

# Byfield Parish Church

## *Announcement from the Pastoral Search Committee*

February 26, 2017

Dear Church Family,

It's been a journey, and it's funny the things we remember on a journey. What stuck in our minds was something Jon Rudolph said at the start. He referenced 1 Samuel 16:7 where it says, "The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." So the die was cast; the edict was given. The criterion for selecting the right candidate for our church was going to be his heart. Pure wisdom, as it turned out. And so we present to you someone we believe and trust is a young man with a heart for God and for Byfield Parish. His name is Matthew Brent Fugate. You may remember him as an intern working with the youth a few years ago.

Over the course of the fall, we pursued two candidates. In November, phone interviews were conducted followed by Skype interviews in December. In January we met to determine where all of this had left us. It was at this point that Brent began to move to the forefront of our minds. References for both were outstanding, but one reference for Brent stood out. It caught our attention because it gave us a unique window into the godly nature of his heart and consequent potential as a qualified leader of our church. As a result, we determined to have a face-to-face interview with him. After the interview, the overall sense was one of comfort and a sense of fit. The more we approached the idea of Brent as the next senior pastor, the more it seemed like God was directing us to him. The following week we met again and unanimously agreed that we should extend the candidacy to Brent.

A major consideration in the search process was the nature of the transition. How were we to acquire someone who would be comfortable with the presence of a long established and well-loved pastor who would be an active member of the congregation and living in the church parsonage? Brent, with his experience here in 2009-2011 and his resulting love for our church and for Pastor Boylan, seemed to fit the bill perfectly (pun intended). Brent views Pastor Boylan as a mentor who can help him understand the needs and history of our church as well as a resource for understanding how those needs could be met.

Brent is currently the Associate Pastor of Service and Outreach at Hope Community Church in Newburyport. Between his work there and at First Church Swampscott, he has six years of ministerial experience. He currently heads the Newburyport Clergy Association and serves as president of the Board of Directors for the Pregnancy Care Center, and currently takes annual missions trips to Haiti.

Brent is originally from Tennessee where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in nursing. After sensing a call to ministry, he came to New England where he attended Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, graduating with a M.Div. in May 2012, and was ordained in the UCC in 2015 (sponsored by BPC). Brent and his wife Ann have been married for 12 years and have four sons: Josiah 8, Levi 6, Micah 4, and Ezra, 22 months.



On Saturday, March 11, we will have a “Meet and Greet” with refreshments in the fellowship hall from 1:00-3:00 pm. Please come by to say hello and get to know Brent and his family.

Brent will preach on Sunday, March 12, and there will be a congregational meeting immediately after the service to vote on his installation. The specifics regarding the next two weeks and the agenda for that meeting will be sent in an informational packet along with this letter this week.

So it is with great pleasure that the Pastoral Search Committee presents to the congregation at Byfield Parish Church the Reverend Matthew Brent Fugate as our candidate for the position of Senior Pastor.

Thank you for your constant prayers and support.

*The Pastoral Search Committee*

Bill Ferguson, Jim MacDonald, Jon Rudolph, Art Gott, Jenneth Scharlach, John Trudel