new growth for our largely mature population. Please prayerfully consider whether God draws you to us.*

*Yours in Christ,  
St. Brigid's Parishioners*

## *Everyone Is Welcome*

St. Brigid's is a "Welcome to All" congregation. You are welcomed with love into our fellowship. We believe God has called us together regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, economic status or abilities. Community is a strength that flows abundantly through this parish.



Our Sunday worship services are traditional and include a healing service monthly. We are fortunate to have four lay ministers that can conduct Morning Prayer and three Eucharistic visitors that can take communion to the sick/ homebound. This keeps us prayerfully connected.

St. Brigid's family most definitely appreciates its sermons! Tying scripture to our daily lives is important to our parishioners. Relating ideas from God's lessons that each person can apply to their daily lives and help their spiritual direction is something we have all come to rely on from our weekly gathering. In addition, parishioners have shown an interest in Bible study further connecting them to the word of God.

Music has always been important to St. Brigid's and is celebrated at Sunday services and special services during Holy Week, Lent, and Christmas. In 2014 the church installed a new beautiful Allen Organ donated by contributions from parish members. Special choral pieces have been enjoyed by all since the installation. The choir is seeking to grow to continue to share their love of song with the parish.

As in many churches in today's era, the population of children participating in the parish is small. There are only a few Sunday school children. We are hopeful to welcome new families into St. Brigid's and help more children learn of God's love!

St. Brigid's Church cares about our parish family, their worries, health and needs. During the COVID-19 virus scare our Senior Warden orchestrated plans for expanded phone calls, emails,



and texts. This has helped to assure our families do not feel isolated or alone during quarantine periods. Palm Sunday was celebrated by a car parade passing St. Brigid's! We received a special blessing with Holy water when passing the front doors! We were isolated but together!

As we care for our parish family, we care for our beloved St. Brigid's structure built in 1901! In 2020, new windows have been installed in the offices. Under the current circumstances which do not permit construction projects, installation of new windows in Parish Hall have been put on hold, as well as our first stained glass window in the church space. Our vestry and the parish committees care for the building and finances with great detail. The economics for the window improvements are a combination of donations, a low-interest loan, and grant applications, when possible. Maintaining a healthy and safe space for God's works to continue ranks high in this church.

### *Our Community*

As living members of the body of Christ, the St. Brigid's community has received the gifts of love and generosity from our God and consciously have shared them without measure, as much as humanly possible. Witnessing to this strengthens our own faith and resolve in a world that hungers for God's Grace. In that spirit we reach out as a community to our local food bank and homeless shelter via nonperishables monthly. Most recently, during this pandemic we keep a supply of food available in the Town Square accessible for those who need it. Additionally, several parishioners make face masks for those who need one.

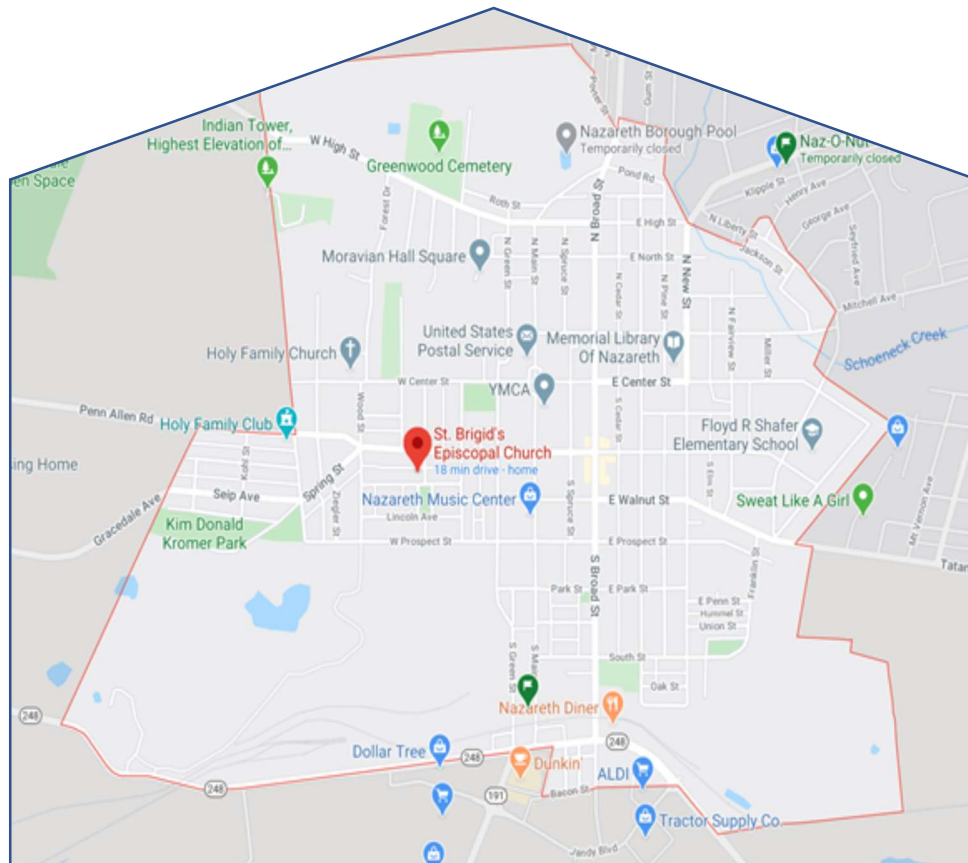
Programs have been conducted to gather school supplies, gift cards, clothing, and cash donations to support those in need in our community. Parishioners assist with a summer lunch program. In addition, we open our church for use by another congregation so they too can have a home. The list goes on, but the ideas are abundant and the desire for outreach strong.

Even with abundant outreach from this small, but mighty, church family, our own are not forgotten. There is a connection that makes each individual feel part of the bigger whole. Members reach out to each other fostering an inclusive environment and responsiveness when someone is in need, both physically and emotionally.



## *The Nazareth Area*

Nazareth was founded in 1740 by Moravian immigrants from Germany. The land was purchased from George Whitefield following a failed business venture. At its beginning, Nazareth was a closed community of faith, meaning only members of the Moravian Church could purchase land in the town. This custom continued until the second half of the 19th century. The result was a predominantly German Protestant settlement. As industry grew, people of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds arrived and other churches were built by these new arrivals. German Lutheran, Evangelical and Reformed (now United Church of Christ) and Roman Catholic congregations nurtured their members in this Nazareth community.



In 1995, St. Brigid's began as a mission of the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem. The Rev. Canon Jane Teter served as the first rector of the parish. The congregation began worshipping in the basement of a bank in Moore Township. Five years later, the present building was purchased to create a more permanent home for the parish. The former Haman Memorial United Evangelical Church was built at the turn of the 20th century. At the time of purchase, it had been unoccupied for some time, requiring skilled hands from the new congregation to bring it from dusty neglect to a place of worship that can welcome all through its doors.

In September 2020, with enthusiasm St. Brigid's will celebrate its 25th anniversary!

## Meet Our Church

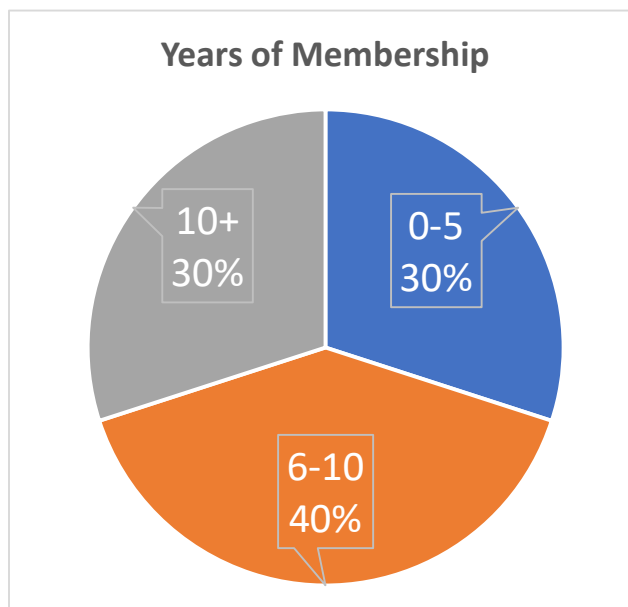
*Now you are the body of Christ, and  
each one of you is a part of it.*

1 Corinthians 12: 27

Our church was founded in 1995 with four families and a vicar. In the 25 years since, the congregation has continued to grow. We currently have 40 families in membership, with a total of approximately 90 parishioners.

Approximately 1/3 of our congregation have been members for five years or less; just over 1/3 have been members for between 6 and 10 years. The remaining 1/3 have attended for 20 years, with one family for the entire 25 years.

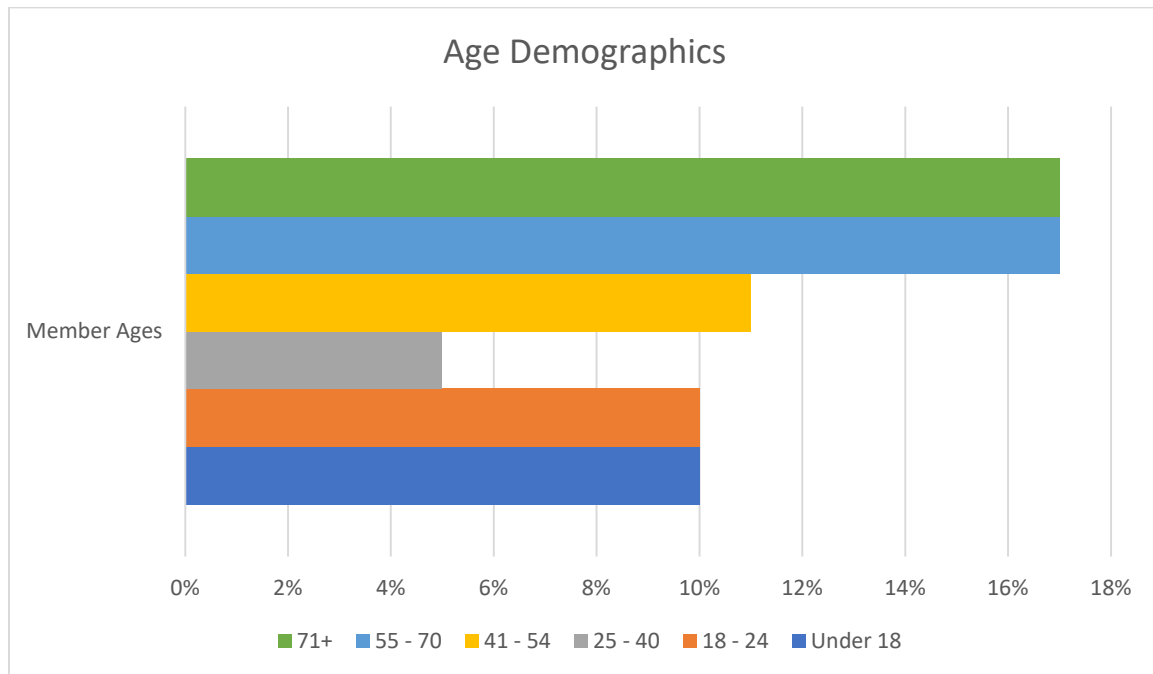
Our parishioners are also diverse in their church history. Nearly 2/3 of our parishioners came to the Episcopal church from other religious roots such as Roman Catholic, United Church of Christ (UCC), Moravian, and Mormon, among others. Even those members who were raised in the Episcopalian tradition have diverse experiences: large and small congregations; traditional and progressive traditions; low and high liturgy. They all bring a perspective to the church family which imbues it with complexity and acceptance for one another.



Approximately 65% of our parishioners are 55 years old or older, with half of those 70 and older. The remaining 35% are evenly distributed between the younger age groups. While we do have a few parishioners in the 18-24 years age group, the majority of these younger parishioners are in college or do not otherwise attend. Additionally, we have eight families with primary or secondary school age children who participate.

Our congregation, although not very large, is very active and engaged. Sunday worship is the most important reason our members attend church regularly, followed closely by fellowship with other parishioners. A large percentage of the church family, including children, offer their time and talent in one or more of the various ministry opportunities. We are an open, genuine, and communal congregation; we desire spiritual nourishment with application to daily life, grounded in scripture, tradition, and reason. With that, we desire and are committed to continue to grow

our church in love for the youth, families, and young adults of our congregation and for our larger communities.



Our worship together, our service to the church family, and our service to the community are our ways to be the body of Christ, together and individually.

### *Challenges and Hopes*

In 2020, St. Brigid's will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> year anniversary as a parish. We are small in number but large in spirit consisting of dedicated, involved, and welcoming parishioners. Like many churches, our membership has declined over the past several years, yet we continue to be blessed with generous financial support from our congregation. Currently there are very few children and young adults attending our services, and the majority of our parishioners are over the age of 55. Our regular Sunday attendance consists of around 35 parishioners, which leads to this search for a half-time rector who will work 20 hours per week.



We are searching for a friendly, approachable, priest who will continue our tradition of meaningful preaching, caring pastoral care, and spiritual growth. We hope the right candidate

will bring creative ideas for adult education and involvement in the wider community to aid in growth of our parish family. We seek a priest who will help attract new members and younger families, and who will be open to varied types of worship and music. Perhaps, most importantly, we need someone who understands the importance of maintaining the warm, caring, family atmosphere that makes St. Brigid's such a unique and special faith community.

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Thank you for viewing our profile. Please take a moment to pray with us:

*We of St. Brigid's Church pray that our doors will always be open to all for worship and our pews filled; that we willingly share our various ministries through every member participation; that our spiritual life be enriched through the reading and study of scripture; that we be a place where both doubters and believers wrestle with issues of faith; that we participate more in our growing region by reaching out to community needs, and not just our own; and that we always be evangelists of the Good News to our world, all of which we ask through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.*