

An update on Saint Brendan's

Here is some of St. Brendan's story after their parish development work in 2001- 02.

By the time we completed the work in 2002 it was clear that the congregation wanted to own a building on the island. There were several factors in why it took another 7 years before the new home was a reality: 1) the ability to finance it, 2) the availability of a suitable property, and 3) an empathetic response to the sensitivities of those who had invested so much in being a parish without property.

In 2018 St. Brendan's worked through another process of discernment and renewal.

Parish website in May 2024

Until 2009, St. Brendan's shared worship space with other established churches, initially St. Mary Star of the Sea (Roman Catholic), and later Stonington Methodist Church. While these partnerships served us very well at that period, the time came for us to find a worship space we could call our own, and when the North Deer Isle Community of Christ Church building was offered for sale, it brought us to a point of weighty decision.

St. Brendan's had grown up and thrived for thirty years without owning property. Being unencumbered freed us to devote ourselves and our resources to outreach and the changing needs of ministry on our island and in our world, but it was apparent that a permanent visible place that was specifically ours would allow us to do important things we could not have done before. With much prayer for guidance and listening to one another we struggled with the idea of ownership and decided we were perhaps being called to a new way to be the body of Christ. In the autumn of 2009, St. Brendan's purchased and moved into the handsome 19th Century building it now occupies. With our new physical space, increased visibility in the community and deliberate effort to increase our numbers, resources, interests and talents, St. Brendan's has also faced another struggle, one perhaps less anticipated than the demands of property. We are no longer just a tiny handful of year-round islanders, intimately known to each other, gathering where we can, welcoming in summer several times our winter numbers of seasonal residents and visitors, some of whom shoulder parish work and responsibility for the time they were present, a much needed assist to the year-round stalwart.

The new reality of St. Brendan's has become - along with greater numbers, resources, energy and ability to take on larger ministry - also the fact of more variety of church experience and expectation, the need to work harder at getting to know one another, the issues created by more complexity in how we relate to one another and make our decisions. We have not always moved smoothly and happily into the new patterns and consequently learned that rapid movement can be painful indeed. We are committed nevertheless to answer God's call and to finding our way forward in his name.