



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – SEPTEMBER 19, 2018**

## **Forsyth County’s Largest Catholic Church to Break Ground on Church Expansion**

St. Brendan’s is proving spring isn’t the only season for new growth as the parish breaks ground Sunday, September 30, 2018, on a new chapel, expanded offices and meeting rooms and a bell tower which the parish hopes to become an iconic part of Cumming’s future landscape.

Atlanta Archbishop Wilton Daniel Gregory will join St. Brendan parishioners to celebrate the 12:20 p.m. Mass. The Groundbreaking celebration will follow on the church’s front lawn.

The first shovels of dirt will represent the culmination of more than 2 years of fundraising. The first Phase of the expansion includes a new rustic Irish chapel complete with stained glass windows that support the structure’s Resurrection theme. In addition, two towers will be added to the church’s façade, one of which will feature a real bell operating on a carillon system. Additional meeting rooms, offices, and outdoor spaces will help meet the thriving parish’s desire for places to gather.

Future phases include the construction of a freestanding gymnasium, ministries building and expansion of the main church itself.

“What we are striving for is two-fold: functionality and beauty,” says Pastor Matthew VanSmooenburg, L.C. “While no one can deny the tremendous need for more space for our many community-minded ministries and our exploding faith formation programs, we can’t lose sight of what we are ultimately trying to accomplish: the creation of a beautiful and sacred space to express our faith now and for generations to come.”

With those two goals in mind, the new chapel will seat 100 people, providing a much needed intimate alternate setting for adoration, funerals, weddings and other liturgical events. Appointments will include stone interior walls with Gothic wood accents, a marble altar, Stations of the Cross and a rose window centerpiece.

“We are creating a space here where families can gather and commemorate those hallmark moments in their lives,” VanSmooenburg says. “And yet, it will also be a quiet, spiritual space where you can reflect on the tremendous gifts of the Spirit, spend time in adoration, and grow in one’s faith relationship with Jesus.”

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The new meeting rooms and offices will be a testament to the functionality the parish craves. The classrooms will feature built-in audio and visual systems that will integrate with digital technology for superior teaching capabilities, comfortable seating, and lighting designed to improve productivity. Tying it all together, in the main hallway there will be a digital message board informing visitors of the times and locations of the day's events.

"At the end of the day, we are creating a legacy here," VanSmoorenburg says. "A place where families for generations to come can gather, can pray, can learn, can grow. It is the first step in St. Brendan's becoming the city center for the Catholic community."

*Established in June 2000, St. Brendan's is a Roman Catholic parish of the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Approximately 3,800 families call St. Brendan's home. For more information regarding the parish, please visit [www.StBrendansATL.com](http://www.StBrendansATL.com). For more information regarding the Archdiocese of Atlanta, please visit [www.archatl.com](http://www.archatl.com).*

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St. Brendan the Navigator Catholic Church is located at 4633 Shiloh Road, Cumming, GA 30040



*Rendering of Future Church after Phase 1 Expansion  
Additional Photos and Renderings Available Upon Request*