

**FIRST PARISH BROOKLINE  
PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
January 9, 2017**

**Attending:** Sue Andrews, David Cave, Ben Davis, Michele David, Ann Dinsmoor, Laura Hatfield, James Shillaber, Rev. Rebecca Bryan. **Absent:** Alice Mark

**Chalice Lighting /Reading** by Rev Rebecca from the work of Jan Richardson.

**Check in:** Rev. Rebecca invited us to check in by talking about the challenges and risks associated with the current time in the Parish Committee's history.

**Minutes** from the December meeting were unanimously approved

**Policy on Formation of a Ministerial Search Committee:** This policy was reviewed and unanimously approved. It will be mailed to all FPB member households along with the proposed bylaws amendments at the end of this week.

**Updates:** James Shillaber will send out a Doodle Poll to determine a date when the PC can meet with Meck Groot to discuss approaches to anti racism efforts at FPB.

**Strategic Issues Discussed:**

- 1) **Report from Transition Team:** Bob Williamson and Mark Reynolds attended the meeting to report on the results of the recently conducted congregational survey. They reported that 176 members and friends completed the survey. The purpose of the survey was threefold:
  - a) To begin to determine how the congregation thinks about itself, and how we prioritize various parts of FPB's activities.
  - b) To obtain data on the impact of our mission statement.
  - c) To take the temperature of feelings/ideas in the congregation re: financial sustainability.

Bob and Ann, along with Laura Hatfield, who performed the data analysis, reported that the respondees represented a good cross section of our population, with a proportional response between parents and nonparents.

Worship was found to be the strongest reason our members participate.

Also, very important was community, both for adults and children. About a third of respondents placed either social action or multicultural diversity or both, as the most important aspects of their participation at FPB.

Nest steps will include two sessions of congregational conversations, to be held on Sunday, January 15, at 9:30 am and again at 12:30 pm. Members of the Transition Team will present the data garnered from the survey in general terms. They will then engage attendees in pairs and then in groups of four to discuss what they think are the most important questions on which to focus during subsequent congregational conversations.

More specifics about the survey will be published in the "Among Us" communication to be emailed on Tuesday, January 17.

Members of the PC expressed gratitude to the Transition Team for the work they have accomplished.

**2) Discussion of Leadership Transition in the Parish Committee:**

Various possibilities for replacing the chair of the PC in light of Ann Dinsmoor stepping down from the chair position and from membership in the Parish Committee were discussed. These possibilities included an individual volunteering to take on the role of Chair until July 1, when Michele David, current chair-elect, will step into the role. Also discussed was the possibility of shared leadership among all of the members of the PC.

The majority of the members felt that bringing on a new person to the Parish Committee at this time would not be helpful.

**3) Providing Physical Sanctuary for Immigrants at Risk of Deportation:**

Jody Leader and Karla Baehr from the Immigration Justice Committee, and Whit Larrabee, congregation member and attorney, attended this portion of the meeting.

Whit Larrabee discussed our possible liability for violation of criminal laws were we to provide physical sanctuary. He reported that during the 1970's, when churches were providing sanctuary for those refusing to be drafted into the military, it was rare for anyone to be prosecuted, and no one went to jail for breaking the law.

Members of the Parish Committee voiced their opinions and fears about the IJC's proposal for FPB to provide physical sanctuary. James Shillaber, a member of the Immigration Justice Committee (IJC), along with Jodi and Karla, assured us that the IJC feels confident that physical sanctuary can be accomplished without hiring personnel to coordinate the effort.

The current plan, agreed upon by the Parish Committee, is for the IJC to hold a congregational discussion on providing physical sanctuary on Sunday, February 5. Pending results from that discussion, the PC may call for a congregational meeting to vote on the issue on Sunday, February 26.

Members of the PC expressed gratitude to the IJC for all of the work they have done to prepare a proposal for providing physical sanctuary.

**4) Further Discussion on PC Leadership:**

After our guests departed, we spend more time discussing how to handle our leadership situation.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Andrews, Acting Clerk.